

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

*Wednesday, 18th October, 1944.*

The Council met at 12 noon, His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

## PRESENT.

His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G., President.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary (Acting) Mr. M. B. Laing, O.B.E.

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

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.B.E.

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

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

The Hon. H. N. Critchlow (Nominated).

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

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

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

The Hon. J. B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

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

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. A. M. Edun (Nominated).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

The Hon. C. P. Ferreira (Berbice River).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on Thursday, 12th October, 1944, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENT.

### APPRECIATION OF THE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

The PRESIDENT: I have been asked by the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce to convey their thanks to the Legislative Council for passing the Bill to amend the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce Ordinance.

## ORDER OF THE DAY.

### MOSQUITO NETTING FOR INDIGENT PERSONS.

Mr. ROTH: Sir, I beg to move:—

Whereas the incidence of malaria in Georgetown at present is higher than it has been for the past two years, and

Whereas the supply of quinine is limited and it is conjectural when stocks may be replaced, and

Whereas despite Government's promise to exempt it from Bill of Entry Tax, mosquito netting is still beyond the reach of poor people;

Be it Resolved, that this Honourable Council recommend to Government the taking of such steps as may be necessary to bring this most essential commodity, mosquito netting, within the reach of indigent persons, by way of controlled grants to certain charitable institutions, such as the Infant Welfare and Maternity League, the St. Vincent de Paul Society, and various Dorcas Societies.

I gave notice of this motion quite a considerable time ago during the last session, and perhaps technically the facts may not be quite what they were then. Nevertheless it is admitted that malaria in its effects is one of the greatest scourges from which we suffer in this country, and the malariologists assure us that owing to the peculiar physical conditions of the country it is practically impossible to eradicate the mosquito carrier of this disease. Therefore the only means of fighting this and other mosquito-borne diseases is to take preventive measures, and until we know the results of the forthcoming experiments with DDT the present method of protection against mosquitoes is the use of mosquito netting.

Some time ago I approached Government with the request that they would subsidize mosquito netting. For reasons which no doubt Government considered good and proper they declined to do so—that is to subsidize it generally—but Government did promise to remove the Bill of Entry Tax. Whether that has been done or not I am not certain. But even if the Bill of Entry Tax were removed the material would still be beyond the means of the poor man. For instance, yesterday I took the occasion to have enquiries made throughout the dry goods stores to ascertain the price of the very cheapest and largest mesh netting, and found that it cost an average of 72 cents per yard. Before the war one could get a suitable net for \$3.50; today it is impossible to get the same article under \$9.50. Those who suffer most from mosquito-borne diseases are undoubtedly the children, and more particularly the children of the poor. Hon. Members may

remember the old music hall song, the refrain of which goes: "The rich get richer and the poor get children." That is very true, unfortunately true of this country and its conditions.

Since I have been allowed the honour to sit on the Board of Poor Law Commissioners I have read the monthly reports of the visitors of children receiving outdoor relief, and I find that their condition of health is due in part, if not entirely, to mosquito-borne diseases and lack of means of protection from such diseases. In June last the Director of Medical Services addressed a letter on the subject to the Chamber of Commerce, and I understand that copies of that letter were distributed among hon. Members. I am very pleased to note that the recommendations in the Director's letter are very much in line with those in my motion. If you will permit me, sir, I will read an extract from that letter in order to remind hon. Members. After explaining that it is no use having a mosquito net unless it is properly used the Director goes on to state in his letter:—

"The following organizations might, I consider, co-operate in carrying out the programme in the first instance:—

(a) Government Health Department — eight health visitors are employed (stationed as follows—No. 79 Village, Springlands; Williamsburg, Corentyne; Bush Lot, West Coast, Berbice; Buxton; Kitty; Den Amstel, East Coast, Demerara; Anna Regina, Essequibo). It is part of their duties to make regular visits to all new born infants in their districts in their homes, and to attend at regular infant and prenatal clinics (both with and without the doctor).

(b) Health visitors employed by the Infant Welfare League. There are six Health Visitors stationed as follows—New Amsterdam; Beterverwagting; Agricola, East Bank, Demerara; La Penitence; Vreed-en-Hoop and Suddie.

(c) In Georgetown, a number of health visitors working under the direction and control of the Municipal Health Department.

5. The following principles are suggested:—

(a) Distribution should be confined to clinic babies. Reason:—proper supervision is otherwise impossible.

(b) A nominal charge (at least) should be made for every net issued.

(c) Before a net is sold the Health Visitor should satisfy herself that the mother has available a suitable cot, etc., so that the net can actually be used and that she understands its proper use.

(d) An approved uniform design of net should be issued. A demonstration cot properly equipped with mattress, linen, and net, should be set up in each health centre.

(e) Regular checks for six months by the Health Visitor should be made to ascertain that the net is being properly cared for and used.

In the first instance the scope of the scheme might be restricted to the districts served by health visitors. There are a number of other districts served by thirty-nine subsidized midwives. I do not suggest in the first instance bringing them into the scheme but the position should be reviewed six months to a year after the inception of the plan with a view to extension if it is successful.

It is estimated that about 3,000 babies will attend these clinics in a year (exclusive of Georgetown)."

What I am asking is that Government would implement the suggestions of the Director of Medical Services and in addition include other welfare organizations such as Dorcas Societies, in particular the Children's Dorcas Club and organizations of that nature whereby really deserving cases of poor people would be placed in a position to acquire this very essential safeguard of their health. I ask hon. Members to support the motion.

Mr. FERREIRA: I have great pleasure in seconding the motion so ably moved, and I feel sure that a motion such as this will receive the sympathetic consideration of this Council. I, however, think the motion does not go far enough. Recently Your Excellency made an announcement with regard to experiments with DDT. I consider that one of the most outstanding announcements made in this Council for a considerable time, because I am convinced that malaria is the chief impediments to the

progress and development of this country. Speaking of the constituency I represent I have taken up the question of land settlement and the development of the East Bank of the Berbice River, but I have it from Government that land settlement cannot be considered in that district because of malaria. It is well known that that district is one of the most fertile in the Colony, and it seems a crying shame to think that fertile lands should be in existence in this Colony and allowed to go abandoned merely because efforts are not made to control malaria.

The question is a very big one and I will not take up the time of the Council by discussing the effects of malaria and malnutrition. There is no doubt that some effort should be made, and if the acceptance of this motion would be of some assistance in controlling malaria I think this Government should take steps to do everything in its power to help the people and so help the Colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: (Mr. Laing, Acting): The motion which has just been moved in connection with mosquito netting has the sympathy of Government, but not to the extent mentioned in the motion before the Council, which asks that mosquito netting be brought within reach of indigent persons. Unfortunately in this Colony there is a great deal of overcrowding in what might be regarded as slum areas. A very large number of persons occupy the same room and many persons actually occupy the same bed, and I have known and seen instances where persons sleep not only on the bed but under the bed. That is not a condition peculiar to this Colony but occurs the world over. It will be realized by Members that there would be considerable difficulty in making proper use of mosquito netting under those conditions. It is therefore essential—and the Director of Medical Services has stressed the point—that infant life should be protected, and protected in particular against the malaria mosquito. The Director of Medical Services therefore proposes, as the hon. Member has told us, to build a demon-

stration cot and to educate persons in the use of mosquito nets for covering their young children. By doing that they can, of course, protect their children not only from mosquitoes in the evenings but also during the daytime, and the further suggestion by the Director of Medical Services is that the mosquito net should be made available to mothers of clinic babies at a nominal charge.

The cost of that proposal is now receiving the attention of the Medical Department, and Government desires to support the motion to that extent. If the hon. Member would agree to withdraw his motion I think Government would give an undertaking to examine the matter further from the point of view of the recommendations made by the Director of Medical Services, that is to try to make mosquito netting as far as possible available at a nominal cost to mothers of clinic babies, and also to provide the necessary education in the use of mosquito netting.

Mr. ROTH: I am very grateful to hear Government's attitude in going so far towards implementing the motion I have moved, but one has to remember that there is quite a large population of young children who cannot be classed as infants, but who also require and should have protection of this nature which their parents and guardians, through their indigent position, cannot afford. Whilst being very thankful for Government's assurance to the length to which it will go, I cannot conscientiously withdraw my motion. I will leave it to the Council for the reason that I say there are hundreds, if not thousands, of little children beyond the stage of infancy who suffer considerably from mosquitoes. What I am asking is that certain of the reputable welfare organizations be given some controlled grant from which really deserving cases could be assisted other than actual infants. This would not be effected by the Director's proposals.

The PRESIDENT: Perhaps I should ask the hon. Member if he would withdraw his motion if Government gave the

assurance that on receipt of a reply from the Director of Medical Services as to the organizations which he thinks could profitably receive mosquito netting at the cost to Government the matter would be brought back to the Council? We are rather in the dark still; we do not know what it is going to cost, and it is asking quite a lot of Government to accept the motion without knowing how much money will have to be expended.

Government is in sympathy with the motion, and if the Director of Medical Services says that in his opinion mosquito netting can be usefully issued at such a price to such and such an organization, with resulting cost to Government of so much, I will bring the matter back to the Council which will then decide whether it is prepared to spend that money. Will that meet the hon. Member?

Mr. ROTH: Yes, sir. I thank you. I had rather thought Government would have suggested the appointment of a small Committee to go into those very points which Your Excellency now assures me Government itself will go into. I accept your assurance and withdraw the motion.

Motion withdrawn.

#### AMENDMENT OF LICENSED PREMISES ORDINANCE.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I beg to move:—

BE IT RESOLVED, that this Council recommends to Government that legislation be enacted in order that the hours between which licensed premises may be open in urban areas, as set out in the First Schedule to the Licensed Premises Ordinance, 1944, be amended as follows:—

- (a) That every day with the exception of Sundays, Christmas Day, and Good Friday, and as otherwise provided in this resolution be amended to read—8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.—3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

- (b) That Saturdays be amended to read—8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.—2.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
- (c) That all Wednesdays and public holidays be amended to read—8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

I ask permission to substitute the following for par. (b) of the motion:—

- “(b) That Saturdays be amended to read 9 a.m. to 12 noon—3 p.m. to 8 p.m.”

Several spirit shop proprietors and shop assistants have asked me to endeavour to get Government to amend the Schedule to the Licensed Premises Ordinance because of the fact that they do not agree with the shift system. I have already handed in a letter from the Ministerial Fraternal to the Colonial Secretary along with the names of employers and assistants who signed it. I hope that the Council will support the motion.

When I was a young man I drank until 9 o'clock one night and found myself in a very funny position. I know what drink is causing the youths of this Colony. We find more youths drinking today than in my day, and I do not think Government or the Social Welfare Organization has any intention to encourage our youths to drink. Many crimes are due to drink. I hope the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, will second this motion and withdraw his own, so that the two may be dealt with together.

Mr. EDUN: In seconding this motion I would like to enquire whether the motion standing in my name cannot be discussed at the same time?

The ATTORNEY - GENERAL : The position is that if the motion before the Council is carried the hon. Member's motion cannot be taken at this session.

Mr. EDUN: With that explanation I will second the motion moved by the hon. Member. When the Bill was before the Council I was unfortunately absent owing to ill health, and as soon

as the Bill became law I tabled my motion asking that consideration be given to the question of the hours. There was a Committee comprising the Hons. de Aguiar, King, J. A. Luckhoo, Critchlow and myself, with the acting Colonial Secretary as Chairman, on which there was unanimous agreement on the other phases of the Bill but not as regards the fixation of hours. Mr. Luckhoo did not attend the meeting, but Mr. de Aguiar and Mr. King stood out prominently on the question of the shift system, while Mr. Critchlow and I supported the other view—the fixation of hours. I thought the Chairman might have given his vote in favour of our side, seeing that it was more in the interest of the social and moral welfare of certain classes of people. I am not here to say what prompted the Chairman to decide the other way. Perhaps he thought it was the business of both sections to arrive at a compromise, but I thought that as the head of the Social Welfare Organization he might have thrown his weight on our side. In any case that is the past. I do not wish to refer to it, but with your permission, sir, I would like to read a cutting from the *Daily Chronicle* of the 16th instant with reference to comments by the Chief Justice of Bermuda. It reads :—

“The excessive consumption of liquor and the necessity for the establishment of a Borstal Institution were dealt with by Sir Brooke Francis, the Chief Justice, in his address to the grand jury at the opening of the Michaelmas Assizes.

“The Chief Justice described as ‘a matter of concern’ the extent to which drunkenness appears as a contributory factor in the commission of many of the offences listed to be dealt with at this session. “The manifestation is but further confirmation of the view I hold, and of the opinion expressed by those engaged in social welfare work, that the consumption of spirituous liquor is not only indiscriminate but excessive among certain elements of the population.”

Mr. JACKSON: May I ask, from what paper the hon. Member is reading? Is it from the “Chronicle”?

Mr. EDUN: An extract from the "Daily Chronicle".

Mr. JACKSON: What paper is the hon. Member reading from?

Mr. EDUN: From the "Labour Advocate." (Continuing to read)

"It is not as if the position in this respect were improving; on the contrary it is my belief as the result of two and a half years' experience that there is a deterioration, and you may ponder with me whether the people of the Colony should not submit themselves, heatedly though it may be, in this fifth year of war, to some measure of restraint."

That is an expression of opinion from a prominent legal member of the Bermuda community, the Chief Justice. On examining the situation, as I do, I feel the same conditions are applicable in this country, and I think the time is ripe when restriction on the consumption of liquor should be definitely maintained. But this is not a question of whether revenue is collected. This is a question which affects the vast majority of working class people not only in Georgetown and New Amsterdam but in the country districts as well. It is for that reason, sir, I am of the opinion that in the urban areas the proprietors of rumshops can come to a kind of compromise, one of zoning. That is to say, taking Georgetown for example, from Camp Street to the waterfront and from Lamaha Street to Sussex Street will be a zone in which all the spirit shops should be closed at the hours specified in the motion. Similiar conditions exist in the other stores, the larger ones in Water Street close at 4 o'clock in the afternoon while the others continue to 7 o'clock. There will be ample time for persons to get their liquor.

The question, as it stands, affects the social and moral welfare of a class of people definitely. I say that because I too have been approached by the Minister's Fraternal and asked to do my level best to win the support of hon. Members of this Council in so far as

the social welfare side of the question is concerned. If you happen to walk on the streets of Georgetown from 7 o'clock in the evening to 9 o'clock, you would see on the pavements an undesirable class of people knocking about the rumshops. That is what we ought to eliminate in this City of ours which we claim to be our principal town. Let me take you for a mental walk to the John Bull rumshop in the evening just across the square, and you will see some sights that will make your heart leap. It is not because I do not drink, as I do claim that everybody should drink if he or she wants to. But this much I ought to claim and what I do not like to see, is one set of people to be classed in a particular strata and another set in another strata as if we are grading classes in the distribution of the sale of liquor. If you continue to open spirit shops at night certain people will go there. You are encouraging human vampires, women of disreputable character, who are poisoning not only the morals of our people but their physical condition also. I know there is a definite plan of work so far as the Americans are concerned in a prophylactic against syphilis and other diseases in Georgetown. It is an excellent system. I know that system. It was shown me how it is carried out. We are not in a position in this country to institute a system like that in Georgetown to save the people from themselves and, therefore, if we cannot do that then we ought to do this: Let the people be able to drink or purchase their "grog" in the rumshops up to 7 o'clock in the evening, and if they are not contented with that they may buy and take it to their homes to be drunk there after that time. I know the people of the upper classes drink and get drunk and behave badly, but where? In their clubs or in their homes. It is one's privilege to do that, but certainly not to drink and be drunk on the streets and so have the Police after you. Many persons are convicted of drunkenness or other crimes actually caused by liquor.

I want to appeal to Government and to the proprietors themselves to take

a serious view of the situation. The condition in Bermuda is the condition here. One is just the facsimile of the other. Drinking is not conducive to any ideal at all, but if some people think otherwise then let them drink at home or within the precincts of a club. Surely, I think, it is the duty of the State to prohibit drinking on the streets of Georgetown after 7 o'clock at night or after dark. I am sure that Government is not prompted in this case by the motive of collecting revenue. If it is otherwise, then as a British Guianese I would be sorry, but in my own mind I feel certain it is not so. It is not a question of revenue collection from the consumption of liquor. Now that we are spending a large sum of money on the social and welfare organizations assisted by the Colonial Development and Welfare Act organization, I think we ought to show some gesture of goodwill having accepted that gift from the Imperial Government to carry on social and welfare work in this Colony. We should say to the Imperial Government, "We are following your trend of thought and action; we are going to limit certain classes of people being drunk on the streets of Georgetown to prove that we mean to carry out the principles of Social Welfare Development in British Guiana."

I do not want to detain the Council. I do not think it is a controversial question. The hon. Mover has told you that even the employers are willing to have the change. I am sure the shift system will not be in the interest of the employers themselves because, as the result of the complications and the many questions to be asked by the Competent Authority and the Labour Inspectors, it will not be worth their while gaining a few dollars and having to answer so many questions. The shift system will be more trouble than benefit to them. I am sure that they as proprietors are not prompted to open their shops at night for the gain of

a little more money and, if they view the situation in the same way as I am viewing it and the Ministers are viewing it and other prominent citizens are supporting it, I think the time has come when we should eliminate from the streets of Georgetown drinking after 7 o'clock at night. The streets will be clear; the people will benefit and you will have a happier set of people. So I think I should ask every Member of this Council present to support the motion as laid by the hon. Mover, and let us have a fixation of the hours as stated and not forget what the Chief Justice of Bermuda has pronounced.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I wish first of all to congratulate the hon. Mover of this motion and his able seconder on their persistence in delaying the proceedings of this Council by the introduction of a motion of this kind; and in doing so I wish only to remind the hon. Members of the lengthy debates that took place only quite recently on this subject. On the other hand I would like to sympathize with them—and I am sure that other Members like myself feel that they deserve some sympathy—because they have attempted to discuss a subject with which they are not familiar at all but are being guided either by their own morals or what was told to them by other people. In the first place those hon. Members have forgotten that the question of the spirit trade is controlled by the Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Ordinance, the provisions of which are many and varied and the conditions of which are also many and varied, and the penalties attached to those conditions are also many and varied. I do not propose to deal with that at any length. I propose just to refer to the Ordinance concerned, Chapter 107, and invite their attention to the various provisions dealing with the sale of intoxicating liquor, as that may suffice them and make them change their

views. But I would rather confine my remarks to the motion as it appears in Council to-day.

First of all I would describe the motion as one worthy of no consideration. It has no merit neither for those who set themselves up as moralists nor otherwise. So much has been said about curbing the drinking of the people on the one hand, and yet in the same breath it is said that the people can drink in their clubs or in their homes and in that way there will be no interference with anyone. I would like to say this is my experience not only of rum but several other commodities: The minute you restrict the use of it you encourage the use of it in many other directions and, I suggest, you not only encourage its illicit use but also in a way that will be far more injurious to the people whom the hon. Members of this Council are trying to protect. Would hon. Members like to see rum not being sold in rumshops but in brothels in the City to a larger extent than is being done to-day? I venture to suggest they will not like to see that, because the dangers arising out of the consumption of rum in those places as far more than the hon. Secorder of the motion even in his speech can illustrate.

If I may be permitted to go back to one little point, although I said I will not refer much to the Intoxicating Liquor Licensing Ordinance. I wish to refer, and I think I ought to do so, to the restriction in the number of licences for spirit shops. These licences are not issued merely on application being made to the District Commissioner for permission to sell rum. That is not the case at all. Under the Ordinance there is a Board to which application has to be made, and since some years ago by an Order in Council the actual number of spirit shops in an area is limited, the Board has no power whatever to increase that number. The Board may

consider applications in the case of spirit shops having fallen out either on account of bad trade or otherwise and grant such licences, but it is unable to issue a new licence unless the number of spirit shops has fallen below the minimum prescribed by that Order in Council. Therefore there is a certain amount of restriction in that way. When I hear that proprietors have asked for this motion to be brought to this Council I am not only amused but, perhaps, I may express myself by saying I am somewhat surprised, because I venture to suggest that I know the spirit trade in Georgetown in particular, and this motion deals particularly with the trade in Georgetown and New Amsterdam. As a matter of fact I think I can claim to have a knowledge of the spirit trade in the entire Colony, barring the Rupununi where I have not been. Coming back to Georgetown I am positive as I stand here that the hours stated in the motion are not acceptable to the 42 spirit dealers in Georgetown. Speaking for myself— I happen to be one of those proprietors—if I have the slightest belief that a motion of this kind will go through I will move amendments to the different hours and different days and by the time we are through it will be found that, perhaps, the question of fixing the hours will not be the best thing to do.

The legislation that was recently passed restricted the number of hours of work of an employee, and one would have expected these two hon. Members, as accredited representatives of Unions, to come to this Council on the question of the number of hours of work that the employees who are members of their Unions should perform, but they realize if they do that they will have a very bad case because the recent legislation passed limits the number of working hours to forty-four (44) per week and, I think, eight (8) hours a day with a half day off during the week. That is how the forty-four hours

a week is arrived at. Many employers, it is true, had to make a good deal of calculations in order to have a proper time-table set up so that their employees can get what is entitled to them. The hon. Members have not come to this Council about that as they are evidently satisfied the employees have had their fair due, but rather they think they should bring this matter up from the moral angle. I do not know what is the difference between a man being drunk in a spirit shop and one who is drunk in a mushroom club in the City or one who is drunk for that matter in the Georgetown Cricket Club. I cannot see the difference between any of those men. They are all drunk and, what is more, they all have to get home because I do not know that any of the respectable clubs in Georgetown have accommodation for residence. Those who get drunk there have to get home the best way they can. So I do not see the difference between a man being drunk in a spirit shop, or a club, or at home. To my mind he is the same drunkard and you cannot prevent that. But this is a comparison I would like to make, and it is all over the City. Here you have a spirit shop at one corner and a mushroom club on the opposite side of the street. I use the word "mushroom" advisably. I regret to say that some of these clubs are fostered, perhaps, by some of the signatories to the request that was made to the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member (Mr. Critchlow). Closing the shop in the day at 12 o'clock makes no difference, as all they do is to transfer the stock from the shop to the club run by John James and, what is more, make a little more profit on it. I speak from personal experience.

We all know what can be done with rum. In the spirit shop the proprietor has to conform to certain laws. The Club owner has to do so just the same, but for some reason he is very seldom caught. The shop proprietor has to sell rum at a certain

strength and so on, but at a club you can get anything from a little methylated spirits flavoured with some good rum, or a mixture of that spirits and some of the rum that is made from cane-juice, to good rum. If that is the sort of thing this Council and Government would like to encourage, by all means go ahead. But I do not know that these hours will suit everybody. Certainly they do not suit my own business. If I feel that this motion has any chance of passing this Council, I am afraid I would have to move certain amendments to the hours proposed. It will make no difference to me. The hon. Mover read from a paper an extract which was reproduced three times.

The PRESIDENT: I think it was the hon. Seconder!

Mr. de AGUIAR: It was reproduced at least three times, that which he attempted to say a Chief Justice in Bermuda said about the number of cases to be tried at a session and the reasons therefor. I have not heard any of our Judges saying the same thing here; so I do not see the comparison. It might have been a good comparison if the hon. Member could have at the same time cited one of our Judges making a similar comment. I do not recall a comment of that kind having been made, certainly not within recent times. I have heard comments on other matters, arson etc. That does not arise in this particular case. I wish to make it perfectly clear that although I am a spirit shop proprietor I am not speaking for the proprietors at all. I think that this is a restriction of the liberty of a person. I cannot see why,—and I use the word "I" very forcibly—I can go to my club and have a drink at 8 or 9 or 10 o'clock at night and—I was going to say the hon. Mover and Seconder but they are non-drinkers.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I do have a drink!

Mr. de AGUIAR: I do not see why a man is not to be allowed to have a drink merely because he has to get his drink from a spirit shop. Talking about removing the people off the streets, if you are going to do that, let us start at once to clean the streets, close the cinemas, close down the newspapers and stop them from publishing seditious matters. You cannot start by closing the spirit shops. That is not cleaning the streets at night. Is it suggested that the man who publishes a seditious article in a newspaper is drunk? I have never heard that. Yet there are numbers of seditious articles printed in this Colony that we know of, and libellous articles too. Is it suggested that they are printed by people who are drunk? I have never heard that in my life. Even if they were drunk—let us assume that they were drunk—I am positive they could not put that up as a defence—that because they were under the influence of liquor they did not know what they were doing. I am one who has always held the view that drunkenness is no excuse. Perhaps I am speaking from personal experience, but I think that a man who is drunk knows very well what he does. My experience is that such people know their limit and get home long before the spirit shop closes.

I am quite sure that this is not a step in the right direction. If it were I would certainly support it. Members have referred to the shift system as not working satisfactorily. Surely that cannot be true. It was only introduced on the 1st of this month. Can any Member say honestly and conscientiously that the shift system has not worked? I as a proprietor cannot say that because it has only just been introduced. I certainly refuse to accept the suggestion that it is not working satisfactorily. To whom it is not working satisfactorily? Is it not working satisfactorily to the employer? He was forced to adopt it by law. Is it not working satisfactorily to the employee

or the public? In what way is it not working satisfactorily? I have the shift system in my own business and I make the statement (Members may believe it if they wish) that my employees have told me that when they go off at 12 to return at 4 p.m. they do not know what to do during the interval. I told them that I had nothing to do with that; their hours were fixed and they had to abide by them. Perhaps that is where the system is unsatisfactory, but this motion does not remedy it because it says:—

“(a) That every day with the exception of Sundays, Christmas Day, and Good Friday, and as otherwise provided in this resolution to be amended to read:—8.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.—3 p.m. to 7 p.m.”

That means that employees would have to leave at 12.30 and return to work at 3 p.m. For myself I would want to open at 9 a.m., close at 11, open at 4 p.m. and close at 9 p.m. Of course that would not keep people off the streets. Closing the rumshops would not keep people off the streets. I am amused when I hear attempts being made to educate the young with the moralist view. The hon. Member quoted what happened in Bermuda. I would like to make a statement of fact about what happened in the United States of America. I have visited the United States several times, and it is no reflection on the people or the Government of that country. I was there before prohibition, during prohibition and after prohibition. When I was there before prohibition, I got a drink when I wanted one. During prohibition I did not have to go anywhere for it because after a time I walked about with my own hip flask. It could be handed to you by your lady friend or any kind of friend. It was the fashion to walk with a hip flask during prohibition, but even that time has changed. Now it is much easier to get a drink there. Are we going to educate our young people to walk about with hip flasks in their pockets, and

to rush into a rumshop at five minutes to seven in the evening, put their hip flasks down and asked that they be filled up for the night?

What Members do not seem to appreciate is that the average spirit shop is the poor man's club. I visit my shops very often for experience. I meet them and hear them talking. Nine times out of ten they are talking about the Government, about Members of this Council, and things of that kind. In short they discuss general topics of the day. The rumshops do not only sell rum over the counter. That is only done to the odd fellow who is in a hurry. The man who wants to go to a spirit shop in the afternoon goes into a private room and sits down there with his "cut down". People of that sort do not harm anybody. I have a shop in what some Members may regard as one of the bad districts of the City, but I do not think the Police can record any misbehaviour in that area.

This attempt to set up moral standards is only a myth, a camouflage, and I say that Government would be ill advised to restrict the freedom of the people. We hear a lot about freedom of speech, freedom from fear and freedom from want, and we want to restrict their freedom to drink. Why don't we restrict them in writing or speaking? Very often they write what they do not know anything about. This Government has gone as far as it could in restricting the number of hours employees should work.

The PRESIDENT: This Council.

Mr. de AGUIAR: This Council has gone as far as it could in restricting the number of hours. Now an attempt is being made to restrict the number of hours business premises may open and remain open. What strikes me as peculiar is that these are the Members who talk about having three shifts—24 hours a day—and suggest that we should become industrialized like other countries and find work for the people.

Why some of those places had to close was because they could not afford to keep open longer, but if the trade in Water Street demanded 24 hours a day opening I am sure they would have put up a case to Government on the basis of the shift system and Government would have had to consider it. Why are parlours allowed to remain open until midnight? Why don't we close them at 4 p.m.?

As far as I am concerned, speaking as a Member of this Council I say that I regret that I shall be unable to support the motion as it stands. It has not even my sympathy, and I shall have to vote against it. But as it seems that the motion might receive some kind of consideration I will put myself in order by moving the following amendments:—

"That items (a), (b) and (c) be deleted and the following hours of opening substituted therefor;—

- On Mondays ...9 a.m. to 12 noon--4 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
- On Tuesdays .....10 a.m. to 12 noon--5 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.
- On Wednesday .....3 p.m. to 10 p.m.
- On Thursdays .....9 a.m. to 12 noon--4 p.m. to 8.30 p.m.
- On Fridays .....9 a.m. to 12 noon--5 p.m. to 9.30 p.m.
- On Saturdays .....12 noon to 2 p.m.--4 p.m. to 10.30 p.m."

I have suggested hours which may suit certain rumshops but I cannot say that they would be acceptable to all. If we are trying to fix hours it seems to me that I am quite in order in suggesting the hours I have just mentioned. I do hope that perhaps those hon. Members who have spoken on the motion so far, and even those who will follow, will agree with what I have stated, and that is that the spirit trade is by its very nature a restricted trade; that the number of hours an employee must work in those places is already prescribed by law, therefore no relief is required in that

direction, and lastly, whether the hon. Member's hours or mine are accepted there is bound to be a reduction in the number of people who are at present engaged in this work. I speak for myself now and say that as a result of the shift system I had to employ more people, but the minute the present hours are reduced I will have no alternative but to send them away. The suggested hours would provide an 8-hour day and I would have no use for the extra people who are now employed. I am sure that that is the position of a number of proprietors who have also adopted the shift system.

Mr. FERREIRA: I would first of all ask that copies of the Order of the Day be supplied to Members before meetings of the Council. The question was raised quite recently and I raise it again. It is true that on this occasion I telephoned the Clerk of the Council and got the information I wanted, but if Your Excellency is aware of what takes place on the telephone trunk line service you will realize that there are occasions when it takes a day to get a call through to Georgetown. On this occasion it took me two hours. I am suggesting that for the convenience of Members we should receive copies of the Order of the Day at least three days before the meeting. I would further suggest that when the Order of the Day is being sent to the printers typewritten copies could be sent to Members of the Council.

The PRESIDENT: Every possible step is being taken now to get the information to Members. At the last meeting of this Council I stated that we would meet on Wednesday for the sole purpose of discussing these motions. I then got the Order Paper out to Members on Monday morning, as soon as it was received from the printers. Every Member who was present at the last meeting knew that we were meeting on Wednesday for the

purpose of discussing this motion and other private motions. I will bear the hon. Member's remarks in mind. I have already discussed the matter with the acting Colonial Secretary. I entirely agree that Members should have the Order Paper or information about matters which they are going to discuss at the earliest possible time.

Mr. FERREIRA: With regard to the motion itself the mover mentioned that he had been approached both by employers and employees. Surely the employers would have the remedy in their own hands. If they want to keep their premises open for eight hours a day it is entirely open to them to do so. In fact some of them are already doing that, and as regards the employees they are already provided for as from the 1st of this month.

I gathered this too from the mover and the seconder that the social welfare problem was really the object of the motion, but when I listened to the seconder it struck me that he was talking more in terms of clubs, so-called boarding houses, and doubtful hotels. So far as I am aware, the type of person referred to can be found outside those doubtful hotels and clubs which I suggest should be under the close scrutiny of the Police Department. If we accepted fixed hours it would really mean that the public and the poor man would have to go to the various mushroom clubs and pay possibly twice the price he would pay for his liquor in the spirit shops. In other words the only result would be to increase the price to the consuming public and consequently to deprive the legitimate trader of honest trade. There can be no doubt about it that throughout the world, and even in Germany, people are drowning their sorrows in liquor much more in recent times than they did a few years back. I do not see how we can attempt to restrict the liberty of the subject in this way. If a man wants to have a drink surely he is entitled to have it.

The hours suggested will not suit certain localities in Georgetown, such as the railway station or the bus park. When we are discussing the limiting of the sale of liquor we have to consider the entire liquor trade, and not only the spirit shops but the clubs and doubtful boarding houses and hotels. I do not see how such a motion can be accepted. The sale of bush rum is increasing rapidly in the County of Berbice. It is quite a common thing to have bush rum sold at dances in New Amsterdam. I venture to suggest that a motion of this kind, if adopted, would further increase the sale of bush rum. I ask hon. Members not to support the motion.

Mr. KING: I have very little to say except to express surprise that only a few months ago this matter was discussed by the Council and protection was given to employees so far as hours of work are concerned, but within a few months of that being done we have a motion which, to a great extent, restricts the liberty and movement of the subject, and which must affect to a great extent the earning capacity of the rumshop proprietors of the Colony. Personally I view with alarm the restrictions which are being placed day after day on the liberty of the subject—the liberty of his movements. If we go on at this rate we will have to obtain licences to move, breathe and speak. I deprecate interference with business unless and until such interference is essential to prevent a scandal or advantage being taken of any section of the community. In this instance the motion attempts to interfere with the rights not only of the man in the streets but of a very large vested interest in this Colony.

Unfortunately I was not in my seat when the mover of the motion spoke, but I was here when the seconder spoke. I listened very carefully but I heard nothing beyond the grounds of morality and social welfare which could

convince me that this motion should have the support of this Council. I would suggest to the seconder of the motion that there are other and far better ways of protecting the morals of the younger people of the Colony than by closing rumshops at 7 o'clock in the evening. This is not the way to save the boys and girls of this or any other City. I have not known of one instance in which a boy or a girl was ruined through the rumshops of the City. They are ruined by other means. If the hon. Member has a sincere desire to save the young people of a certain class I can assure him that there are many avenues open to him, and I suggest that he try them.

As has been rightly remarked by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar), the control of drink is so rigidly enforced by the Police Department that there is no need whatever to impose further restrictions suggested by this motion. After all we must not consider or imagine that the people of this Colony are so weak-willed, spineless or stupid that we have to make legislation to prevent them doing something which we feel is wrong. If a man does not want to drink he does not have to, and if he wants to drink the closing of rumshops at 7 o'clock at night is not going to prevent him from drinking. If a man wants to get drunk I can assure the hon. mover and seconder that this somewhat pusillanimous motion is not going to prevent him, and he would get drunk even if the rumshops were not open at all. After a time it becomes such a disease that he would do anything to fulfil his desire or appetite. A motion of this kind is not going to assist people of that type.

A motion of this kind, in my opinion, is not going to save the morals of the young people of Georgetown and New Amsterdam, and if that is so then I consider it a restriction of the liberty

of the subject. Personally, it certainly will not have my support. As I have said before, many restrictions are being imposed on the people of the City and elsewhere. There is no need whatever for this Council to insult the population of this City and of the town of New Amsterdam to the extent of saying that they are unable to take care of themselves and, therefore, we are going to protect them by closing the rumshops at 7 o'clock. To me it is a somewhat silly way to help people to help themselves. There are far better other ways. You are not going to keep the young people off the street by closing the rumshops. Try to persuade them to go elsewhere, to alter their outlook on life. Educate them. Cultivate their minds to a higher standard of living. That is my way of thinking to save the people of this City, especially the young people. There are certain movements in this City which, to my personal knowledge, are doing a tremendous amount of good. That is the kind of movement we want all through the Colony; not this silly idea of closing the rumshops at 7 o'clock. The salvation of these wayward youths has been too long delayed. We must start when they are young to try to keep them off the street before they get to the rumshop when it is too late. If I thought there was any chance of saving the morals of the young people of the City by closing the rumshops I would have given my utmost support to any motion for that purpose. But I have been unable to find any suggestion in the speech made by the hon. Seconder to convince me that this motion will benefit those people.

For the sake of uniformity I would like to second the motion made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara as regards a change of the hours. I think, however, he moved that motion *moreso* to show this Council how impossible the present motion before the Council is; and you will get various sections of the Colony coming forward to this Council with similar motions,

if this sort of thing happens. After we sat in solemn conclave for days and days considering the question and passed legislation, within a few months you get a motion trying to amend, or abridge, or alter it. If this motion is passed we would get motions from all over the Colony in this Council asking that the hours of opening and closing of the rumshops in the various districts be altered to suit the convenience of the people of those districts.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is not quite correct in his inference, because when the Bill was passed His Excellency Sir Gordon Lethem, who was in the Chair, gave an undertaking, which in effect influenced some of the Members in agreeing to the Bill, that a motion would be moved subsequently to amend the hours. It is not quite correct to say hon. Members moved the amendment after the Bill had been passed. The inference is not quite correct.

Mr. KING: I do not remember that. Perhaps I was not in my seat when that undertaking was given. I do feel, however, that where consideration has been given, as I said before, and legislation has been passed and it becomes necessary after to amend the hours, other procedure should be adopted in bringing the motion before this Council and not as has been done in this case. I have no desire to speak at any length. I shall vote against the motion.

Mr. JACKSON: I am supporting neither the motion nor the amendment, for I am satisfied that the Ordinance should be given a fair chance before any motion or amendment of this kind is brought. Perhaps it may surprise hon. Members when I say that there is decidedly less drunkenness in the City and in the Colony today than there was fifteen or twenty years ago. (Voices: "Hear, hear!") When I say that I say it without fear of contradiction. In the days gone by when there

was a great display of drunkenness and misconduct on the streets due to drunkenness there were no societies or organizations established in order to reduce the amount of drunkenness and lead the young people into the paths of rectitude and virtue. I want to suggest, sir, that if the intentions of the hon. Mover and his Secunder are honest and they would like to see the morals of the young people improved, they might adopt the principle of starting and supporting organizations which will take the young people off the streets and give them a good outlook on life. I would suggest, perhaps, to the mover and his secunder that they should use every effort to place adjacent to each rumshop an organization like the Band of Hope Society or the Temperance Society or to be called whatever name they like, and preach to the young people that instead of drinking spirituous liquors they should drink the soft beverages or juices that they could produce for them. If they have their organizations working quietly, silently and beautifully opposite or near the rumshops they may be able to do a great deal more than they expect from the motion which has been tabled. I believe that after very careful consideration the Ordinance fixing the hours was passed, and it will be madness to have those hours changed now without a fair opportunity of seeing how that Ordinance worked having been given. I take it that the amendment was only an afterthought, as in itself it is a bit ludicrous, and I do not think the mover and secunder are serious at all. I think the motion should certainly be rejected by this Council.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I may emphasize that I am not speaking officially on behalf of Government. As you said, sir, we are not bound one way or the other in this matter. I am in a little difficulty in speaking for other Members too. Firstly the motion has my sympathy. I agree that it is absurd that these places

should open as early as they do, but at the same time I find the motion so rigid that if it is carried Government will have to introduce a Bill to have these compulsory fixed hours in Georgetown and New Amsterdam and in every area which may be declared an urban area. Hon. Members will realize that England went through the same stages as this Colony in respect of this subject matter and that England adopted the reverse process in 1921. Instead of having restricted prohibitive hours they changed over to permitted hours, and the system has worked and it is much more lasting. It gave the actual proprietors or lessees more latitude to fix their own hours in order to take advantage of local conditions. The English system is this: The Act says, no licensed premises shall open before a certain hour and none shall remain open after a certain hour and all shall close for two hours during the day at the same period, but you must fix your own opening and closing and what time you will take your two hours off. Anything like that I will support at once. Hon. Members will recall that I served on that sub-Committee which struggled manfully to fix the shop hours. We had meeting after meeting, deputation after deputation, petition after petition, and it was quite hopeless to fix anything to please everybody. We were taught one lesson and that was in the framework of a Bill do not try to be rigid but give a little latitude. Looking back I see in that Shop Ordinance the mistake was that it was too rigid. Now we have petitions from all the people living in the river districts against the hours. We went too far and made it too rigid. Can we not benefit from that experience with this present motion?

If this motion, as proposed by the hon. Mover, is carried we are tied down to fixed hours for every place in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and other urban areas. I will support the motion willingly for the reduction of hours if they are not fixed and without

any possibility of altering. The hon. Member for Central Demerara has moved an amendment. He will be the last person to want that carried, and he wants me to move one to get him out of the difficulty. The reason, I feel, hon. Members of this Council are being rushed is that they have not had an opportunity to find out whether these hours suit the public. I think we ought to have that opportunity. We ought to be advised by the people who have had an opportunity to study the matter or, perhaps, know it without studying it. In view of that I beg to move the following amendment to the original resolution:—

“All the words after the words “recommends to” be deleted and the following substituted therefor: — “His Excellency the Officer Administering the Government that a Committee be appointed to consider and report on the extent to which it is desirable to shorten the hours during which licensed premises in urban areas may be open.”

The effect of that is to request you, sir, to appoint a Committee to decide whether the hours set out in the original motion are suitable or not and, if not, what hours are preferable. When we get that report we will know the facts we are working on. At the moment hon. Members cannot say whether these hours will suit the licensed premises in Georgetown and New Amsterdam. My point of view is that it is impossible to have exactly the same hours to suit every single place. It seems there should be some latitude given to every proprietor or lessee for the hours to be fixed by him to suit local conditions. I beg formally to move the amendment.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. de AGUIAR: Speaking on the amendment I would like—

The PRESIDENT: Which amendment?

Mr. de AGUIAR: The one just moved by the hon. the Attorney-General. It sounds very reasonable and harmless at first blush, and I am inclined to agree with it, but what I have risen to say is this: It seems to me that if an amendment like that or a motion in that form comes up in the Council, say in six months' or one year's time, then perhaps it would receive greater support than it may receive today. My reason for that is this: This Council is now being asked to suggest to you, sir, that a Committee should be formed to go into this question of the number of hours each day that these licensed premises should be open or the hours when they should be closed. I think that is striking at the root of the whole thing to do that now, when the number of working hours per day for an employee has been already fixed by this Council on the basis of the number of opening hours of these licensed premises. It seems to me that to come back and suggest an alteration — perhaps the Committee may come back and say that the opening hours at present existing are suitable because there is quite a lot of argument for and against—will be striking at the root of the decision of the Council when we have that Bill prescribing the maximum number of working hours as forty-four (44) per day and eight hours a day and not longer than four and a half (4½) hours at one spell. The whole thing was very carefully worked out, and if there is going to be any alteration of the opening hours there is bound to follow a number of consequential alterations in the number of working hours of the employees. What I am afraid, sir, is this: Perhaps it may be found not so convenient to limit the number of hours in the way we have done in that last Bill. I mention that, as there is a good deal of merit in the amendment moved by the hon. the Attorney-General. It sounds reasonable, only I think it would be much better if the present system which has been introduced here was given an opportunity to work say for

six months, and after that time then perhaps we may follow his suggestion. If the Committee is going to take two years to report, I would support the amendment.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I heartily support the amendment moved by the hon. the Attorney-General. I am of the opinion that different areas should have different hours suitable to them. That is done in other parts of the world. I do not know if I can reply to the remarks made by hon. Members.

The PRESIDENT: Yes, you can!

Mr. CRITCHLOW: A certain hon. Member talked a lot about restriction and the liberty of the subject, and a certain hon. Member said it is a silly idea to restrict these hours. Is it meant that the people of Trinidad are so foolish that their Spirit Shop Ordinance provides that these shops must open from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 6.30 p.m., on week days except Saturday when the hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.? The hon. the Attorney-General can tell this Council that in England the spirit shops open from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 5 p.m. to 10 p.m. Do you mean it is silly for them to restrict those hours of opening? I am a fair labour man and look at both the employers' and Government's sides in this matter. I would like to see the employers have sufficient time to sell their drinks also. Government had told us that we must allow the Bill to pass and bring a motion with respect to the hours later. I do not want it to be said that we are not serious. I was serious before the law was passed because I sat on a Committee appointed to consider this matter and two of us were for the hours and two against but the Chairman gave his casting vote in favour of the other side, and before the Bill was passed I sent a letter to Government and this is the reply I received:

"27th July, 1941.

Sir—The Governor has directed me to say that he has received your letter of the 26th July regarding the Spirit Shop

Bill and suggests that the best way you can raise the question in regard to the change of hours is to give notice of resolution at today's meeting of the Council  
I have the honour, to be, etc."

I did give such notice but we were then told to allow the Bill to pass and bring the matter up later. So you can see that we were willing to discuss this matter long before the Bill was passed. I say it is not fair to say that we sat down and said nothing. I wonder if those Ministers of Religion who supported us are silly too to suggest that these hours be changed? In reply to many of the things that have been said I say, it is a great pity that some of the members of the Committee do not know what exists in other parts of the world. I have travelled and in most places I have visited they have such restriction for the opening and closing of licensed premises.

As regards the present hours we are not going to change the 44 hours working week. I have walked around and talked with both employers and employees and they have said there should be a law that certain areas should have different hours to others. In Water Street after a certain hour the business places close down and such trade is transferred to another section of the town. Take Albouystown, much business is done there at night. Arrangements can be made to fix the hours so as to suit the proprietors in the different areas.

Mr. DIAS: I have listened to the lengthy debate we have had. I was in favour of the amendment moved by the hon. the Attorney-General, but what has struck me is this: If a committee is appointed to consider these hours they may be exceeded or it may be considered necessary to shorten the hours, because the amendment reads: ".....a Committee be appointed to consider and report on the extent to which it is desirable to shorten the hours during which licensed premises in urban areas may be open." I want to suggest that

if the Committee is to consider whether the hours are desirable, then it seems to me the hon. the Attorney-General should modify it a bit so as not to be misleading to the Committee otherwise they may misinterpret the intention of Government. I take it, Government does not consider they should shorten the hours but they must consider whether it is desirable and, if so, to what extent. I do not know if I made myself clear.

The PRESIDENT: You have made yourself clear. I do not know whether the hon. Mover will accept that minor amendment.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is quite true when I drafted it that I intended that the Committee should look for a reduction, but I felt it was important that the matter should receive consideration and that we should get more facts to go upon. I agreed to amend the motion in order that the facts can be secured for us. I amend it to read "on the extent, if any, to which it is desirable to shorten the hours....."

Mr. CRITCHLOW: I beg to support the amendment and to withdraw my motion.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I withdraw my amendment. The hon. Mover of the original motion having withdrawn his, I have no other choice.

The Attorney-General's motion was put, and the Council divided and the voting resulted as follows:—

For: Messrs. Edun, King, Peer Bacchus, Percy C. Wight, Dias, Austin, Critchlow, de Aguiar, C. V. Wight, the Colonial Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—12.

Against: Messrs. Ferreira, Roth, Jackson and Jacob—4.

Motion passed.

ACCEPTANCE OF C.D.W. FUNDS FOR RICE EXPANSION SCHEMES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move:—

THAT, with reference to the Officer Administering the Government's Message No. 6 of the 2nd of August, 1944, this Council approves of the acceptance of funds provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, 1940, to meet the cost of the following rice expansion schemes:—

|                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| Crabwood Creek.....                | \$170,000 |
| Lots 63-74, Corentyne Coast .....  | 73,600    |
| Weldaad, West Coast, Berbice ..... | 42,600    |
| Mahaicony-Abary .....              | 275,000   |
| Perth Canal .....                  | 18,000    |
| Mahaicony Rice Mill.....           | 20,000    |
| Anna Regina Rice Mill .....        | 32,000    |

\$632,000=£131,667

The object of the motion is to record this Council's acceptance of those funds provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act, and in particular to record the Council's acceptance of the conditions under which those funds are being provided. Hon. Members will see the three conditions stated in par. 4 of Message No. 6 of the 2nd August, 1944. Those three conditions are that on the completion of the works the areas involved should be declared as Drainage Areas under the Drainage and Irrigation Ordinance; secondly, that as a result of such declaration of areas annual maintenance rates on a satisfactory and agreed basis be levied for the upkeep of the works, and, thirdly, (and this is most important), that any private lands improved as a result of these works should contribute by way of acreage rates towards the capital cost of these works. The first of those conditions which, of course, is well known in this Council, is an accepted principle that when works of this character are carried out the areas become Declared Drainage Areas, and the second condition is consequential on the first. The third

condition is, as Members are perhaps aware, one of the main features of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act passed by the Imperial Parliament. In that Act it is definitely laid down that money provided from Imperial funds to improve private lands in the Colony shall be subject to such an arrangement that a portion of the increase in the value of those lands resulting from the expenditure of that money shall accrue to the general revenue of the Colony concerned. That condition was stressed in this Council when we accepted the money provided for the Boerasirie-Bonasika scheme.

Members well known that the funds have been provided tentatively as a loan but as soon as action is taken to implement those conditions the money becomes a free grant. Implementing the first two conditions is simple, but the third condition is a matter of some difficulty with regard to the arrangement for taxing the increased value of the lands. That is now a subject which is being given very careful consideration by Government. It was considered by a Committee under the Chairmanship of the Commissioner of Local Government, and a recommendation was made that a Central Committee should be set up to advise Government as to how that tax should be levied. It is a very difficult subject, but the matter is to be given careful and urgent consideration.

I have said that the object of the motion is to put these things on record in this Council, but I should like to take this opportunity to bring to the general notice of the Council the scope and character of these Rice Expansion Schemes. In the Message it is stated that the Governor has addressed a series of despatches to the Secretary of State forwarding applications for free grants and so on. I took the opportunity at the last meeting of the Council to lay printed copies of those despatches, and I hope Members will have some opportunity to read them and to study them. When these Rice

Expansion Schemes were first conceived the original idea was to get as quickly as possible available additional land for increasing food production for the West Indies generally. Members will remember that in 1942 conditions became very difficult as regards food supply, and we were asked to do what we could as urgently as possible to increase facilities for rice production. Members know very well that we have not gone ahead very quickly. Through shortage of labour, materials and so on these schemes are taking rather longer to come into being than we had hoped. Nevertheless, what has developed out of it is this: that they are now an important step in post-war planning in respect of the economic future of the rice industry. If Members have read those despatches they will note that they involve drainage schemes covering some 30,000 acres of new land which will be available for rice cultivation, and the improvement of existing land to the extent of another 2,000 or 3,000 acres. Looking at the figures themselves Members will see that in addition to the amount stated in this motion (\$632,000) further applications have since gone forward for even larger schemes.

One other drainage scheme is the Bloomfield-Whim scheme for \$96,000. The other very large schemes which have not yet been finally approved by the Secretary of State, but for which applications have gone forward, are the Mahaicony-Abary rice cultivation scheme, for which a grant of \$302,000 has been asked, and the scheme for the provision of mechanical equipment for which \$324,000 has been asked. Of course Members know that Government has already initiated action on these schemes. That was done with the consent of the Secretary of State, and the formal action in asking for grants is taking place now that we know something of the actual cost. All these figures in respect of applications which

have already gone forward total no less than \$1,300,000. In addition to that we have sent forward applications to meet the cost of a new central mill which will be not less than \$418,000. So that altogether the schemes embraced in the despatches which have been laid in Council call for an expenditure of nearly \$1,800,000. Members will see that these schemes are very expensive, and they are a very important step in the planning for the post-war situation in respect of the rice industry.

In one of the despatches three things are pointed out as being necessary. It is said that we want proper drained and irrigated land; we want mechanical equipment and proper milling. All those three factors have been dealt with in those applications and in those schemes. The most important scheme of all is, of course, the Mahaicony-Abary scheme. That is a very large scheme indeed. It covers an area of some 12,000 acres, and apart from the drainage works what is planned there is the actual cultivation of the major portion of that land by mechanical means. Members will see in the despatches that during this year work has already started, and 2,500 acres of that land have already been brought under cultivation by mechanical means, and reaping is now taking place. Some Members have had the advantage of visiting that place and, I think, have been most favourably impressed by what is going on. I do hope that opportunity will be taken as soon as possible by all Members of the Council. I will not say more about it because I feel sure some other Member will say something about it.

I just want to close by paying a tribute to the man who, I think, is the originator of all this. He is not here today. I refer to the hon. Mr. Seaford. He has done an immense amount of work in connection with these schemes. He has done it voluntarily and freely, without remuneration, and

has given an immense amount of his time. I think the rice industry owes him a debt of gratitude for the work he has accomplished in this respect. The members of the Rice Marketing Board paid Mr. Seaford a rather humorous compliment just before he left the Colony. They wanted to express to him their appreciation of his good work and had what is described as a portrait of him made by a local artist. That portrait, I think, did no justice to Mr. Seaford's classic features, nevertheless it looked like him, so the Board had the picture framed and presented it to him with a letter expressing their appreciation of what he had done. I merely mention that in passing, but I do want it to go down on record that I personally, and I feel sure the Government, is grateful to Mr. Seaford for the immense work he has done in connection with these schemes. I now formally move the motion.

Mr. deAGUIAR seconded.

Mr. PERCY C. WIGHT: I think this motion is rather belated. We have practically spent a good deal of this money and we are now taking the opportunity to put it on record. These schemes have been proceeded with but I happened to be on the East Coast on Sunday and was surprised to see how the sea water was flooding several estates in the Mahaicony district. It is worth while sending engineers to see what is happening. The odour that comes from the dead fish caused by the sea water getting into the fresh water trenches is terrible. I speak authoritatively because I own property there myself. This Council voted a sum of money for the digging of the old Dutch canal at Sarah. It was dug by an old friend of mine some years ago but nothing further has been done. All we have been told is that there is no labour and no materials are available. The only materials required are shovels and that kind of thing. I took Mr. Case and Mr. Seaford some time ago to see the place. They saw

animals walking up to their knees in water. The conditions are appalling and I must ask for some explanation of the delay in carrying out that little bit of work.

We were given an estimate of something like \$18,000 which I think went up to \$20,000, but the work is still hanging fire. I was told on Sunday by some people in the district that notices were put up at the Post Office intimating that labour was required. One of the proprietors is willing to do the work provided Government undertakes to return his money with a small rate of interest. I observed that concrete piles have been put down to the width of the old Dutch canal. That work was done in 1943, but up to to-day nothing further has been done. I suggest that the Engineers of the district should be asked to make a report on the matter.

The drainage work at Springhall has not been done. If necessary, labour can be brought to the district. Shovel work is the only work people are prepared to undertake because they are handsomely paid for it. I am not going to criticize the Mahaicony-Abary scheme because the work done is undoubtedly very satisfactory. With respect to the laying down of the machinery due credit should be given to Mr. Seaford. I would like to be assured that the work is going to be of material benefit to the poorer classes of people.

#### DEATH OF THE COLONIAL AUDITOR.

The PRESIDENT: I have some very sad news to announce to the Council. Before I came into Council this afternoon I knew that Mr. Lempriere, the Colonial Auditor, was very gravely ill, and the Director of Medical Services has just sent me a message intimating that he died at 2 o'clock this afternoon.

Mr. Lempriere was a very able officer, and what is equally important, he was a very helpful officer. He was

tolerant and sympathetic, and in my opinion, which I am sure is shared throughout the Government Service, his death will be deplored. I think this Council would like to express its very deep regret and offer its deep sympathy to his widow, and incidentally to his brother who is a clergyman in this Colony.

Mr. de AGUIAR: With your permission, sir, I should like on behalf of the Unofficial Members of this Council to associate myself with the remarks you have just made with reference to the lamentable death of Mr. Lempriere. We in this Council have always regarded him as a very energetic and painstaking officer who at all times was willing to give the best he could in the service of this Government. I am sure that all of us around this table this afternoon feel grieved over his sudden demise, and I would wish that a letter of sympathy be sent to his widow and relatives.

#### ACCEPTANCE OF C.D.W. FUNDS FOR RICE EXPANSION SCHEMES.

The PRESIDENT: We will now continue with the Order of the Day.

Mr. JACOB: I was very glad when the debate on this motion was deferred last week so that Members might read the despatches which are printed as Legislative Council Paper No. 21 of 1944. Since the adjournment I read with interest Your Excellency's Message No. 6, the despatches, and several other relevant papers in connection with this matter. I want to say at the outset that I support most heartily this motion for the acceptance of the funds provided under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act to meet the cost of the schemes, but not on the terms and conditions set out in the Message. I think we are all grateful for the help we have been getting from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund but I am sorry to say, looking at the expenditure on

several schemes over a period of years that in my opinion more than 50 per cent. of that expenditure has been definitely wasted and mis-spent.

I am not going to detain the Council too long to-day by speaking on several schemes. I will concentrate my remarks on the Mahaicony-Abary scheme which is put down in Your Excellency's Message at \$275,000. These sums have been given to this Colony—to the extent of millions of dollars, I believe—with the object, as stated in the first paragraph of the Message, that these schemes should be "initiated at the request of the Secretary of State for the Colonies specifically as measures to increase the production of rice in British Guiana in the endeavour to provide for the requirements of the British West Indian Colonies." That is a very good thing. It is what this Colony had been hoping for for a very long time. It is what every inhabitant of the Colony wanted—some real help to put rice or any other industry on a sound economic footing. We are all grateful to the Secretary of State for this help. More than that—we are grateful for the money given to us from time to time, but I for one cannot say that these sums of money have been properly spent. The schemes have been badly designed, the expenditure has not been properly supervised, and the works have not been properly carried out.

The PRESIDENT: I would like to ask the hon. Member whether he has personally seen the Mahaicony-Abary scheme?

Mr. JACOB: I speak from personal knowledge.

The PRESIDENT: Have you seen the Mahaicony-Abary scheme?

Mr. JACOB: I have seen it twice. I took the trouble this morning to ask for the Hansard report of the debate of the 18th March, 1942, when the original resolution was passed, and I

looked up what I said on that occasion. I will refer to that later on. I wish to assure the Council that whenever I speak here I speak on matters with which I am familiar, and if I am not familiar with any matter I say so. I am going to speak very frankly and freely on the Mahaicony-Abary scheme. I have said before that there was not proper supervision, the expenditure was not properly controlled. If Your Excellency is not aware of those things perhaps you will enquire as to how many persons supervised the work before your advent to the Colony, and what happened to one gentleman who suddenly left the Colony. I refer to one of the Chief Engineers. These things are not all made known to Government, and it is well that Government take cognizance of them and listen to what Members have to say.

I visited the Mahaicony-Abary scheme on two occasions and spoke to at least 100 persons on the work that was going on. I think the rice industry was started over 50 years ago, and it is indeed gratifying at this stage to learn that Government is taking the right step. It is never too late to attempt to do the right thing. We are now told that we are taking the right step. I am sorry to say that Government is not taking the right step, and if hon. Members would be frank and would speak as freely as I do they would tell Government so. It is time this Government take the right step, and it is time this Government see that Imperial funds are not literally wasted. The hon. Member for Georgetown Central made certain remarks. I do not know if Members followed him very closely, but I cannot understand what the hon. Member means. Private lands are going to be taxed in accordance with paragraph 4 of Your Excellency's Message which says:

".....The Secretary of State has notified the Governor that approval is subject to acceptance of the conditions that (a) the

areas involved should be created declared drainage areas under the Drainage and Irrigation Ordinance 1940, (b) annual maintenance rates should be levied on an agreed basis, and (c) any private lands improved should contribute annual acreage rates towards the capital cost of such improvement.....”

It is clear that if this Council approves of those conditions every proprietor has to pay acreage rates towards the capital cost. When practically one-half of that money is wasted what will happen? That has happened to nearly every scheme I know, and that is why most of the schemes cannot bear the annual maintenance rates. They are badly designed. Is this Government not aware of the fact that the Drainage and Irrigation Board has not got the confidence of the people concerned? Is this Government still unaware of the fact? Will this Government continue to close its eyes and say it has the right to govern? What I say is, continue with your methods and you will find the production of rice and any other product for that matter will go down. It has gone down, but you continue to say production has increased. I say the Drainage and Irrigation Board has not the confidence of the entire community but has the confidence of certain members and the implicit confidence of Government. Government has paid tribute to its members; Government has paid tribute to the Chairman. But let Government take the newspapers and see what the people say about the Drainage and Irrigation Board.

As regards (b) I am saying that the Mahaicony-Abary scheme is badly designed and the maintenance rates will be tremendous and, I am sure, the people will not be able to pay. In 1942 I made a statement—the debates are not printed; it has not been found practical for Government to print the debates. Government is not concerned with what has happened in the past. This Government does its work in such a slipshod manner that one won-

ders why the Colony is not in a state of chaos. I cannot refer to the particular page of the debate. Government does not worry itself to see that the debates are printed and is not concerned with what Members elected by the people say in this Council. What I said then was this at the meeting of the Council of March 18th, 1942:

“One hon. Member mentioned the difficulty in getting labour at reaping-time. That is due to the fact that there are no dams, no means of transportation and even at the last Autumn crop thousands and thousands of bags of padi remained in the ricefields through lack of proper transportation facilities, suitable roads and lack of labour. I think that is well known to one hon. Member of this Council, who is a member of the Committee.....”

That is what I said about the method of transportation etc., and Government does not choose to worry about that. You have the river and you have a set of boats and launches and so these will do the work. But these have failed. I continued to say:

“I have listened with considerable interest to the speech delivered over the radio — and I have also read it in the Press — by the Secretary of the Rice Marketing Board asking growers to plant rice and stating that Government intends to increase production by 40,000 acres.”

I gave a lot of figures. Today I hear the hon. mover say 30,000 acres of new land will be taken in. Whether that refers to the entire Colony or to the Mahaicony-Abary scheme I cannot say.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I said the acreage involved in the places dealt with in the despatches was approximately 30,000 acres. The actual figure is 29,337 acres of new land drained and irrigated and also there was improvement in 2,618 acres of land, not new land.

Mr. JACOB: What I would like to get at is the actual area that is going to be put under rice cultivation. I have read the despatches (Legisla-

tive Council Paper No. 21 of 1944) and I have listened to the hon. Mover and read all other relevant papers, but I cannot get anything definite. I have seen a vague statement in the Review of 1943 by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, given in May, 1944, and a vaguer statement than that I have never read. On page 12 of that Review this is what is recorded under Rice:

"The figure for the year is 51,000 tons as against 49,000. The 1943 Autumn rice crop is 45,000 tons of rice which compares with 43,079 tons for 1942. The total acreage reaped shows a falling off in the rain grown 'shied' areas, especially those of East Demerara, due to unfavourable weather conditions at seeding time. However, higher yields per acre have been obtained from the transplanted areas.

"The experiment and breeding work of the Department of Agriculture has continued and several new varieties are undergoing commercial tests."

That is what the President of this Council suggests in his written Review as regards the rice industry. No one reading a statement like that and the many despatches which have been written can come to a conclusion as to what is the actual amount. I cannot. I have read those despatches. I have seen sentences or repetition of phrases practically throughout. It looks very well, a lot of paper, a lot of matter, comprehensive it is called, but I do not know how to term it. I have read Despatch No. 203 dated 12th November, 1943, Despatch No. 204 dated 12th November, 1943, Despatch No. 205 dated 12th November, 1943, Despatch No. 206 dated 12th November, 1943, and Despatch No. 207 dated 12th November, 1943, all signed by the hon. the Colonial Secretary who was then Governor's Deputy. Five despatches of the same date referring to various schemes on rice production in British Guiana, and frankly I do not see where we are heading to. I have also read—I am putting these things in detail because probably I will have to refer to them later on—Despatch No. 212 dated 23rd November, 1943, is signed by Sir Gordon Lethem, Governor, and also Despatch No. 213

dated 26th November, 1943, and Despatch No. 137 dated 26th July 1944. Despatch No. 149 dated 4th August, 1944, is signed by Your Excellency. Frankly I do not want to say anything more on all these despatches I have enumerated, but I do wish to refer to Despatch No. 149. I notice that in paragraph 3 Your Excellency states:

"In April, 1942, during the course of discussions on the subject of the Rice Industry generally Sir Frank Stockdale while expressing some doubt that mechanisation would prove practicable and satisfactory in British Guiana, agreed that it was necessary and desirable to try it out and undertook to assist in furthering the project."

It is regrettable that the Comptroller of Development and Welfare should express doubt, and from my small experience in this Colony I know, whenever these doubts are expressed on something that is really practicable and something that will prove beneficial, what happens. Fortunately or unfortunately up to the present time we are told that these mechanical means are satisfactory, but Sir Frank Stockdale doubts they will prove practicable and satisfactory. I want to say that unless this Government is prepared to mechanise and modernise methods in this Colony it will be better that Government shut up the Colony and tell the inhabitants to get out, as you are not going to get people to continue with antiquated methods and not keep abreast of the time as other parts of the world are doing. If it is beyond the capacity of Government and all its expert advisers to provide suitable machinery and mechanisation for the improvement of our industries, then this Government has failed considerably.

The PRESIDENT: In point of fact we are applying mechanisation to the Rice Industry.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: In point of fact that is what the motion is all about.

The PRESIDENT: It interests me to hear the hon. Member say we

should have mechanisation, and here we have a motion on which he is speaking relating to the very subject.

Mr. JACOB: I agree partly with that but not wholly. Unless you attempt to do that you will not be able to compete with the world markets.

The PRESIDENT: We are attempting.

Mr. JACOB: When a gentleman in the position of Sir Frank Stockdale expresses doubt on a matter so obvious, one wonders what next.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I was present at the discussions in 1942 with Sir Frank Stockdale. He did express doubt in respect of the use of mechanisation in the cultivation of rice in this Colony, but he like some of us knew that the technical designs in the experiments in the past had failed. What he expressed doubt about was that the right type of machinery would be available for the kind of soil here, and in that despatch which I now confess was partly drafted by me I had put that in as it was going to Sir Frank Stockdale who would welcome it and do all he could to encourage and help us to get mechanical equipment. I do hope the hon. Member will not press Sir Frank's doubts.

Mr. JACOB: I am thankful for that assistance, but I do not see the practical side of it. You made emphasis of the fact that if this Colony is to be in a position to secure and maintain the whole of the post-war West Indian markets for rice and to expand to other potential markets we must take a practical view of things. That is something practical. What is this Government doing to find out what will be the production in this Colony, what those markets will require, how we are going to meet them and when? I have listened to radio talks by the Secretary of the Rice Marketing Board. The East Indian Association dealt at length with that and the Editor of its paper "The Indian Opinion" also dealt with

that in the editorial columns. I smile while saying that because the hon. the Colonial Treasurer thinks I have a hand in it. Maybe I have a big hand.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: The hon. Member has two hands in it.

Mr. JACOB: That does not matter. I am in the Association and I have given the facts I have got and which the hon. the Colonial Treasurer knows. I say the Rice Marketing Board itself is not doing that. While Your Excellency brings in the question here, what does one of the Executive Officers do? He goes, looks around, comes back and tells the people "We will not be able to sell the rice as there is not the market. We have to be afraid of Burma." I know the reason why, and that is why I have referred to Sir Frank Stockdale. I am not going to say more at the moment. You suggest we have to do certain things—to secure and maintain not only the West Indian markets but the markets of the Western Hemisphere. That is something to aim at. What practical steps are being taken by this Government to achieve that? I would certainly like to know that at some future date you will put a clear picture before this Council showing that we are producing so much, we propose to sell so many tons to outside markets and to eat so much. Has this Government taken the trouble to do that, an elementary and practical thing done by any business man? No; practically nothing has been done.

Coming to Your Excellency's other despatch, No. 150 dated 4th August, 1944, Your Excellency opened by saying:

"I have the honour to refer to the correspondence regarding the purchase of two rice mills for this Colony ending with my telegram No. 119 of 13th February, 1944. . . ."

And Your Excellency goes on to say in paragraph 3.

"As regards the second mill which it has been decided to obtain from the United Kingdom the information requested in my telegram No. 81 of 2nd February as to the possibility of obtaining a new mill in place of the second hand plant originally offered has not yet been received from the Crown Agents . . ."

I am sorry to think this Colony is going to embark on the schemes with second hand machinery. For a new brand project, one with immense possibilities, you are going to begin to experiment with second hand machinery. That is certainly not a step in the right direction. I advise that no second hand machinery be bought at all. Your Excellency then goes on to speak about Dryers in the 6th paragraph. I remember I was a member of a Committee that investigated the desirability of the erection of a central mill in Essequibo, and we had the benefit of the advice and personal attention of Mr. Parker. I have asked for that Report but have not got it. I think the hon. the Colonial Treasurer would remember that Mr. Parker came out here, appeared before the Committee and gave valuable advice in respect of the erection of a central rice mill in Essequibo. We had quite a lot of data and facts, but absolutely no mention has been made of that in this Despatch. Mr. Seaford, your expert adviser, was on that Committee and, I think, the Chairman was Major Bain Gray, then Acting Colonial Secretary. That Committee was appointed in 1937 or 1938. All those papers have been thrown aside and something new started. Is that method adopted for progress, may I ask? I think certainly not. You have had estimates prepared. You have had the advice of a practical Manager of Malaya coming out here, sent by the Secretary of State for the Colonies. You had on that Committee Mr. Seymour, a practical man. That Committee submitted a Report, but the whole thing is forgotten and you are beginning now again. When the present Officers go away on promotion, you will have another set of Officials and start over again. That is my experience of this Colony. You have a scheme, an industry, and everything that

is possible to work on. We can grow the best rice that can be produced in any part of the world. We can grow rice here and compete with Burma very successfully, but this Government is just tinkering with the whole problem. It does something now, puts it before the people; there is a little flutter and then everything is forgotten and a new set of Officers begins to make a fresh start. Mr. Parker was emphatic that artificial drying can be successfully used and recommended that a central mill should deal with all the padi.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I was a member of that Committee myself and Mr. Parker was against mechanisation. He came from the East and was very much in favour of sun drying. He was very keen on sun drying. The hon. Member is quite wrong in what he said.

Mr. JACOB: I am not prepared to contradict the hon. the Colonial Treasurer, but what I am certain about is that the hon. Member was not a member of that Committee. May I ask the Clerk of Council to get that Report? I was a member of that Committee and I remember distinctly that the hon. Member was not a member of it. I took a very keen interest in the matter, and Mr. Parker was emphatic that mechanical drying can be successfully used. I express doubt, however, whether a single mill in Essequibo can handle all the padi produced in Essequibo. I know Essequibo, with all due respect to the hon. Member who represents that division. Mr. Parker went further to say that the padi from Leguan and Wakenaam can be transported to Essequibo and be handled by the central mill. I am saying that Mr. Parker's advice can be well taken, and he recommended the erection of central mills. But my main point is that this Government seems to have forgotten that and has begun now to look for data and new advice and, what is more, from the U.S.A. That is all I say about it.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think we are looking for advice.

Mr. JACOB: You have given up your British Adviser and are looking for an American Adviser. Maybe it is a good thing. I see in the 8th paragraph of Your Excellency's despatch of the 4th August you state:

"With regard to the proposed visits by experts it is most desirable that an experienced person should supervise the erection and the initial operations of the mills and the Comptroller has expressed his willingness to support a free grant for this purpose. . . ."

That will capture most of us, but certainly it will not catch me. We may obtain free grants if we are able to manage our own affairs, but we are mis-managing our own affairs so as to be continually asking for grants and I will not be surprised if we do not get anything at all. This free grant idea is something I am definitely against. I say we do want experts, but my point of view with all due respect to other experts is that this is a British Colony and we want British experts. We want them to see our point of view rather than to dictate and advise us. I am British to the backbone. I have no other blood running through my veins. But I do not know if all of us can say that.

Then there is Your Excellency's other despatch, No. 151 of the 4th August, 1944. This is my main point. The second paragraph refers to the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme. It says:

" . . . The works include the construction and fencing of dams on the four sides of the area to protect the land from flooding, and digging and fencing of some 27 miles of main drainage and irrigation canals, the construction of 10 large sluices and the installation of two 80-ton per minute drainage and irrigation pumps as a safeguard against any possibility of flood or of water shortage. . . ."

I have been to Mahaicony twice—once by boat and through mud. From my knowledge—and I certainly have some knowledge of local drainage and irrigation conditions—if you are going

to dig a trench and make a dam to keep off the flood water, you are not going to throw the spoils from the trench on both sides; you will certainly put the spoils on one side and make up a dam. But what has happened there? Most of the spoils are thrown on the wrong side with the result that there will be no dam to keep the flood water out. That is what I say is bad designing, and that has happened throughout the scheme. Whenever you want to make a dam and you dig a trench, you certainly are not going to throw the spoils on the wrong side as you want to get a dam to prevent the water flooding the dam. As regards the cross-trenches they have the wrong thing. They have thrown the dirt on both sides and when the practical men talk about it they are told to shut up and it is not Colonial Government money but Imperial Government money and they can spend it as they like. One District Commissioner had the impudence to tell me "Oh, you have nothing to do with it. I am in charge of it. It is Imperial money and I will spend it as I like."

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: May I ask the hon. Member to make himself clear? In those cross-trenches the earth is thrown up on both sides. The hon. Member has not made himself clear.

Mr. JACOB: I think I made myself quite clear. Certain places require the earth to be thrown on one side only. People have complained to me and have taken me there and shown me. If you want to employ mechanical means in your cultivation you must certainly have dams so as to transport your tractors.

If the hon. Member does not understand what I am saying I will ask him to go back and study the whole question. He is one of Government's advisers. He is the only Member of this Council connected with those people who have built up the industry, and is the only Member there to advise Government on the work of the people who know what they are talking about. One man who had a tractor there wrote a letter complaining that his tractor was

being ruined because of some spiteful work by people there. I referred him to the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Humphrys) who said he could not see him, and I told him to see whom he liked. Representatives of some districts will not listen to these people. My friend does not know and does not know where to find out. He sits down, listens to everything and says it is all right. I take the trouble to find out and I do so without any hope of reward. Government cannot accuse me of that.

The PRESIDENT: Are you sure you are not overstating the case?

Mr. JACOB: I am not. A man gets disgusted and loses his money, labour and machinery. That is the reason why the Mahaicony area has not produced the rice it should. There must be proper dams and trenches. The whole design of the scheme was bad and at least 50 per cent. of the money has been mis-spent. I would like to make other quotations from page 14 of Your Excellency's despatch No. 151 of August 4, but it may be said that I am repeating myself. In paragraph 9, however, Your Excellency makes this point:—

"With accepted average yields, this means an additional 10,000 tons of rice or an increase of nearly 50 per cent. on the Colony's present exportable surplus."

Your Excellency was careful to put the Colony's exportable surplus at 20,000 tons. I have been looking at the reports of the Rice Marketing Board, and 1,000 tons do make some difference. The report of the Board for the period 1st October, 1941, to 31st March, 1942, gives no figures because the exportable surplus was less than 10,000 tons. The Board refused to give the figures. For the period April to September, 1942, the quantity of rice exported was noted as exports during the period 1st October, 1941, to 30th September, 1942—18,863 tons. The following report for the period 1st April, 1943, to September 30, 1943, shows that the quantity exported was 18,313 tons. Last year, from January to December, the exports as given in the *Commercial Review*,

were 17,180 tons. The previous year they were 22,479 tons. The quantity exported up to August this year is 14,878 tons, as against 11,000 during the corresponding period last year. It does appear that the quantity exported this year will be over 20,000 tons.

Government has received thousands of dollars from the Imperial Government on the specific condition that this Colony should supply the West Indian market with rice. Before those sums of money were forthcoming we were practically supplying all the British West Indian Islands and the French West Indies with rice. Today we are unable to supply Trinidad alone. Are those facts not known to the Colonial Treasurer who is an expert in twisting figures? Am I to repeat those facts every time I speak on rice, and to have him contradicting me every time? Those are Government's methods, and so long as Government continues so long will I act as I am. Government has not made good use of this money which has been given to us, and while I regret to say it I think the Secretary of State should ask Government to give an account and withhold further grants until that has been done. I think the Secretary of State should send out two experienced men to look after this expenditure. The local people have failed completely. Some people think that some of them are a menace to the expansion of the rice industry. Most people feel that those who are advising Government on the expansion of the industry are a menace to the industry. That is definitely the opinion of the East Indian Association and that opinion has been expressed very clearly in an editorial in its small paper.

Who is the Government? I realize that a country gets the Government it deserves. British Guiana has got the Government it deserves, but I can assure you that some of us are beginning to think that it is regrettable that we are in British Guiana. I have laboured here for 30 odd years, and I feel that I should leave this country now. This country has been very kind to me in very many ways but I do not think it is

going to be kind to me in the future. I think it is grossly mismanaged by people who are birds of passage—some people say “birds of prey”. The rice industry has been sacrificed for many things. We are talking about rice only. I do not know whether these sums are to be expended on rice alone. In order to have successful rice cultivation there must be some complimentary industry—cattle, ground provisions, poultry, pigs and so on. What is being done in those directions? What has happened to the Mahaicony Scheme? The designers started to remove the cattle a distance of 50 miles from the area where they were. Can an ordinary man live on rice cultivation alone? Can Georgetown do without the milk that it receives from the Mahaicony district? After long protest and a good deal of dislocation the designers agreed to permit the people to keep their cattle within the area. A lot of harm has been done already but it did not matter to them.

The people in that district have stated in the past, and with a good deal of truth and justification, that surplus water from the Lamaha conservancy was let loose to flood the Abary area. That has happened over and over again and with regularity during the last 10 years. Is Government not aware of the fact that Barclays Bank established a branch at Mahaica when rice was booming in that area? The rice industry was becoming too prosperous in that area, and the result was constant flooding, cattle dying and rice mills being flooded out. The result is that now we have so much less rice being produced in that area, and Government is now attempting to improve that area. I have seen the estimate. I read those papers until one o'clock this morning. On page 16 of Your Excellency's despatches, in the memorandum describing each item in the scheme with the estimated costs, I find under item (e) —“Internal Transport”—provision for 6 lorries at \$3,000 each, 2 jeeps at \$1,000 each, and levelling dams \$2,000. What are the lorries going to do? Are they going to run on the public road only, or will they be used to transport

the padi from the fields? Are they going to be provided with dams during the heavy rainfall? If those concerned do not expect heavy rainfall when the rice is being reaped they have no foresight.

My attention has been drawn to the fact that there is provision for a tug. That is not good enough to transport padi from 12,000 acres of land between Mahaica and Abary. If Government is going to erect a central rice mill it must plan for the future. There must be proper internal roads. In this entire Colony we are in a chaotic state because we have no regular and proper means of transport—road, rail or water. To visit my constituency I have to sit on a steamer, spending 22 hours each way, and that wonderful facility is only available to me once a fortnight. Only a person in very good health can travel on the lorries on the Bartica-Potaro road.

Government must revise its plans for the Mahaicony scheme and provide more money for the construction of dams. There must be a dam alongside the creek. Certain people on the Government side have told the people that they will not see a dam there—why should there be a dam when launches will be provided for their transport? Government has blundered in the first instance. The hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Percy C. Wight) has said that Government is blundering even now. My last visit to the district was over a year ago. I went there in 1942 and 1943, and I discussed the matter with someone from there a few weeks ago. Whilst it is true that a good rice crop is being reaped at the moment there are only about 3,000 acres under cultivation. Government may say that it cannot get labour. There are labour advisers now on the Executive Council and in other places. I certainly think that the indictment that labour is unwilling to work is certainly not correct. If men are to be paid 3/- per day and women 1/6 Government will certainly not get them to work. It is Government's policy to underpay and

expect people to work just because it is Government. Government will not get people to co-operate in that way.

I promised to speak very frankly. I have attempted to do so and I have not overstated my case. I have been accused of doing that over and over again. I am of the opinion that the Mahaicony scheme is very bad. Government should discontinue its present methods and get the people whom it is pretending to serve, and whose welfare it pretends to have at heart, to co-operate, but its officers are bullying them. The time for that sort of thing is past. Government will certainly not get people to work for even 4/- per day. I have been looking into the cost of living figures and I have read the report of the radio interview with the School Medical Officer in which he said that it takes about \$2 per week to feed a child properly. Female workers employed by Government do not get \$2 per week, and some of them have children.

In its scheme Government must not forget cattle rearing and the production of vegetables. At the present time there is a definite shortage of cattle and fresh meat. It is true that there is a surplus of ground provisions, and that we are exporting some of it. I heard over the radio the other day that it is not that British Guiana is exporting, it is that British Guiana is able to supply local requirements and export at the same time. I see the Publicity Officer present. I advise him to look at the export figures for previous years.

The PRESIDENT: I think you ought to keep to the motion.

Mr. JACOB: I think I am in order because, as I said, rice, cattle—

The PRESIDENT: Don't let us go back to local food production.

Mr. JACOB: Years ago we had sufficient cattle and ground provisions to supply the Colony's requirements and

export, but during the last few years we have not been able to export, and there is a definite shortage of beef. While Government is attempting to increase the production of rice it must not decrease or discourage the production of other things, including cattle. That is definitely what happened at Mahaicony and Mahaica. Without cattle there can be no proper rice cultivation. The farmers must have oxen to plough and pull their boats out at certain times.

We are grateful for these sums of money but half of it has been mispent. I made a note on the motion to the effect that 50 per cent. of the \$275,000 has not been beneficially spent on the Mahaicony-Abary scheme. My hon. friends who represent other districts will probably say something about the Corentyne and the West Coast of Berbice, and the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) will certainly tell us something about the Anna Regina rice mill which I think has not been properly designed in the first instance, and the idea of producing white rice has proved a failure. Maybe Government did not have the best advice, and while it is attempting to do something about milling in Essequibo the local millers are able to compete against the Government mill and are succeeding to a very large extent, with the result that a local engineer had to be called in to re-arrange the plan at Anna Regina.

I have nothing more to say at this stage and I trust that a report of this debate will be sent to the Secretary of State for the Colonies who should at least see the other point of view—that the sums of money being given to us are not being properly spent. I should certainly like to send a copy of the official record to some of my friends in England who are asking all the time that money be sent, and it may be well to tell them that although they give us money they should send us experts to

see how it is spent. I am serious on the point that this money is not being properly spent. I could give facts to show that what has happened in the recent case is happening at the present time, but it would lead us nowhere. I am only advising caution, proper supervision and administration of these funds, and I think that experts should come out to advise as to the planning and the completion of these schemes.

Mr. JACKSON : There is one thing the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) should be made to unsay at this stage. He said that the Colonial Treasurer was not a member of the Essequibo Coast Rice Committee. Perhaps he may be asked to read the signatures at the end of that report.

Mr. JACOB: I am sorry; my memory failed me. (laughter). It is not a laughing matter.

The PRESIDENT: That is a matter of opinion, too.

Mr. JACOB: I asked for that document. The Committee was appointed in April, 1938. I asked for the document over the telephone this morning. Two different documents were laid on the table and I am sorry that I said the Treasurer was not a member of the Committee. I find that he was.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I can also tell the hon. Member that I drafted the report.

Mr. JACOB: I am not surprised. I had a distinct recollection that Major Bain Gray was on the Committee. I now see that he was originally appointed.

Mr. KING: I have listened with great interest to what has been said by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob), and while I am going to give him credit for some knowledge of the cultivation of rice I

cannot give him credit for the amount of knowledge he has endeavoured to credit himself with as regards the laying out of drains and canals on lands suitable for rice cultivation. I certainly could not accept his opinion against the opinion of so highly respected a member of this community with the best knowledge at his disposal as Mr. F. J. Seaford. Fortunately for me I had an opportunity quite recently of paying a visit to the Mahaicony-Abary Rice Expansion Scheme, and I certainly would advise every Member of this Council and every person who is interested in the growing of rice in this Colony to go there and see for himself what has been done in the hope of making the Rice Industry one which will be of some use and help to this Colony.

For two or three years I have been hearing reports that the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Expansion Committee were hoping to put under cultivation a considerable area of land in the Mahaicony-Abary district. Within the last few months I had heard that they had ploughed and planted in the vicinity of 2,500 acres. To show the interest I took in the matter, I have several times asked for an expression of opinion as to how the rice was growing and what was happening, and I was told that everything was going well. I therefore felt that this was an opportunity for the Colony to prove that mechanical cultivation and reaping of rice was something that had come to stay. When I was asked by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer a few weeks ago if I cared to go and see the scheme, I promptly accepted the suggestion, and to say that I was amazed and astounded at what I saw is expressing feebly what has happened in that area. In the first place I was amazed at the enormous area which had been cultivated and planted. I was equally astounded at the work that had been done before cultivation could take place. Before I go further I would like to pay tribute to those who had been responsible, if not, entirely at

least in a very great measure, for the success of the scheme, because I am quite certain it will be a success even in a larger area.

The hon. the Colonial Treasurer has this morning paid tribute to the work, unstinted and unpaid for, that the hon. Mr. Seaford has rendered to this scheme in the interest of the Colony. I know that the hon. the Colonial Treasurer is not one who desires or hopes for praise for anything he does in the interest of the Colony, but I feel that great as the work and the help and the assistance that Mr. Seaford has rendered to this industry, they are not greater than what has been done in the same way or in a different manner by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer. We are fortunate in this Colony in having in the Government Service alongside the Governor where he can help and assist Government in a way that one outside will not be able to do a man who is capable of taking charge of what I may term a commercial proposition such as the Rice Marketing Board and the scheme of rice growing in the Mahaicony-Abary area. In Mr. McDavid, the Colonial Treasurer of this Colony, I am glad to think that we have his services in those respects. I know that he is keenly interested in the Rice Industry. For about eighteen months while I was a member of the Rice Marketing Board I realized the amount of thought and amount of care he took in handling the affairs of that Board. I know it must have occupied a considerable amount of his time. This expansion of the Rice Industry has occupied even more of his time, and it surprises me to think how he does all he does within the short space of twenty-four hours a day. I consider myself a busy man and most of us do, but I certainly will not attempt to do the amount of work for which Mr. McDavid will get nothing but thanks and the appreciation of his country and which he does outside his official duties. Associated with him he has one who is perhaps equally as keen in the development of the Rice Industry and a very capable officer whom I have known for many years. In the Secre-

tary of the Rice Marketing Board this Colony is lucky in having a man of the type of Mr. Gadd. This Colony owes him a debt of gratitude. There is not the slightest doubt that the remuneration paid him for his services is insufficient as recompense for what the Colony owes him for the assistance he has given to the Rice Industry in this Colony. Another Officer to whom I desire to pay tribute, who I understand and from personal knowledge has taken a very keen interest and done a tremendous amount in this Rice Expansion Scheme of the Mahaicony-Abary area, is Mr. Bell of the Agricultural Department. I feel sure that without the keenness and enthusiasm of those four gentlemen whom I have named, this experiment would not have been the success it has been. I desire from my seat in this Council to say on my behalf and on behalf of those I represent—I suppose others will express their opinion—we are grateful to those gentlemen for what they have done. I am sure when they look back in later years when the Rice Industry is on a firm and solid footing, they will have the satisfaction of knowing that but for their foresight, enthusiasm and courage the Rice Industry would not have come to anything.

I am satisfied, and have said so for a few years, that saturation point so far as the growing and reaping of rice has been reached in so far as manual labour is concerned. I do not believe that this Colony can expand the Rice Industry to any greater extent than it is now expanded except by mechanical means of cultivation and tillage. That is the only hope I have that the Rice Industry will be something of which this Colony will be proud and which will be a great financial asset in the years to come. It has been doubted, I know, for years in this Colony by many persons who had a right through their experience to express their opinion, and reading the statement made by Sir Frank Stockdale to which the hon. Member for North-Western District referred expressing the same doubt, as to mechanical cultivation in

so far as Rice in this Colony is concerned. It might be difficult and it is feared that it might not be successful. The only doubt I personally had was that there might be difficulty in so far as the mechanical cultivation of rice and that was in the reaping of rice and that was in the reaping of rice by mechanical means. I know a certain type of rice that grows on the estate which I partly control, Maryville, Leguan, which does not stand up. Through the efforts of the Agricultural Department in years gone by they have produced a rice which bears so heavily that the stalks cannot hold the amount of padi on each particular stalk. That was one difficulty I feared in so far as mechanical cultivation was concerned. But the type of rice planted in the Mahaicony-Abary area, whether it is due to the particular type or to the type of soil there I cannot say, stands up and not the slightest difficulty is experienced by the reapers in cutting. I was surprised and exceedingly gratified to see that. In the course of conversation with the Director of Agriculture, who was also one of the party, I asked him if he felt that there would be any difficulty in other types of rice being reaped mechanically, and from what I understand him to say they are at present working in the Botanic Gardens and by the Rice Expert on a type of rice which, in the opinion of the Director so far as can be seen now, is probably better than any type we have now and which will stand up. But so long as that difficulty is overcome I have not the slightest doubt that this Colony can plant and reap rice mechanically. It will, I know, be difficult for the small man to have his rice planted and reaped by mechanical means at first until there is some means of assisting him with communal ploughs and threshers.

Until the difficulty is overcome whereby the small man who now plants his piece of land with rice having what is known as meres to protect the land and keep the water in, until such means are devised by which rice can be grown by artificial help there will, I admit, be that difficulty in so far as the small

man is concerned. I personally do not think that is going to stand in the way of the small man having his land ploughed or reaped mechanically, because he will very soon realise that the mechanical cultivation of land for rice and the mechanical reaping of rice are going to reduce the cost considerably, and that is one fear, I think. It will be impossible for this Colony to compete in the world market of rice, unless we can reduce the cost of production and bring the rice down to a level with other countries which undoubtedly will compete with us in years to come. I have some idea as to the cost of cultivating an acre, but very little idea as to the cost of reaping or threshing an acre of rice. I am however quite certain it will be very much less than in the somewhat tedious and expensive method of reaping and threshing by hand or bull. It will be infinitely more expensive than if it is done mechanically.

In the speech made by the hon. Member for North-Western District there were parts that were certainly refreshing and parts which were most depressing and parts quite unnecessary. But I was exceedingly glad to hear him make the statement in this Council that he has the firm and complete conviction that there is every hope of this Colony becoming a rice-producing country. Not only do I hope that but, as Your Excellency has said in your despatch to the Secretary of State which was referred to by the hon. Member, to supply the West Indies and this part of the world with rice. I hope when the time comes we will be able to go further afield and get better and more advantageous markets for our rice because, as stated by the hon. Member and as I have been always told, the rice of this Colony is as good as any other rice in the world and better than most. There is no better rice grown in the world than the rice in British Guiana, and as soon as the world realises that, I am quite sure, markets now closed to us will be

opened to us when we are able to supply their needs. If it means a matter of spending a million, or two million, or five million dollars, whether obtained by free grant or loan from the Imperial Government or from the assets of the Colony itself, to establish a rice industry in this Colony to such a size as I imagine, then I feel it will be money well spent. Money does not matter because we will get it back in course of time. That is why I feel we do owe a debt of gratitude to those gentlemen I referred to for their foresight and courage in going on with this matter. Last year I heard the opinion expressed that it was madness, as mechanical cultivation of rice had been tried and had failed. They felt it was just a waste of money, a wild gamble. I never subscribed to that idea, and I was glad when I had the opportunity a few days ago to see what has been and can be done in the mechanical cultivation of rice in this Colony. I feel sure hon. Members will take my advice and see it. They will be surprised as I was to see what is being done there. The hope is, if they can get the additional mechanical equipment necessary, that another 3,000 acres will be put under rice. It is there for the purpose of growing rice. The area I saw there was enormous, and I feel sure it will make a tremendous difference on the amount of rice at present produced in the Colony. After all, if we double our production in the Colony today which will be a great help, it will be nothing to the amount of rice that is required by this part of the world which we can deal with. 100,000 tons or 120,000 tons, or 150,000 tons of rice can easily be sold so long as we can get the different other markets which before the war were barred against us to a great extent. The only way to do that is to reduce the cost and make the price of our rice reasonable with other markets of the world.

There is much more I can say on this subject because it is an industry

in which I have been interested for many years and one in which I have been actively engaged. There is no need for me to say much more on this particular subject because I am certain that even in spite of the remarks made by the hon. Member, who spoke before me, that he is satisfied some of this money had been wasted every Member of this Council will give his support to the motion which has been moved by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and that we will express our appreciation and our thanks to the Imperial Government for the grants so generously made to help us foster and expand the Rice Industry of the Colony. I am not able to say whether the money has been wasted or stolen, but I will be very much surprised to learn that in the expenditure of nearly \$300,000 some of it is not wasted and some of it has not gone into channels other than the right ones. That is very natural. It is very difficult to control the expenditure of a large sum of money in an area far removed from direct control. Some of it will be lost or some of it get away without obtaining some return. But I am quite certain that that the money is under the control of the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and those who I know are interested in the project up there, and that very little of it has been wasted and very little has been stolen. The supervision I saw there is pretty sound and I will say this: The labourers I saw there are not many, but they were certainly working hard. I admit it is possible to put on that show for our benefit, but the results will show whether or not the labourers are working as hard as they should. It is quite easy to check up the returns. I again desire to associate myself with the motion and to express to Government our grateful appreciation of what is being done.

Mr. LEE: I did not expect to say anything on this motion because I felt this Government should always be grateful to the Imperial Government for any grant it receives, but

there is one thing I would like to point out to those responsible for the expansion of rice production. Whilst they are experimenting with mechanical means and so reduce the cost of production, they are not carrying that to the peasant farmers so as to teach them that mechanical means of cultivation and reaping will be a saving to them. For the last Autumn crop they allowed the threshers to go to Essequibo and the proprietors who got the benefit of their use were great in their praise for the reduction of cost as well as of the number of labourers employed which resulted. I would ask if Government can see its way to send a thresher to the constituency which I represent for the reaping of the crop there, so as to educate them in its use.

Mr. FERREIRA: To a point of correction! Last year the Grow More Food Committee paid the expenses of the farmers in various parts of Berbice to go to Mahaica and see the threshers at work. I think I am correct in saying that some time later it was proposed to have demonstrations for small farmers and efforts were made to get the threshers and cutters to work on a communal basis among them.

Mr. LEE: I am glad to hear that, but no effort was made in that regard in respect of my constituency. What I would like to say is this: Quite recently the rice-farmers there knowing that Government had brought down a thresher-reaper asked me whether I could not approach the Committee in order to obtain its use. I approached the person in charge of it as the area planted was an extensive one, and he told me that it could not be rented nor lent because it would be required by

Government for reaping. At the time I made the request the experiment in the Mahaicony-Abary area was not quite ready for reaping. I feel Government should take every opportunity to try it out on the plots of peasant farmers. I know there are rumours that the money has been mis-spent. Facts have been shown and efforts made to prove them, but I am not satisfied and will not say anything more. I feel it is my duty to warn Government to exercise caution in respect of the money that is spent in the digging of trenches and in respect of the manner in which they are dug. If Government takes notice of what we say, some of the money will not be mis-spent. This motion I heartily support and do ask Government if it can to get more in order to expand the rice production to do so and we will gladly welcome it.

The PRESIDENT: I expect several other members would like to speak on the motion. If it is convenient I suggest that we meet at 12 o'clock tomorrow afternoon and then meet in Finance Committee afterwards. I propose to invite the hon. Mr. Woolford, the hon. Mr. Critchlow, the hon. Mr. de Aguiar and the hon. Mr. Ferreira to serve on a Select Committee to consider the motion which was previously passed.

Mr. EDUN: I was thinking if two Ministers of Religion cannot be included.

The PRESIDENT: I am afraid not. It is a Select Committee of the Council.

The Council adjourned to 2 o'clock the following afternoon.