

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 17TH AUGUST, 1950.

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 J. Gutch, O.B.E.

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

The Hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. E. F. McDavid, C.M.G., C.B.E.

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

The Hon. Dr. J. A. Nicholson (Georgetown North).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

The Hon. D. P. Debidin (Eastern Demerara).

The Hon. J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central).

The Hon. Dr. G. M. Gonsalves (Eastern Berbice).

The Hon. Dr. C. Jagan (Central Demerara).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (New Amsterdam).

The Hon. C. A. McDoom (Nominated).

The Hon. A. T. Peters (Western Berbice).

The Hon. W. A. Phang (North Western District).

The Hon. G. H. Smellie (Nominated).

The Hon. F. E. Morrish (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES.**DR. SINGH'S ATTENDANCE.**

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 16th of August, 1950, as printed and circulated, were taken as read.

Mr. ROTH: I ask that the minutes be amended by the deletion of the name of the hon. Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Dr. Singh) from those present. He was not present until after the adjournment of the Council.

The PRESIDENT: Are you certain that the hon. Member was not present?

Mr. ROTH: I am certain, Sir. As a matter of fact the hon. Member asked that his presence be counted as being present at the meeting of the Council.

Amendment agreed to.

Minutes as amended confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY.**CIVIL AVIATION (BIRTHS, DEATHS & MISSING PERSONS) BILL.**

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I beg to move the first reading of a Bill intituled—

"An Ordinance to make provision for the recording of Births and Deaths and of persons missing in aircraft registered in the Colony and for other purposes connected therewith."

The COLONIAL SECRETARY seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a first time.

RICE MARKETING (AMENDMENT) BILL.

The Council resumed the debate on the second reading of a Bill intitled—

“An Ordinance to amend the Rice Marketing Ordinance, 1946, with respect to the powers and functions of the Rice Marketing Board and the Executive Committee of the Board; and in other respects.”

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) was speaking when the debate was adjourned.

Dr. JAGAN: Sir, I must first of all express appreciation not only of my own but, I suppose, of hon. Members for the opportunity which had been given in presenting to this Council a statement by you and subsequently yesterday afternoon a conference with Members, as you said, Sir, to try to come to some compromise agreement, especially since you felt there were so many misconceptions about this whole issue. I remember the hon. the Financial Secretary in making his opening remarks was very complimentary to me. He said: “I can rely on the hon. Member for Central Demerara to bring to bear his usual intellectual and logical grasp of all subjects that come before him.” I do not know if I am really deserving of that compliment. I need not point out what I also feel about the hon. Member's skill and intellect, as many Members have already spoken about that, but I would like to say that the hon. Member's skill and intellect are somewhat dulled by his apologies or his defence on behalf of Government. I only wish that skill and intelligence were on my side, and I do hope that some time in the near future we shall have the opportunity to have him on our side. Coming back to the point, since these various advances have been made I do hope, speaking now on this Bill, that I would really merit this praise which has been showered on me and that I will be able to bring to bear logic to show that the Government's case is illogical.

In the first place I want again to refer to clause 7 because, as it was originally presented, it seems to have been very obscure, but by the various amendments — if I may call them so — which have been introduced an attempt has been made to make the issue more clear. But still, as the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) pointed out yesterday, the main issue remains and that is, that this company or corporation will be outside the provisions of the Rice Marketing Board. I do hope you will pardon me if I make comments with reference to the meeting yesterday and what you or the hon. the Financial Secretary said, not with the idea of disclosing anything. If I do make any statement which you feel should not be said, kindly notify me.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member need not refer particularly to the conference. He can say what he now knows.

Dr. JAGAN: Sir, it has come to my knowledge that the C.D.C., which is interested in this rice deal, first of all would like the decks clear and to have a reasonable measure of freedom, if they are to come into this deal, to market their own rice. Before I proceed to the point of the agreement which is supposed to be tendered later on to this Council, I want to have clarified certain fears which are running through my mind. If the C.D.C. wants to be free from the restricted provisions of the Rice Marketing Board and wants this measure of freedom to market its own rice, then it seems to me that two things are assumed. One is, that the Rice Marketing Board as presently constituted is not capable of marketing rice or giving the best so far as securing markets, whether in the West Indies or any part of the world, is concerned. First of all, I would like to challenge such an assumption, because I do not feel it is correct. Let us assume that it is correct for the moment, then again I do not see why those so-called skilled officials who may be operating the C.D.C. cannot come in with the Rice Marketing Board and give their skill and knowledge on behalf of themselves, and on behalf of the rice producers of this Colony as a whole. Therefore, Sir, it seems to me a little

contradictory in terms on the one hand to say that the C.D.C. will want to be free from the restricted provisions of the Rice Marketing Board, and on the other hand to say that an agreement will be subsequently put to this Council which will protect the rice farmers and peasants of this Colony.

Let us assume for a moment that in this agreement that will be drafted everything is made to secure the position of the small man in this Colony. It may be that because of certain restrictions which are now placed on the Rice Marketing Board this new corporation will also have to abide by certain of those restrictions. By that I mean the following: At the present time we are selling rice locally, a large quantity for local consumption, and as we all know that rice is being sold at a lower price than the export market's. Another point which has to be considered is the fact that we have at the expiration of the first contract which will be at the end of next year, another contract pending for another three years during which time we have to meet up certain obligations. Let us assume for the moment that in this new agreement to be drafted this corporation will also have to abide by the restrictions which are now placed on the Board; that is, they will have to meet their share of rice which is consumed locally and, perhaps, also meet up the necessary and required quantity of rice which has to be exported to the West Indies under contract. I say that, because the fear has been expressed that the large corporation will be milling rice very efficiently and, possibly, it will lower the cost of production and the small mills will be unable to purchase padi at a higher price; consequently if they are purchasing padi too the time may come when the Rice Marketing Board may find itself not being able to fulfil its contractual relations with the West Indies. It may be assumed, that in the agreement which will be drafted there will be a clause which will state that the company or corporation will have to meet any deficit which will have to be met in case there is not enough rice within the grasp of the Rice Marketing Board.

Here are the contradictions. On the

one hand we are told the C.D.C. does not want to be bound by the restrictions of the Rice Marketing Board, and we must remember that the Rice Marketing Board is primarily a selling organization. But here it is being expressed that in an agreement which will be made the terms will be so favourable to the small man that the company will have to abide by the restrictions which, if it was on the Board, it would have to meet. Sir, if this agreement, which is supposed to be tabled later on in this Council, would be so favourable to the small man in this Colony and would place restrictions on the corporation, then if it goes on the Board it would be under the same restrictions and would suffer in no other way. Those are the two points which, I feel, are very contradictory in themselves and, consequently, I cannot see any necessity for allowing this thing to go a stage further and for us to go through all the bother as, perhaps, a very skilled individual may have to be brought and a long time wasted before this agreement will be drawn up and to what avail? If it is drawn up it will have to be brought to this Council again and, possibly, another long debate may ensue, when in truth and in fact all this can be avoided. The C.D.C. or corporation can form itself and come within the provisions of the Rice Marketing Board and be subjected to the very same restrictions which it would be subject to if the agreement is made in favour of the small man and the producers of this Colony. Therefore the argument does not seem to be right. There is something contradictory in it, and the C.D.C. insisting that it must be left out makes individuals suspicious and feel it is no good going through this long winded procedure, though it is said the agreement will come before this Council for ratification.

In the course of the debate mention has been made of the central mills and machinery which, possibly, we will be able to get from the U.S.A. under the terms of the E.C.A. I would like to find out whether the Colony cannot get that equipment without the formation of this company. Is it possible that the Colony because of its needs, possibly because of the fact that the Colonial Office may not want to recommend it, cannot

get the machinery without the co-operation of this corporation? In my last speech I gave some facts and figures to show that all that has been said about development must not be assumed and taken for granted. I have pointed out, and other Members have pointed out also, the very commercial nature of the C.D.C. We have been also told by the hon. the Financial Secretary that we are going to get Marshall Aid, possibly if the company is formed. I am not too sure about that. He also said Marshall Aid is being given to us free and gratis, as there will be no strings attached. I have already gone to the trouble to show that the C.D.C. and the C.D. & W. and all the so-called development plans have as their primary objective the balancing of Great Britain's annual deficits.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: In referring to that, it is sterling area as a whole and it includes the whole group of countries, some non-British.

Dr. JAGAN: This is the E.C. Agreement which was handed to Members of this Council when the Marshall Aid was promulgated. We had to accept it and we had no say about it. I would like to read a couple of relevant sections to show that even with this generous gift which, the hon. the Financial Secretary has intimated, has no strings attached, there are certain strings attached. Article 5 of the Agreement says:

"The Government of the United Kingdom will facilitate the transfer to the United States of America, for stock-piling or other purposes, of materials originating in the United Kingdom which are required by the United States of America as a result of deficiencies or potential deficiencies in its own resources, upon such reasonable terms of sale, exchange, barter or otherwise, and in such quantities, and for such period of time, as may be agreed to between the Governments of the United States of America and the United Kingdom after due regard for the reasonable requirements of the United Kingdom for domestic use and commercial export of such materials..."

In the second paragraph the Article goes on to say:

"Recognising the principle of equity in respect to the drain upon

the natural resources of the United States of America and of the participating countries, the Government of the United Kingdom will, when so requested by the Government of the United States of America, negotiate where applicable (a) a future schedule of minimum availabilities to the United States of America for future purchase and delivery of a fair share of materials originating in the United Kingdom which are required by the United States of America as a result of deficiencies or potential deficiencies in its own resources at world market prices so as to protect the access of United States industry to an equitable share of such materials either in percentages of production or in absolute quantities from the United Kingdom, (b) arrangements providing suitable protection for the right of access for any citizen of the United States of America or any corporation, partnership, or other association created under the laws of the United States of America, or of any State or Territory thereof and substantially beneficially owned by citizens of the United States of America, in the development of such materials on terms of treatment equivalent to those afforded to the nationals of the United Kingdom, and, (c) an agreed schedule of increased production of such materials where practicable in the United Kingdom and for delivery of an agreed percentage of such increased production to be transferred to the United States of America on a long-term basis in consideration of assistance furnished by the United States of America under this Agreement."

Paragraph 3 reads:

"The Government of the United Kingdom, when so requested by the Government of the United States of America, will co-operate, wherever appropriate, to further the objectives of of paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article in respect of materials originating outside the United Kingdom."

Sir, the Marshall Aid may appear to have no strings attached, but for the Colonies it does have many strings attached in that it falls in with the C.D.C. policy of colonial exploitation. What is said here is merely saying that the U.S.A. is deficient in raw materials—cocoa, tin, bauxite, rubber,—and they must be produced by the Colonies. In 1938 the exports of tin and rubber in Malaya amounted to more than the total exports of the United Kingdom in dollars to the U.S.A. The policy is to keep the Colonies producing the raw materials. Of

course it is an age-old Imperialist policy, but now we find the U.S.A. helping along that policy. I do not know how far it is going to get us, but I do hope we will be able to have a clear-cut policy because we are being told certain things which, on the surface, may appear to be true.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: Is the hon. Member suggesting that Malaya and other Dependencies are not paid for their products by the U.S.A.?

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Member himself quoted the world market prices which they are paid.

Dr. JAGAN: It is not only the world market prices. The main point is that the Colonies are made to produce certain things. The policy is that we must produce things which the U.S.A. and the U.K. are deficient in.

The PRESIDENT: Is this Colony doing that? Are we producing sugar and rice for the benefit of the U.S.A.? We do not produce anything else.

Dr. JAGAN: Rice and sugar are two of the things that are spoken about, but what about gold, timber and bauxite?

The PRESIDENT: None of them go to the U.S.A.

Dr. JAGAN: They go to the dollar areas. That is the point. The hon. the Financial Secretary asked whether I was suggesting that the Colonies were not being paid for the things they produce. Surely they are being paid, but the point is that Great Britain owes the Colonies. He knows that the Sterling Bloc owed the Colonies £600 million up to the end of 1948, and has only paid a few millions.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: That is not so.

Dr. JAGAN: Sir, I wish you would ask the Financial Secretary not to interrupt. The point I was trying to make is that I do not agree with the policy which the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peters) described as the wage policy, but I prefer to call it the plantation

policy. In spite of this generosity and the suggestion of huge capital coming into the Colony, I am afraid to leave the C.D.C. or any other corporation outside the provisions of the Rice Marketing Board. I hope that in his reply the Financial Secretary will tell us whether we will get this free gift without any strings attached, whether we form a company or not.

With reference to the machinery which was purchased some time ago by the Rice Marketing Board I remember that the Chairman of the Board made the statement in this Council that in time to come the rice farmers would give him great credit for having that foresight. I have no doubt that they will do so, because any infant can see the benefits to be derived from the use of machinery. I do not think we are as blind as people were many years ago who, even in England, destroyed machinery because they felt that it would put them out of jobs. What I want to point out is that the Board has spent a lot of money on machinery, and some of the farmers have taken up some of that machinery because they have seen what is happening around the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme, but one high official in the Government told me that it was sad to see the loss suffered by some of those people who had invested their savings in purchasing machinery, realizing that in that lay the future expansion of their cultivation. They had lost everything or nearly everything as a result of the recent flood. Many of them are faced with the prospect of not being able to meet their annual payment.

The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) referred to Came Grove some time ago and remarked that machinery had become a burden to the people on that settlement. It is a sad thing to have to come to this Council and say that machinery is becoming a burden on the people, but that is so because there has been no forthright policy. With their oxen farmers and their families have been able to plough two or three acres of land, but with the advent of machinery they have had even to borrow money for ploughing and other expenses, and when the floods came they lost even what they had not had

before. We do not want it to be said that machinery is a burden on the farmers, therefore Government should give serious consideration to the problem of drainage and irrigation in this Colony. The hon. Member who is the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board has told us in Council that the Board will have no difficulty in selling the tractors and other machinery which has been bought. I hope that is correct. What amazes me is the fact that even after those individuals in the United States who are in the hit-and-run business went up there and disappeared the other day, an expert of the Rice Marketing Board was sent to examine the machinery and reported that it was satisfactory.

Mr. FERNANDES: To a point of correction. No expert was sent to examine the machinery. A member of the Board was sent to examine other equipment which was not purchased by the Board.

Dr. JAGAN: The expert in question is a member of the Board. He may not be termed an expert but his opinions have been cited in these matters. I do not know if Your Excellency will permit me to read from the balance-sheet or the Auditors' report to the Rice Marketing Board with reference to the hire-purchase agreements. This is what is said in one paragraph--

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: Is the hon. Member about to read from the confidential report of the Auditors?

Dr. JAGAN: I propose to read from the report of Messrs. Fitzpatrick Graham & Co.

Mr. FERNANDES: I do not know what the hon. Member is referring to when he speaks of the Auditors' report, because the balance-sheet certified by the Auditors is printed, but the Auditors drew the attention of the Board to certain things which have been remedied. The matters were discussed at a meeting of the Board and have been fixed satisfactorily.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I do know that auditors submit supplementary reports which are confidential.

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. Member propose to read from a public document or not?

Dr. JAGAN: I do not know if it is a public document but the taxpayers are paying for the service of Messrs. Fitzpatrick Graham & Co., and I feel that any communication made by them to the Board is a public document. After all the Board is being run for the benefit of the people of the Colony, and if the Auditors submit a report to the Board I do not see why it should be withheld from the public, even if it is not printed in the main report.

The PRESIDENT: That is a matter for the Board to decide.

Mr. FERNANDES: I have no objection to the hon. Member reading it because it was published in the newspapers, therefore it must be a public document.

Dr. JAGAN: Anyway, in view of the fact that so much criticism has been levelled I do not think I should read it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member has said that he proposed to read the document and the Chairman of the Board has said that he has no objection because it has been published in the newspapers. I do not know what impression has been made on the minds of hon. Members but there may be suspicions about his decision not to read it.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I do not think it is correct to say that a confidential report has been published. As a member of the Board I can say that it has not been released for publication; it is a private document.

Dr. JAGAN: Am I supposed to read it?

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member can do as he pleases.

Dr. JAGAN: Before I leave the question of machinery I wish to say that I do not see the necessity for the inclusion of clause 5 in the Bill, because in the report of the Rice Marketing Board for the period 1st October, 1948, to 30th September, 1949, it is stated:

"58. The total value of stocks of equipment held by the Board at 31st December, 1949, together with the outstanding balances due in respect of equipment sold to producers under Hire-Purchase Agreements, amounted to approximately \$791,000, and the Board has now decided to discontinue the scheme after current stocks are distributed."

If that is going to be the future policy of the Board I do not see the necessity for incorporating this clause in the Bill. I am sure that Government has given its blessing to what has been done, and that what has been done has been done in the best interests of the rice producers of the Colony.

With reference to the Executive Committee the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board in his opening remarks mentioned the fact that *vis a vis* the Board the Executive Committee is really reduced to the position of having to refer everything back to the Board, and consequently the expenses of the Board are mounting. That may be quite true, and I have no reason to doubt it, because the hon. Member cited figures which were very illuminating. Expenses have been going up, and I have in my hand a copy of the agenda of the Board for a meeting on the 30th May, 1950, which I would like to read in order to show this Council that a good deal of what is being done by the Board and increasing its expenses, might very well be done by the Executive Committee. The agenda reads:

1. Confirmation of Minutes.
2. Release of rice for Jamaica.
3. Claim for compensation — Miss Ouckama.
4. Letters from Mrs. D. Mahadeo:
 - (i) increasing rental of New Amsterdam premises;
 - (ii) requesting Board to repair palings at New Amsterdam premises.
5. Purchase of jute bags.
6. Staff Leave — D. Griffith, W. E. Cameron, Mrs. D'Ornellas, and J. L. Gordon.
7. Importation of equipment for Blending Plant.
8. Letter from Hon. C. A. McDoom re angledozer.

9. Travelling and subsistence for Members attending meetings of Building Committee.
10. Lighting Plant for Springlands house.
11. Application by Assistant Clerk-in-Charge, Springlands, for use of lower flat of Springlands house.
12. Petition by District Supervisors.
13. Financial Statement — Rice Producers' Association.
14. Grading of Staff.
15. Correspondence.
16. Any other business.

Mr. FERNANDES: For the information of the hon. Member I may explain that each one of those items was put on the agenda on the instructions of the Board that they were matters which were not to be dealt with by the Executive Committee. It was decided that all staff matters should go before the Board, and everything on that agenda was put there because of the decision of the Board when it questioned the authority of the Executive Committee. Those items were put on the agenda while the ruling of the hon. the Attorney-General was being awaited as to what were the functions of the Executive Committee.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I am sorry that as a member of the Board I have to contradict what the Chairman has said, but it is not correct to say that all those items were put on the agenda as a result of the instructions of the Board. I will later give the correct version when I speak on the Bill.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. Member proceed?

Dr. JAGAN: It seems that interruptions are the order of the day. The point I was trying to make is that the reason why the expenses of the Board are mounting up — and that is one of the reasons advanced why the Executive Committee should be given more power — is that the Board has to deal with quite a number of trivial matters. I have just read an agenda of 16 items, and I am told that the items are usually so numerous that they cannot be dealt with at one meeting. Trivial matters which are well within the

scope of the Executive Committee are discussed by the Board, with the result that expenses mount up. I have cited this instance to show Members who consider clause 7 objectionable, that they should throw out the other clauses, because we have been told that certain clauses are to be withdrawn, and that other clauses, such as that giving the Executive Committee more power, are not necessary. If at some subsequent time it is found necessary to make such minor amendments as giving the Assistant Manager the same power as the Manager with regard to seizure of padi or rice, such amendments can be made in the Ordinance.

In winding up I would like to quote a passage from the speech of the Colonial Treasurer on the 31st January, 1946, in introducing the Rice Marketing Bill, in which he apparently referred to a speech made by him in 1943. In column 2095 of the Hansard report of January 31, 1946, he is reported to have said:

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

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: Will the hon. Member read the concluding portion of that paragraph?

Dr. JAGAN: Yes. It goes on to state:

"It is, therefore, a matter of great personal satisfaction to me that I am able to introduce this Bill with that objective in Council, and to move the second reading today."

I do not know whether the Financial Secretary's object in asking me to read the concluding passage is to suggest that the present Board is a truly co-operative organization. If so I would like to send him over to the Co-operative Department to get some of the lectures they are giving now. We all know that the Rice Marketing Board is not a co-operative. Eight members of the Board are nominated by the Governor, and of the eight members who the Rice Producers' Association is

supposed to put in we have been told that three of them were rejected by Government who nominated three others in their places. If that is what is meant by a co-operative I hope that some amendment will be made in that view. I want to speak particularly on the question of the Board being made a co-operative organization because I feel that the time is very ripe that that should be done. We are told that it would be a very big undertaking to make the Board a truly co-operative organization with the rice growers themselves. I do not like the term "rice producers" because it is all-embracing. I would like to see the Board made a truly co-operative organization of the rice growers of the Colony.

The PRESIDENT: Well the rice growers must do it. I know what the hon. Member is getting at; I see his idea. It is not so far removed from my mind, but if there is to be a co-operative organization the rice growers must co-operate. If the hon. Member could start such an organization I think he would be doing a good service to them.

Dr. JAGAN: In answer to that, Sir, I would like to state that the only body which really can speak in the name of the rice growers of this Colony is the Rice Producers' Association. Nobody can come along and say "I have organized the growers into a co-operative organization and here is the plan," because Government would surely and rightly ask his authority to speak in the name of the rice growers. But by Statute the Rice Producers' Association has been made a representative organization of the rice growers of this Colony, and I have here a copy of a resolution forwarded to Government by the Rice Producers' Association requesting Government to make the Rice Marketing Board a co-operative organization. The Association has consulted Mr. Cheeseman who has been in the Colony for some time and has now gone. If it was Government's intention to make the Rice Marketing Board a co-operative organization it surely would have consulted Mr. Cheeseman on the subject.

As far as I see, the problem in this country is a very big one, and unless we plan in a big way we are not going to solve

it. When I was a boy my father was a rice planter. He had about four acres of land, one of which was about a mile from our home, another two miles away, another acre about three miles away and another bed about five miles away from our home. I remember that as a boy I had to go behind the cows, running bare-footed to the rice fields to carry on the rice work. Why hasn't Government thought about doing something to help people like my father? The people had to waste time and energy in having to cultivate an acre here and an acre in another place. What has Government given in the way of an incentive to the people? Sir, in this big Colony with so much land the people are still land hungry and do not have adequate and proper facilities to cultivate the land of this Colony. I have cited figures to show a deliberate policy on the part of the sugar producers to reduce the acreage for cultivation by the people, because they have found the workers are not working sufficient days on the sugar estates. If we are really interested in the farmers and want to see the industry developed—and that is the claim of this Bill — let us bring in the corporation but see that the people's interests are not endangered. Why not give the people facilities? Give them land in one particular spot so that they can have organized use of the land themselves.

The PRESIDENT: Question!

Dr. JAGAN: We are talking about a big corporation. My friend, the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin), pointed out that during the floods the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme cut the dam and flooded the people of the area. That is a policy again which is aimed at helping the rice farmers and the people of this country. As I see it, Sir, the Colony can be developed and the people who are in the existing rice industry can do the development, provided they are given the facilities. By that I mean proper irrigation and drainage and also better and organized use of the land. You mentioned the other day, Sir, that there was one Producers' Co-operative organization with a marvellous achievement. But I want to state that if there was any sincere interest in the peasants and rice growers of this

Colony, and if it was felt that Producers Co-operatives would help them forward then Government should have advocated an adequate policy. Why has Government not set up machinery stations in certain outlying places and made the machinery available to the people as they are doing at the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme—renting the machinery out to the peasants at half the rate per hour that the Scheme is doing? If the rate per hour for the ploughs is \$3.00, let Government come out and say "In order to help the people we are going to charge \$1.50 per hour; we are going to subsidize them to that extent". The Government in England does things like that; when the people could not be got to go into the coal mines the Government gave them extra pay and rations. If the object of this Government is to encourage producers co-operatives, let us not leave it to the whims of the people, because we know the people are accustomed to the old and antiquated mode of production and may not want to give it up. I submit that the way forward is not the plantation type of agriculture. I hold no brief for the individual type of agriculture. Let it not be understood so. On the other hand I say the way forward is to give them the facilities. A Producers' Co-operative organization can only be if Government gives the incentive. But so far I do not see that any incentive has been given. Instead we are now being asked to believe in the Government when for so many years we have not seen the fruits of the good intentions of Government. Perhaps the problem has been so big that the Government was not able to grapple with it all. Perhaps on account of the bigness of the problem no positive policy could have been framed. But, Sir, if that is the sin not of commission, then it is definitely a sin of omission because in not advocating certain policies the people are left to suffer. I do hope hon. Members will take this opportunity to throw out this new clause which has been brought forward as an amendment.

Sir, in my private discussions with the hon. the Financial Secretary he intimated to me that if I were satisfied that the Government was sincere in its motives especially with reference to the new clause, then would I take the initiative both in

this Council and out of this Council. I hope I am not saying anything I should not say. I want to say that I will take the initiative and will do so because I am not convinced that the Government is doing the right thing in allowing the C.D.C. to be exempted from the provisions of the Rice Marketing Ordinance. Even if it takes all my energy I am going to oppose this measure, despite the fact that it may or may not pass in this Council, because I feel it is not right, it is unfair, it is unjust. I have pointed it out already that the Council or the people of this Colony cannot hope for anything good from such a company, when it has already aroused distrust in that it does not want to work within the provisions of the Rice Marketing Ordinance. As I have said before, even if they are out of it, according to the contemplated terms of agreement they would be limited to the same severe restrictions, and so I cannot see any reason whatever for them to be left out.

Sir, a memorandum has a few moments ago been given to hon. Members. I have not had time to peruse it, but I know what is written there. That is, the recommendation of the Rice Producers' Association — I hope I am correct — is to amend the Rice Marketing Ordinance so that this new company, which will be formed, will have the right to nominate eight members which Government is now nominating. Sir, if this corporation in which Government will have funds and the C.D.C. will have funds has the right to nominate eight members to the Board, the same right which Government now has and the Rice Producers' Association which is protecting the interests of the peasants and other interests, then I do not see why there should still be any suspicion on the part of the C.D.C. or any other concern. I am not wholly in agreement with it, but nevertheless I hope, Sir, that Government will find this a real way out of this impasse and will accept it readily, because the C.D.C. will then be able with its expert skill and knowledge to find markets to go into the Rice Marketing Board and be limited to the same restrictions in so far as local consumption is concerned and as our West Indian contracts are concerned, and be able to get benefits

for itself and the others. I do hope that when the hon. the Financial Secretary speaks we will hear that he is in agreement with the proposal as put up by the Rice Producers' Association, and then the C.D.C. will be free without the waste of so much time to negotiate new contracts and settle down to business now and not, as the hon. Member says, probably in two or three years to come.

Mr. MORRISH: Sir, I have listened with considerable care and a lot of patience to the views of the various speakers, and I am very grateful to your help in having that informal conference yesterday which cleared a number of points on which I was somewhat obscure. I am able to form my own conclusion now. I shall be brief, Sir, but I must take this opportunity to make reference to certain statements made by the hon. Member who has just taken his seat. I quote the actual words he used, I think, last week when he commenced to speak. He said that he had noticed a deliberate policy on the part of the sugar industry to stifle the rice industry and other minor industries. I stress the word "minor"—and that the acreage allotted to rice cultivation by the sugar estates had been steadily reduced. First of all, I will not comment on the latter part of that statement, as Your Excellency has mentioned that the hon. Member has a motion in that connection and it will be very improper and irrelevant to speak on that now. But, however, I think the statement that there is a deliberate policy on the part of the sugar industry to stifle the rice industry is too ridiculous for words.

I suggest that everyone here remembers only too well Sir Frederick Seaford. I am sure that every Member here agrees that he was for many years a very prominent member of the sugar industry, and I am sure that every Member here also knows that for many years Sir Frederick Seaford gave up thousands of hours of his leisure time to aid the rice industry of this Colony. I suggest, therefore, that the statement that the sugar industry wants to hamper the rice industry is a very incorrect statement. It is well known, Sir, that Sir Frederick went to unlimited trouble over the Mahaicony-Abary creek areas, and spent many days and did a great

deal of hard work in helping Government to bring those lands into being to grow rice not for the benefit of the sugar industry but the rice industry. In addition to that, the sugar industry on the Courantyne Coast not only showed willingness to help the rice industry but actually supplied experts to help and guide that industry as to how some of its works should be done. I understand also, Sir, that one particular estate even went to the extent of supplying water for the growth of rice. I refer to the Crabwood Creek area.

Further to the point of minor industries, I think it is very soon forgotten that only recently one Company not only promised a considerable sum of money but also set aside an area of land for experimentation in the growing of bananas. Another Company is also at this moment putting in an area to experiment with cocoa. I suggest that shows, Sir, very appreciable efforts on the part of the sugar industry not only to foster minor industries but to aid existing industries. I would like to quote this portion of the hon. Member's statement again in which he referred to the rice industry and other minor industries. I am quite sure that the members of the rice industry would not like it to be dubbed a minor industry of the Colony today. I consider it a very major industry and would suggest that if it is thought to be a minor industry the one very simple way to help it to become a major one is to support this Bill.

Mr. PHANG: I will not take up too much of the time of this Council. Only yesterday it was my intention to oppose this Bill, but since then I have heard certain explanations which have satisfied me that the interests of the rice growers are protected. In view of that fact I cannot do otherwise than support this Bill. I am going to support it very heartily. It is my duty, as Government is investing in this rice producing scheme, to co-operate with Government all I can. I am going to support this Bill.

Mr. WIGHT: We have been on this debate nearly three weeks, and if we continue at such length it looks as though we might go on to the end of the year. Therefore, I shall endeavour to be as brief

as possible in the circumstances. In speaking on this Bill I am fully sensitive and conscious of the fact that I speak as the representative of one of the largest rice growing areas of this Colony. It therefore means that it is a duty cast upon me, as the people's representative, to see that their interests are protected and are in no way harmed. In doing so I would just like to state here what has been stated by a greater authority than myself as to what is the duty of an elected member of a legislature and how that duty should be performed. That, Sir, is no doubt fully alive in the minds of each and every Member of this Council. It is that "an elected member is not a delegate sent to speak and vote in the name of his constituency; he is a member of a sovereign body in which he is supposed to obey the dictates of his own mind and his conscience." Those words are fully supported by one of the greatest Parliamentarians known to the British Empire, Burke. With your permission, Sir, I will read from a book by Robert Rayner on British Democracy in which he quotes Burke's words to his constituency at Bristol when he was called upon to vote against their wishes. I quote:

"Authoritative instructions and mandates which a Member is bound to obey and to vote and argue for against the conviction of his judgment and conscience are utterly unknown in the laws of this Island. Parliament is not a Court of Ambassadors from different and hostile interests but a deliberate assembly of one nation with one interest, that of the whole."

I commend those words to the consideration of each and every Member of this Council, and I do so because the whole of this Colony means the whole Colony, every sectional part and community of this Colony. How is this Colony to be developed if we are not going to have money poured into it for development to take place? Are we to be developed or are we not to be developed? That seems to be the decision that hon. Members are called upon in this debate to decide. Now we have received a severe blow in the announcement that the Anaconda Company is no longer continuing at the moment their investigations in this Colony. That is a severe blow to this Colony. We

trust that they will come back. Those, who know, will know the effect of the Anaconda Company leaving this Colony. Those who have been employed and have obtained employment directly and indirectly will soon know, if they have not already felt that blow. What are we to do? Are we to stand by and allow development to lag and flag as it has been doing in this Colony? Hon. Members have said that Government is stifling development against the interests of the people. Hon. Members have suggested that Government has deliberately, and other interests too, flouted the wishes of the people of this Colony, the land of their birth, and yet we sit down here and are told that we are to await development and it can be done as it has started. We have waited, one hon. Member suggest from the days of his father, for this development to take place. All the more credit it is to the hon. Member for his having attained to a seat in this Council, a profession and a lucrative income. But who did that for him — his father? He says he does not agree with the present peasant development. If he does not agree with it, are we therefore to sit by idly for the next 50 or 120 years and let this development crawl?

Dr. JAGAN: To a point of correction! I did not say that I did not agree with the peasant system. That was the whole point of my argument.

Mr. WIGHT: I am glad to hear the hon. Member say that. I can assure him that a contented peasantry in any land is contentment, and he will agree with me, I feel sure, that any form of agriculture is necessarily a poor and lower form of economy to a country than an industrialized one. I speak feeling, as I do, that my particular constituency will benefit by development. My term of office in this Council expires in 1952, but I am not impressed that I am to form my judgment by mass demonstration. I sit here to serve and to serve in the interest of everyone in my constituency, and I trust I shall do that according to the oath I have taken. I say, if Essequibo is languishing as it has been for years, is it to continue to languish? Is it not to have a revival, some opportunity of seeing some vision that

there is a future in its particular industry? The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) said that he dissociates the rice producer from its definition; he would dissociate the price producer from the definition of miller as against the peasant. I agree with him. I have so noted, it. The artificial definition in the articles of the Rice Producers' Association is not what the grower for whom I stand understands. Is the hon. Member for Central Demerara going to deny that the propaganda instigated in this particular instance has not been done by the grower? Will the hon. Member tell his constituency, if he represents a rice growing constituency, that it is the grower who started this agitation that the growers are not fully represented in the Rice Producers' Association? Did the hon. Member read the names of those members who forwarded the memorandum to me and gave me the information? Does he find the growers in the majority there? Who are in the majority? Who are leading this demonstration? It is the millers. I can go back to my constituency —

Mr. DEBIDIN: To a point of correction! I think it is totally wrong for the hon. Member not only to refer to the question of agitation but to give the impression that the growers are not interested in what he calls "this agitation". The signatories to which he referred are both millers and growers.

The PRESIDENT: I think the memorandum before the Council answers the question. Hon. Members have a copy of this document signed by these people, and hon. Members must decide on that.

Mr. DEBIDIN: May I point out that at every meeting, or what the hon. Member calls a demonstration, there were about 90 per cent. growers, the balance being millers?

Dr. JAGAN: Please stop the hon. Member from inferring that I am instigating the growers?

Mr. WIGHT: I am not inferring that; if the hon. Member thinks I am at him he is fully capable of replying. I repeat that the memorandum has been signed. Let

both hon. Members look at it and put alongside of it the question whether that particular signature is that of a grower or that of a miller. I proceed to my point.

Mr. DEBIDIN: To a point of correction! The memorandum is a memorandum by the Rice Producers' Association, a statutory body. I fail to see the point in the question asked, because it suggests a false statement.

The PRESIDENT: I am afraid there have been a good many false statements.

Mr. WIGHT: The hon. Member knows that in our profession we are not thrown off by interruptions. They give us considerable time, when we take our seats, to think of an answer. Again in 1952 those of us who desire to seek re-election to our constituencies will be on the platform, and if the development envisaged by this Bill has taken place, our constituents will be able to know whether they still hold their lands, and in what way this Bill has jeopardized their future and their livelihood. Therefore, what have we to fear in obeying the dictates of our consciences and judgment if we feel that the development of this country hangs on the peg of the introduction of capital for such development? I do not desire to enter into a detailed analysis of the speeches made by previous speakers, but I may say that there were many points made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) with which I am in entire agreement. For instance, we all know that the Rice Marketing Board has its faults. I have said so myself, but we have been assured that those faults are being remedied. I agree with the hon. Member that those who made the contracts with the West Indian Islands were not as wise as we are today, and I also agree that the producers should get as much as they can, especially producers in the rice industry. I also agree that bonuses and increased salaries in the Rice Marketing Board should not be paid, but should instead be paid in the form of bonuses to the rice producers if that is practicable. I agree with that, but I also agree that if we want development this Bill should be passed.

I cannot, however, see why clause 2 should be included in the Bill. I cannot see why the Rice Marketing Board cannot continue to operate as it has been doing since its inception, but I do not say that because clause 2 should not be in the Bill the other clauses should be wiped out. The supplementary memorandum of the Rice Producers' Association which we have been asked to consider, suggests confusion in the minds of its authors, and with your permission, Sir, I will read a portion of the concluding paragraph, which says:

"The one or two clauses which may seem desirable could always be reintroduced at some other convenient time".

If they are desirable why throw them out now? Surely it would be a waste of time to come back here and re-introduce them. The concluding portion of the paragraph states:

"It is feared that if the Bill is allowed to reach the Committee stage for the sake of saving these few desirable clauses, the highly detrimental Clause (7) may get through in some form which may still operate to the detriment of the humble rice producers of this Colony."

That is quite possible. At one time I was undecided as to how this clause could operate even under the provisions of the Rice Marketing Board, and I still feel that it may be possible to do it. There is no reason why the two bodies should be in competition. The umbrella of the Rice Marketing Board could form a shade for the corporation. It will be within the power of this Council to see that the clauses of the agreement to be entered into with the corporation do not operate to the detriment of the peasant farmers. We are not members of a mutual admiration society indulging in throwing compliments across the table, but there are Members here who will be able to effect that purpose. Having listened to the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) for four or five hours I feel sure that if he has been able to marshal his facts so well as to be able to speak for that length of time, when the agreement comes before this Council he will, if necessary, spend five hours on each clause so as to protect the interests of the peasants.

There are one or two matters on

which I agree with the hon. Member, and on which I have myself written the Board and the Government. I refer to small details like bringing rice from Essequibo to have it graded in Georgetown and then transported back to Essequibo to be sold. Such things are quite within the competence of the Board to adjust, and in view of the interest the Rice Producers' Association is taking in this Bill I feel sure that it will endeavour to have such matters adjusted. The same thing applies to the question of machinery.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara says that development should bring prosperity in its wake. Most certainly it should, and that is what we want. We want prosperity for the rice grower, but we are only going to get it by development. Is this Council aware of the fact that in its present financial position this Colony cannot attempt any development project of any kind? Can any Member who has monthly financial statements placed before him, say that at the moment this Colony can spend a million dollars to develop the rice industry? Are we to wait in the hope that we may be able to show a surplus so as to be able to throw ten million dollars into that development? I am appealing to hon. Members to view clause 7 of the Bill as giving Government an opportunity to see whether the C.D.C. or any other corporation are sincere in their desire, at the instance of the U.K. Government, to develop our rice industry. We should not be the ones to apply the dampers to prevent the fire from escaping, but should give them an opportunity to prove their sincerity.

I agree with the hon. Member that there has been colonial exploitation in certain respects, and that there is still danger of it, but in spite of that we should not adopt a dog-in-the-manger policy by sitting down, as we have done in the past, holding our lands and saying that we are going to develop them ourselves when we can make no effort to do so because of our limited financial resources. We have made mistakes in the past — serious mistakes for which we are now suffering. I need not recall each and every one of those mistakes. I need only recall the fact that we should have had a railroad in this Colony, and that we

would not have had our present transportation difficulties. We should not, like our forefathers, be parties to the frustration of development of this country by refusing the hand that is offered to us. Now is the time when we should get everything we can and get it immediately, otherwise it may never come. The question of machinery has been referred to, and also the question of Marshall Aid which may not come because it may be needed elsewhere. Let us get ahead and give this mandate to Government, so that in 1952, if nothing is achieved, we would be able to tell our constituents that it was not our fault. Let us give Government the opportunity of carrying the blame. I am going to support the Bill with the feeling that in 1952 my constituents will be well pleased with what I have done.

Mr. KENDALL: I have listened attentively to the various speeches for and against this Bill which has aroused so much public interest, and to so many conflicting views that one is at a loss to determine which section of public opinion, as presented by the local newspapers, should be adopted. Your Excellency's statement, which you delivered on the 10th inst., coupled with the proposed amendment of clause 7, has been most timely. It has helped to remove from my mind certain fears and suspicions as to Government's future policy towards those who have been the backbone of the rice industry since its inception. I refer to the small peasant farmers. They are the people in whom I am most interested, and whatever I do today I will do with the hope that it will benefit them and the Colony in general.

I have no desire to oppose the Bill in its entirety because I feel that in doing so I would not be serving those people in whom I am most interested. I am not the representative of a rice-producing area, and because of that fact I think I can view this Bill from a very detached position, not allowing myself to be stampeded by conflicting rice interests. Members should be reminded that for a very long time there has been talk of the great potentialities of British Guiana, but those potentialities cannot be developed.

unless capital is put into them. We have heard Members say that the C.D.C. should keep out and let local people develop the industry. That is all well and good, but we know that since the Rice Marketing Board made the contract with the West Indies it has not been able to fulfil that contract 100 per cent. The members of the Board knew very well when they made that contract that they could not fulfil it, and because of that fact they included a clause in the agreement which allowed the Board to guarantee 80 per cent. of the contract requirements. It is only until this year that the Board has been able to supply that 80 per cent., and until this Colony can supply 100 per cent., it will not be able to enjoy world market prices. It is a known fact that contracts are made on the basis of a long-range policy, and in such a manner that if there is a slump one party may lose and the other gain. There may be a slump in the world market, and Trinidad and the other West Indian Islands may suggest to us that as the market price has been reduced we should reduce our contract price. It is known that the Trinidad Government is subsidizing the rice bought from this Colony, which shows that the price at which we are selling them our rice the consumers there cannot afford to pay.

In the course of the debate one Member suggested that the rice industry has reached a very precarious state, and that the prices being offered by the Board cannot pay the growers. We have been told that it costs around \$83 to produce an acre of rice, but the only way to test the economic condition of any community is to see the living conditions of the people in that area. Members will agree, and especially the merchants, that the Courentyne Coast is the most progressive area of the Colony. There is no section of the Courentyne where one can see any alarming state of poverty, which shows that rice is paying. I am surprised to hear Members say that it is not. It is true that we would like to get the best possible price for any commodity, but it is incorrect to say that rice is not paying, because it will pay even more.

Dr. GONSALVES: I am the one who made the suggestion. To contend that it

is not costing \$83 to produce an acre of rice is absolutely untrue.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member made the point that the prices now being paid by the Board are not profitable to the growers. The hon. Member who is now speaking is entitled to his opinion. I cannot have these contradictions going on all the time.

Mr. KENDALL: Before the interruption I was endeavouring to point out that the rice industry, by its own effort today, cannot fulfil the demands for rice, and unless outside capital or local capital was put into it we would not get what we are looking for. It is the duty of Members of this Council, if they have the future of the Colony in mind, to think of the unemployment in this country, and if those who have made money in the rice industry are not prepared to put some of that money back into it, then we must seek outside capital, whether it is from the C.D.C. or any other corporation. I do not see anything wrong in that.

I am supporting the Bill in its amended form. After we have listened to you, Sir, and the assurance you have given us, and we still continue to say that we are against the Bill then our suspicions are not with the C.D.C. but have been shifted to Your Excellency. If the Governor gives me his word publicly and privately I am not one who would not accept his assurance. If time proves that your word was of no value then I would have something to say, but Your Excellency has given us your word, and if I do not vote in favour of the Bill then I am saying that your word means nothing.

There has been much talk about the Rice Marketing Board. I want to agree with certain Members that there is need for an inquiry, because in this very Council two members of the Board have made conflicting statements. But that is not sufficient to justify our throwing the Bill out, although I am beginning to feel that it is not right that the C.D.C. should join with the Rice Marketing Board until the Ordinance is amended so as to fit in with the large-scale operations that are envisaged. If we are satisfied that the

functioning of the Board is not as we would like it I do not think it is right that a new company should be hitched on to the Board. You have promised, Sir, that there will be collaboration between the company and the Board. I do not know in what form you will introduce machinery in order that the two bodies may work together, but whatever it is I am certain that it will come before this Council for ratification, and that will be the time when those Members who are most interested in their constituencies and the Colony in general will see to it that the terms of the agreement fit in with the best interests of the people. I am in agreement with the Bill in its amended form and I shall support it.

Mr. RAATGEVER: It looks as though I am the last speaker, but I hope I am not the least. I do not intend to make any long speech because I am not an orator, and hon. Members who have spoken previously have dealt very fully with all aspects of the Bill. I am in favour of the Bill with the exception of clause 2, and I shall endeavour to give my reasons at the proper time, why we should delete that clause. I did not approve of clause 7 in its original form because I felt that any company bringing capital into the country should operate under the rice marketing organization. As a result of the amendments proposed by you, Sir, and the discussion with you yesterday afternoon, I am prepared to support the clause in its amended form, because I feel that it would be in the best interests of our people to support it. I have always had uppermost in my mind the interests of the 40,000 odd peasant producers of rice, as I have always felt that their interests should be adequately protected. After what I heard yesterday I feel absolutely certain that their interests will be adequately protected, and I am going to support the amended clause. I also feel, in view of what I heard yesterday, that the interests of the present millers will also be protected when the time comes, and that they need have no fear.

I now propose briefly to give some of the reasons why I think clause 2 should be struck out. First of all the hon. the Financial Secretary in his opening speech, on pages 7 and 8, said:

"I want to pass now to what I may call the immediate causes of dissatisfaction and friction in the functioning of the Rice Marketing Board, and their relation to clauses 2-6, and clause 8 of this Bill. That brings me right away to clause 2 which deals with the constitution and the functions of the Executive Committee."

Later on he said:

"Indeed, it gave me considerable difficulty to find a formula for the original draft of this legislation dealing with the Executive Committee and, eventually, in collaboration with Mr. Duke we arrived at the formula which is set out in the existing Ordinance, at section 5 (3).

Now, to go back to the formula for the Executive Committee, may I, Sir read in full the sub-section? It says:—

"(3) Subject to the directions and general control of the Board the Committee shall manage the business of the Board under this Ordinance and may, in the name and on behalf of the Board, exercise the powers, duties and functions of the Board under this Ordinance other than the powers, duties and functions of the Board under subsection (1) of section six, section fifteen, subsection (1) of section thirty and section thirty-six."

It seemed to us—that is, Mr. Duke and myself—that the purpose of these words would be completely clear, but it has since transpired that that is not so. In fact, I think the Board has actually asked for a legal ruling as to what they mean. That ruling has never been given, but because of certain happenings between the Board and the Executive Committee—where certain members of the Board have felt that the Executive Committee usurped functions which did not belong to them or acted contrary to the policy prescribed by the Board, or have not brought to the notice of the Board certain matters for their advice and direction—because of these things and an idea that the Committee's acts are invalid except specifically approved by the Board, it has been suggested that these words—"subject to the directions and general control of the Board"—should disappear, and that there should be words to the effect that the Executive Committee shall conduct the business in accordance with the general policy of the Board.

That is the cause of all the trouble, the Executive Committee is subject to the direction and general control of the Board. The main part of this clause gives the Board power to direct and control the Executive Committee, but for some reason or other Government now seeks to remove that control and power from the Board. I disagree and do not think it should be removed. The hon. the Financial Secretary goes on to say that certain members of the Board felt that the Executive Committee usurped functions which did not belong to them. I would like to say that it was a great majority of the Board who felt so. I would like to know from the hon. the Financial Secretary, who asked for this clause to be amended? It is said it has been suggested. I would like to know who suggested it. I happen to know that the Board did not ask that this clause be removed or amended. The Chairman did not ask for it and I, as the other representative of the Legislative Council on the Board, did not ask for it to be done. I see no necessity for its removal or for its amendment. I feel Government is interfering unduly with the functions of the Rice Marketing Board in attempting to amend a provision which has been working satisfactorily since 1946, without any request by or reference to the people whose duty it is to carry out the provisions of the Ordinance. I do not see the necessity also for increasing the members of the Executive Committee by adding one more at the present time. From a perusal of the minutes of the Committee it will be seen that all the members did not attend all the meetings at any one time. There was never a full attendance and, if there is, there is a casting vote which the law gives to the Chairman and if it is exercised you have a majority throughout. I have not seen on any occasion the Chairman use his casting vote.

There were complaints about the functions and operations of the Executive Committee. One member of the Board wrote complaining about it. The matter was discussed and it was adjusted. At a meeting in February when the financial position of the Board was being considered — unfortunately I was not present

at the meeting — it was decided to appoint a sub-committee to investigate the financial position of the Board and also to consider the question of the functions of the Executive Committee. That sub-committee had seven meetings and made certain recommendations. Those were general recommendations, and they were put to the full Board and were accepted. In view of the remarks made by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) and the reply by the Chairman of the Board, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Fernandes), I would just like to read what the decision was so that hon. Members could see that what I said previously was quite correct. It was as follows:

“POWERS AND FUNCTIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

1. That all contracts or sub-contracts involving amounts in excess of \$250.00 should be approved and executed by the Board.
2. (a) That, in the matter of staff, the Manager should be authorised:—
 - (i) to engage, dismiss, transfer or promote members of the junior staff to a maximum salary range of \$100.00 per month;
 - (ii) to grant leave to the staff in accordance with a schedule to be approved by the Board;
 - (iii) to grant loans to staff in deserving cases, subject to a maximum equivalent to one month's salary repayable in six monthly instalments.
- (b) That all other matters pertaining to staff should be subject to approval by the Board.
3. That all claims involving amounts in excess of \$500.00 should be approved by the Board. (N.B. It was made clear at the time that “claims” should not include accounts, etc., rendered against the Board for work done or goods supplied).
4. That the purchase of any padi and the milling thereof should be sanctioned by the Board.
5. That all purchases of machinery and agricultural equipment should be subject to the approval of the Board.”

That is what has been recommended by this sub-committee and accepted by

the Board, and put into operation so that there is really no necessity to bring to the full Board any of the matters I referred to.

Mr. FERNANDES: To a point of correction! The hon. Member has just read the recommendations of the sub-committee which were accepted by the Board, but the greater part of the functions of the Executive Committee as recommended by the sub-committee are really the powers of the Manager. I would like the hon. Member to single out two or three items on that agenda which can come under the powers of the Executive Committee as laid down in that clause. I would like him to do that because everyone of those comes under that restriction.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With all due deference to the hon. Member, we are on the second reading of the Bill which deals with the principle, and the hon. Member is really engaged in dealing with clause 2 of the Bill, which naturally and obviously means he has to go into details. That is a matter, I suggest to the hon. Member and this Council, to be properly dealt with in the committee stage.

Mr. RAATGEVER: Very well, Sir, but I think I am right here. I referred to the remarks made by my friend, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, when speaking on the second reading of the Bill. I am sure I am not precluded from mentioning that. In connection with the powers and functions of the Executive Committee this is the copy I made of his remarks. I think the newspapers have a full report of it and it will be in the Hansard if there is any question. I have here:

"Mr. Fernandes told how a farcical situation arose when the limit to spending more than \$100.00 was placed on the Committee. In the meantime the Committee for peace and quiet ceased to function and every little matter had to go before the Board."

There was no such limit at all. We have not placed any limit on the spending.

Mr. FERNANDES: To a point of correction! I said the hon. Member sug-

gested a limit. I did not say there was a limit placed.

The PRESIDENT: I do not think we ought to go into all these details. If there is any particular point to clear up let us do it in committee.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I just want to give reasons for the hon. Member referring these things to the full Board. He said in the meantime the Committee for peace and quiet ceased to function and every little matter had to go before the full Board, and that is the reason why all these items are on the agenda. I am only giving you what he said. This is the proper place for me to make these comments because he wanted to say that I was not correct. He placed all those items on the agenda as the result of his decision not to summon meetings of the Executive Committee.

The PRESIDENT: Will the hon. Member pass on?

Mr. RAATGEVER: All right, Sir. My very good friend, the hon. the Financial Secretary, goes on to say — I propose to leave the matter of functions of the Executive Committee alone because it seems I am going to be continuously interrupted — on page 9 of his reported speech:

"...The Chairman has a casting vote but he should not be put in the position of using a casting vote as between two sides. I do not wish to infer that those persons who are nominated by the Governor and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman are necessarily anti-producers, but it may arise there is a difference of view and consequently it is better to strengthen the Board by the appointment of another member; and this Bill seeks to give power to the Governor to nominate the seventh member. There is a great deal of suspicion thrown on this matter. Actually all the members of the Board are nominated by the Governor, all of them. This additional member to be nominated from the Board to the Executive Committee may be in any of the categories...."

I just want to say, it is quite true you, Sir, nominate all sixteen members to the Board, whether producer, non-producer or Government members. The Ordin-

ance lays down the procedure, but in the Executive Committee you only nominate one member. The Ordinance provides for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and four members of the Executive Committee, and you nominate one member, the other three being elected by the members of the Rice Marketing Board. If it is deemed necessary to strengthen the Board, as the hon. the Financial Secretary says, I do not see why in these democratic days you, Sir, should be put in the position to nominate somebody else. It should be by ballot. If there are to be seven members, the additional member should be balloted for. As I said before, I am not stressing that point because I do not think there is any necessity to increase the number of members of the Executive Committee or to vary its functions by changing what I have read. At the proper time I propose to move the deletion of that, and my friend the Chairman of the Board, will second it and vote for it. That is just to show that the Board feels there is no necessity for this. We are together as one on it.

Before I leave this, I would like to clear up misapprehensions about the Rice Marketing Board. One hon. Member seems to think there are irregularities and another said there seems to be necessity for the appointment of a committee of enquiry. The Rice Marketing Board has put its house in order; everything is working satisfactorily now. There was never any question of irregularities, any defalcations. It is simply that the Executive Committee in the opinion of the Board has exceeded its functions. We were prepared to let that Committee exceed its functions as long as everything was running satisfactorily, but when we found that everything was not satisfactory we simply had to step in. First of all we asked for a ruling from the Attorney-General which only arrived a few weeks ago, and the Board took it into its hands to appoint by a majority this sub-committee which, as I said, met on several occasions and arrived at certain decisions which were accepted by the Board and are now in operation.

There is only one other point my friend, the Chairman of the Board, said here about machinery, that I wish to refer

to. He said: "The Board in importing machinery had its ups and downs. There is no question that the Board has made mistakes. But the Board really acted in the interest of the producers in importing machinery." There is no question about that. My complaint is that it went too far and too fast. What I want to correct is that the Board did this. It was done by the Executive Committee. It is not the present Chairman's fault that the Executive Committee had decided to embark on a scheme of purchasing machinery without the approval of the Board. That was in 1946. It did not ask the approval of the Board neither did it give the extent of the amount of capital it was proposed to spend in buying machinery. The matter was to be discussed subsequently, but it was never discussed nor brought before the full Board, so the full Board never gave its approval. As a member of the Board I am prepared to take the blame and to accept responsibility for anything it does, but I cannot be blamed or I cannot accept responsibility, or the producer-members of the Board be expected to accept responsibility for something we did not approve of. A lot has been said that all this trouble in the Board has been brought about by the producer-members. That is not so. This enquiry was originated by non-producer members. The sub-committee that was appointed was comprised of producer-members, non-producer-members and a Government Official. The Director of Agriculture was on that sub-committee. I hope I have clarified the position and that I have made it quite clear that the producer-members have not been behind this action of the Board.

The hon. the Financial Secretary in the last paragraph on page 10 of his speech said:

"While I am on grades I want to mention a matter which has no relation to anything in the Bill, but it is something which has caused a certain amount of public dissatisfaction, and it arose out of the recent action of the Board. Members knew that the practice and procedure of the Board is to have all the rice delivered at Georgetown. That is to say, all the rice produced by the mills in the country is purchased in Georgetown and actually delivered in Georgetown, the reason being, as I said

before, for the rice to be blended into various grades for local sale and for export. In that way, of course, the Board makes a considerable profit, because instead of selling the highest grade and the lowest grade in a certain category they are blended into one and greater profit is thereby secured from the price received.....

I want to make it clear that the Board makes no considerable profits and that the Board returns to the peasant-producers about 99 per cent of all profits made. Last year the Board returned more than 100 per cent. of the profits made. The Board operated last year at a deficit of \$6,000 by returning to the peasant-producers more than the full amount of money received in net profit on the sale of rice. That is something I want to clarify, because it has gone abroad that the Rice Marketing Board is making millions of dollars profit. One hon. Member said we made a million dollars in a year. That \$1 million he speaks of is an accumulation over a period of years mainly when the hon. the Financial Secretary had the honour of being Chairman of the Board and it was handed down to us to form the nucleus of our funds for putting up new buildings and financing the purchase of bags, rice, etc. We are very grateful to him for that.

The PRESIDENT: You had better put it back.

Mr. RAATGEVER: We are handing to the producers the profits made. That has been our policy for the last two years. The present Chairman and I and other members feel that the peasant-producers should be given all the profits made which are not needed for the working of the organization. The hon. the Financial Secretary goes on to say on page 11:

"The Board has since by a decision which, I believe, was not a majority one caused those sale depots to be closed or has decided that they should be closed. What is the result? The result is, a country shopkeeper must come into Georgetown to buy his rice and pay the freight back. He may have the mortification of having his shop within 100 yards of a mill, but it is an offence to buy from that mill. As a matter of fact he would be sent to goal for doing it and so would the miller. So he has to take it from Georgetown back to his shop and pay freight on it, and in that

way he loses money because the retail price is uniform throughout the Colony".

The first part of the statement is not absolutely correct. It was a substantial majority decision, as 10 out of 11 voted for it. The one member who did not vote did not do so because he was against it but because he felt that if rice is not to be sold in the rural districts it must not be sold in Berbice; all must be sold in Georgetown and the people must come to Georgetown and buy it. That was one of the reasons why he was against it. So it was really a substantial majority decision. The hon. the Financial Secretary further states:

"The Board realised this and asked that the retail price of rice for sale in the country districts be increased by half cent per lb. If that request had been approved you would have had this substantial anomaly of rice grown in the country being sold in Georgetown at a half cent per lb. less than in the country district where it is produced."

The request of the Board was that the retail price of rice for sale in the country districts be increased by a half cent per lb. Well, Sir, I think Government fixes the price of sugar for sale all over the Colony. I also think Government fixes the price of ground provisions for sale in Georgetown, at Wismar and Berbice. I happen to know that, and that in the country districts sugar is being sold at a half cent per lb. higher than in Georgetown. There is a fixed price for the sale of ground provisions in Wismar, Georgetown, New Amsterdam, but no fixed price in the country districts. The people who grow ground provisions in the country districts have the mortification of seeing their produce go to Georgetown and of seeing it sold in the country districts at a higher price than it is being sold at in Georgetown. Why then pick out rice to be sold all over British Guiana at the same price and not ground provisions and sugar which are also vital foods and are absolutely necessary for the people of the Colony? I see no reason why the decision of the Board, which was made in the interest of the producers in order to save money, should not be approved. It cost us \$16,000 a year to sell this rice on the East Coast and West Coast, and our deficit

was \$6,000. We would have made a profit of \$10,000 if we had not sold this rice at the depots. There would be no difficulty in people getting rice in Georgetown. Rice is also sold in Berbice. There is no difficulty in buying rice in Georgetown and taking it wherever the people want. What my friend might suggest is to ask the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme on the East Coast Demerara to sell this rice to the people. That is what he could have suggested and what could be done, but to come here and say that the Board has not acted in this matter in the best interest of the producers when on the other hand ground provisions and sugar and fresh meat are so sold, at higher prices in the country districts, it is invidious in my humble opinion.

Finally I am just going to refer to one more point made by my friend, the hon. the Financial Secretary, when he quoted what one newspaper said. It is on page 19 of his speech:

"One newspaper article made a pertinent remark. It said Governments do not as a rule put forward Bills or schemes intentionally to harm an industry and to harm the people engaged in it."

My reply to that is, no Government would intentionally put forward any scheme to harm anybody, but Government would possibly do so through lack of knowledge or bad advice. It can be done either way but not intentionally. No one is going to accuse Government of doing it intentionally. I will not, and I am sure hon. Members will not. The hon. the Financial Secretary went on to say:

"And I would like to add that Public Officers like myself do not go to all this trouble in order to do something harmful. I myself am reaching the retiring stage where I should sit back a little and even retire, but here am I actively pursuing an objective of this nature because I do feel I am in a unique position to offer to the people of the Colony and to the Government I serve, a contribution which cannot always be secured from others...."

We all know the hon. the Financial Secretary. He is a very capable official, one of the most capable in this Colony. He is an ornament, if I may say so, to the Colony. He is also my oldest friend. But

I would just like to tell him that we all have our limitations, and he is no different from the rest of us, and that it is human to err. We all make mistakes. He can by mistake bring this thing forward. He will not do it intentionally because he is just as interested as we are in our people. He is like us a Guianese and has the interest of the people at heart. He will not deliberately bring forward any measure to injure the people of the Colony, but, clever and competent as he is, he is likely to make mistakes like all of us. I hope these remarks I have made will be accepted in the spirit in which they are made.

Before I take my seat, I would like to pay you a tribute, Sir, because I happen to know that when you were in the United Kingdom you took the opportunity to visit the C.D.C. and you tried to get them interested in developing this Colony by putting capital into it. When you returned to the Colony you followed that up, and it is as the result of your endeavours that the C.D.C. is considering investing money in this Colony. Those of us who are closely associated with you and know you very well have a high regard for you, and we know that you are interested in our people and that you will do anything to help them. We know that in bringing forward this measure, which has been very much criticized—and you too have been very much criticized—you have done it with the best possible intentions. You felt you were acting in the interest of the people, but when it was pointed out to you that this clause would possibly affect the people adversely you have made your officers suggest certain amendments. With the last amendment that has been suggested, I think, you clarified the position and pointed out that the coming of the C.D.C., if they do come to the Colony, would be a blessing to the people of this Colony. My very good friend, the hon. Member for Western Essequibo and Deputy President (Mr. Wight) mentioned the closing down of the Anaconda Company. That is a matter of grave concern to me, because I was looking forward, like all hon. Members, to them operating in this Colony on a large scale. Many people thought they were operating and were taking thousands of ounces of gold

out of the Colony, but I would like to tell them that they never took any gold away. The money they have spent was on exploring the possibilities for development of the gold industry. Had that Company succeeded, this Colony would have been made so far as mining is concerned. We have lost that Company, but we must not lose the opportunity of the C.D.C. bringing money into the Colony. All that is necessary is for Members of this Legislative Council, when the agreement is brought before them, to see that the interests of the 40,000 peasant-producers who bear the heat and burden of the day, many of them working waist deep in water, are protected. I am sure when the matter is brought before this Council hon. Members will see that is done and that the people are adequately dealt with and justly treated.

Mr. McDOOM: I happen to be among the strongest supporters of the Rice Marketing Board as the sole buying and selling organization with respect to padi and rice in British Guiana. I have been able to visit the various districts and observe that the Board is not only a boon but a blessing to the rice producers of this Colony, especially the growers. Therefore I feel that nothing should be done which would in any way hamper the functioning of the Board as the sole buying and selling organization. If we could raise sufficient money — and we should be able to do so because I am supporting the C.D.C. — to buy the padi outright then, of course, the position would be different, but until then I do not see how we can do without the Rice Marketing Board. I want the C.D.C., and I want them badly in the interests of the Colony. I have said so in this Council, and out of the Council, when we were considering the C.D.C. in connection with our timber industry. I think we should all want them and want them very badly.

There is, however, one point on which perhaps you will not agree with me, Sir, and perhaps most Members will not agree with me. I think I made the point yesterday in conference, that whatever prices are secured by the C.D.C. in the world market those prices should also be obtained for the producers of the

Colony. I asked if the C.D.C. got \$20 per bag for rice sold outside the British West Indies market — and in this Colony we are only getting \$10 per bag — whether our price would be increased proportionately, and I think I was told "Yes". If that is so then we have no quarrel at all. At least I have none.

There is another point. I feel that the terms of the agreement to be made with the C.D.C. should be known to Members of this Council before we give the Bill our wholehearted blessing. I suggest that we suspend the passing of the Bill until the negotiations take place with the C.D.C. and an agreement is drafted, after which the Bill can be brought back to the Council to be passed. We should not pass the Bill until the terms of the agreement are known to us.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Sir, I crave your indulgence to claim my right to speak on the amendment.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I submit that no amendment has been moved, Sir.

The PRESIDENT: I cannot allow the hon. Member to speak on the proposed amendment at this stage. The Council has been informed that when the Committee stage is reached Government will move an amendment, and it would be time then for the hon. Member to say what he wishes to say.

Mr. DEBIDIN: On that point may I crave your indulgence to make this statement: that no less than three or four hon. Members this very afternoon referred to the fact that they had a change of heart because of the proposed amendment which you have indicated in your statement to this Council. Debate has been taking place on the Bill, and to disallow any discussion by a Member such as myself and the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Dr. Gonsalves), who are the only two Members who had spoken before you made the statement to the Council, is not morally right, if it is legally right. I think that constitutionally I have the right to speak because Members had expressed their determination to vote against clause

7, and the proposed amendment can be treated as if it was an amendment moved in this Council.

Mr. RAATGEVER: When I spoke I referred to the amendment proposed to be moved.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Whether the word "proposed" is used or not, the fact is that there was something definite before this Council which was considered during the debate which took place subsequent to the statement Your Excellency made to this Council, and I regard it as being important to the rice industry. I heard you say, Sir, that time is important, and in view of the importance of the issue I am sure you will agree that no time would be wasted if an opposite view is expressed on any particular aspect of the Bill. I am appealing to you, Sir, not to impair the proceedings of the debate on the second reading of the Bill by causing anyone to come to the conclusion that you wish to force this Bill down the throats of the people. That statement has been made in the memorandum of the Rice Producers' Association. I feel that I am entitled to make certain comments on the Bill, and I particularly wish to speak on the amendment to be moved.

The PRESIDENT: I must rule that the hon. Member is not in order as the amendment is not before the Council. The motion before the Council is that the Bill be read a second time. Government is quite entitled to say that in the Committee stage it proposes to move an amendment, and then will be the time for the hon. Member and any other Member to speak on it, and as long as they wish.

Mr. DEBIDIN: May I suggest that a wrong has been committed because Members have been speaking on what is not before the Council. It seems to me that permission having been granted other speakers to speak on the proposed amendment, those of us who did not have that opportunity should have the right to do so now. There are only two Members who are involved, and I feel that it is morally right that I should be permitted to speak on the proposed amendment.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member

can speak when the amendment comes before the Council. If he does not like it he can vote against the motion for the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. ROTH: Sir, I rise to a point of order. The hon. Member refuses to accept your ruling and sit down and wait until the Committee stage is reached.

The PRESIDENT: I think the hon. Member was only trying to make his point.

Mr. DEBIDIN: In so far as the proposed amendment is concerned my point is that at this stage when the motion for the second reading of the Bill is about to be put, it must have some effect on the voting on the second reading. Even if it has the effect of inducing Members to vote for the second reading in order to let the Bill go into the Committee stage I say that I should have the right to speak on the proposed amendment.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member has stated his case. My ruling is that he cannot speak again on the second reading of the Bill. He will have the fullest opportunity to speak when the amendment is put before the Council in Committee. Throughout the debate I have done everything I possibly could to clear away misconceptions and misunderstandings. I made that statement with that object, and if hon. Members are not satisfied with it they will vote against the second reading of the Bill. They will have the fullest opportunity to discuss the amendment when it gets to the Committee stage. I am afraid I cannot allow the hon. Member to speak on the proposed amendment at this stage.

Dr. SINGH: I have spoken already but I intended to ask for some information before the hon. the Financial Secretary replies to the debate. I may point out that those of us who spoke earlier on the Bill spoke on the Bill as it stood then, but since then Your Excellency has indicated to us the proposed amendment which has changed the attitude of some of the Members who were hostile to clause 7, and I believe that most Members have spoken with the knowledge that clause 7

will be amended. That is also my predicament, and I intended to ask what was my position. When I spoke on the Bill I spoke on it as it then stood, and I intended to vote on it as it stood. Government having satisfied us, as you have done, that this Council will have the last say as regards the agreement I have changed my views, and I am going to support the Bill because of the proposed amendment. Therefore I must support the hon. Member.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member can say all he wants to say in the Committee stage. I am not denying him the right to speak on the amendment which will come up in Committee. I think he will have an opportunity to speak, not once but twice in the Committee stage.

Dr. JAGAN: It is true that the hon. Member will have the right to speak in the Committee stage, but a lot of time will have been wasted between clause 1 and clause 7. It seems to me that the last two speakers have a very valid case, because when they spoke on the Bill they had no idea whatsoever of the proposed amendment. I hope Your Excellency will change your ruling on the matter.

Dr. GONSALVES: May I ask one question? If the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) is allowed to speak with a view to proving that it is not necessary for the Bill to go into the Committee stage, what would be the position? Those of us who have already spoken will not have the chance to speak again, because under the rules we are not entitled to. We agree that Your Excellency has given us a great deal of latitude, but there are certain points on which we must give in, but if the Bill is placed before us as it is we will have to vote against it, because we have not had an opportunity to explain our position. In the circumstances we would be made to appear ridiculous, as if we were running with the hare and hunting with the hounds.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think if hon. Members viewed this matter clearly they would see that this is the position. When the hon. the Financial Secretary

opened the debate on the second reading of the Bill he pointed out to hon. Members that clause 7 would be amended along certain lines, and that he and the Attorney-General would consider the form of amendment which would be put before the Council in the Committee stage. He indicated the form which the amendment would take in general principle, and I wish to emphasize to hon. Members that when we are dealing with the second reading of a Bill we are dealing with it in principle. The question of principle is whether the C.D.C. or some other corporation, should be allowed to operate in the Colony and under the provisions of the Rice Marketing Board or not. The principle was adumbrated in the debate on the second reading of the Bill, and it was clearly indicated to Members that clause 7 would not remain in the form in which it was printed in the Bill. Consequently hon. Members cannot say that they have been taken by surprise and have spoken on the principle of the Bill without knowing what was involved. The details of a Bill are dealt with in Committee.

In order to remove misconceptions and misunderstandings which had emerged from time to time from various speeches of hon. Members, Your Excellency has made a statement to the Council in which you indicated the form which the proposed amendment would take. Now that the hon. the Financial Secretary has pointed out to Members that there would be an amendment of clause 7, the ruling of the Chair is that Members have already expressed their views on the principle of the Bill. Hon. Members have had considerable latitude and opportunity to express their views on the principle of the Bill, as to whether they would give an opportunity to a development undertaking to come into the country, and whether it should be tied down within the limits of the Rice Marketing Board. The moment any hon. Member is permitted to speak to clause 7 in detail it re-opens the whole debate. The debate on the Bill must follow parliamentary practice and procedure.

Mr. DEBIDIN: May I ask the hon. the Attorney-General whether a Bill can-

not be thrown out in the second reading? Isn't he assuming that this particular Bill will go to the Committee stage, and that I would have a chance of speaking on the amendment which I have not had.

The PRESIDENT: I am afraid I have given my ruling, and I confirm my ruling in the matter. The hon. Member will have the fullest opportunity in Committee to say what he likes. My whole object in making that statement to the Council was to try to help, not to hinder, and I have given every latitude to Members during the debate on the second reading. Does any other Member wish to speak?

Mr. ROTH: Before referring to the Bill itself I wish to say that I am sorry the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) is not here, because I wish to refer to some remarks he made in the course of his speech on the second reading. I think his exact words were "that so long as this Council remains as presently constituted Government will always have a majority." Apart from the arithmetical fallacy of it I take strong objection to that statement on account of the insinuation that the seven Nominated Members are in Government's pockets. The hon. Member never loses an opportunity to have a smack at the Nominated Members. It is true that we have no constituencies, but on the other hand we are responsible for all the people of the Colony and, most important of all, the Nominated Members are responsible for our own consciences.

With regard to the Bill I must frankly admit that until its first publication the most I knew about rice was what it looked like on a plate with curry or pepperpot. A day or two after the first publication I was handed a memorandum from the Rice Producers' Association. At first I had the utmost sympathy with regard to clause 7, but I decided not to commit myself one way or the other until I had heard both sides. I listened to the speech of the hon. the Financial Secretary and to Your Excellency's statement, and I was present at the conference yesterday afternoon. I am absolutely convinced — and I say it without fear of reasonable contradiction — that the passage of clause 7 will not make the slightest difference

one way or the other to the rice producer. I repeat that the passage of clause 7, as it is proposed to be amended, will not affect the rice producer in the slightest degree one way or the other. All it does is to permit Government to open negotiations with the Company about which we are hearing.

I was surprised to hear one Nominated Member ask that the Bill be suspended so that the agreement might be laid before the Council. Surely it has been explained in sufficient detail that no agreement can be discussed until the decks have been cleared. It must be remembered that if we pass this Bill as it is nothing detrimental or otherwise can accrue, because whatever agreement is made will be subject to the approval or disapproval of this Council. Some hon. Members seem to make up their minds not to recognize that fact. In doing so they are not doing any good for their country, and any Member who votes against this Bill, especially after we have heard so much about development, should forever close his mouth about the development of this country. I support the Bill *in toto*.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Before the hon. the Financial Secretary replies I wish to move that further consideration of the Bill be deferred until Government has had an opportunity to negotiate with the C.D.C. (Your Excellency asked for a mandate yesterday) and let us know the terms on which they agree to operate within the framework of clause 7 as it is proposed to be amended. I am suggesting that no vote be taken on the motion for the second reading of the Bill until Government has carried out its mandate to negotiate with the C.D.C.

Mr. WIGHT: I do not see how that is practicable.

The PRESIDENT: After the Financial Secretary has replied I will put the motion for the second reading of the Bill, and if it is not carried I will put the amendment.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I crave an opportunity —

The PRESIDENT: I cannot allow the hon. Member to make this an excuse for saying what he has attempted to say. I have given the fullest latitude to every Member, and to prolong the debate will do no good whatsoever.

Mr. DEBIDIN: This has become extremely important because of sub-clauses (2) and (3) of the proposed new clause 7. If Members would look at those sub-classes carefully they would see that the C.D.C. or any Company would, by the agreement to be made, control the export trade. It seems to me that we must have a clear distinction drawn between the operation of the agreement against the powers of the Rice Marketing Board. In other words we must know to what extent this agreement will (a) ensure the promotion and advancement of the rice industry and the protection of the interests of rice producers in the Colony generally, and (b) we must also know beforehand in what way the C.D.C. or the Corporation will arrange the marketing of padi and rice produced in the Colony and fix the grades and prices in relation thereto in collaboration with the Board.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is really making a second speech on clause 7 of the Bill. I have given the hon. Member every latitude. He proposes that the second reading of the Bill be deferred, and if it is seconded I shall put his motion after I have put the original motion.

Mr. DEBIDIN: May I explain that since there is going to be conflict between the powers of the Corporation under clause 7 and the powers of the Rice Marketing Board, I am asking that the terms of the agreement be made known to this Council beforehand.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member has said that before and I must ask him to resume his seat. I cannot permit him to speak further.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: Sir, as we have only a few minutes left before 5 o'clock, may I defer my reply until tomorrow.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I would suggest that the Financial Secretary reply now.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I would ask that the adjournment be taken now.

Dr. NICHOLSON: I move that the debate be proceeded with.

Mr. RAATGEVER seconded.

The Council divided and voted:

For — Messrs. Morrish, Smellie, Mc Doom, Kendall, Fernandes, Roth, Raatgever, Wight and Dr. Nicholson — 9.

Against — Messrs. Phang, Peters, Debidin, Ferreira, Drs. Jagan, Gonsalves and Singh — 7.

Did not vote — The Colonial Secretary, the Attorney-General and the Financial Secretary and Treasurer — 3.

Motion carried.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: Sir, I do not propose, even if I were able to do so, to deal with all the comments and observations made by hon. Members in the course of this debate. In fact, if I tried to do that I would be speaking for nearly as long a time as they all did combined. I was most interested in the speech by the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. Wight), particularly in that portion of his speech in which he reminded the Council that this Colony unfortunately has a very bad reputation with regard to the encouragement or discouragement of capital, whether that bad reputation is deserved or not. It is true to say that there have been instances in the past in which the Government, the Council, or the people of the Colony seemed to have preferred to remain without capital, or seemed to have preferred some things that they valued at too high a price, and to have preferred those things to the incoming of capital.

Last night whilst thinking this over I picked up some of my recent copies of a magazine which is very famous, and in one of them was a leading article headed "Inverted Micawbers." The argu-

ment in that article was a criticism of H.M. Government in some respects. Hon. Members will remember that Micawber was a very famous character in one of Dickens's novels who, of course, knew all about the balancing of budgets to the nearest penny, but never carried out his own prescription because he was always in debt and near bankruptcy. Nevertheless he was always waiting for something to turn up. The article, which I read with great amusement, pointed a finger of scorn to whom it was directed, and termed them "Inverted Micawbers, waiting for something to turn down." I should hate to think that this Council would do anything that would justify that criticism being laid against us, for those who oppose this Bill would not only be rightfully regarded as inverted Micawbers, waiting for something to turn down, but even denying themselves the opportunity to look at something to turn down, because that is what it would mean. I do not want to repeat what has been said so often in this Council by myself and other Members.

Mr. DEBIDIN: I take exception to the hon. Member's suggestion that we are here waiting to turn down anything. We are here dictated to by our consciences, and as long as we are here we have a duty to perform.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: As I was saying when I was interrupted, as has been explained so often in Council and at the informal conference which took place yesterday afternoon, what this Bill is really seeking to do—quite apart from the minor amendments which it contains—is to open the door for negotiations with the Colonial Development Corporation. As one hon. Member pointed out, the enactment of this section into law will make not the slightest difference to the present position. When the agreement is made and it is approved and ratified by this Council, then and only then will there be a change in the position. Members have been assured that in the framing of that agreement there will be full consultation with all interested parties before the agreement actually reaches the Council. The assurance has been given that the

members of the Rice Marketing Board, individually and collectively, will be consulted. They will have to be consulted because the agreement will have particular reference to the activities and the functions of the Rice Marketing Board. Consequently, even before the agreement reaches this Council there will be ample opportunity for consultation with the interested parties, and finally, when it reaches this Council and has been ratified, then and only then will the effect of this Ordinance be felt. It means nothing until the agreement has been ratified.

That is the main point of the Bill, but I would like to deal with a certain criticism which gave me a great deal of pain. I think it came from the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Debidin) who suggested that this Bill was the product of the ingenuity—the almost Machiavellian ingenuity of public officers who had put together this structure designedly to obstruct the Rice Marketing Board and those whom the Board shelters, and to bring in this section for the benefit of the new undertaking. I can assure this Council that that is not so. This Bill has a curious history. It started, as things do in the Government Service, in a very small way. It started with a letter from the Rice Marketing Board asking Government to put into law their proposal that the Board should be given power to seize padi and rice. Simultaneously with that another letter came from the Board asking Government to give protection to their Assistant Manager. There and then in one Government file the matter went to the Law Officers, and a Bill was prepared. It then came to me and at that early stage, about 18 months ago, I suggested that opportunity should be taken to draft clauses in regard to the operation of a development corporation in this Colony. I was not at that time thinking of the C.D.C. at all, but the transformation of the present Mahaicony-Abary Scheme into a Company. The Attorney-General of the day, or the Legal Draughtsman, attempted a draft which was not satisfactory to me, and the matter remained in abeyance for some time in one file. Then another file came along with a proposal from the Rice Marketing Board that they wanted to purchase agricultural machinery but did not have the power to

do so. After a conference with the Governor they were given an undertaking that at some time a validating clause would be put into a Rice Marketing Bill.

Then followed this recent interlude with the Rice Marketing Board over its decision to lower the grades of rice and to prepare to give the Director of Agriculture power to veto such a decision. At the same time there was the interlude about rice for Jamaica, and the possibility of our rice going outside the area defined by the international agreement, and so it was thought that a clause in this respect could be put in at the same time. Then came this project with regard to E.C.A. and Marshall Aid. That was the thing that finally brought about the clause to enable the introduction of a new undertaking. There was no concerted attempt to produce a Bill for the purpose of the protection of the C.D.C. on the one side and giving greater power to the Rice Marketing Board on the other. These things just grew up into one comprehensive Bill.

We have heard a great deal about the working of the Rice Marketing Board itself. On the whole I would like to say that Government is satisfied that the Board is doing a good job. What we have heard this afternoon has indicated many points on which there have been differences of opinion. For instance we have listened to a very controversial discussion between the Chairman of the Board (Mr. Fernandes), the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) and the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, and I think it is sufficient to indicate that there was some justification for the suggestion that the Executive Committee, as constituted by law, was either not functioning properly, or not being given an opportunity to function properly. I was very interested to hear the agenda which was read by the hon. Member for Central Demerara. Members will realize that if that sort of agenda is put before the full Board it would never finish its business. It was just for that reason that this instrument of management was created. The whole purpose of clause 2 was to ensure that the Executive Committee was given an opportunity to function as it was intended to function—to manage the business under the supervision of the

Board and its instructions, if necessary, and with the power reserved to the Board to review and revise their decisions and, if necessary, to reverse them. Objection has been raised to clause 2. I think it is a matter for the Council. If Members are satisfied that the Executive Committee will indeed function as it was intended to and ought to function under the powers of the existing Rice Marketing Ordinance, then all will be well. I am sure that Government will not press for the retention of clause 2, but this discussion has at least served the purpose of clearing the air and clarifying the position with regard to the Board and the Executive Committee.

As regards the Board itself and its future, I wish to say that I was very interested in what the hon. Member for Eastern Berbice (Dr. Gonsalves) said about the difficulties of his constituents on the Courentyne. He spoke of their difficulties and the time it took for them to get their money. I may say that one of the chief aims of myself and the former Secretary of the Board, Mr. Gadd, in the difficult years of the old Board, was to set up the Board as an organization for the purchase of padi and not rice. That can still be the aim of the Board. It would take a lot of hard work to bring that about, but it can still be the aim of the Board to be the sole purchaser of padi throughout the Colony.

As regards converting the Board into a co-operative organization, by all means, if the rice producers are able to effect that very desirable aim, I think that everyone in the Colony would be pleased. Personally I feel very doubtful as to whether they can do it. I think that harsh as are the provisions of the Rice Marketing Board designed to keep the rice producers together, it is still an instrument which carries out the co-operative idea. It is true that the members of the industry are compelled in this way to form themselves into a group of which the Rice Marketing Board is the pivot, but if they can get together in any way without the harsh provisions which now bind them together, let them do so by all means. That would be a very desirable thing, and I as a consumer would also escape

the very harsh provisions which make me have to deal with a certain body instead of with individuals whom I prefer. In other words both the producer and the consumer would be free.

I do not wish to take up the time of the Council any longer. There are many points which I have noted here to reply to, but if I go on I would take far more time than is necessary. The points which I have noted are not of any great consequence, but there were one or two by the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan). I think he particularly asked why we could not get Marshall Aid through E.C.A. without this particular provision? I thought that was fully explained in my original speech. I tried to point out that we had to give specific and definite assurance to the E.C.A. authorities that we were definitely able to complete the construction of the mills for which they would be giving us machinery and that we would be able to put those mills to the best possible use in order to carry out the purpose for which that gift would be made. It seems to me that the only way we can now do that is by claiming that we are now in a position to invite the C.D.C. to come in with us and assist in carrying out this purpose. That is one of the chief reasons for urgency in passing this measure, because it would enable us to issue that invitation, and also enable us to use it as an argument in support of our E.C.A. application.

The hon. Member for Central Demerara (Dr. Jagan) made a very important point in regard to a letter which has been sent to the Government, and only now received, from the Rice Producers' Association. The Association has, of course, been in violent opposition to the Bill, and the hon. Member was correct when he said that the Association has now suggested that Government should invite this Council to amend the Rice Marketing Ordinance by replacing the eight members who are non-producers — that is members comprising public officers, business persons and Members of this Council — by eight persons to be nominated by the C.D.C., and also to provide in the law that the Chairman of the Board shall be nominated by the C.D.C. I

was glad to hear the hon. Member himself express doubt about the proposal. This matter has not been considered by Government but it will probably be considered together with the negotiations for the agreement. But I consider it my duty to say at once that any such arrangement would obviously mean that the C.D.C. would secure complete domination of the Board. The C.D.C. would have eight members nominated by itself, the Chairman nominated by itself, with his casting vote, against eight other rice producers. I think it is an extraordinary proposition and not in the interest of the the rice producers of the Colony. I should hate to see it come through.

I hope that the ideas I expressed yesterday, which we hope will be translated into the agreement by which the marketing of rice by the Board on one hand and the Company on the other hand would proceed hand-in-hand, will bear fruit. I suggested a sort of Joint Marketing Committee comprised of members of both bodies which would decide upon export policy, prices, grades and so forth, and I feel sure that such a proposal would be much more in the interest of the rice producer than the suggestion that the Board should be completely reconstituted with the C.D.C. dominating the position, as suggested in this letter. I thought I would mention that because it was mentioned by the hon. Member himself. It has not been considered but I have no doubt that it will be considered during the negotiations for the agreement.

The facts of the issue have been explained fully, and one thing about this debate is that it has raised this issue to the level which it ought to have. No one is in any doubt whatever now as to what the Bill means. No one is in any doubt as to what his vote will mean, whether he votes for or against it. There is no doubt that if we close this door we put ourselves in the position of almost rejecting the opportunity to reject capital. With those words I ask that the motion for the second reading of the Bill be put.

Mr. DEBIDIN: Sir, what has happened to the motion I moved?

The PRESIDENT: I will put the original motion, and if that fails your motion will be put.

The Council then divided on the motion for the second reading of the Bill and voted:

For — Messrs. Morrish, Smellie, Phang, Peters, Kendall, Fernandes, Ferreira, Roth, Raatgever, Lee, Wight, Dr. Nicholson, Dr. Singh, the Financial Secre-

tary and Treasurer, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—16.

Against — Mr. McDoom, Mr. Debidin, Dr. Jagan and Dr. Gonsalves—4.

Motion carried.

Bill read a second time.

Council was then adjourned until 2 p.m. the following day.