

# SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana (Constitution) (Temporary Provisions) Orders in Council, 1953 and 1956).

Wednesday, 26th October, 1960

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

**Speaker**, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

**Chief Secretary**, Hon. Major I. O. Smith, O.B.E. (acting)

**Attorney-General**, Hon. A. M. I. Austin, Q.C.

**Financial Secretary**, Hon. W. P. D'Andrade.

} *ex officio*

The Honourable **Dr. C. B. Jagan**

—Member for Eastern Berbice  
(Minister of Trade and Industry)

„ „ **B. H. Benn**

—Member for Essequibo River  
(Minister of Natural Resources)

„ „ **Janet Jagan**

—Member for Western Essequibo  
(Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)

„ „ **Ram Karran**

—Member for Demerara-Essequibo  
(Minister of Communications and Works)

„ „ **B. S. Rai**

—Member for Central Demerara  
(Minister of Community Development and Education).

Mr. **R. B. Gajraj**

—Nominated Member

„ **R. C. Tello**

—Nominated Member

„ **F. Bowman**

—Member for Demerara River

„ **L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.**

—Member for Georgetown Central

„ **S. Campbell**

—Member for North Western District

„ **A. L. Jackson**

—Member for Georgetown North

„ **E. B. Beharry**

—Member for Eastern Demerara

**S. M. Saffee**

—Member for Western Berbice

„ **Ajodha Singh**

—Member for Berbice River

„ **Jai Narine Singh**

—Member for Georgetown South

„ **R. E. Davis**

—Nominated Member

„ **A. M. Fredericks**

—Nominated Member

„ **H. J. M. Hubbard**

—Nominated Member.

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

Mr. E. V. Viapree — Assistant Clerk of the Legislature.

ABSENT :

Mr. W. O. R. Kendall—Member for New Amsterdam

Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.—Nominated Member—on leave.

The Clerk read prayers.

## MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, 21st October, 1960, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## ORDER OF THE DAY

**RICE MARKETING BOARD AS A CO-OPERATIVE**

**Mr. Speaker:** Council will resume consideration of the following Motion by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh):

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends to Government the introduction of legislation to provide for the Rice Marketing Board to be converted into a co-operative organisation of rice producers of this Colony."

At the adjournment on the occasion when the Motion was last debated, the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Beharry) was speaking. If he so desires he may continue now.

**Mr. Beharry:** As I pointed out last Friday, it is a pity that this Motion has only now been brought before the Council. The hon. Mover intended, when he introduced the Motion, that the Rice Marketing Board should be controlled by the rice producers, as he felt the need and the necessity to have the Board democratized. As I see the issue today, the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, within whose portfolio the Rice Marketing Board falls, has said that the Motion should be rejected because the Rice Marketing Board is today a properly democratized statutory body; that it is controlled by the rice producers and the industry as a whole, therefore the need and necessity to convert the Board into a co-operative organization does not arise.

I agree with the Minister of Trade and Industry that control of the Rice Marketing Board is now in the hands of the industry, and that the Board has been democratized. It is also the first time in the history of the Board that an elected Minister has some control of the running

of its affairs, but I say that the Minister of Trade and Industry has failed the industry in the very first year of that control because, through the lack of a proper national policy in the field of marketing of our rice, the Board has suffered a loss of nearly \$400,000. I say that a proper marketing policy has not yet been evolved, and the Minister of Trade and Industry has failed the industry and the country.

We see that the rice industry has been progressing in every direction save and except its marketing. We see the expansion of the agricultural sector of the rice industry. In the processing sector of the industry, modern mills are being set up all over the country, yet there is no definite policy on a national level with respect to the marketing of our rice. If there is a surplus of rice we sell it at a loss because we have no policy. In fact we have no proper storage accommodation for the rising production. The Report of the Board states that large sums of money have had to be spent to provide storage facilities for the last crop because our rice could not be marketed. It was discovered at the last minute that the rice was going bad and the Board decided to sell 10,000 tons of padi to Venezuela at a loss.

No one can deny that the rice industry of this country has been built on the West Indian market, and that they have cultivated a taste for our parboiled rice. When the Minister of Trade and Industry assumed responsibility for the affairs of the Rice Marketing Board he should have initiated a comprehensive policy to increase the consumption of our rice in the West Indies. With a population of a little over half a million people British Guiana's annual consumption of rice is about 30,000 tons, whereas with a population of nearly three millions in the West Indies their annual consumption of rice is approximately 60,000 tons. The West Indian market has not yet been touched, and nothing is being done to increase the use of our rice in that market. Unless the Minister

of Trade and Industry sits at his desk and thinks constructively in respect of the needs of this country, and applies his ability, which I think is limited, with respect to marketing, trade and industry — unless he can develop a greater appreciation of the need for this country to move forward in the field of industry and marketing, I am afraid that this section of our development is going to continue to be neglected.

A few days ago I read in a newspaper an open letter from the Minister of Trade and Industry to Mr. Peter D'Aguiar, and with Your Honour's permission I would like to quote from the letter what the Minister wrote about trade and industry. I quote:

"You say that Mr. Burnham has no policy; that yours is economic dynamism. What is economic dynamism? I humbly submit that Mr. Burnham's P.N.C. has a policy. It's the same as the policy of the N.D.P. and U.D.P. of John Carter and Rudy Kendall, with whom Mr. Burnham is now allied. It's the same as yours. It's indistinguishable from the policy of the imperialists whose theme song and panacea for all our economic and social ills are foreign capital (ists) and the free enterprise system. This underlying similarity is what drives you all together to gang up to defeat us."

This shows clearly and beyond any shadow of doubt that the Minister of Trade and Industry has no desire to allow the migration of capital from the private sector into the industrial activities of this country. He states here quite clearly that he does not believe in private capital.

#### **The Minister of Natural Resources**

(Mr. Benn): I wish to draw attention to the fact that the hon. Member is referring to something irrelevant. We are discussing the marketing of rice, but the hon. Member is speaking about private capital coming into the country.

**Mr. Beharry:** I was referring to the Minister of Trade and Industry under

whose portfolio the Rice Marketing Board falls. I want to explain to hon. Members of this Council that the Minister has failed his country and this particular industry. He has not only failed in this particular industry, but in all other industries in this country. He has failed to create an incentive to encourage foreign capital in this country as a result of his constant outpourings.

**Mr. Speaker:** How does that relate to the Motion before the Council?

**Mr. Beharry:** He has no policy, and if he has one it is a negative one. In the very first year he took control of the Organization there was a loss to the industry of nearly \$400,000. He does not have the vision and ability to see that this is an expanding industry — expanding in the field of agriculture; expanding in the field of processing, and that he should look after the marketing section. Why did he not pay attention to it? I know there is a saying in this country that "some people dig their own graves". [Mr. Benn: "You have dug yours already".] History and time will recall who is already dead and who is alive. Time is on the side of the people of this country. You can only observe the quality of a man when he is given a job to do. I say that the Minister of Trade and Industry has failed his country by not providing a comprehensive marketing policy for our rice.

I would like to compliment the Minister of Trade and Industry for introducing legislation whereby the Rice Marketing Board has been democratized. It is democratized in that he has given the members on the Board and the people in the industry the right to control the day-to-day operation of the Board. But I shall not spare him for not providing a national marketing policy for the industry, so that the rice farmers, millers and everyone connected with it could look forward to the future with confidence.

It is a young industry; it is now being built up, and I know that a proper

[MR. BEHARRY]

marketing policy similar to the policy of expanding agriculture is necessary. If the Minister of Trade and Industry would pay more attention to the marketing side of things, I am sure the industry would grow by leaps and bounds. I hope the Minister would pay attention to what I have said, and would give more of his time to evolving a better policy for the marketing of the rice in this country.

**Mr. Jackson:** Converting the Rice Marketing Board into a co-operative will not be in the best interest of the rice industry. The Motion seeks to convert this Board into a co-operative of producers. If we cast our minds back to the time when there was an Amendment to the Ordinance which governs the Board, it will be recalled that I said that the time had come when the consumers ought to have had a place on the Board. I felt that the Board as it is, and the purpose which it seeks to serve, should not be in the hands of the producers alone, and that the consumers should have a voice in its functions, because the people who kept the Board alive are not merely the producers. Without consumers there would be no producers, and any attempt which is made by this Government or any other Government to convert the Rice Marketing Board into a producers' co-operative will be an injustice to the people who are consumers of rice in this Colony.

But let us go step by step. The Rice Marketing Board has an investment capital of about \$8 million. I understand that in the very near future there is likely to be an additional expenditure of about \$2 million, so that it can be said that with the plans in mind the capital investment of the Board will be approximately \$10 million. How many producers are there to take care of this \$10 million capital? I understand also that there are about 62,000 producers. If that figure is correct, and if my information regarding the capital is correct, then how can we expect the producers to take charge of such a huge investment?

Perhaps it may be contended that there are some producers who are wealthy and amongst those some will be found who can take charge of this \$10 million concern. If that is going to be the argument, then it is clear that the small producers will have no place in the industry in so far as the Rice Marketing Board is concerned. If we, however, assume that all rice producers are able to take shares in this producers' co-operative and can take care of the \$10 million, then that would be money spent without taking over the Board as such.

On the other hand, a further question will arise: How will the producers finance the day-to-day expenses of the Board? I am informed that the annual turnover of the Board is approximately \$23 million, and that this is largely financed by overdrafts which are made by the banks of this Colony. Can there be any guarantee that if the producers are able to find the money to purchase the R.M.B. outright, that the banks will continue to lend them the money to finance the day-to-day activities of the co-operative?

I am afraid that the moment the Rice Marketing Board is converted into a co-operative, as this Motion seeks to obtain, the first difficulty which will arise will be the question of finding money to finance the day-to-day activities of the co-operative. If my assumption is correct, it will require about \$33 million for this take over. [Mr. Jai Narine Singh: "You are a poor businessman".] I am advised by my friend on my left that I am a poor businessman and that I know nothing at all about business. I concede that I am not a businessman, and I would leave it to his mentality to reply to the remarks I have made. He has the right to reply, and I am sure he will take the opportunity to say how this money can be put up to convert the Rice Marketing Board into a Co-operative for the producers.

I say that \$23 million is required for the annual turnover of the Rice

Marketing Board, and it is difficult to see how the producers will be able to finance the running of the co-operative. It is difficult to see them finding \$10 million, except the hon. Mover of the Motion is going to advocate selling the Rice Marketing Board and converting it into a co-operative under the same conditions as the Vergenoegen Rice Mill was sold and converted into a co-operative.

After having spent \$100,000 on the Vergenoegen Rice Mill, Government sold it for \$30,000. Government took only a part of the money in cash from the people to whom the mill has been sold as a co-operative. Perhaps that is what the hon. Mover of the Motion has in mind. Do you want this big capital investment to be handed over to producers as hire purchase in the guise of a co-operative? It cannot be so regarded if it is not sold for cash. That is what is likely to happen, if the hon. Mover intends that the Rice Marketing Board should be sold over to the people under the same conditions as the Vergenoegen Rice Mill.

It is alleged that already some of the Vergenoegen shares are being turned over to private individuals, and that before very long it is quite possible that what was once a co-operative venture will pass into the hands of a single individual or a small number of persons. Is this the first time a rice mill was owned on a co-operative basis? I am sure the hon. Mover of the Motion, who knows very much about the rice industry, will tell us that there was such a venture at Wakenaam and why that venture failed. I would like him to say whether the co-operative started from the top, or it was one which started from the bottom?

I am not going to agree with any attempt to pass over the Rice Marketing Board to people under the same conditions as the Vergenoegen Rice Mill was turned over and turned into a co-operative. After all Government is spending a lot of money on this venture--money

which belongs to the people as a whole. As I have said on the last occasion, the people who are involved in the success of the rice industry are the producers, the Government and the consumers. The public as a whole has been contributing largely to the progress and success of the industry.

I have said that the capital investment is too high for the producers to take over the Board. I have said also that the day to day expenses of the Board will make it difficult for producers to take it over and run it as a co-operative, but I want to make this further point that the profit motive will deny an opportunity for safeguarding the industry.

I think the Minister of Trade and Industry said that the Rice Marketing Board enters into certain fields and that the money derived therefrom is ploughed back into the industry. I am advised that subsidies are granted to producers by way of reduced prices in the cost of bags and twine. I am advised also that experiments are being jointly borne between the Government and the Rice Marketing Board.

I understand that the mechanization of the industry was financed, in the first place, by the Rice Marketing Board. I understand, too, that this had been possible because of the policy which the Board has been pursuing. Can there be any guarantee that if this Board is converted into a co-operative that the things which are now being taken care of by the Board as constituted will continue to be so? I understand that whenever there is a drought the Board makes provision for helping the farmers. Have we any guarantee that this would happen if it is converted into a co-operative? I understand that at Vergenoegen there is a lot of quarrelling between those who own the mills and those whose rice has to be milled, and it is my belief that the same thing that is happening at Vergenoegen would happen with the Board if the Motion succeeds.

Another point: The producers

[MR. JACKSON]

themselves are already bound into co-operatives. They cultivate by means of a co-operative; they own their combines and tractors by that method. Would it be the same if the Board were to be converted into a co-operative and put into the hands of the producers? What guarantee is there that there will be benefits coming to the producers? It will be a very serious state of affairs if we permit it to take place; and I cannot see any justification for such a course of action.

I want to be very frank. Somewhere lurking in this very industry will be some trouble or there is some trouble. If you are going to convert the Rice Marketing Board into a co-operative, then the efforts that are being made by the producers would be put into effect. I am advised that the producers are now clamouring for the condition that whilst they are not engaged in planting or reaping their crops they must be employed at the Rice Marketing Board in place of the workers who are there. If that is true it would mean that the degree of employment obtaining at the Board would disappear.

I understand that the Board employs about 300 persons and that the producers are demanding that they themselves must be employed there. With the conversion of the Board into a co-operative, we can very well see what is going to happen in this country of ours. If it is true that they are demanding that during the slack period they should be employed in place of those who are working at the Board, what would happen if the Board gets into their hands? Would we not be creating a Frankenstein and trouble where trouble should not be?

Any attempt to convert the Rice Marketing Board into a co-operative would put the people at present employed there out of work because the producers, when they are not cultivating their land or sowing or reaping, would come down to town and work at the Board. Have not the people who consume the rice the right of employment as well as those who

produce it? I am sure that my friend on my right did not give this matter serious consideration; for if he did, he would have thought of every aspect of what would happen today and what would happen tomorrow.

I want to warn this Council that if the Rice Marketing Board is converted into a co-operative—if what someone wants to be done is allowed to take place—then life would not be easy in our country. There will be greater unemployment and the families of those at present employed at the Board would suffer—the very people he would have to approach in 1961 would not be able to find employment for themselves and their children in the future.

**The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran):** There have been a few surprises in this debate so far, the main one being the support of the Government by the last speaker.

Perhaps, I can start off by complimenting the hon. Member, the Mover of the Motion, for having at last awakened to the interest of the rice producers. Not very long ago he was appointed to a Committee, the Report of which I have here, to go into the question of the re-organization and possible improvements of the Rice Marketing Board, which could have been an excellent forum for him to advance his arguments in favour of a co-operative. But what do I find in this Report? The hon. Member had not been able to attend more than two meetings of the Committee.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** I refused to attend the others.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** He more likely went on a South American tour. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, in speaking to this Motion—he is not in his seat at the moment—quoted several co-operative slogans: “one member, one vote” and so on, but slogans alone do not make a co-operative out of a complex organization like the Rice Marketing Board. I think the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, when this Motion was being

discussed, pointed out that the Government had consulted the specialist in this field, the Commissioner for Co-operatives, and that certain advice was sent in to the Government which he acted upon. I intend, later on, to quote from that Report; but there is one point that was made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, when he asked whether the Government had held a plebiscite among the rice farmers to find out whether a co-operative was required or whether the democratization of the Rice Marketing Board was sufficient.

I am sorry that the hon. Member is not here in person for me to compliment him on having been persuaded to the principle of a referendum or a plebiscite. Since the 1955 debate in this Council on the question of Federation my friend has been tinkering with the idea of a plebiscite. Unfortunately, it has taken five years for him to appreciate that principle. However, I hope that it is not too late for the hon. Member to appreciate and put into practice the question of a referendum, and I further hope he would not only use it when it suits him but apply it on every occasion.

The hon. Member has been talking about making the Rice Marketing Board into a co-operative. This is the advice; in fact, it is a very long report by the Commissioner for Co-operatives, and I shall read, with your permission, the relevant parts. It is dated the 25th October, 1957. Immediately after the Minister took up the responsibility for co-operatives, the Commissioner was consulted on this question, and this is what he said:

"The essential features of a co-operative enterprise are that:

(i) It has open and voluntary membership within the group which it seeks to serve;

(ii) It is democratically controlled;

(iii) Its profits are returned to its members in proportion to the use which they make of the enterprise after adequate reserves have been set aside and the capital invested in it has been appropriately rewarded."

The Report goes on to describe the Rice Marketing Board, which I may not repeat. I notice my friends, particularly the hon. Member for Demerara River, who has been waging and fighting a phantom battle all along for the millers and landlords, looking at me. This is what the Commissioner said about these people in relation to a co-operative:

"A co-operative society of producers must exclude rice millers (who are middlemen), landlords and consumers, so that any consideration for the creation of a co-operative organisation to replace the present arrangement must involve the exclusion of such persons except in so far as they are themselves rice farmers".

He goes on to state what should be done if Government were to set aside his recommendations and still desired to set up a co-operative. I need not go into that again because it is the normal formula for the setting up of a co-operative, but this is his main recommendation:

"If a decision is taken to alter the present marketing arrangement I advise that such alteration be carried out in the following stages:

(i) amendment of the Rice Marketing Ordinance to include provision for the refund to rice farmers of a portion of the profits of the Board as a bonus on the rice sold to the Board. This would remove a source of discontent on the part of many rice farmers who labour under the impression that the Board utilizes to its own end the profits made. Special arrangements would, of course, have to be made in respect of padi sold to the Rice Development Company;

(ii) reconstitute the Board to allow for a progressive increase in the number of persons representing producers, and for a corresponding decrease in the number of other persons;

(iii) replace the Rice Producers Association by a co-operative society of rice farmers on the lines set out in paragraph 8".

It is very clear that the Government has implemented and has in fact introduced some of the measures recommended by a person who is most knowledgeable and has considerable experience of co-operatives in British Guiana. I therefore cannot understand why, after these facts were made known during the recent

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

debate on the Bill to amend the Rice Marketing Ordinance, some Members could support the Motion before the Council to convert the Rice Marketing Board into a co-operative organization instead of waiting to see how the recent changes in the constitution of the Board will work.

If what I have said so far has given hon. Members the impression that this Government is opposed to co-operatives, I wish to make it clear that that is not the case. It is not difficult to assume that some Members will parade in and out of this Council that the Government is opposed to co-operatives, as they did in the case of the leasehold-freehold debate. On that question the decision of this Council was for the retention of the leasehold system on Government land settlement schemes. It had absolutely nothing to do with the freehold system of land tenure as it exists in the country. In view of the fact that some Members misinterpret things to suit their own ends I wish to point out and to emphasize that this Government is not opposed to co-operatives. Indeed, the Vergenoe-gen rice mill which was run by Government and which was losing money year after year, has been sold by Government to a co-operative. [Mr. Burnham: "At a loss"]. The co-operative is making a lot of profit. [Mr. Burnham: "At a depressed price"]. In a short time they hope to be able to pay the purchase price of the mill and to move forward. In fact they propose to embark on another form of co-operative enterprise, to provide electric lighting for their village.

I need not recall the number of co-operative societies which have been set up since this Government came into office. Suffice it to say that hon. Members are fully aware that prior to August, 1957, a great deal of the work of the Co-operative Department was in the penny-bank business. Everyone knows that it is very difficult to persuade people who have been weaned from co-operatives even though they were run on a different system, to return to co-opera-

tives. We know that most of the people in the country districts had been accustomed to co-operatives of their own kind, and having been weaned away from the system it has taken a great deal of time to bring them back to the belief that co-operatives can be of help to them. I say that to assure hon. Members that this Government will continue to assist in the creation of co-operatives in whatever field they are found to be practicable. There are a number of land co-operatives, and encouragement is being given for the formation of producer-co-operatives and co-operatives for the lighting of villages. I have had a talk with one of the officers of the Co-operative Department who told me that there were two or three Village Councils which desired to introduce co-operative lighting and so forth in their villages. I have said all this so that some Members would not have an excuse for going outside and creating a wrong impression.

There is one practical difficulty which I am sure the former Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, and the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, will appreciate, and that is, that rice farmers in this country have been accustomed, after acceptance of their rice by the Board, to receive a cheque in full payment. One of the basic principles of a co-operative is that if, for instance, the Rice Marketing Board were converted into one, on receipt of rice by the Board some payment on account is made to the farmer, but the balance would not be paid to him until the end of the year when the expenses and the profits have been worked out. There are, of course, ways and means of getting round that, but it is a very complicated matter and is likely to cause considerable difficulty to those who would wish to rush into a co-operative a complex organization as the Rice Marketing Board. If the Board had been made a co-operative organization at the outset that would have been another matter, but it is not so simple now to force the principle of a co-operative down its throat.

I have said, and I wish to emphasize, that Government is not opposed to the system of co-operatives. The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Beharry) has, as usual, run away from the debate after having made a great number of inaccurate, inconsistent and irrelevant statements. I know that he believes in the policy of striking a blow and running away, but that sort of thing is not going to last very long. He has accused the Minister of Trade and Industry of going on trips all over the world. I have been going through the Minutes of the meetings of the Rice Marketing Board of which I had up to recently the honour of being a member. The hon. Member was also a member of the Board, and it is difficult to get anyone to say that he showed any interest in the business of the Board. The Minutes are there to prove that he attended meetings of the Board only when a trip abroad was in the offing.

For example, after he heard that a delegation was being sent to Venezuela, the hon. Member attended every meeting of the Board, but when it was decided that he would not be a member of the delegation his interest in the affairs of the Board waned and he attended no more meetings. I am sure that the hon. Nominated Member who was until recently the Chairman of the Board, will support that statement, because I know that the hon. Member who talks about other Members going on trips abroad, actually lobbied members of the Board to nominate him to go on the delegation to Venezuela.

It was the hon. Member's Ministry which, in 1958, could not provide for the Rice Marketing Board an accurate assessment of the Spring crop. [An hon. Member: "Your Government."] Yes, my Government. That is why the hon. Member is sitting where he is today. He said that he resigned his office as Minister of Natural Resources. He did not resign; he was kicked out. Let us have facts straight.

The hon. Member talks about increasing the production of rice, but the Rice Marketing Board did not have a proper assessment of the Spring crop for 1958, with the result that the Board had to advise the West Indies market to buy rice from Burma. In the end the big Spring crop had to be carried over whilst the West Indians were eating Burma rice.

He talks about the large amount of money the Board owes to the banks. Obviously the Board does big business—the hon. Member for Georgetown North has indicated the size of the business done by this organization. The hon. Member knows that during the difficult years of 1957-1958, and early in 1959 when the drought was on, the Board was forced to spend a considerable sum of money in order to provide pumps and fuel for farmers to pump water into their rice fields. The hon. Member is aware of the assistance the Rice Marketing Board gave to the farmers by way of advances through the banks and the credit corporation. He is also aware of the fact that the rice farmers were so desperate, in certain areas that were not considered as spring crop areas, that they were even given loans to encourage them to put in spring crops. It is not surprising that the hon. Member is continuing with his irrelevancies and inaccuracies.

The hon. Member talks about increasing the consumption of rice in British Guiana and the West Indies. Obviously the Government and the Rice Marketing Board are interested in this matter. Does not the hon. Member know that the Rice Marketing Board, by persuading the Government of Jamaica to prohibit the importation of white rice from other countries, is now supplying Jamaica with a considerable amount of white rice? Formerly, when British Guiana was unable to supply Jamaica with the necessary amount of white rice, it was imported from the U.S.A., Holland and so on. We are doing our best to help the industry.

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

It must be remembered that the Rice Marketing Board is not a Government Department; it is not run directly by the Ministry of Trade and Industry, and the hon. Member knows that. The responsibility for the running of the Rice Marketing Board is vested in its members. How then can the hon. Member accuse the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry or the Government for the shortcomings of the Board? There can be no question of shortcomings in the Rice Marketing Board.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, who has already spoken on this matter, has pointed out the tremendous improvements that have been made in the Board. When one reads the newspapers one gets the impression that the present members of the Rice Marketing Board are responsible for so many things! Everyone is aware of the fact that electronic grading which is to be installed at the Rice Marketing Board is to a large extent the brain-child of former members of the Board.

**Mr. Burnham:** One man, Mr. Bayley.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** The hon. Member is wrong—it was the Director of Agriculture. However, the Director of Agriculture, or the Manager of the Rice Marketing Board could not make such a decision without the members. One gets the impression that the present members of the Board are responsible for all of the improvements. The hon. Financial Secretary and the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, were both members of the Board. [Mr. Burnham: “The next Speaker.”] I think it is inaccurate for people to say that the Rice Marketing Board, or the Minister for Trade and Industry has been responsible for this or that without going into the question properly.

There are the people who have been accusing the Government and the Minister of Trade and Industry of forcing

people to eat what the Government wants them to eat. You will no doubt remember the debate on the potato tax. On that occasion it was said that this “Communist Government” was forcing people to eat certain things. Today they are telling us that the Government is responsible for the people not eating more rice! How can they eat more rice when the hon. Member himself is directing activities against the consumption of rice? I refer to advertisements in the newspapers about “Roti from Tip Top Flour”.

The hon. Member also made another inaccurate statement—a statement that the padi sold to Venezuela was sold at a loss. That is untrue. I am surprised that he has said that, because he was sitting as a member of the Rice Marketing Board when the matter was dealt with. There were long discussions on the matter, and he was fully aware of what took place because some of the discussions proceeded late into the night. Of course the hon. Member does not remember that today.

However, he has done better than the hon. Member for Georgetown South who would not attend the meetings. He knows that the padi sold to Venezuela was sold at a very attractive price so far as Guianese producers are concerned. Unfortunately, the offer was made at a time when some of the rice had either been sent to bonds, or had been sold to the central mills owned by the Rice Development Company. In order to supply Venezuela with padi, it was necessary to transport it from various bonds and other places to the central collecting depot. The padi had to be transferred into new bags, because deterioration had taken place between the time the bags had been stacked and the time the padi had to be removed for shipment to Venezuela. There was a great deal of extra labour involved in skipping the padi into new bags and so on. The extra work carried up the cost of labour, but the sale of padi to Venezuela, I wish to emphasize, did not create any loss to the rice producers.

Hon. Members opposite are arguing that the Board should be converted into a co-operative. It is very difficult to find arguments against the principles of a co-operative, because one believes in these things. Does it matter very much whether the results are the same, if the efforts of the farmer are repaid in the long run? So far as the sale of padi to Venezuela is concerned, the farmers eventually got their money. Whether it is in the form of assistance to enable the pumping of water to rice fields during the drought; whether it is in the form of increased prices for rice; or whether it is the stabilizing of prices from the reserves of the Board when the price of rice goes down, the most important points are that on the one hand the farmer has been able to get assistance from the Board when he needed it, and on the other he has been able to get from the reserves of the Board the price his rice is worth.

I think that the Government—even though I say it myself—should be complimented by the Members on the other side of the Table for having done such a good job.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am afraid you will have to get a Motion to enable you to continue.

**Mr. Fredericks:** I beg to move that the hon. Minister of Communications and Works be granted an extra ten minutes.

**Mr. Gajraj:** I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I merely want to say that the Government has acted with speed in bringing about legislation to democratize the Board. In view of the fact that legislation has been passed quite recently to deal with the control of the operations of the Board, I hope the hon. Mover of the Motion will withdraw it at this late stage. If he does not so desire, I am sure that we can deal with the matter when the time comes, that is,

if he persists with the Motion. I think that Government should be given an opportunity to find out whether the legislation is operating for or against the farmers and rice producers.

I have nothing more to say, except to appeal to hon. Members, especially those who come to this Legislative Council with their usual inaccuracies, to leave certain things for the street corners so that we may have proper discussions on the motions that appear on the Order Paper.

**Mr. Fredericks:** In seconding the Motion for discussion, I had hoped to hear from the hon. Mover, sound arguments and valid reasons in support of his desire to have the Rice Marketing Board changed into a co-operative. I confess to disappointment as he has given no indication to this Council of the type of co-operative he has in mind and what shape it should take. How are we to go about its formation? Are there any added advantages which will accrue to rice producers which they do not now enjoy? All these questions have been left in the air, so to speak, unanswered.

We have been told by previous speakers that both Mr. Cheeseman and Mr. Gordon, experts in the field of co-operatives, have examined the situation carefully and they have recommended against the Board being formed into a co-operative. Consequently, we were all the more keen in hearing from the Mover pearls of wisdom, more or less, to confuse the experts. Alas, we were disappointed!

The hon. Member had made mention, in support of his Motion, about the hardships and sufferings of the rice producers. He mentioned the incidence of blast disease, the delays in transit of rice and of incorrect weighing and gauging, but all these ills and all these difficulties will remain whether it is a co-operative or a Board. A co-operative would not be the panacea to cure all ills. Mention has also been made that the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Producers Association have been impositions of the industry on the people by the last Gov-

[MR. FREDERICKS]

ernment. Very few, if any of us here, can deny that these impositions have been blessings in disguise, as it is extremely doubtful whether, without the Rice Marketing Board, the rice industry could have contributed, as it has, \$18 million to the economy of this country or, for that matter, that it would have been in such a healthy and thriving position as it is today.

Mention has been made about the loss in 1959, but the hon. Mover should know that 1959 was not the only year that the Rice Marketing Board has incurred a loss. I will even go a bit further than he does in saying that the Rice Marketing Board may not have been conducting its business in the most efficient way, nor has it invested its capital wisely. In conceding these things, I would like to make it clear to this Council that I do not impute any mismanagement or inefficiency on the part of the Manager of the Rice Marketing Board. It is my own belief that the present Manager of the Rice Marketing Board has not been fully appreciated by the industry, and it may be, too, that the imposition of his appointment may also be a blessing in disguise to the industry.

In listening to the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, many of us cannot fail to be heartened by the repeated use of the words "democratizing process" when he refers to the present constitution of the Rice Marketing Board, and that the Board as constituted has members who have a majority voice on the Board and can therefore direct its policy. We would have wished that such democratizing process could be carried several stages further to include other things as politics. However, the present composition of the Board is of such that the rice producers have a majority and, therefore, a controlling interest. They cannot only direct its policy, but they can also decide in what manner their profits are to be distributed.

The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry has announced two cardinal objectives of a co-operative. Firstly, that a co-operative should be controlled by its members; and secondly, that the members should decide what profits should go back to the members. These objectives, I concede, are presently being enjoyed by rice producers as the Board is now constituted, but the hon. Minister has failed to tell this Council another principle governing co-operatives, that is, the members have an interest; they own the co-operative. In the case of the Rice Marketing Board, the Board is a separate entity — a separate constituted entity. There are no members who own the Rice Marketing Board and, personally, I do not see any reasons why the Rice Marketing Board cannot be formed into a co-operative. We are looking forward to independence. We are looking forward to accepting responsibility and running our own affairs, and I feel that the difficulties to be encountered in changing the Board into a co-operative is well within our capabilities irrespective of the experts who have advised against it.

The previous speaker has told us that, at present, the responsibility is vested in its members. I would ask him if they have the responsibility of management why should they be denied ownership of the Board? To me, it follows naturally and I support the Motion.

**Mr. Bowman:** The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry told us last week that the Rice Marketing Board is under the virtual control of the people in the rice industry. While he has developed the point and we must accept the fact that the Board today is more democratized than it was in the past, I am particularly worried at the Government's deliberate delaying tactics which they have been continuously pursuing until today.

Perhaps, Members missed the point that the Motion we are discussing today was first tabled in the Council since last year. In fact, the Minister made the

point that if this had come up before the law under which the present Rice Marketing Board is operated, it would have been all well and good. We see the deliberateness of this Government to make Members look small in the eyes of their constituents so as to make it appear that their representatives are not doing anything. They sat down on this Motion and proceeded with their Bill. If this Motion were debated last year, no doubt the Rice Marketing Board —

**Mr. Ram Karran:** To a point of order. When the Bill was being debated in this Council, the Minister of Trade and Industry made reference to the Motion which was tabled a day or two before; and most of what the hon. Member says is inaccurate.

**Mr. Speaker:** Do I understand the hon. Minister to say that it is inaccurate to say that the Motion was first tabled in February last year?

**Mr. Ram Karran:** No, Sir. The statement is inaccurate. The hon. Member is charging that the Minister of Trade and Industry said if this Motion, which is now being debated, was produced before the Bill was introduced to alter the Rice Marketing Board's Ordinance, that the alteration which we have already agreed to would not have been made. I am saying it is inaccurate because the Minister actually made reference to this Motion when the Bill was being debated.

**Mr. Bowman:** What I am saying is that they deliberately held back the Motion with the object of bringing their Bill forward so as to prove to the rice farmers that the P.P.P. are the only people working in their interest. If the Motion was brought before the Bill, no doubt it would have been passed by this Council. For example, last year I tabled two Motions in this Council and up to now they have not been debated. I am charging that they have deliberately delayed this Motion so as to prove to the people that their representatives do not fit anything and that they are the only

ones who are thinking and working in the interest of the people.

Take the sugar industry for example: The sugar industry has two funds—the rehabilitation and price stabilization funds. I understand that there is a price stabilization fund for the Rice Marketing Board. However, I think if this Board is converted into a co-operative such funds can be established, if they are not already established.

Again, take "Banks" for example: I am not referring to "Banks" because I am a member of D'Aguiar's party. [*Laughter.*] Just the other day a dividend of 15% was declared. And I am saying that if this Board is converted into a co-operative and these various funds are put aside, which would guarantee the industry, then the remainder, whatever it is, can be disbursed and the farmers would be satisfied, and all the money which is being wasted would not be wasted any longer.

The Minister said we cannot argue reasonably in favour of this Motion, but I am supporting this Motion because I think the farmers would be benefited more. Again, the Board is a statutory organization and the rice farmers cannot appoint the manager. If the Rice Marketing Board is converted into a co-operative the members of the co-operative would have the right to appoint the General Manager who is appointed by the Governor today. Where is the virtual control of the Board by the producers? It is not virtually under the control of the rice producers because it is a statutory body, but as a co-operative it would be under the control of the rice farmers. That is the reason why I am supporting the Motion.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh (replying):** The Motion now before the Council was tabled on the 12th February, 1959. It was not debated in the last session and I had to table it again on the 5th of January this year for the current session.

[MR. JAI NARINE SINGH]

It has been brought up for debate practically at the end of the year. During the debate the word "democratic" has been freely used, and the rice industry has become the plaything of politicians, especially in this Council.

I wish to refer to the person who created the Rice Marketing Board, Sir Frank McDavid, who thought of its eventually becoming a co-operative organization. I should like to quote what he said on the subject in 1946. He was then Colonial Treasurer, but since then the word "Colony" has become obsolete, and the word "country" is preferred. So that today the officer holding that post is designated Financial Secretary. I quote from column 2095 of the Hansard report of the debate on the Second Reading of the Rice Marketing Bill, where the Hon. Frank McDavid, as he then was, said:

"I concluded my remarks in the Council by stating that I give an undertaking that as soon as the war is over I would do my best to have the present Board converted into a co-operative organization of a democratic character, in the management and control of which those engaged in the rice industry would take an important share."

That was what the hon. Frank McDavid said in 1946, but I wish to refer to the democracy which is practised in the rice industry. Hardly 10 per cent. of those who vote at elections for the Rice Producers' Association in order that a member may eventually sit on the Rice Marketing Board, are registered as voters. According to my friend on my right (Mr. Jackson) there are 62,000 persons who are rice producers. I would like to know whether 6,000 of those persons have voted for those members of the Rice Producers' Association who sit on the Rice Marketing Board. But those same persons who are shouting about democracy would like to say that there should be no qualification for membership of the Legislative Council, except that a person must be 21 years of age, a British subject and must be qualified

to vote. Why then should a rice producer have to seek out a District Supervisor and pay him a shilling in order to become a member of the Rice Producers' Association and be able to vote at the proper time? We have an exorbitant sum of \$20,000 being spent by the Rice Producers' Association. Why should it not register every rice producer in a district? Where is the democracy in the present system?

If I were to call the names of members of the Rice Marketing Board who are mentioned in the Board's Report for 1959, and who are supposed to be rice producers, I would raise the hair on our heads. Even those who have been elected to the Rice Producers' Association this year are mainly politicians seeking the suffrage of the electorate, not necessarily to foster the rice industry but maybe to foster other issues in their own interest or in the interest of their colleagues. That, unfortunately, is the democracy that prevails in the rice industry, and that is why I say that Members of this Council have a grave responsibility to the rice industry which has not been on an even keel for the last 20 years.

One hon. Member has suggested that if the Rice Marketing Board were converted into a producer co-operative it would prejudice the consumers of rice. I cannot see how, if those who produce an article form a co-operative to market that article, the consumers would be prejudiced.

In the course of my opening remarks on the Motion I said that the grading and weighing of rice was not being properly carried out by the Rice Marketing Board to the satisfaction of the producers. If the Board was a co-operative organization the rice would be graded and weighed in the areas where it is produced, and insured by the organization. Today the rice is forwarded to the Board in Georgetown at the risk of the producer. If it gets wet or is damaged in any way, he loses.

In a co-operative organization those engaged in the production of the particular article would have a say in the marketing of their produce. It is no wonder that the Rice Marketing Board is continually losing money. It is losing money because those who run the Board are not concerned as to whether the poor rice producer makes money or not.

Much has been said about the Vergenoegen rice mill which Government sold to a co-operative society at a low price, but the Government sold a derelict mill which produced rice of the poorest quality, much to the dissatisfaction of the co-operators who will now have to find the necessary money for a multi-stage mill in order to be able to produce rice of good quality. The Vergenoegen mill is a single-stage mill.

As far as I am aware there is no squabbling over the operation of the Vergenoegen rice mill and the co-operative is going well. The great difficulty at the moment is that the people are trying to make a profit by operating a derelict mill which does not produce first quality rice. It is the duty of the Government to give these people added financial help to enable them to install a multi-stage mill so that the organization can produce the best grade of rice. I cannot say that the Government is interested in having multi-stage mills all over the country. The Government has handed over a derelict mill to those poor people.

**Mr. Benn:** I would like to correct the hon. Member, so that Members of Council will know the true position. The people at Vergenoegen had asked Government to sell them the rice mill. They knew the type of mill they were purchasing, because they had been working it for several years. This Government never asked them to purchase the mill.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** Government knew that the mill was out of date, so it was passed on to ignorant people who did not know enough about the machinery.

**Mr. Benn:** I object to the hon. Member's statement. I repeat that the settlers at Vergenoegen have been working the rice mill for several years, and they knew the type of machinery they were purchasing. They asked Government to sell the mill to them as they intended running it as a co-operative.

**Mr. Burnham:** On a point of order. Is that a point of order?

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** It is not too late for Government to go to the assistance of these poor people. Government's attention has been drawn to the fact that the mill that manufactures rice at Vergenoegen is incapable of producing first quality rice.

**Mr. Speaker:** May I remind the hon. Mover of this Motion that he is replying to the arguments on the Motion, and not to any remarks made by the Minister for Natural Resources?

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** I accept that, Sir. The Minister of Trade and Industry concedes that the motive behind the introduction of this Motion is sincere and in the best interest of the rice industry. I feel that the industry will be better off if we were to convert it into a co-operative organization.

Much has been said about the Governor's Committee and the fact that I was not in agreement with the Rice Committee's Report. I was not in agreement with the people on the Committee, and one must have the courage of one's conviction regardless of who is at the head of the Committee submitting the Report. In view of the fact that I was not in agreement with certain parts of the Report, the hon. Minister of Natural Resources, after examining the situation, will agree with me that I should not accept the other parts.

I have been asked to mention why I did not attend the meetings of the Committee to which I was appointed. After I had attended two or three meetings I found that the superstructure——

**Mr. Davis:** One meeting. [*Interruption*].

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for Georgetown South is perfectly in order. [*Interruption*.] I wish hon. Members will keep quiet when I am speaking and not persist in having discussions round the Table. I was saying that the hon. Member is perfectly in order to speak in the strain in which he is speaking, because the Minister of Communications and Works drew attention to the few occasions on which the hon. Member attended certain meetings of the Committee. He criticized him very strongly for so doing and he was not stopped. He dared him to give an explanation. Therefore it is perfectly in order for the hon. Member to give an explanation, and I wish hon. Members will be fair enough to listen to him.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** I attended two meetings for certain, and I saw from the superstructure, the surroundings and the environment of the Committee that no useful purpose would have been served by attending another meeting. I refused to attend any other meeting, and I refused to sign the Report when it was sent to me. I was convinced that the Committee could not serve any useful purpose to the rice industry, and that is why I refused to attend any more meetings. [Mr. Burnham: "Nebuchadnezzar".] If one is not satisfied with the way a Committee is going about its business, one should not continue to attend any more meetings. [Hon. Members: "Why do you attend the meetings of this Council?"] You may not be satisfied with the proceedings in this hon. Council, but you can take part without resigning. You may not attend every meeting, but you will still be a Member of the Legislative Council. Anyway, I have replied to the allegations made by the Minister of Communications and Works, and I have told hon. Members why I refused to attend the meetings of that Committee.

I feel that the Rice Marketing Board is an imposition on the rice producers of this country, and the least that Government could have done in this matter was to have set up a proper Committee to investigate the possibility of establishing a co-operative organization which would take care of the industry.

The hon. Member for Georgetown North asked how a co-operative would be able to provide \$30 million to market the rice? In 1946 Sir Frank McDavid was confronted with a similar difficulty, but he introduced legislation whereby the assets and liabilities of the then Rice Marketing Board were passed on and became part of the new Board. It has been reiterated by several Members in this Council that the Rice Marketing Board belongs to the rice producers and that they share in the management of it. If a co-operative is formed, then why should not its assets and liabilities be passed on as a single unit to a co-operative organization? If 62,000 producers were to form themselves into a co-operative in order to take over the Rice Marketing Board, I do not see why a bank functioning inside or outside this country would not want to loan the co-operative the necessary funds to carry on its business.

For the enlightenment of the hon. Member for Georgetown North, I should like to mention that in the Gold Coast, now known as Ghana, there was a cocoa co-operative organization with more than 62,000 members. Cocoa in Ghana is not produced on tremendously large estates; it is produced to a large extent by small people living in rustic villages. It is only through the machinery of the Government that they have been able to form a co-operative organization and harness an industry which is the agricultural mainstay of the country.

If Government thinks that converting the Rice Marketing Board into a co-operative organization is the best thing for the rice industry, I do not think there will be any difficulty from a practical

point of view in harnessing things. The rice industry would then be converted into a single co-operative organization.

So far as having consumers on the Rice Marketing Board is concerned, it may well be that a subsidiary organization of consumers could be formed, or we could have a producers' and consumers' co-operative. It will be simply a matter of working out the details and putting the machinery into operation.

As far as employment is concerned, the fact that it is a co-operative organization does not necessarily mean that people from Essequibo can come down to Georgetown to work with it. It is a fact that at this moment people come from Enmore, Golden Grove, Buxton and so on to Georgetown to work. Some work at the Rice Marketing Board and at the saw mills. I do not see how the question of employment can present any difficulty to the establishment of a co-operative organization.

Further, there are 62,000 rice producers. If we assume that each rice producer has a family of five, there will be approximately 3,000 people to take care of. A man has a wife and three children at the average. That would be five in the family; 62,000 multiplied by five would be 310,000. It shows the magnitude of the industry. It covers  $\frac{3}{5}$  of the population of this country and, consequently, it would be democracy to give  $\frac{3}{5}$  of the people voting strength in the industry by making it into a co-operative organization.

I wish to say, nevertheless, that I am not, in any way, trying to defame or decry the efforts of the officers of the Rice Marketing Board because they, in

their own way, have been making every effort to have a betterment in the industry; but what I am saying is: it is not enough. The voice of the people is the voice of God, and it is not being heard. When it will be heard, I do not know. I thought this Government would have given the people an opportunity to be heard in the rice industry. But there is also considerable improvement in the marketing machinery of the Rice Marketing Board itself. I can see that the Rice Marketing Board has been making every possible effort to explore all the markets that should be available to British Guiana.

**Mr. Speaker:** Are you replying?

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** I am, Sir. I read today that they are willing to sell the Cuban market over 25,000 tons of rice. I do not know how much truth there is in that.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think that came up in the arguments today. There are two things: (a) when you speak to the substantive Motion; and (b) when you speak in reply. You speak first and when you are replying you do not have to go over the whole thing.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** The point to which I would like to draw the attention of hon. Members is: I still feel it will be a good thing for the country if the Rice Marketing Board were to be converted into a co-operative organization. Quite a lot of experts have come here. I have heard about co-operative officers having given opinions, but if the opinions of experts can be relied upon, we would have either been in Heaven or in Hell, because experts' opinions send us so high or so low that we might have wondered whether British Guiana would have been in existence today.

Question put, Council divided and voted as follows:

For	Against
Mr. Fredericks	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Jai Narine Singh	Mr. Davis
Mr. Campbell. — 3.	Mr. Gajraj
	Mr. Jackson
	Mr. Burnham
	Mr. Ajodha Singh
	Mr. Saffee
	Mr. Rai
	Mr. Ram Karran
	Mrs. Jagan
	Mr. Benn
	Dr. Jagan
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney-General
	The Chief Secretary. — 15.

Motion negatived.

### GUIANIZATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE

**Mr. Speaker:** There is another Motion standing in the name of the hon. Member for Georgetown South. It reads:

"Be it resolved: That this Council records its protest against the appointment by the Secretary of State for the Colonies of a non-Guianese as Director of Posts and Telecommunications of British Guiana and recommends to Government that steps be taken to continue unbroken the accepted policy of Guianization of the Civil Service."

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** Mr. Speaker, with respect to this Motion, I have had a conversation with the hon. the Chief Secretary (acting) and I think he wishes to make a statement on the matter. In the circumstances I am going to ask, through you and hon. Members, to have this matter, if he is going to make a statement, put down for sometime.

**Mr. Speaker:** I have not heard anything about it.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** I ask that this Motion be put down for sometime.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not know. It is a matter for the Members. This was tabled for the first time on the 5th of January this year.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** But it is from the explanation given to me that I think it may not be opportune, at this time, until we have the statement in the White Paper.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not know anything about it; unless Members of this Council wish it to be taken at another time. If Members agree, it will be all right. The Clerk of the Council has now attracted my attention to a statement that was made in the Legislative Council by the hon. Chief Secretary on the 14th of July, 1959, and this statement reads thus:

"I wish to inform the House that the Government recently gave the Hon. Member for Georgetown South an undertaking that his motion concerning Guianization would be taken at the next sitting of Council which is today. However the Government has decided to review the present policy for the Guianization of the Civil Service and, after consultation with the various representative organisations of the Service and if necessary the Secretary of State, to set out in a White Paper the policy for Guianization which it is considered should be followed in future. This paper will be laid in this House as soon as possible and Hon. Members will be given the opportunity to debate the proposals in it.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown South, who has been informed of the Government's intentions in this matter, has very kindly agreed that in these circumstances further action on his motion should be deferred.

M. S. PORCHER,  
Acting Chief Secretary,  
14th July, 1959."

I would have expected the hon. Member for Georgetown South to have attracted the attention of this Council to a statement of this kind made by the hon. the Chief Secretary on the 14th July, 1959; and I am perfectly sure that a statement such as this, made in this Council and which is to be regarded, would be honoured on that basis.

As Speaker of this Council, having seen this statement, I would not allow the Motion to go through until the White Paper is laid, unless there is something

that the Chief Secretary would like to say as to why this statement to this Honourable Council by the Chief Secretary at the time, should not be honoured. And I do not think the Chief Secretary would say anything like that, otherwise, it would lessen the regard this Council should have for statements of persons in such high positions.

**The Chief Secretary** (Major Smith, acting): I wished to have the opportunity to explain the delay in presenting the White Paper and I shall draw attention to what Your Honour has just read in the statement. This White Paper was to be prepared in consultation with the Staff Organizations and, if necessary, with the Secretary of State. Unfortunately, it has taken us a very considerable time to obtain from the Staff Organizations, their views on this matter.

A last reply was received only this month and we are now working actively on this White Paper which, I hope, will be presented to the Council in the very near future.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** Those are the circumstances under which I agreed to have the Motion deferred.

**Mr. Speaker:** Having regard to the statement, I have no option than to have the matter deferred. The hon. Chief Secretary has told us that the White Paper is receiving active consideration at the present time.

## BROADCASTING PROCEEDINGS OF THE COUNCIL

**Mr. Speaker:** The next item is a Motion by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central which reads as follows:

"Be it resolved: That proceedings of the Legislative Council be broadcast."

**Mr. Burnham:** My remarks on this Motion, I promise, will be as brief as the wording of the Motion itself, unless perchance what I would consider unreasonable opposition forces me to make a lengthy reply. In these days of adult

suffrage, in these days when what takes place in the Legislative Council is of the utmost importance and concern to the entire community, I feel that some attempt should be made to give at first hand to the people of British Guiana an account of the proceedings in this Legislative Council which is the law-making body of the country. We have always had newspaper reports of what has taken place here, but sitting in another place Your Honour would most probably have agreed with me that judicial notice can be taken of the fact of the inaccuracy of many a newspaper report.

The proceedings are also embodied in the *Hansard*. A disadvantage, so far as the *Hansard* is concerned, is that copies of the *Hansard* are not easily available to members of the public, and, secondly, it is an acknowledged fact that many an embellishment find their way into the official copy of the *Hansard* after the typescript is sent to the speaker. I feel that members of the public must have an opportunity of hearing most, if not all, of what takes place here. The members of the public must have an opportunity of hearing the live voices, for even assuming the wider circulation of the *Hansard*, cold print can never portray or represent what can be portrayed or represented by the living voice. Of course it may be argued that such persons as are interested may attend the meetings of the Council. I do not think, however, that that argument should be seriously put forward in view of the size of the visitors' gallery, and in view of the fact that the hours during which this Council meets are hours during which the majority of working men and women are employed on their duties.

I do not expect to hear any appeal to tradition or conservatism — that it would be unbecoming of this Council and beneath its dignity that its proceedings be broadcast. I do not, however, jump a hurdle before I come to it. I shall await any such criticism of the Motion.

It is to be noted that the proceedings need not be broadcast directly—they can be tape-recorded and subse-

[MR. BURNHAM]

quently broadcast over the radio station or stations. Under the franchise under which the British Guiana United Broadcasting Company operates, Government is entitled to as much as 1½ hours per day free time. Therefore it seems to me that there should be no difficulty whatever in getting the necessary time to broadcast the debates. There may be some parts of the proceedings which are not of any particular importance — the formal parts, such as the prayers and the declaration, with all due respect, Your Honour, that the Council is properly constituted. Those things need not necessarily be broadcast, because the purpose of the Motion is to give the public, the listening public of British Guiana, an idea of what are the matters being discussed here, and what are the views expressed by their representatives, elected and nominated.

I wish, immediately before I sit, to congratulate the Government upon bringing up this Motion so early. It has taken them only five months to bring this simple Motion before the Council. It has been my experience that a Motion I tabled in 1958 has not yet come before Council, and I want to congratulate the Government upon the dispatch with which they have treated this matter, and I hope I shall find their support so far as the substantive Motion is concerned.

**Mr. Jackson:** I beg to second the Motion, reserving my right to speak at a later stage.

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to make an observation. I believe that the words slipped out of the mouth of the hon. Member for Georgetown Central when he referred to the embellishment of the *Hansard* reports, practically suggesting that there was a revised version of Members' remarks in this Legislature. As far as my knowledge goes, the only corrections that are permitted are grammatical errors and things of that kind, but nothing of substance.

**Mr. Burnham:** May I make a personal explanation, Sir? With respect, I entirely agree with Your Honour, and that is what I was referring to—grammatical corrections.

**Mr. Campbell:** I rise to express my pleasure in supporting this Motion. My constituency lies far away at the north-western end of British Guiana, and the people who live there are not a newspaper reading public. Of the 13,000 inhabitants in the North-Western District perhaps about a dozen or a few score read the newspapers, but every one of those small farmers in the creeks and along the river banks has contrived to own a radio. It is the only means of relaxation they have after a very hard day's work. They tune in their radios and listen to what is going on in Georgetown and beyond. They know nothing about the debates that take place in this Council. They have told me that they often listen to the radio broadcasts of the debates in the Legislature in Trinidad and other West Indian islands, and they wondered whether something of that kind happened in Georgetown. They have asked me to see what I can do to bring that about. I told them about four or five months ago that another legislator was bringing forward a Motion on the subject for debate, and that in time the debates in the Legislature would be broadcast.

I have ceased altogether to think about bringing Motions in this Council. I tabled a Motion last year dealing with pensions but I have heard nothing more about it. It appears that when a Motion is tabled it is locked up somewhere, and that is the end of it. Once in a while a private Member's Motion is brought up for debate, so that I do not bother to bring any more Motions. Whatever representations I have to make I make them at Ministerial or Departmental level, and in that way I have been able to get a few things done. I support the Motion.

**The Chief Secretary:** I agree that the broadcasting of debates in the Legislative Council is a valuable political

education for the electorate. There are some disadvantages, however, which have been found in other places. At some times Members tend to speak to the electorate rather than to the Motion under debate, and on other occasion, if they feel that public opinion is against a particular measure they may not speak as forcefully in support of it as they might otherwise have wished.

I know that in Trinidad the proceedings of the Legislature are recorded and broadcast, I believe, every night between 8 and 9 o'clock. As far as I know they do not broadcast matters of detail but answers to questions, debates and statements by Members of the Government.

I understand that this matter was raised in the Federation at an early stage of its life, and it has been referred to a Select Committee to determine if and how it can be done. I agree with the hon. Mover of the Motion that it would not be possible to have live broadcasts, of our meetings, because there would be a very poor listening public at the time and, therefore, arrangements would have to be made for the proceedings to be broadcast at a particular time at night.

There are numerous things that would have to be sorted out, and, I think that in this case, as has been done elsewhere, it might be most useful to refer this matter to a Select Committee. I propose, therefore, to move the following amendment to the original Motion:

"Be it resolved: That a Select Committee be appointed to consider whether the proceedings of the Legislative Council should be broadcast and, if so, in what form."

**Mr. Jackson:** The people in this country are entitled to have a knowledge of what transpires in this Council.

**Mr. Speaker:** We are now dealing with the question "That a Select Committee be appointed to consider whether the proceedings of the Legislative Coun-

cil should be broadcast and, if so, in what form".

**Mr. Jackson:** I am going to speak in opposition to that, because I feel that the original Motion should be accepted, and the appointment of a Committee to consider the details regarding how it should be done could be dealt with afterwards. I am not going to accept the Amendment to the Motion. I repeat that the people in this country are entitled to have knowledge of what transpires in this Council. We sit here from time to time as their representatives; they have chosen us because they believe that we are able to speak on their behalf. While they have faith in us in that direction, there is no way in which everything that takes place in this Council can reach them.

It is true that the newspapers make an attempt to report as best they can the proceedings of this Council, and from time to time a little bit of information reaches the public. However, if we take what the hon. Member for North Western District has just said as an example, it will be found that there are several people in the Colony who either will not take the time to read newspapers, or who cannot read but can understand what is broadcast over the radio.

I will give an example. The Government, through the Leader of the Majority Party, gives a weekly broadcast, and since this has been introduced several people have become interested in the working of the Government. Several people are now interested in the policy of the Government, and, perhaps, what transpires in this Council. I have seen several people anxiously awaiting the hour when the Press Conference is scheduled to be broadcast over the Radio Stations. I have seen them listening to the recorded account of the Press Conference with an interest which they would not demonstrate if what transpired were published in the newspapers.

Such behaviour gives me the feeling that if the proceedings of this Coun-

[MR. JACKSON]

cil were broadcast in the manner suggested by the hon. Mover of the Motion the people would not only become more alive to the affairs of the Council, but they would receive an education which they are now denied. They would be educated with respect to political matters, economic matters and all matters that are being discussed in this Council. Apart from the fact that the people will become more interested in the work of the Council, we might give others inspiration to come forward and we might produce many a politician greater in stature than many of us who are here today. It is by listening to live speeches of Members of this Council that some people will get an inspiration to come forward and do something for the benefit of the country.

It is right that the public should be given an opportunity to assess the Members of this Council who represent them, because it would help them subsequently in deciding who should represent them in future in this Council. I feel that the Motion should be accepted by this Council, and if there are any details to be worked out a Committee could be appointed for that purpose. I am hoping that hon. Members will support the original Motion.

**Mr. Bowman:** I rise to support this Motion. I am supporting it because I share the view that there are thousands of people in this country who can understand the spoken word, and several people who cannot read. Many of the people to whom I refer do not buy newspapers because they cannot read, but they have radios in their homes. Those who are unable to purchase radios but are interested in what is taking place can and do listen to their neighbour's radio. I feel that those people should be given a chance to hear what transpires in this Council. [An Hon. Member: "Give them television."] When television comes they will get it; they will also get a lot of antics from certain Members.

I know that some people are afraid to let their constituents hear what they have to say in this Council. I am not a grammarian; everybody in British Guiana knows that I am an ordinary workingman, but I express myself in the language that I know best. I am not afraid of my constituents hearing what I have to say in here. I would like to see the proceedings of this Council broadcast over the radio for the benefit of the people in this country. As I have said before, many of them cannot read, but those who can and cannot afford to purchase a newspaper or a radio can listen to their neighbour's radio. These are the handicaps with which some of the people are faced, and if the proceedings of this Council are broadcast the people will become more interested in the matter.

It must be assumed that a number of hours will be placed at the disposal of the Government, at which time the proceedings of this Council will be broadcast. As long as the people know that the proceedings of this Council will be broadcast, I am sure that they will listen to what is taking place here. For that reason I am supporting the Motion.

**Mr. Burnham** (replying): The Amendment which the hon. the Chief Secretary purported to move and which no doubt expresses his point of view is entirely unacceptable to me. His Motion or purported Amendment — I am using my language, I hope, carefully — must come from a group or a mind that is undecided.

You must have a select committee to investigate whether to decide. This Government has had this Motion for five months. Has Government not yet decided whether it is a good thing or a bad thing? What is this hide and seek about? The Government has had a clear point of view. Where are you going to select the Select Committee from? From this Council? There is nothing technical as to whether or not the principle should be accepted. I will concede that the mechanics for putting it into operation may require some technical

advice, but in Trinidad it is done. Why come here and tell us about the Federal Government deciding to send it to a Select Committee?

I know it is the officials who are opposed to this Motion, and I do not see why the Elected Government is allowing itself to be bamboozled into this line of thought. What have you got to fear? If they can broadcast it in Trinidad why cannot they broadcast it here? And I am surprised at the Elected Government allowing these officials, who are not elected by the people; who do not have to say anything to the people to keep their jobs; who are not responsible to the people but who are creatures appointed by Her Majesty's Government — and I am all the more surprised when I recall that the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry was the person who, in 1953, had suggested that loudspeakers be put on from the Legislative Council, at that time it was the House of Assembly, so that the members of the public outside could hear because the members of the public had an interest in hearing and had the right to hear.

Here, this suggestion is being implemented, if I may say so, because you will be perpetuating testimony and record and you will be able to give an opportunity to the public, at a time convenient, to hear the demonstrations of Members. In this day and age and year, before we get a constitutional change and move forward, that we should have such obscurantism from the Government Benches is unbelievable. What there can be undesirable about broadcasting Legislative Council debates? Do members of the Government fear they will be embarrassed by their inability to give forthright answers to questions? Do members of the Government fear that when, in 1951, they supported one thing, in 1960 they support another? [Noises.] Now that the murmurings are over, I shall proceed to ask whether members of the Government are afraid of what they vote for here? Are the members of the Government in the position to deny taking a certain stand? [Interruption].

As I was saying: I am not afraid of the public hearing what I say in this Council, and I do not see why any democratic Government should be afraid — and it is most disgusting to find an Amendment of this nature. If the Amendment were to the effect that there should be added to the Motion a further Clause that a Select Committee be appointed to work out the details of the implementation of the principle, I would have accepted that but, in the circumstances, I cannot for one moment agree to the Amendment. [Pause] I was going to say that the Amendment has not been seconded.

**Mr. Speaker:** It was seconded; but even if it had not been seconded I think the Orders seem to suggest that if a member of Executive Council moves a Motion it does not need a seconder. The Question is:

"Be it resolved: That a Select Committee be appointed to consider whether proceedings of the Legislative Council should be broadcast and, if so, in what form."

Question put, Council divided and voted as follows:

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Bowman	Mr. Davis
Mr. Hubbard	Mr. Jackson
Mr. Ajodha Singh	Mr. Campbell
Mr. Saffee	Mr. Burnham
Mr. Rai	
Mr. Ram Karran	
Mrs. Jagan	
Mr. Benn	
Dr. Jagan	
The Financial	
	Secretary
The Attorney-	
	General
The Chief	
	Secretary.

**Mr. Bowman:** Mr. Speaker. I misunderstood the Question that was put. Please ask it over again? [Laughter.] I misunderstood what was being put to us. I thought we were voting on the original Motion.

**Mr. Speaker:** No, we are voting on the Amendment. What are you voting for?

**Mr. Bowman:** I am against the Amendment.

**Mr. Speaker:** It shall be so recorded.

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Hubbard	Mr. Bowman
Mr. Ajodha Singh	Mr. Davis
Mr. Saffee	Mr. Jackson
Mr. Rai	Mr. Campbell
Mr. Ram Karran	Mr. Burnham—5
Mrs. Jagan	
Mr. Benn	
Dr. Jagan	
The Financial Secretary	
The Attorney-General	
The Chief Secretary—11.	

**Mr. Speaker:** The Amendment is carried. The Motion is carried as amended:

“Be it resolved: That a Select Committee be appointed to consider whether proceedings of the Legislative Council should be broadcast and, if so, in what form.”

**Mr. Burnham:** I would like to point out that if an Amendment destroys a Motion completely it is not an Amendment; it is a substantive Motion, and you cannot have it as an amendment. But the procedure is that if an Amend-

ment is carried, the Motion as amended has to be put. I agree that the Motion as amended cannot now be put because it does not make sense.

**Mr. Speaker:** What do you suggest? How should I frame it?

**Mr. Burnham:** I agree with you, with respect, that the Motion as amended cannot make sense; but I am merely submitting that the Amendment should never have been put.

**Mr. Speaker:** I shall put the Motion also. Doubts seem to have arisen. I shall put the substantive Motion:

“Be it resolved: That the proceedings of the Legislative Council be broadcast”.

Question put, Motion negatived.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Chief Secretary:** I beg to move that this Council adjourn until tomorrow, Thursday, 27th October, at 2 p.m.

*Council adjourned accordingly at five o'clock.*