

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Tuesday, 2nd February, 1960.

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. D. M. Hedges

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

Financial Secretary, Hon. F. W. Essex, C.M.G.

} *ex officio*

The Honourable Dr. C. B. Jagan	— <i>Member for Eastern Berbice</i> (Minister of Trade and Industry)
„ „ B. H. Benn	— <i>Member for Essequibo River</i> (Minister of Natural Resources)
„ „ Janet Jagan	— <i>Member for Western Essequibo</i> (Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)
„ „ Ram Karran	— <i>Member for Demerara-Essequibo</i> (Minister of Communications and Works)
„ „ B. S. Rai	— <i>Member for Central Demerara</i> (Minister of Community Development and Education).
Mr. W. O. R. Kendall	— <i>Member for New Amsterdam</i>
„ R. C. Tello	— <i>Nominated Member</i>
„ F. Bowman	— <i>Member for Demerara River</i>
„ L. F. S. Burnham	— <i>Member for Georgetown Central</i>
„ S. Campbell	— <i>Member for North Western District</i>
„ A. L. Jackson	— <i>Member for Georgetown North</i>
„ S. M. Saffee	— <i>Member for Western Berbice</i>
„ Ajodha Singh	— <i>Member for Berbice River</i>
„ Jai Narine Singh	— <i>Member for Georgetown South</i>
„ R. E. Davis	— <i>Nominated Member</i>
„ H. J. M. Hubbard	— <i>Nominated Member.</i>

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

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

ABSENT :

Mr. E. B. Beharry—Member for Eastern Demerara

Mr. R. B. Gajraj—Nominated Member—on leave

Mr. A. M. Fredericks—Nominated Member

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, 29th January, 1960, as printed and circulated were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, has asked leave to be absent from today's meeting.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, cannot attend this afternoon as he has some business at Atkinson Field.

ORDER OF THE DAY

**B.G. RICE PRODUCERS
ASSOCIATION (AMENDMENT)
BILL**

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn) is to move the Second Reading of the Bill intituled

"An Ordinance to amend the British Guiana Rice Producers Association Ordinance."

Mr. Benn: I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill to amend the British Guiana Rice Producers Association Ordinance. Since 1951, efforts have been made by the Rice Producers Association to secure amendments to the Ordinance, Chapter 250, and to the Regulations which govern this Ordinance.

When the proposals were first submitted to Government they were not all agreed on and, since 1951, discussions concerning an Amendment to this Bill have gone on at regular intervals. It was not until recently that both the Rice Producers Association and the Government have seen their way in agreeing and putting forward the Amendment to the present Ordinance.

The present Amendment makes one or two fundamental changes in the structure of the Rice Producers Association. Ordinarily, elections take place on the 15th February, each year, and after

the elections to the District Committees of the Rice Producers Association, each District Committee nominates two persons, who are described as electors, to attend a meeting in Georgetown and to elect 24 persons who shall form the Council of the Rice Producers Association. That procedure has not worked very well in the past because it has been found that persons who were not quite connected to the industry had been nominated to the Council. Some District Committees secured no representation at all on the Council of the Rice Producers Association, and this state of affairs led to considerable dissatisfaction among rice producers.

The present Bill aims at correcting that, and makes provision for direct representation through each Committee. The number of District Committees will be reduced from 13 to 12, and each District Committee will nominate to the Council of the Rice Producers Association two persons who will be appointed by the Minister instead of by the Governor.

Under the existing Ordinance the Council performs most of the functions of the Association, but in this Bill provision is made for an Executive Committee of the Association to be set up, and this Executive Committee will have the power to carry out certain acts in the name of the Council of the Rice Producers Association.

Another change in the constitution of the Council of the Association is that whereas elections to the Council take place every two years while elections to the Committee take place yearly, it is now being proposed that elections to the District Committees will be held once every two years. What has been happening in the past is that certain members of the Council who became members of the Council by virtue of their membership of District Committees, remained members of the Council even though they lost their seats as members of District Committees. The Bill seeks to correct that.

Another change in the Bill refers to the management of the affairs of the District Associations which are described as District Committees of the Rice Producers Association. The officer who is now known as District Clerk will be described as a Field Representative, and the management of the affairs of the District Associations will be vested in a Committee of seven members, a Chairman, Vice-Chairman and five other members of a District Association. I would like to direct Members' attention to an error in Clause 6 of the Bill, and to say that in the Committee stage opportunity will be taken to delete paragraph (c) of subsection (3) which states:

"(c) a Field Representative, whose duties shall include the duties of Secretary of the Committee".

In other words, the Field Representative, who is now known as District Clerk, will not be a member of a District Committee of the Rice Producers Association. As a consequence paragraph (d) of the same subsection will be amended to provide for five instead of four members of the District Association.

The Bill also makes provision for the payment of reasonable travelling and subsistence expenses incurred by members in attendance at meetings, and by officers or members of the staff of the Association who have to leave the City and go out on the business of the Association.

Opportunity will be taken during the Committee stage to amend one or two Clauses of the Bill, and there are one or two other provisions in the Bill which the hon. the Attorney-General proposes to amend.

The rice industry has become a more important industry today than it was in 1942 when the Ordinance was enacted. Small rice producers are seeking a greater voice in their own affairs, and it is not inconceivable that a Bill such as this should be brought before the Council to amend certain provisions

in the Ordinance which rice producers believe to be an injustice to them. Proposals for this amending Bill were made since 1951.

Another portion of the Bill deals with elections to the Council of the Rice Producers' Association which will consist of the Director of Agriculture and four other persons. This new arrangement provides an opportunity for the Director of Agriculture to give the Council the benefit of his expert advice, and also provides for the election of those persons who are considered capable of running the affairs of the Association. I am hopeful that hon. Members will give the Bill their unstinted support. It has been requested by the Council of the Rice Producers Association, and goes a far way towards satisfying the aspirations of the rice producers of this country. I formally move that the Bill be read a Second time.

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan): I beg to second the Motion.

The Speaker: (*after a Pause*): I do not know whether Members do this in order to unsettle me. I could never be unsettled. I have waited for some time to see if any Member wished to speak.

Mr. Bowman: For my part, Sir, knowing that there are Members who are more intimately concerned with this Bill, I thought they would have got up to speak.

The Attorney-General (Mr. Austin): Speak up; we cannot hear you!

Mr. Burnham: To a point of order! Have we a new Speaker, Sir?

Mr. Bowman: I said that in this Council there are Members who are more intimately concerned and acquainted with the Rice Producers' Association to which this Bill refers. Seeing that they neglected to get up, I have taken my chance to say a few words.

Sir, there is no doubt that this Bill is somewhat progressive, in that it is

[MR. BOWMAN]

seeking to take over from the Governor the power to nominate members of the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board and to place that power in the hands of a Minister who is the representative of the people, and I would subscribe wholeheartedly to this Bill except for the fact that it overlooks the rights of certain people who are intimately concerned. I refer to landlords and millers.

The argument might be that these people have their own representation which is adequate. A paper has been prepared by one of its members dealing with this matter of representation. Their organization is not a statutory body, and since they are also concerned with the rice industry, I think they should be included in the provisions of this Bill, which at the moment obviously excludes them.

In the past such men were represented by four landlords and five millers, but in this proposed amendment of the Ordinance these people will not be represented at all. This is wrong—their voice should be heard. They should be given an opportunity to continue to make representation. Perhaps later on I will say something further, in Committee stage.

Mr. Davis: I rise not from the prodding of the hon. Member for Demerara River, but because I hope to make a contribution to this debate that might have a bearing on the future of the industry. The hon. Minister of Natural Resources referred to the Bill before us as being fundamental to the rice industry. He went on to say that parts of the Ordinance have not worked out as well as they might because people not quite connected with the industry had got into the industry.

I do not know to whom the Minister was making reference, but I would like to say that some of the people who have got into the industry have been welcomed by the industry and in the opinion of the industry, which I share, they have made

very sound and remarkable contributions to the industry.

Let me say at the outset that there is a certain part of this amending Bill which commends itself to me completely. I refer to that section of it which seeks to introduce the constitution and powers of the executive committee. I have served on the Rice Producers' Council for two terms, and I am very proud of having done so. What are the objects of the British Guiana Rice Producers' Association? It may be well for me to refer to them at this stage. "The Rice Review", Vol. 1, No. 3., the quarterly journal of the B.G.R.P.A., states:

"The Functions of the Association are stated in Section Four of the Ordinance as follows:—

(1) The protection, promotion and advancement of the interests of rice producers generally;

(2) The proposal of any measures including co-operative schemes of all kinds conducive to the maintenance or extension of production in the industry;

(3) Representing rice producers on the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board through and by means of members of the Council appointed by the Governor to be members of the said Board in the manner provided by section four of the Rice Marketing Ordinance, No. 5 of 1946;

(4) Making representations to the Governor concerning any matter affecting production in the industry, the operations of the Rice Marketing Board and the interests of rice producers generally; and

(5) Inquiring into and reporting on any questions relating to the industry which may be referred to it by the Governor or by any Body lawfully concerned with any phase of the industry, and advising on any matter connected therewith."

The functions of the Association can no better be set out in outline. I found in my two terms of service that there was need for this executive council. The Association was constituted by 24 members, and there were matters that arose in between the quarterly meetings and which had to wait for those meetings.

I support this portion of the Bill heartily, although I would have liked to

see clearly stated the functions of the executive council — because we do not want to take from the dog too much of its head, and I submit in this case that the “dog” is the Rice Producers’ Association, and the “tail” the Executive Committee.

Howbeit, this is a step in the right direction. Clause 4 of the Bill seeks to repeal subsections (2), (3), (4), (5) and (6) of section 5 of the Principal Ordinance, and in this Clause, one of the subsections to be substituted states that

“The members of the Council shall be the Director of Agriculture or his duly authorised representative and rice producers who are appointed or elected thereto as hereinafter provided.”

Let me make one important point now. A rice producer, as I understand the term in the Rice Marketing Ordinance, can be anyone falling into the categories of rice farmer, a landlord, a miller or manufacturer. It is fundamental that it should be so, and officially recognized, because it takes the combined efforts of all these three categories to produce a bag of rice.

Subsection (3) of the proposed Section 5 of the amended Ordinance, as set out in Clause 4 of this Bill, reads

“The Committee of each District Association shall, in accordance with the provisions of the regulations, appoint one member of the Committee, (who shall be a rice farmer) to be a member of the Council and four other persons (each of whom shall be a member of a District Association) shall be elected to be members of the Council by, and at a meeting of persons appointed under the provisions of this subsection:”

It seems to me therefore that what is sought here is really a reduction of what was formerly the Rice Producers’ Association to a Rice Farmers’ Association. It would not be possible for a person who is a landlord or a person who is a miller to become part and parcel of the newly-constituted Rice Producers’ Association, and in my view that would be a retrograde step.

Let us admit that the Rice Millers Association of which I am still a member

is a body of people with a particular interest who have banded themselves together under the Trades Unions Ordinance: they are, to all intents and purposes, trade unionists, as the Minister of Communications and Works observed. I lost my seat as Vice President of the Association. But I am now an ordinary member, and I still have an over-riding interest in the Association. I therefore want to say that this legislation will be a death-blow to my union, the Landlords and Rice Millers Association. The Rice Millers Association is not a statutory body. It is an affiliate of the trades union organization. If this Ordinance sought, in connection with the members, to amend the Ordinance so that the Rice Millers Association, whether it be “Mr. A” or “Mr. B”, would have a voice on this Rice Producers Council, that would be a horse of another colour; but in its present state or form, I deem it a retrograde step in the industry.

I would ask the Minister of Natural Resources whether this proposed Amendment has had the blessing of the Rice Producers Association and of the District Associations, because I have enquired in the districts and members of the District Associations have informed me that they were unaware of the change — this fundamental change, to use the words of the hon. Minister of Natural Resources — which is being sought by the Amendment.

I would next like to draw the attention of hon. Members to subsection 9 of Clause 4 of this same Ordinance. It says this :

“The Council may appoint some fit and proper person to be General Secretary of the Association and such other officers and servants of the Association as may be necessary, and may pay any person so appointed such remuneration out of the funds of the Association as the Council considers adequate, and may dismiss any such person.”

In the present Rice Producers Association Ordinance, it is stated clearly what are the duties of the General Secretary. It goes on to say that the General Secretary shall not be dismissed by the

[MR. DAVIS]

Council without the approval of the Governor. I have had an actual experience of this particular phase of the Ordinance and I think this Amendment would be, in effect, a colossal breach of faith, in the sense that when the post of General Secretary was determined, it was stated that the General Secretary of the Rice Producers Association would have status comparable with the Secretary of the B.G. Rice Marketing Board as his terms of employment were somewhat similar. It was felt that this Clause regarding his dismissal only with the expressed wish of the Governor was vital, and it was part of my experience to see the necessity of this part of the Ordinance.

There was once a General Secretary of the Association who had got into conflict with certain executive officers of the then association. He was told to do a certain thing in a certain manner and he felt, whether rightly or wrongly, that it was in conflict with the duties of the General Secretary; that it showed certain partisanship. He refused and, as a result, there was a strenuous effort to have him removed and to substitute another individual. At that meeting, at which I was present, we were able to point out to the Council the wrong attitude that had been adopted, and the matter was resolved. But it occurred to me — and it left an indelible impression on my mind — that this Clause was substantial, vital and necessary.

We have tried, through the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, to secure a tenure of the land to tenants so that the rice farmers would be able to earn a comfortable living — a reasonable living — and not be subjected to being thrown off the land, indiscriminately. Now that we have gone to a great deal of trouble to get security of tenure for the rice farmer, to my judgment, it would be necessary for us to offer the person who is engaged as General Secretary of the Association or Secretary of the Rice Marketing Board the same security of tenure with his job. I would offer this as a suggestion:

that rather than it be “subject to the approval of the Governor,” that the words “subject to the approval of the Governor in Council” be substituted. That, I think, would give a greater measure of security to the individuals concerned.

This Bill also seeks, at Clause 5, the submission to the Minister of the names of eight members of the Council for consideration as members of the Rice Marketing Board. It seems to me that this is a move in the right direction by the Member who has charge of this particular industry. But I want to put this suggestion to the hon. Minister of Natural Resources: that a panel of 12 names be submitted to the Minister so that he may select eight persons whom he thinks best qualified to serve on the Rice Marketing Board. I, in making this suggestion, am looking ahead. There may be a day — and I hope my remarks may be construed in the manner in which they are made — when a person who is entirely disconnected with the rice industry may be the Minister concerned, and here would be this Council saying that we want these eight names and these eight names only. There may be eight names—completely rice farmers.

It can be, too, that the 12 names submitted would be completely rice farmers, but I think the Minister should have the right to examine the panel and select from the panel the eight names whom he thinks would best serve the industry. I am supported in this argument by the argument put forward last week or the week before by the hon. Minister of Communications and Works who said, in this Council, that he had told a certain organization to submit a panel of names to him and that organization had acted quite wrongly in only submitting to him the number which was required for that particular committee. So I feel that in making this suggestion to the Government I will find strong support coming from my friends on the other side of the Table.

The Minister's statement that he proposed to delete subsection (3) of

Clause 6 has left me rather confused.

Mr. Benn: I said I proposed to move the deletion of paragraph (c) of subsection (3) which seeks to include the Field Representative as a member of the Committee. I do not propose to delete the whole subsection.

Mr. Davis: We are *ad idem*. This is a fundamental change. In the present Ordinance provision is made for the election of six members of a District Committee who meet under the Chairmanship of the Secretary of the Rice Producers Association and do two things. They elect (a) their executive officers—the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and the Secretary—and (b) they elect two electors who eventually constitute the Rice Producers Association with other categories of rice producers.

It is conceded that there has been some trouble in this particular phase of the Ordinance because we have had stalemates, and at times the General Secretary of the Rice Producers Association has had to use his casting vote. Sometimes we in the districts have felt that these stalemates were created so that the Secretary could use his authority. A Field Secretary is a paid servant of the Association, a paid servant of the industry. Let us not forget that at no time have the General Secretary or the District Clerks, when they sit on their respective District Associations, had the right to exercise their votes one way or another. They make recommendations or suggestions but the elected members of the District Association make the decisions.

I want to impress upon the Government and hon Members of this Council that the Rice Producers Association is a statutory body and, as such, I think we should give it the status it deserves. I therefore heartily agree with the Government that the election of District Committees should be biennial to coincide with the election of the Council of the Rice Producers Association, because it has been very awkward and disconcerting

to find that a man who one year had the confidence of the rice producers and of his confreres on the Council of the Association and could be made a member of the Rice Marketing Board may, the following year, lose his seat on the District Committee. I support wholeheartedly the Government's effort to correct what could be regarded as an anomaly, and I agree that the rice producers should have a greater voice in the control of the industry.

Do not let us mix the affairs of the industry with the affairs of the Government. I recognize the good work that is being done by the Government for the benefit of the industry, and I am very sincere in that expression of opinion, but we also have to think of the day when there may be a change of Government, and so make provision for all these possibilities. I hope I have been able to explain to hon. Members who perhaps are not as conversant with the working of the Rice Producers' Association as I happen to be, certain aspects of the Bill as they present themselves to me.

Mr. Tello: I am certainly grateful to the hon. Member who has spoken with a vast amount of knowledge and experience and made much clearer to me many points because of his intimate connection with the industry. But I do not agree with him that there should be an amendment of the Ordinance to provide for the submission of a panel of names of members of the Rice Producers Association to the Minister for appointment as representatives on the Rice Marketing Board.

If it is the desire to give the members of the Rice Producers Association greater responsibility in running the business of the industry, why leave the final selection to a Minister of the Government who may not be intimately connected with the industry, or whose primary duty is as a Minister of the Government? I feel that any organization should have the right to decide who is best suited to represent it on another body.

[MR. TELLO]

I agree with the hon. Member for Demerara River that we should have some information as to the effect of the change of the constitution of the Rice Producers' Association, because one can see that when the Ordinance was being framed a tremendous amount of thought was put into it, and that it was recognised that to have the industry stabilized and developed to what it is today it needed the closest co-operation between the three great sectors; the manufacturers, the landlords and the rice farmers. The Sugar Producers' Association can be taken as an example of successful co-operation in this respect.

In the "four other rice producers" to be appointed as members of the Council of the Association, millers and landlords can be represented, but we must face facts. There is no provision in the Regulations that only millers shall elect millers and only landlords shall elect landlords. They are all subject to the open vote of all rice producers, and each category feels that it should have one of its own to represent it. For instance, it is only natural that a rice farmer would give his vote to a fellow rice farmer in preference to a miller or landlord. If the amendment in this Bill is passed one can almost see the Rice Producers' Association being converted into a Rice Farmers' Association and, in my humble opinion, to the detriment of the industry.

It is quite true that the landlords and millers can organize themselves into their own associations, but the rice farmers also have that right, and instead of having a Rice Producers' Association there would be a Rice Farmers' Association, a Landlords' Association and a Millers' Association, and they could voluntarily get together and decide major issues in the industry. But that is not the object of the Principal Ordinance, nor even of this Bill. The whole idea behind the Bill is to give greater representation to those engaged in the rice industry, and undoubtedly all three cate-

gories are extremely important to the success of the industry. I seem to think that there must have been some genuine understanding and real co-operation between them that today we have the rice industry occupying such an important position in the life and economy of this country.

Like my friend, the hon. Member for Demerara River, I plead with the Minister to give some consideration to a further amendment of the proposed Amendment so that there can be an assurance of continuance of the local representation as provided in the Principal Ordinance.

The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran): I have listened to the contributions made by my friends on the other side, and while it was not my intention to speak very lengthily on this fairly simple Bill, still I would like to make a few points, particularly with respect to the contribution of the hon. Members.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, has expressed concern over the provision under which officers employed by the Association would be dismissed or disciplined. Subject to correction by the hon. Mover, it is the intention to replace these few words which would qualify the dismissal of this particular officer, the General Secretary, subject to the approval of the Governor. But I do wish to add that the time is long past when organizations — and I support the view of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello — should not be able to assume the responsibility of taking action against an employee without going to the Governor. The Governor has many other duties to perform, and I am sure that responsible organizations should be able to say whether an officer should be dismissed or disciplined.

Of course, my friend, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, has been a member of the Association for some years. I know he is very experienced in it, and he is probably talking

from experience. In the past there has been quite a lot of experience of people getting into the Association because of outside influence and so forth. I can assure the hon. Member that that will not happen, and cannot happen in the future. He describes it as a breach of faith, and I gather from the Mover that this will be done, but I do want to emphasize that we simply have to take out all these irrelevancies and anachronisms from future Bills and allow the Council to carry on as it should.

I think Mr. Davis, speaking on Clause 6 was slightly misled in referring to subsection (3) (c) and confused "Field Representative" with "Field Secretary". I gather that the two functions are different.

However, I noted that Mr. Davis supported parts of the Bill being brought into force. For a number of years, since 1952, as the hon. Member is fully aware, the Association has been trying to get amendments made to this Ordinance, but unfortunately these amendments never reached the Legislature. The present system, supported by Mr. Tello, allows for District Committees. Two members from each Committee are sent down as electors to the Georgetown office, and these people decide who would be the 24 members of the Board. Very often we find people who did not have the guts to face the electorate being returned as members of the General Council and of the Rice Marketing Board. In other cases they found themselves there because of "things behind the door". It is a very bad system, and this legislation will bring the Association more on its toes and more within the interests of rice producers.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, made a claim for the retention of the system whereby the rice producers are divided into three categories — rice farmers, rice millers and rice landlords. It is true that this Ordinance which we are seeking to amend has so arranged it, but if one follows the argument behind it to a logical conclusion, one would soon have included the people who cut rice in

the field, and at some future date you would see rice-eaters being also recognized.

The mistake, if you can call it that, came about with the drafting of the Ordinance. The Ordinance was enacted during World War II when Government thought it was necessary to set up a Rice Marketing Board to take care of the needs of the West Indian consumers—a single buying and marketing agency. Since it was set up under Defence Regulations it was necessary to establish organizations for the millers and landlords—the producers. Everybody knows that in those days the farmers were badly organized and the people who in fact had the greatest say were the millers; and in order to bring about a system acceptable to the noisy people these categories were included. The Association was dominated by millers and landlords.

This, however, is not the reason why this Bill seeks to have them all in one category. I think we can do no better than open the membership and give equal representation to all sections of the industry without having to limit the representation of farmers, landlords or millers. Very often you will find that people who are really interested and who can make a contribution to the industry cannot find themselves in the organization because of statutory requirements which limit them to identification with one category or another. It would not be fair for us to continue in that way because the origin of it was misconceived. It had to be, at that time, because of the fact that it was brought in under the Defence Regulations.

My friend refers to the Association of Sugar Producers in the West Indies. I am sure that he would agree with me that that organization, a representation of all the people in the West Indies, is not a statutory organization but a voluntary one. Perhaps, at a later stage, it might be necessary to dispose altogether of this Ordinance and allow rice producers, landlords, millers and farmers to take care of their own industry.

Mr. Jackson: It appears to me, now, that the hon. Minister of Communications and Works has given a very clear justification for the repeal of the Ordinance instead of this Amendment. One would have thought that with his knowledge of the industry, as he has put forward this afternoon, he would have strongly disagreed with the Amendment which has been put forward for our consideration, and would have urged that the whole Ordinance should be repealed to provide the people, who take part in the production of rice, with a voluntary organization.

He indicated that the Ordinance, which this Bill now proposes to amend, was brought up during the War, and that the Defence Regulations made it compulsory for us to put it on our Statute Book. Now that the War which brought about this Ordinance has ended so many years ago, it is clear to me that there is no need for us to have this Ordinance on our Statute Book. He has admitted that because of its creation as part of the Defence Regulations, there were limits put upon the people who should be members of that Association; and because of this fact these people, who ought to have a right in saying how the industry should be run, have not been given that right or cannot exercise that right.

Mr. Ram Karran: I did not say that.

Mr. Jackson: He said because there had been limitations by virtue of the Ordinance, there cannot be every category or every category cannot be part of this Association. If, therefore, the man who is employed as a planter of rice is also part of the producing factor of the rice industry, then that person ought to have a say as to how the industry is to be run. It is a modern concept in industry where not only the employer or entrepreneur has the say as to how an industry is to be run, but also the worker who sits down today around the table and plans with the employer what are the conditions and disadvantages which the industry has to

face. It is clear, therefore, that this attempt to amend the Ordinance is not in keeping with modern concepts in industrial development or industrial concerns. It is part and parcel of an archaic practice. I would have thought that this Government would have become more modernized. With all I know of their claims of being progressive and modern and to have war-time repressions removed, they should have come here and said, today, that we are removing this Ordinance completely because it inhibits the activities of the people who take part in the industry.

I am somewhat puzzled over the fact that they are using two terms here; one is the "rice producer" and the other the "rice farmer", and I shall be happy to have the definition of these two terms. Does it indicate that if I have enough money to go into the rice industry — buy 2,000 acres of land, employ a manager and labourers for the purpose of cultivating my land—that I can be a rice producer? Does it indicate that a man who has never planted rice before but who has money and can engage in the industry by employing labour, is one of the persons whom they have in mind as being a rice producer? If that is the case, then it is taking or it is introducing something which the Government, as members of a political party, have, from time to time, been condemning. They had been condemning large land owners who have never produced anything but who, because of their money—that is the impression I have of the politicians of that party—held indirect interest in the industry.

It is possible, under this Bill, for a man who has a lot of money to invest in rice, to call himself a rice producer.

Mr. Benn: To a point of order. I thought the hon. Member saw the Chapter dealing with the definition of "rice producer"?

Mr. Jackson: I raised the point on account of what the Minister said—that the Ordinance limits the number of cate-

gories of people who ought to be and who can be in the industry, and I am only projecting the point which seems to be part and parcel of the Government's policy. I feel the time has come when this Ordinance should be repealed and should not be kept on the Statute Book of the Colony, for the very reason which the Minister of Communications and Works has just stated — that it was a war-time measure and it inhibits the activities of the people in the industry. And I trust that the Government would not proceed with this Amendment, but have the entire Ordinance repealed.

It appears to me that if you have an Association which has elected officers to the Council, the appointment by the Governor in Council is wrong. There again, it is another inhibition of the activities of the people who are engaged in the industry; and I am somewhat disappointed in the fact that this Government by this Amendment, is attempting to or is maintaining an irregular procedure, thus negating the rights of the people to choose who they want to serve their interests. It is better, from what I have said, if there is no election at all to the Council, to let the Minister choose for himself those who ought to be on the Board or the Council. If he has the last word to make the appointment, then he is the person who has to determine who should be a member of the Board or the Council. I feel that keeping this inhibition or still maintaining this attitude which prevents the people from having a final say on the Board or Council, is something which is wrong and it should not be in the Ordinance. Perhaps, in the Committee stage, we might be willing to amend the proposition so that the people should make their own elections without the interference by the Governor in Council or the Minister in charge.

The next point is: I see in the Executive Committee, provision is made for only five persons — the President, two Vice-Presidents and two other members—who will be in the Council. As one

who has been very long in an association, I feel that the number "two" is inadequate to the number "three" — that is, the President and two Vice Presidents as against two members—for you will not be able, under the circumstances, to balance the policy of the organization or the industry. I make this point even stronger because with respect to the District Committees, you provide for seven while on the Central Executive, you provide for five. Perhaps, that is an oversight and I wonder if the Minister would see that there is something wrong in keeping the Central Executive to be governed by two officers and two members of the Council while in the District Committee he has seven people, three of whom are the Chairman, Vice Chairman and a Field Representative and four other members of the Council. That is more in keeping with what it ought to be, and I suggest that he seeks to provide for more ordinary members on the Council as against three primary officers.

I understand that the Minister of Communications and Works raised a very important point, and I think it was the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, who replied that, perhaps, the industry will be more mechanized in the future. We are seeing that that is the trend, but my answer to that would have been that while the rice cutter has a claim to take part in the planning and policy of the industry, he cannot do so because of the fact that there is no continuity of movement, for today he is there and tomorrow he is gone—unlike other industries where there is more regular employment, and where people can be assured that they will spend say 10 years in one industry.

It is clear in my mind that this entire proposal is contrary to what ought to be, and I am satisfied that in view of what the Minister of Communications and Works has said, Government should decide to defer further consideration of this Bill with a view to its being withdrawn.

The Minister of Trade and Industry
(Dr. Jagan): I think that certain points

[DR. JAGAN]

need to be clarified because there is, apparently, quite a great deal of confusion about this matter. There are two principles which are sought to be established in this Bill. Firstly, there is the question of representation. In the existing Ordinance provision is made for elections in districts from which 26 electors are chosen, who then go to a central point to elect a Council of 24 members. The Council of 24 members is not chosen in keeping with the democratic wishes of the people in a particular district or with the idea of giving any area representation. Therefore this Bill seeks first of all to allow each District Committee to appoint its own member who will then become a member of the Council. In other words, each one of the 12 districts will have a direct voice in the Council. I think it will be agreed that this is an improvement on the present practice.

I think Members have raised some doubt as to the position of the District Committees. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, who has considerable experience in this matter, raised some doubt about the District Clerk, now to be known as a Field Representative, having a direct voice on the Committee, not only in the matter of speaking but also in the matter of voting. I think the Minister has already indicated that an amendment is to be made to the Bill to delete the provision whereby a Field Representative would have the right to vote in a District Committee. The hon. Member knows that there have been deadlocks resulting from the fact that there are only six members on each District Committee. As a result the General Secretary had to intervene on many occasions to resolve those deadlocks. Whenever there was a tie in the voting—three on each side—the General Secretary had to be called to make a decision, and this, obviously, led to a great deal of dissatisfaction and charges that the General Secretary was being partial in casting his vote one way or the other.

That is the reason why an amendment is being sought to provide for the election of an additional member to the District Committees, so that there will be seven instead of six members. I feel that in future this change is likely to work much more satisfactorily, and I am sure the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, will agree with the proposal of the Minister.

As I see it, the fundamental criticism which has been raised is the one dealing with the exclusion of landlords and millers from the provisions in the Ordinance. The others are criticisms dealing with the mechanics—how the organization will work. Let me deal with the criticisms by the hon. Member for Georgetown North. He referred to the modern practice in industry of co-operation between management and labour, and the tendency to allow workers to have a bigger say in the management of industrial enterprises. That is certainly something which we who champion the working-class have always agitated for, but it has not yet been fully recognized and accepted by the employers.

We know that in this country, for instance, if you make mention of a Management Council, whether in an advisory or an executive capacity, you will no doubt be thrown out of the window. Be that as it may, however, the point is that it is a practice to which employers are slowly coming around to accept, but we are far away from making it a recognized principle.

In any case it is a far different story from saying that workers should participate in the management of industry, and on the other side of the coin suggesting that landlords should have a big or perhaps an equal say in the affairs of the rice industry. In industrial concerns the bosses have the whip in hand. The hon. Member is supposed to be fighting for the working-class, therefore it is quite reasonable to expect that he will fight for workers' representation in an industrial set-up, but here we are dealing with an entirely different situa-

tion. We know that this is a producers' organization, and we know that there have been conflicts between landlords and tenants. We read about them every day in the newspapers, and in some cases Magistrates have had to decide one way or the other. That is one of the main reasons why it was felt that it should be strictly a farmers' association, as in that way we can remove the conflict of interests between landlords and tenants.

Hon. Members may not agree, but what happens in the case of a tenant having difficulties with his landlord? He goes to the General Secretary of the Association, the District Clerk, the District Committee or to the General Council of the Association. Whose side is the Association to champion? Is it to sit on the fence and be neutral? That is the problem which has faced this organization for many years. In fact, in the early days of the Association when members were appointed, and later when they were even democratically elected, we found that the weight of representation was very much on the landlords and millers' side. But today, when provision has been made for democratic elections, the farmers have a big say in the elections, and the Rice Producers' Association has become, to all intents and purposes, a farmers' association. So much so that the landlords and millers' representatives on that body have more or less taken the line that they have no voice in the Association.

So we say: let us remove the conflict of interests, evidence of which we see every day in the Courts. There is now a Millers and Landlords' Association. Whether it is a statutory body or not does not matter. What is important is the recognition which that body gets from the Government. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, knows as a fact that for many years previous Administrations never gave due regard or recognition to the Millers and Landlords' Association. It was the present Administration which for the first time gave that Association recognition, and it is a known fact that

it has one or two representatives on the Governor's Rice Committee. What we want are virile organisations. Let the millers and landlords have their own organization and be as virile as possible. On the other hand let the farmers have their own organization to protect their interests. In that way we would not have the stalemates we have had for many years in the District Committees and in the headquarters of the Rice Producers' Association. The representatives of millers and landlords who are members of the Council of the Association have said that to all intents and purposes the Rice Producers' Association has become a farmers' association. Therefore, this Bill merely seeks to make *de jure* what exists *de facto* at the moment. It does not take away rights, but puts the Association on a basis where it can work properly, for the purpose for which it was created.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: One little point here: it seems that the hon. Member feels that landlords and millers are fighting for themselves. They are contributors to the rice industry as rice producers; in fact the millers are the people whom it was felt had financed the industry and helped it along. Since the Rice Producers' Association is not a statutory body and is receiving financial aid for its maintenance and for organizational purposes from the Rice Marketing Board I do not see why the landlords and millers, who have a part to play in the industry, should not be placed on a similar footing and be able to bargain as rice producers themselves bargain.

I have here a document dated 2nd February, 1960 and signed by Sardar Singh, Secretary of the B.G. Rice Millers and Landlords Association, and the concluding part of it states:

"Our grounds therefore is that, if the Government refuses to allow the Rice Millers and Landlords continuance of their adequate representation on the Council and the Rice Marketing Board, then the Rice Millers and Landlords association must be made a statutory body to represent its members."

[MR. JAI NARINE SINGH]

I do not think that making the Association a statutory body is going to be enough; they must have all the assistance which will help to keep the organization virile. Government should devise some means whereby millers and landlords—who play a very important part in the progress of the industry—should receive some assistance from the Board as the Rice Producers' Association is doing; and instead of there being a conflict of interests between the rice producers, millers and landlords and their organizations functioning separately, maybe they can co-ordinate their efforts and work out some *modus vivendi*. Government would be well advised to see that something is done.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry has spoken and I do not wish to exercise my right of reply.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Mr. Benn: I wish to ask this Council that further consideration of this Bill be deferred in order to allow Government the opportunity to prepare further amendments to it.

Agreed to.

Further consideration of the Bill deferred.

B.W.I.A.: WITHDRAWAL OF PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT PROPOSED

Mr. Speaker: The next item is the Motion standing in the name of the hon. Member for Georgetown South, as follows:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends to Government the withdrawal of preferential treatment to the British West Indian Airways and the establishment of Atkinson Field as a port of call for as many airlines as may wish to call there."

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: In moving this Motion I wish to say that I think it is in the general interest of the people of this country, the development of the country, tourism and the general welfare of all concerned.

Many of the ladies and gentlemen in this Chamber and hon. Members of this Council have had, I am sure, experience in travelling from British Guiana to Trinidad by British West Indian Airways, either to visit that Island itself or to join ships or B.O.A.C. for the United Kingdom. In which case, what are we, as citizens, confronted with in the way of B.W.I.A. aircraft? We have to travel in old Dakotas, DC4s and DC3s, some as old as 25 years, no pressurized cabins, fit for cattle to travel in. As a matter of fact one is afraid to put one's nose into them, much more to put one's body into them in order to travel. Those are the naked, stark facts that strike us.

It becomes all the more obvious when one reaches Trinidad to find at the airfield DC7s capable of carrying 100 passengers, equipped with properly pressurized cabins. It makes you feel as though you came from some backward country, some completely undeveloped country where citizens are still walking about half-naked. You get into these Dakotas and you are soon boiling. You are only anxious to get to where you are going.

Yet that is not all the inconvenience you suffer. The B.W.I.A. does not have what might be termed a replacement plane for use when other planes are under repair or cannot travel on schedule. They have a limited number of craft, and we are wedged into that number.

The experience I had on my last trip from Port of Spain to Georgetown was this. I arrived on one day to travel the next day. I could not leave the next day because there was no replacement plane and about 50 passengers had to wait. Passengers came to the airport and had to go back to their homes at their own expense. It meant another day in Trinidad, at \$16 a day if you had an air-

conditioned room at a popular hotel, not counting meals, which would cost another \$15. The next thing was that we were to leave at nine the next morning by a Britannia aircraft; but this plane would leave at eleven o'clock instead, we later learnt by telephone. I checked in at ten. They told me to check again at one, as the plane was delayed. I checked at one o'clock and they said that the plane would definitely be leaving at three o'clock. That was, of course, the second day. At five minutes to three, passengers boarded the plane. I was suddenly told, "You cannot go; the situation is this, we are overcrowded." I said "Take my baggage off". The Britannia started to run from one end of the runway to the other, and came back, to a standstill. It did not leave until five o'clock. I took a chance at travelling at five o'clock not knowing what would be the destiny of the passengers. We did, however, arrive. It is a sad state of affairs for this country's future.

Another experience I had was when I arrived at Piarco airport and found a man coming from Mexico to dismantle a sugar factory in B.G. This man was told that he could not travel for another three days because there was no booking available. That engineer had a sour face over his plight. In his effort to get to British Guiana he would have to wait three days! What sort of impression is created in the minds of people coming to British Guiana?

Furthermore, the planes we have to struggle with are piston-type and twin-engined, and I think B.W.I.A. are doing a disservice to the people of British Guiana, because they do not apparently wish that British Guiana should become part of their link. We are a mere feeder service. It is as if you have a Georgetown-Rosignol railway, and at Enmore you have a feeder line, and this feeder line brings the sugar and also feeds the main line to Georgetown.

The B.O.A.C. to a large degree control the B.W.I.A., and still we are

served with these "cattle" planes. I have travelled through many countries, but I have never, even travelling internally, seen such dilapidated instruments of aviation. Each time I have to travel by them my heart cries out: when will Guiana see in its true sense the greatness that awaits it? These planes hardly ever leave on scheduled time and they are always breaking down. I do not know which Government is responsible, whether it is the Trinidad, the British Guiana or the United Kingdom Government, or B.O.A.C.—all I know is, the sufferers are the people of British Guiana, and the country of British Guiana.

This Motion really seeks to find a way out, so that our people will be relieved and their material welfare would be taken care of. Outside of these planes not being suitable for passenger service, if not British Guiana, the peoples of British Guiana are treated with very scant courtesy at Piarco, by the B.W.I.A. officers. The same treatment is not meted out to you when you travel by Air France or by Pan American World Airways. I feel that they should not treat the people of British Guiana in the way they are treating them. It is time that some voice speak out so that the authorities understand we will not tolerate this any longer and that we are trying to seek a solution towards that end.

I now come to another important matter. The fare to Trinidad is \$136. The fare to New York, return, is just a little over \$500. The fare to Caracas and back is \$210 and to go to Port-of-Spain is \$136—a difference of \$74. I am just showing how unfair B.W.I.A. are treating the people of British Guiana. Because they control the passenger service from British Guiana to Trinidad they have kept the price up in the skies. I feel that this nonsense of taking advantage of the people of British Guiana must be stopped somehow.

B.W.I.A., are a vital service operating from British Guiana to Trini-

[MR. JAI NARINE SINGH]

dad, and are a subsidiary, to a high degree of B.O.A.C. British Guiana is contributing, to some degree, to the maintenance of this airline, as well as the West Indian Islands. But B.O.A.C. have inveigled British Guiana into becoming part of a losing transaction. They have placed on our shoulders old aircraft, condemned and unfit for service. We have the DC4 which has become obsolete. The DC7 is passing out and we have now, jet aircraft. Yet, we still have to carry B.O.A.C. on our shoulders. It will have to be the responsibility of the Government to do something in this matter.

I want to say, in some degree, there is repugnancy between the West Indian Islands controlling the traffic and ourselves, and that is in the tourist trade. Trinidad stands to benefit by keeping the tourists in Trinidad and not allowing them to come to British Guiana. British Guiana, it is well known, has not got a deep harbour. The means of communication is either by air or by sea. We are spending, at the present moment, \$45,000 on the tourist trade. Actually, that is \$45,000 thrown down the drain. We do not attract a single tourist by spending the \$45,000. I say there is repugnancy as far as the tourist trade is concerned, when we take into consideration that Trinidad would prefer to keep the tourists in that country and let the money be spent there, and that we have no deep harbour for ships to come here but have "cattle" 'planes to bring people — "cattle" 'planes which people are saying they would not risk their lives in. One of these days there is going to be disaster by 'plane after 'plane crashing. Those DCs are piston-engine 'planes. There is going to be mourning and loud shouting—but let that be the responsibility of those who have to make that decision.

On this question of a deep harbour: our country's prestige is at stake. Whenever anyone has to come to this country a small craft has to be used. I want to show that behind all this picture you have the British Government. The British Government, through the Foreign Office,

controls every aircraft, military or otherwise, that calls at our airport. They have regulations which are not in the interest of the colonies they control, or the people, but in the interest of Britain and the peoples of Britain. I am going to say this: in a recent incident when the people of Jamaica were seriously prejudiced by the British Government, they took action in the matter. I am sure it came through the various international news agencies.

When the Panam jet service was introduced between New York and Santo Domingo bringing tourists to Montego Bay twice or three times a week, the British Government said that that should not take place. A Minister of the Government made a statement saying that that should be. The great power which rules the colonies still prevails and we see some substituted service has taken place. The B.O.A.C. have taken over that service. But the B.O.A.C. have an inadequate service. The people of the United States of America felt satisfied and were sure of their lives, and there were talks that they prefer Panam as it was safer in the transaction. Has Britain suffered? No, she has gained. The people who have suffered are really the people of Jamaica. That is something in which the people of Britain have no right. They have stepped on the heads of the poor Jamaicans. Not that the people of Jamaica cannot fight for themselves. Not that we cannot fight for ourselves. The time will come when we will fight for our rights.

We would like to see more employment in this country. We would like to see more development in this country, but can we see more development and more employment unless people with capital come to see our country and its potentialities? How will they come? Rarely any ship would come to this country on its own. That was a matter of the past when dozens of people came on the old Canadian ships, the "Lady Hawkins" and the "Lady Drake". Since those ships have disappeared we have had ships coming

here but they only carry passengers from this country to Trinidad or Europe. We are suffering in the matter of tourism because of what has taken place in this very important matter.

I have heard a recent statement made here by Sir Jock Campbell. Sir Jock Campbell, though he lives outside of the Colony and though he may be regarded as an expatriate to British Guiana, nevertheless, has certain vested interests which are bound to be of importance to him in this country. Only eight or 10 days ago he held a Press conference. I do not like to quote him, but I checked at his office here, to make sure that I am not misquoting him. This is what he said:

"I for one believe it would be a disaster if British Guiana did not have an international airport. I think the fact that people coming to this country in twin-engined aeroplanes have to change in Port-of-Spain into second-rate 25-year-old aeroplanes gives investors the thought that this is not a place worthy of investing in."

That was Sir Jock Campbell speaking to the people of British Guiana as representing the investors in the largest commercial concern in this country. He was speaking to the Government and the people of this country.

This Motion lapsed from the previous Session of this Legislature and has now come up in this Session. I am very happy that I have had some support from a quarter I least expected it to come from, an important industrialist and capitalist, a person with great vested interests in British Guiana, Sir Jock Campbell. We have passed the age of the piston engine and have now reached the jet age of aircraft. We no longer travel at 300 miles per hour; jet aircraft are now travelling at 500 miles per hour. Distance and frontiers no longer exist as barriers between nations. Consequently I feel that Government would be well advised to think of making our airport capable of accommodating jet aircraft. Its runway is only 9,000 ft. while modern jet planes require a runway of 12,000

ft. The other day an aircraft of Aerolinas Argentinas touched down at Atkinson Field and it seemed that our people had seen a vision. We must re-condition our airport to accommodate modern aircraft carrying 100 passengers.

I feel that something tangible must be done in this direction. In my travels abroad I have always kept my eyes open. In Panama they had to extend their airfield by 3,000 ft. in order to accommodate jet airlines. In British Guiana we have Atkinson Field which belongs to the United States Government, but I am sure that if this Government approached that Government with a request to extend the runway by another 3,000 ft. for our mutual benefit such a proposition would be favourably considered. Instead, I understand that Government is considering the construction of an airport in the vicinity of Ogle on the East Coast. Members of the Government who have travelled are aware of the disasters that have occurred in other countries as a result of aircraft flying over populated areas. Idlewild airport is about 25 miles from New York. I feel that we must go very carefully into matters of this kind. Air travel is our lifeline at the moment until we have a deep water harbour, and we must do something about establishing an airport as a showpiece. As Guianese we have reason to be ashamed of our airport. There are magnificent airports in North, South and Central America, but we are still lagging 100 years behind those countries.

I have made every effort to get information from the Immigration authorities as to the number of persons who travel to and from British Guiana by aircraft, but I have not been able to get the correct figures. I understand that between 15,000 and 16,000 persons travel in and out of the country by air. If we have to travel by air we want to travel with some degree of security. Do B.W.I.A. offer us such security? It has been said that we have not a sufficient number of passengers to attract other airlines. There could not be a

[**MR. JAI NARINE SINGH**]

greater falsehood than that. There are many airlines which do not call here because they cannot. Why shouldn't this country be the terminal for large aircraft instead of Trinidad? What has Trinidad got that British Guiana has not got? We have tremendous land space.

I have had the assurance in personal conversations with representatives of a large number of airlines, that they would call at our airport but for the restriction imposed by the British Government on foreign aircraft coming here. That is why, when we speak of independence and we do not have control of foreign affairs, we are still one of the most dependent countries. Our very lifeblood is controlled from outside. As I have seen at other airports, I would like to see aircraft landing or taking off from Atkinson Field every ten minutes. It would mean more employment for our people at the airport and generally it would be to the advantage of the country.

Mr. Bowman: I would crave your indulgence, Sir, to make a statement on a matter of grave importance. I heard that this Council will be meeting informally to discuss the question of selecting people to go to England—

Mr. Speaker: Are you seconding this Motion?

Mr. Bowman: I am asking your permission to make a statement.

Mr. Speaker: Well, make it at the close of this particular debate this afternoon.

Mr. Hubbard: I beg to second the Motion, and I reserve my right to speak.

Mr. Tello: I would like to place on record my sympathy with the Motion, while admitting that its terms would be difficult to implement because of existing international arrangements. In the United States preference is given to the

American airlines to fly to the American territories. Our good friend, K.L.M. has similar preference in the Dutch territories. In spite of that, I am very much opposed to monopolies, and I admire the open competition in America, which has the effect of producing the best service to passengers. And it would appear that the airlines there are still paying concerns.

I am not supporting the idea that the DC3s are obsolete, because they are still flying them in the United States. I think the time has come for us to raise our small voice in an effort to remove some unfortunate arrangements in regard to cabotage, and as B.W.I.A. enjoys monopoly rights, this is the time for them to offer us better services, and give us free option as to the choice of airlines we would like to fly with.

Mr. Ram Karran: I have listened with keen attention to the criticisms of hon. Members who spoke to this Motion, and I wish to say, or rather, set out the position as it affects us in British Guiana in relation to the British West Indian Airways. I think it is generally accepted that the standard of services provided by B.W.I.A. can be improved, that we should have more Viscount flights than we are getting at the moment and that the number of DC3s should be reduced.

Government has on several occasions drawn to the attention of the officials of the B.W.I.A. the type of service we should really get.

The fact remains, however, that we would have to build up our travelling population if bigger planes are to land here. We enjoy a feeder service from the terminus of the B.O.A.C. service at Piarco, which is run by British West Indian Airways in accordance with an Agreement signed by the various Territories of the West Indies and British Guiana, laying down conditions under which it should work. The hon. Member who moved the Motion referred to cabotage and the facilities which B.W.I.A.

enjoys but not to the facilities which this territory obtains from the B.W.I.A. service. Perhaps the hon. Member is not aware of the Agreement which was signed in 1956, and which comes to an end after five years, with the provision that in the event of no new agreement being signed, it would be extended year by year. While I do not intend to go into detail by quoting from this thick document in my hand, I will refer to some of the Clauses.

Clause 4 states:

“During the continuance of this Agreement the Company shall maintain and operate the said service over the said routes at the weekly seating capacities and weekly frequency of trips each way specified in the First Schedule hereto, and any extension thereof as may be provided in pursuance of the requirements of Clause 1 hereof at a minimum frequency of one trip each way weekly;”

But that is going into detail. It does, however, indicate that the Agreement lays down the number of trips and capacity of each aircraft which must supply the requirements of the Territories.

The hon. Mover referred to foreign Airlines, but these do not have any obligations to serve this Territory. K.L.M., P.A.A., Cruzeiro do Sul, Air France and other Airlines have no obligations to call here, although they operate in British Guiana.

Before I deal with the cabotage agreement referred to by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, I shall quote a little more from this Agreement in order to indicate further the services and obligations to which B.W.I.A. are committed. It says at Clause 5.(1):

“... The Company shall consult the Governments or Government affected and obtain their or its consent before substituting aircraft requiring longer runways or more elaborate airfield equipment which have to be provided at the expense of the said Governments or Government so affected.”

The hon. Mover himself spoke of the inadequacies of Atkinson Airfield. Obviously then he cannot expect aircraft of the Britannia type or, to be a little more ridiculous, jet aircraft to take off or land there. He also talked of the possibilities of expanding Atkinson airfield—“if it can be done in Panama, it can be done here.” Atkinson field is on a plateau, and to build up the surrounding terrain would involve filling gaps up to about 30 feet deep. That is a major operation for a country such as ours, considering the cost of material and the cost of stabilizing the material. Government must also take into consideration whether it will spend such a large amount of money on the expansion of an airfield which, as a Member has indicated, its—

Mr. Speaker: I think the hon. Minister would have to continue tomorrow; but before that, I think the Member for Demerara River has interrupted to say something.

CONSTITUTIONAL DELEGATION TO LONDON

Mr. Bowman: I was asking your indulgence to make a statement. Just now I received a note which states that the Council will be meeting here tomorrow afternoon at five o'clock to consider the question of selecting members of the Constitutional Committee to go to England. This question which we will be discussing tomorrow is a vital one and I have a Motion which is also vital.

Mr. Speaker: If I may speak to allay any fear: If you refer to Standing Order No. 29 you will see that you are amply protected. There is nothing to prevent Members of the Council from meeting informally. It is an entirely different thing from when we meet to discuss something in Council. Your Motion is amply protected by the terms of Standing Order No. 29; no domestic meeting, whatever it may be, informally or otherwise, can effectively conclude anything in anticipation, so far as this Council is concerned.

Mr. Bowman: The point I was trying to make is, that this meeting tomorrow is to decide the question as to who will go to England.

Mr. Speaker: I do not know. I would not be there. Whatever decision that would be made in that respect would have to be made in this Council. There is nothing to prevent two or more Members from meeting and talking about something. But whatever is to be done finally must be crystallized in this Council.

You have a Motion and any question on that matter can only be debated in this Council.

Mr. Bowman: Thank you, Sir.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Hedges): I beg to move that Council do now adjourn until two o'clock tomorrow.

Council adjourned accordingly, at 5.08 p.m.