

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**FRIDAY, 25th APRIL, 1947.**

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT :

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Campbell Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. W. L. Heape, C.M.G.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. F. W. Holder, K.C.

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

The Hon. E. G. Woolford, O.B.E., K.C. (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. F. J. Seaford, C.B.E. (Georgetown North).

The Hon. C. V. Wight, C.B.E. (Western Essequibo).

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

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

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

The Hon. E. A. Luckhoo, O.B.E. (Eastern Berbice).

The Hon. J. Gonsalves, O.B.E. (Georgetown South).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

The Hon. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

The Hon. W. J. Raatgever (Nominated).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 3rd April, 1947, as printed and circulated, were taken as read.

Mr. ROTH : Sir, I regret that the first remarks I have to make in this Council under your administration should be of a critical nature on account of the draft Minutes I have here. The last paragraph on the first page does not appear to be a true account of the proceedings. My recollection is that the then President in announcing the appointment of an Advisory Committee for the Medical Department only stated the name of the Chairman and not those of the other members.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I can confirm that that is correct. I did not give the names of the other members. I merely stated that invitations were being issued.

The PRESIDENT : Does the hon. Member suggest any amendment to make the minutes agree with the facts? Would it be correct to say "*with the hon. Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E., as Chairman*" and stop there, or say that "*the President announced that he would invite the following to be members of the Committee*"?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I said "invitations are being issued". I did not give any names besides that of the Chairman. I think the minutes should stop at "Dr. J. B. Singh, O.B.E., as Chairman", and that the remainder of the paragraph should be deleted.

The PRESIDENT : Is that the wish of the Council? Then the Council agrees that the minutes be amended accordingly and confirmed.

Question put, and agreed to.

Minutes as amended confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.**1947 GENERAL ELECTIONS.**

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : Sir, with your permission I would just like to make an announcement with regard to the progress of the General Elections for 1947. I wish to inform Members of the Council that the printing of the Lists was completed

and they were delivered to the Elections Officer on April 16. All the Lists have been distributed to the Registering Officers who are publishing them on or before April 30, 1947, by posting them in conspicuous places in each Electoral District. Objections to names on the Lists and appeals must be made by May 15, 1947, in accordance with the Regulations which will be laid later today. The publication of objections and appeals will be done by May 22, 1947. The names of the Revising Officers will be published in the *Gazette* tomorrow, and they will fix the time and place for holding the Revising Courts between June 6, and 21, and publish same. The Revising Officers will then prepare the Lists by July 6 and deliver them to the Returning Officers and the Registrar by July 31.

By the amending Ordinance, 1947, the Register is to come into force on July 31 but may be extended by order of the Governor to a date not later than September 15. There after, the Writs will be issued and nominations will take place as provided for by the Law. It will be appreciated that ten days must elapse between Nomination Day and Polling Day. Later in the day, Sir, the Legislative Council (Elections) (Amendment) Regulations will be laid; they provide for consequential amendments following upon the necessity for the change of the dates as provided in the principal Regulations. There is one Regulation—Regulation 27—which—if I may be permitted to refer to it at this stage—fixed the hours of polling from 9 o'clock in the morning until 5 o'clock in the afternoon, but that has been revoked and a new Regulation 27 substituted. This new Regulation fixes the hours from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Section 100 of the Legislative Council (Elections) Ordinance, No. 13 of 1945, reads :—

“(1) All Regulations made by the Governor in Council under this Ordinance shall be laid before the Legislative Council within fourteen days next after they are made if the Council is sitting on the last day as aforesaid, and if the Council is not then sitting, within fourteen days after the commencement of the next ensuing sitting.

(2) If within twenty-one days after the Regulations are laid before the Council, a resolution is passed by the

Legislative Council that the Regulations or any part of them be annulled, they shall thereby be annulled to the extent set forth in the resolution, and the Regulations, or part thereof, so annulled shall thenceforth become void and of no effect but without prejudice to the validity of any action in the meantime taken under the Regulations, or part thereof, as the case may be.....”

I refer to that section because Government is proceeding along the lines of the Regulations, which will be laid today and to which I have already referred as containing changes in the dates mentioned in the principal Regulations, consequential on the delay in the printing of the Lists.

PAPERS LAID.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY laid on the table the following documents :—

The Report of the Government Analyst for 1946.

The Report of the Deeds Registry for 1946.

Despatch No. 19 dated 20th February, 1947, from the Officer Administering the Government to the Secretary of State for the Colonies on Colonial Mining Policy. (Legislative Council No. 15 of 1947).

Speech by His Excellency Sir Charles Campbell Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C., in the Council Chamber on the occasion of his arrival on the 7th of April, 1947. (Legislative Council No. 16 of 1947).

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL laid on the table the following document :—

The Legislative Council (Elections) (Amendment) Regulations, 1947.

The COLONIAL TREASURER laid on the table the following :—

(a) Minutes of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on Thursday, 27th March, 1947.

(b) Supplementary Estimates for the quarter ending 31st March, 1947 (embodying Schedules of Additional Provision approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council during the Quarter).

GOVERNMENT NOTICES.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.

Notice was given of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills :—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Georgetown Electric Supply (Restriction) Ordinance, 1946, with respect to its duration."—The Attorney-General.

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the establishment in respect of the sugar industry of a Price Stabilization Fund, a Rehabilitation Fund and a Labour Welfare Fund and for purposes connected therewith."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to impose a temporary export duty on sugar manufactured in and exported from the colony."—The Colonial Treasurer.

CONTINUANCE OF RICE FARMERS (SECURITY OF TENURE) ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL gave notice of the following motion :—

"WHEREAS the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1945, (No. 10 of 1945), came into operation on the 14th of July, 1945;

"AND WHEREAS section 24 of the said Ordinance provides that the Ordinance shall continue in force until the last day of April, 1947, but that the Legislative Council may, prior to the expiration thereof, by Resolution declare that the said Ordinance shall continue in force for such further period as may be specified in the Resolution;

"AND WHEREAS it is expedient that the said Ordinance be continued in force for a further period of two years;

"NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1945, shall continue in force until the 30th day of April, 1949."

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES.

The COLONIAL TREASURER gave notice of the following motion :—

"That, this Council approves of the Supplementary Estimates for the quarter ending 31st March, 1947 (embodying Schedules of Additional Provision approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council during the quarter)."

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS.

CITY BUS SERVICE.

Mr. THOMPSON on behalf of Mr. FARNUM gave notice of the following questions :—

1. Is it a fact that the Mayor and Town Council invited tenders to operate a 24-passenger bus service in the City of Georgetown and that the tenders received were forwarded to Government with the request that an award be made ?
2. If the answer is in the affirmative, will Government state whether an award has been made ?
3. If no award has been made, I respectfully ask that Government regard the inauguration of an improved bus service as urgent, and make an award at an early date so that a new service may be commenced during this year or early in 1948.

PRINCESS ELIZABETH'S COMING OF AGE.

Mr. WOOLFORD : Sir, before we proceed with the Order of the Day, I crave leave to move the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders so as to enable me to move the following resolution:—

"Be it resolved: That this Council hereby respectfully tenders its sincere congratulations to Her Royal Highness, Princess Elizabeth, on her having attained her majority, and extends to her its loyal and dutiful good wishes for a long, happy and prosperous life."

Mr. C. V. WIGHT seconded.

Motion put, and agreed to.

Standing Rules and Orders suspended.

Mr. WOOLFORD : In the broadcast made by Her Royal Highness on the occasion of her birthday spent in South Africa, she is recorded as having said:

"I declare before you that my whole life—whether it be long or short—shall be devoted to your service and the service of our great Imperial family to which we all belong; but I shall not have the strength to carry out this resolution alone unless you join in it with me—as I now invite you to do."

The extract which I have just read—characteristic of her simplicity and sincerity—reflects Her Highness's appreciation of her responsibilities as Heir Presumptive to the British Crown; and in a life full of bright hope and still brighter promise of achievement—as hers is likely to be—it will, I feel sure, be of some little comfort and encouragement to her to

know that, in answer to her invitation this Council has deemed it to be its duty to place on record an expression of its goodwill towards her in the performance of her duties.

In her expressed intention of visiting other portions of the British Empire, I am sure, we all hope that it may be found possible for her to visit this portion of the British Possessions beyond the seas, where she may be assured of a very hearty and joyous welcome.

In conclusion I will ask that a copy of the resolution be transmitted to His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies for submission to Her Royal Highness. I will also ask that the text of Your Excellency's congratulatory telegram to Her Royal Highness dispatched a few days ago on behalf of the inhabitants of the Colony, be recorded in the Minutes.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT seconded.

The PRESIDENT: I am sure that everybody in the Council will wish to be associated with the motion that has just been moved. As the hon. Member has reminded us, I took the liberty, as you are aware, to send a telegram of congratulation through the Secretary of State to Her Royal Highness, and in doing so I felt sure myself that I was sincerely reflecting the views of the entire population of British Guiana. I am very glad that the hon. Member has taken this opportunity to move the motion in this Council which, I am sure, will be carried unanimously when I will proceed to convey to Her Royal Highness the expressions of our loyalty.

Motion put, and unanimously agreed to.

ORDER OF THE DAY.

CINEMATOGRAPH REGULATIONS.

Mr. ROTH asked and the COLONIAL SECRETARY laid over replies to the following questions

Q 1—Is Government aware of the anomaly existing in the Cinematograph Regulations through which the use of safety or non-inflammable film is, to the detriment of culture and amusement, greatly restricted?

A —The exhibition of cinematograph films is controlled by the Cinematograph Ordinance (Cap. 105) under sections 5 (1) and 9 of which (as amended by Ordinance No. 10 of 1940) cinematograph exhibitions may only be given in premises licensed for the purpose in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance, except in the case of—

(a) an exhibition given in a private dwelling to which the public are not admitted; or

(b) an exhibition given by a Government Department or by a Town Council of a non-inflammable film of an educational nature, in a town hall, school, public institution or church hall, or in any premises approved in writing in that behalf by the Commissioner of Police.

The revision of the Cinematograph Ordinance is under consideration, but in view of the fire risks in this Colony it is not considered that the provisions referred to above (which were approved by this Council as recently as 1940) are unduly restrictive. The Commissioner of Police is of course bound to keep the provisions of the law as it stands.

Q 2 —In view of the practice of the authorities concerned of enforcing the letter rather than the spirit of the said Regulations, will Government see its way at an early date to amend the said Regulations so as to permit the unrestricted use of safety or non-inflammable film?

A --See answer to Question No. 1.

CONTINUANCE OF RICE FARMERS (SECURITY OF TENURE) ORDINANCE.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With the consent of hon. Members, I beg to move the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders so as to enable me to move the motion relating to the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1945, standing in my name in the Second Schedule, and thereafter to take the Bill in the Second Schedule of which I have also given notice--the Georgetown Electric Supply (Restriction) (Amendment) Bill, 1947.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Rules and Orders suspended.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The motion just referred to is self-explanatory and reads as follows:--

"Whereas the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1945, (No. 10 of 1945) came into operation on the 14th of July, 1945;

AND WHEREAS section 24 of the said Ordinance provides that the Ordinance shall continue in force until the last day of April, 1947, but that the Legislative Council may, prior to the expiration thereof, by Resolution declare that the said Ordinance shall continue in force for such further period as may be specified in the Resolution;

AND WHEREAS it is expedient that the said Ordinance be continued in force for a further period of two years;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1945, shall continue in force until the 30th day of April, 1949."

I take it that hon. Members are fully appreciative of the need for an Ordinance of this nature which has been existing for the past two years. Hon. Members are also aware of the fact that it was enacted as a result of the recommendations of a Committee appointed by the late Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem. The Ordinance provides security of tenure for tenant rice farmers, and Section 6 states:—

"6. A tenant may terminate his agreement of tenancy relating to rice land by giving to the landlord not less than six months' notice in writing . . ."

It will be appreciated that during the War some security of tenure for rice farmers was obtained through the Defence Regulations, but that is very inadequate. I may mention for the information of hon. Members that during the two-year period that the Ordinance has been in force, about 284 complaints of various kinds have been heard and decided. There have also been 75 applications by landlords for evictions and 15 of these were allowed. The com-

plaints were heard by the Officer connected with the matter and he was able to arrange settlements without further action being taken. There has been no appeal to the Governor in Council, although appeals are allowed under the terms of the Ordinance. I suggest to hon. Members that the necessity for the continuance of this Ordinance is very clear and, without further comment, I beg to move that this motion be passed.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Mr. LEE: I would ask that an amendment be made to this motion, and that is, that the extension period be one of four years instead of two years, necessitating a change to be made in the last recital and in the resolve clause. Your Excellency has just arrived in this Colony, and Members of this Council and your Executive Officers will be able to tell you of the hardships which tenants of rice farms in the various districts suffer. It was in order to secure their tenancy that Government deemed it fit to pass firstly, an emergency Ordinance for a period of four years instead of two years, so that their tenancy would be better secured.

Here, I may digress to suggest that Your Excellency should make some inquiry into the present price of rice and see whether, with the assistance of your advisers, you could offer these farmers a better price. As you know, Sir, there is a drought prevailing in the country, and it would be very hard for these farmers, if the rains do not fall between now and June, to get a proper crop and proper compensation for their efforts this year. Your advisers will be able to tell you, Sir, whether it is possible or not to give the farmers a better price for their rice. I do appeal for them and will suggest that this is the time for it to be done, for if a little encouragement is given to the farmers now there is likely to be better crops than otherwise in the cultivated areas. I move that the Ordinance be extended for four years—until 1951—and that the motion be amended accordingly.

Mr. ROTH: I beg to second the amendment, Sir.

The PRESIDENT : Is there any other speaker?

Mr. EDUN : I confess that this motion has been sprung upon us, and, I think, it deserves more consideration. I am, however, tempted to ask Government how did this Ordinance function, what did it cost Government, and whether it is working satisfactorily? As a matter of fact, I should demand a report from those in authority in order to see how it has affected the farmers and whether it has effected any conciliation between the two parties principally concerned with the rice industry—the landlord and the tenant. This Ordinance was specifically introduced to protect the tenants, and, I think, it is right for me to demand a full explanation as to how it has worked. Apart from that phase of the question, the whole rice industry is being guided by this Ordinance and also by the Rice Marketing Board Ordinance through which everyone is looking forward to the formation of a Rice Producers' Association. All these things affect the rice industry, and I am tempted to ask what has become of the Rice Producers' Association. Months and months have passed since the attempt was made to form such an organization. If I am to look for the progress of the rice industry, I have to find out whether the Council should extend this Ordinance. I, personally, think this Ordinance should be permanent because it aims at the improvement of the rice industry. I will support the amendment, but I rather support a permanent Ordinance altogether. At this juncture, may I ask whether Government will tell us something about the Rice Producers' Association? So much hullabaloo was made about Government's intention to form one, but I stated that Government is not capable of forming a Rice Producers' Association. I will therefore ask Government to give me an account as to what has been done.

The PRESIDENT : Does any other Member wish to speak? The last speaker has asked for a little further information as to the working of the Ordinance, and it seems to be a very reasonable request. If hon. Members wish to hear the Commissioner of Local Government on the working of the Ordinance, I am sure they would

find it interesting. I will therefore ask Mr. Laing to address the Council on the working of the Ordinance.

Mr. M. B. LAING (Commissioner of Local Government) : Your Excellency and Members! As Members would recollect, this Ordinance was introduced because of certain differences and misunderstandings that arose between the landlords and tenants interested in the rice industry. The object of the Ordinance is to secure the tenant and also to secure the landlord, and in this respect I think I am correct in saying that it has benefited both. The tenant has been benefited by reason of the fact that he knows that he cannot be dispossessed. His tenancy is an annual one, but if he pays his rent regularly—and that rent is a standard rent fixed under the Ordinance—he may continue in occupation of his land provided, of course, he conforms to a certain standard of husbandry.

The landlord is also secure in obtaining his rent regularly whether that rent be in cash or collected in padi. Further, should the landlord require his land for other purposes, the Ordinance provides that the tenant may be given six months' notice, or should the tenant wish to vacate the land he is to give the landlord six months' notice. Therefore the Ordinance has been as useful to the tenant as it has been to the landlord, and that is the purpose of the Ordinance.

The hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) has asked how the Ordinance has worked. It has been in the hands of an Officer of my department, and I consider that the Ordinance has worked well. There have been 284 complaints of various kinds made under the Ordinance, and all these have been satisfactorily decided by the Rice Farmers' Tenancy Officer. 75 cases for eviction have been heard and sixteen of these were allowed. The Ordinance also provides for written agreements, but only three of these have been made under the Ordinance. It is interesting, Sir, to know that although as many as over 300 complaints of various kinds have been made under the Ordinance and although the Ordinance provides appeal to the Governor in Council, no appeals have been lodged. That says a good deal for the confidence

the people have had in the Officer who has been discharging these somewhat onerous duties. The use of this Officer has been two-fold, because he has been enabled not only to investigate complaints that come under the Rice Farmers' Tenancy Ordinance but to adjust grievances as they arise between a landlord and his tenant, although those grievances may have no direct connection with the Rice Farmers' Tenancy Ordinance.

The hon. Nominated Member has asked what progress has been made with the Rice Producers' Association. The Rice Producers' Association has, of course, been formed and is working at the present time. The Ordinance under which this Association came into being provides that the members of the first Council shall be nominated by the Governor. That has been done. A President has been appointed and the Association is now working in the interest of the rice industry generally. Under the Ordinance, until the Rice Producers' Association can itself elect its members, provision is made for the Governor to divide the district into areas and to appoint local associations. The Colony has been so divided and local associations have been formed. So that, all that can be said of the Rice Producers' Association is that it is working satisfactorily, although as provided under the Ordinance the members have been appointed by the Governor. When the time arrives the Association will elect its own executive body and that should be, I hope, very shortly.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With regard to the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee), I am authorized to say that Government is prepared to accept it.

The PRESIDENT: I put the motion as amended by the deletion of the word "two" in the 3rd paragraph and the substitution therefor of the word "four" and the deletion of the date "1949" in the final line of the motion and the insertion of "1951."

Mr. JACOB: Before you do that, I think, I am in order to say a word or two.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is not in order! I have given hon. Members full opportunity and we have already passed that. I would have liked to hear the hon. Member, but he is quite out of order as the motion is being put.

Motion as amended put, and unanimously adopted

(GEORGETOWN ELECTRIC SUPPLY (RESTRICTION) (AMENDMENT) BILL

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With the consent of Members I ask leave to move the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders to enable me to take through all its stages the following Bill standing in my name in the Second Schedule—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Georgetown Electric Supply (Restriction) Ordinance, 1946, with respect to its duration.

Mr. C. V. Wight seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Rules and Orders suspended.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move that this Bill be now read a first time.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I appreciate hon. Members giving me leave to proceed with this Bill through all its stages. It will be within the recollection of hon. Members that when the Georgetown Electric Supply (Restriction) Ordinance, 1946, was before the Council, I then stated that it was expected that the necessity for the restriction of the supply of electric energy imposed thereby would cease at the latest on the 30th April, 1947. It is now known that this expectation cannot be realized owing to the difficulty that the Demerara Electric Company, Ltd., are experiencing in obtaining new machinery, which it is necessary for them to instal in order to meet the additional demands for the supply of such energy. This Bill seeks, therefore, to extend the life of the said Ordinance for another year or for such shorter period as will suffice to obtain and instal the necessary machinery.

Hon. Members will also recollect that in the course of the second reading and during the time that the Bill was in Committee, some Members thought it desirable that a specific date should be included in the last clause. The Bill as presented to the Council provided that the Order shall cease to operate and have no effect upon such date as the Governor by publication in the *Gazette* may appoint but, as I say, certain hon. Members thought it desirable that a specific date should be inserted. The position is that the Demerara Electric Co., Ltd., made every effort to obtain the necessary equipment but without success up to today. It will be appreciated that there had been great difficulties in the United Kingdom, and one can understand that there has been some slowing down of production as the result of those difficulties. But facts are facts, and we are faced with this fact, that the Demerara Electric Company find themselves unable to instal the necessary machinery as they had anticipated. This Bill now seeks to extend the time to the 30th April, 1948, but with a proviso enabling the Governor, if the equipment arrives and is installed before that date, to publish a proclamation in the *Gazette* putting an end to the operation of the Ordinance. I think, all hon. Members will agree that this is necessary, and the Demerara Electric Company have been doing their best to get the equipment and it is through no fault of their own that it has not come to hand yet. I understand that they have been advised it may be, perhaps, towards the end of the year or very early next year. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: seconded.

Mr. LEE: It is with regret that I certainly should call Government's attention to this fact. There are several people in the City of Georgetown where this Company hold the monopoly who cannot obtain electric current to light their houses, and there is, as far as I know, exercised by the management of the Company in this Colony a sort of preference to certain people to obtain lights where there were no lights. If that conduct is going to be pursued by this Company, then the time

is fully ripe when the City of Georgetown should take over that utility service that is now being rendered by the Company. I give that warning because the time will come when it will be exposed to the public that this preference is being exercised by the Company and, perhaps, to the knowledge of some of the responsible people in the City of Georgetown.

Mr. EDUN: I did not want to say anything on this Bill because I am quite willing to accept the assurance given by the hon. the Attorney-General that he is satisfied about the Company's *bona fides* in this matter. But I would hate to think that Georgetown will remain perpetually at the mercy of a monopolist, when it has been said over and over again by every thinking man and by the experts that we can get cheap electricity. Why are we always happy to be begging for mercy from monopolists? I cannot understand it. It is irksome and boring to a degree. When will we cry halt to this thing? I know of several cases of real hardship in Georgetown where the people cannot get lights at all, and I want to ask how long will this state of things exist. Did the Company make efforts before the War to replace their machinery? All those things should be questioned because they have the experience, they know exactly the life of their machinery, and I would certainly question sometimes their motives. I hope their motive is not that of restricting the lighting supply, because I am thinking that the time has come when we should ask them to give us light in Vreed-en-Hoop from Georgetown. When that day comes, I do not know if we should depend on one Company operating in Georgetown. I think that is a mistaken idea.

Mr. SEAFORD: I think it is only fair that someone acquainted with the real difficulties in getting plants and machinery today should say something in support of this motion. I know from experience that we have been promised a plant to be delivered in 1947, and we are now told that it will be delivered in 1949. The hon. Nominated Member, who has just taken his seat, talked about the unfortunate position of people not being able to get lights and the experts should know the life of the machinery. That is correct.

They do truly know the life of the machinery but they do not know when they will have a breakdown, and no one can. A little more than a year ago we had in this Colony a very severe thunderstorm and considerable damage was done to the machinery. That was an act of God and not of man. The trouble today is not a breakdown but a very great increase in demands for electric power and light, and the Electric Company are not able to get the increase in plant. They have been trying for several years; they could not get the necessary equipment during the War and have not been able to do so since the War has ended so as to meet the demand at the present time. I feel sure, and I know, that they have done everything they possibly could to meet the demands of the citizens of this City.

As regards the remarks by the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee), I do feel it is unfortunate that we should have these innuendoes here. If the hon. Member knows all those things, I do feel it is his duty to go to the Government or the Town Council and ask them to take the necessary steps to rectify them. That is much better than to come into the open Council and drop hints here and there. As regards the remarks made by the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) about it is time we have cheap electricity, I think if he should go into the price of electricity and compare it with that in other places, he would find that it is cheaper here than in other parts of the Caribbean. The Demerara Electric Company. I can say in their favour, have reduced the cost of power and light below what they undertook to do. They have done it because they appreciate that by reducing the cost it will probably increase their trade and it will pay them. We are now getting light far cheaper than they undertook to supply it for.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I quite appreciate what the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) said with regard to cheap electricity. Those days will come, I hope, when, as the result of the experiments which Government or other parties are now carrying out for the harnessing of our waterfalls, we will have electricity cheaper throughout the Colony.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and proceeded to consider the Bill clause by clause.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Clause 2—Amendment of section 7 of the Principal Ordinance.

Mr. LEE: Under this clause I may mention for the benefit of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Seaford) that if he enquires he would find out about what I have said. It is not right for us to name the persons in such matters. But when electricity is a necessity is it not right that we should voice our grievances in public? But I can give him the names of certain places, two at least, that I know of, that have been given electric light in preference to other places where the people live in back cottages.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I would like to say that the preference of which the hon. Member speaks was given at my request. I was acting as Governor at the time. The houses at Wortmanville were being occupied and the Mayor said he did not want hurricane and kerosene oil lamps to be used there. I asked the Company and they did it at the request of Government.

Mr. EDUN: I would like at this point to accept the assurance given by the hon. Member for Georgetown North.

The Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With the consent of hon. Members I beg to move that this Bill be now read a third time and passed.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS AND DEATHS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1947.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In moving the second reading of this Bill intitled—

"An Ordinance further to amend the Registration of Births and Deaths Ordinance, Chapter 139, with respect to the Registration of Births and Deaths occurring in certain parts of the Colony and with respect to the registration of Baptismal names."

It will be seen from the memorandum in the Objects and Reasons, which accompany the Bill, that under the Registration of Births and Deaths Ordinance it is obligatory to register births and deaths within three months of their occurrence. Experience has shown that this period is often insufficient to permit of the registration of such events occurring in remote parts of the Colony owing to distance from and difficulty of communication with the nearest registrar. The principal object of this Bill is to enlarge that time to nine months in the case of such remote areas. By clauses 2, 3 and 5 it is sought to achieve this object by amendments to sections 29, 32 and 72 of the Ordinance.

By section 34 (1) of the said Ordinance a name given in baptism can only be registered on the production of a certificate signed by the Minister who performed the rites of baptism. Difficulties have arisen in many cases where certificates were not obtained at the time of the ceremony and could not be obtained later owing to the death or absence of the officiating Minister. Clause 4 of the Bill remedies this defect. Hon. Members will appreciate the reasons for the amendments in the Bill before the Council. I beg to move that this Bill be now read a second time.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Mr. EDUN : I would like to plead with Government on behalf of the East Indian population for some consideration in this matter. Perhaps, Sir, you will soon learn that East Indians have sometimes one name, sometimes two names and, I think, if the Registrars are instructed by Circular to have the first name of an East Indian child registered with the names of the parents it would be very convenient later. For instance, if the child's name, a girl, is Sunnihar and the father's name is Boodhoo the Registrar should encourage the parent to have both names registered. If you go through the List of Voters today you would find so many Boodhoo's and Per-

sauds. I think the time has come when this Government should go out of its way to educate these people to have two names in order to differentiate between themselves. As a matter of fact, the Man-Power Citizens' Association has carried out a campaign in that direction, asking the Indians to use their fathers' names in their documents, and I think that a Circular should be issued to that effect. I am sure Mr. Laing will be quite agreeable to my suggestion. He is an authority on this question and will be able to advise Government well on it. I just put forward the suggestion and, I think, Government should exploit it.

The PRESIDENT : You suggest that administrative action be taken to encourage the East Indian community to register two names at least !

Mr. EDUN : I want them to accept the father's name too.

The PRESIDENT : I do not think we can pass a law to compel them to use any particular name. I appreciate the hon. Member's point that something may be done to encourage them to register their father's names. I assure the hon. Member we will go into the matter.

Mr. GONSALVES : I rise to compliment Government on bringing forward this Bill. These amendments to the existing law have been very much required for some time. I know personally the difficulty experienced by people from time to time in getting a wrong registration corrected, by reason of the fact that under the law you must get a certificate signed by the Minister who performed the baptismal ceremony. In very many instances the people can neither get the certificate nor is the Minister alive, therefore, the correcting of the Register has been very costly and difficult. I do not think it is too early to have this point brought forward and the law amended.

With regard to the point raised by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat, I may refer him to the Ordinance in which provision is made for the Christian names and surnames of the parties. The hon. Member gave as an illustration that the father's name being Boodhoo it should be

put with the name of the child. The Ordinance speaks of Christian name and if that change is required then it seems the Ordinance would have to be amended in so far as the form required. If the Government takes the view as suggested by the hon. Member, then an amendment of the Ordinance and of the form is necessary. The hon. Member must remember that in dealing with the registration of births the names of the parents, if the children are born in wedlock, both father and mother, are given in the registration form, but in the case of those born out of wedlock only the name of the mother is given. It is not, in my view, a matter for administrative action at all, because the Registrar General cannot direct a father to do it.

Mr. ROTH : On behalf of those persons most affected by this Bill—the residents of the far interior—I should like to thank Government for having introduced it.

Mr. LEE : There is one difficulty in the suggestion of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, which I would like Government to take into consideration, and that is, the Registrar General cannot do it unless the father agrees. I do not see how it can be done administratively.

Mr. JACOB : I think a Committee should be appointed to go into this matter, because I know of several people who have suffered great hardships with regard to passports and so on. I know of certain cases where certain names have been put on baptismal certificates and so on, while the children have been using other names. In some of those cases, the persons wanted to leave the Colony and the names on the baptismal certificates, which were never seen by the children, were put on the passports. The Police Department is fully aware of some of these cases, and I was told by a clerk in the Registrar General's office that steps were to be taken to remove the hardships, but they have not done very much. I think a Committee should be appointed to go into the whole matter, especially for the benefit of the East Indian community. Many East Indians are known by one name and called by another, and in most cases they do not see their baptismal

certificates until a marriage takes place. I repeat that a Committee should be appointed to go into the whole matter.

Dr. SINGH : I agree with the views expressed by the last speaker. The matter is a very difficult one and, I think, a Committee should be appointed to deal with it.

Mr. SEAFORD : If a Committee is appointed it would take a long time to report. I am going to suggest that this Bill should be put through now.

The PRESIDENT : I do not think it is suggested that we should hold up consideration of this Bill until this matter goes to a Committee. I have no doubt that Government will be able to go into this as well as other matters which need examination before the Bill becomes law.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : As Your Excellency has stated, there are certain other matters which need examination before we can put them into law. The point made by the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) as regards passports, arises from the fact that in some cases only the mother's name has been put on the baptismal certificate. A child is sometimes registered by the mother's name, but when he is told to bring a birth certificate later the father's name is required for the purpose of identification, and that is why it is put on the passport. As Your Excellency has indicated, these are matters which require examination and, I think, a solution can be found for them.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I beg to move that the Council resolves itself into Committee to consider this Bill clause by clause.

Mr. Dias seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE.

Clause 5—Amendment of section 72 (a) of the Principal Ordinance.

Mr. JACOB : I take it that Government has agreed that a Committee be appointed as soon as possible to go into this

matter. There is a habit in this Colony of putting things off for a number of years, or for an indefinite time.

Mr. EDUN : I would respectfully suggest that the matter be referred to the Indian Advisory Committee who, I think, can deal with it satisfactorily.

The PRESIDENT : As I have said, I do not think that will be the only matter. I think what I can do on behalf of Government is to undertake an investigation of all these matters—collecting them together—and if it appears that the best way is to appoint a Committee to deal with them, then I would appoint a Committee of this Council to do so. I do not know what the Advisory Committee suggested by the hon. Member is, but I can assure the hon. Member that the matter will not be overlooked.

Clause 5 passed.

Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : With the consent of hon. Members, I beg to move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed.

Mr. DIAS seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

GAMBLING PREVENTION (AMENDMENT)
BILL, 1947.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : With the leave of the Council I ask permission to postpone the second reading of the Gambling Prevention (Amendment) Bill, 1947, which appears as item 5 on the Order Paper.

The PRESIDENT : Is it agreed that the second reading of this Bill be deferred ?

Agreed to.

Consideration of Bill deferred.

EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1947.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I now beg to move the second reading of the following Bill intituled—

“An Ordinance further to amend the Education Ordinance, Chapter 196,

with respect to the minimum age for the employment of children.”

Prior to the enactment of the Education (Amendment) Ordinance, 1942, the period of compulsory education of children was from the age of six to fourteen years in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Buxton, and from the age of six to twelve years elsewhere in the Colony. The employment of children under twelve years was prohibited generally, but in Georgetown, New Amsterdam and Buxton employment outside of school hours was permitted between the ages of twelve and fourteen years. By the aforementioned Ordinance, six to fourteen years of age was fixed as the period of compulsory education throughout the Colony, but the provisions relating to employment mentioned above were not altered. It is considered that prohibition of employment should go hand in hand with compulsory education, and that even partial employment during the period of compulsory education is not in the best interest of a child.

Clause 17 of this Bill seeks, therefore, to make illegal the employment of children under the age of fourteen years, and the proposed repeal set out in the clause is consequential thereon. It will be noticed that in clause 2 there is a proviso to the new clause 17, which reads :—

“Provided that the service rendered by a child to its parents being such service as is usually given by children to their parents, shall not constitute a breach of this section unless such service is rendered on a school day during school hours.”

I am sure this Bill will commend itself to all hon. Members of this Council, and I beg to move that it be now read the second time.

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Mr. LEE : There is only one thing to which I would like to draw Your Excellency's attention, and it is of a pressing nature. The compulsory school age has been raised to fourteen years in the country districts, and while the people are getting conscious of the fact that if they do not send their children to school they would be prosecuted, it has been found in some

districts in my constituency that there are several schools which cannot accommodate the children who ought to go to them. I will therefore ask that something be done to remedy the situation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without amendment.

Council resumed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With the consent of hon. Members I beg to move that this Bill be now read the third time and passed.

Mr. CRITCHLOW seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a third time and passed.

SUGAR INDUSTRY BILLS.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Sir, I would like to ask permission of the Council to take the first reading of the two Bills I introduced today, and I beg to move that the Standing Rules and Orders be suspended in order that these Bills be read the first time.

Mr. SEAFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Rules and Orders suspended.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I beg to move that the following Bill be read the first time.

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the establishment in respect of the sugar industry of a Price Stabilization Fund, a Rehabilitation Fund and a Labour Welfare Fund and for purposes connected therewith."

Mr. SEAFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I give notice that at the next meeting of this Council I shall move the second reading of this Bill.

TEMPORARY EXPORT DUTY BILL.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I now beg to move that the following Bill be read the first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to impose a temporary export duty on sugar manufactured in and exported from the Colony."

Mr. SEAFORD seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I give notice that at the next meeting of this Council I shall move the second reading of this Bill.

The PRESIDENT: That concludes the business on the Order of the Day. The Council will now adjourn until Thursday, May 1, at 2 p.m.