

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.**

FR DAY, 28TH. JULY, 19 0.

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. B. Singh, O.B.E., (Demerara-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. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

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

The Hon. Capt J. P. Coghlan (Demerara 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. 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.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, the 20th of July, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

**PAPERS LAID.**

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

The Administration Report of the Director of Agriculture for the year 1949.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER laid on the table the following documents:—

Statement of Supplementary Expenditure which has been incorporated in the Colony's accounts for the year 1949 consequent on the adoption by the Legislative Council of the Second Report of the Public Service Salaries and Wages Commission, 1948, with the approval of the Secretary of State.

Statement of Supplementary Expenditure which has occurred during the year 1949 and which has not been included in any previous schedule for the year 1949 and is to be admitted as a charge to Public Funds under Colonial Regulation 265(2).

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The ATTORNEY GENERAL gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to establish a Court of Criminal Appeal and to make provision for appeals in criminal cases."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Criminal Law (Procedure) Ordinance."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Prison Ordinance, 1929, by making provision to bring up prisoners before the Court of Criminal Appeal."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Pensions Ordinance, 1933, by providing for the pensions of officers with mixed service in Government and the Health Services."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Cinematograph (British Films) Ordinance, 1933."

## SUPPLEMENTARY EXPENDITURE

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER gave notice of the following motions:—

That this Council approves of—

- (a) the Statement of Supplementary Expenditure totalling \$2,087,264.90 incorporated in the Colony's accounts for the year 1949 consequent on the adoption of the Second Report of the Public Service Salaries and Wages Commission, 1948, by the Legislative Council with the approval of the Secretary of State;
- (b) the Statement of Supplementary Expenditure totalling \$578,295.72 incurred during the year 1949 and not included in any previous schedule for the year 1949 being admitted as a charge to Public Funds under Colonial Regulation 265(2).

## UNOFFICIAL NOTICES.

## CHURCH OF GOD (TRUST) BILL

Mr. THOMPSON gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following private Bill:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to vest in the Missionary Board of the Church of God in trust for and for the

use of the members from time to time of the Church of God all property in the Colony now held and which may hereafter be acquired by any person or by any Society, Association or other body of persons on behalf of or for the use or benefit of the Missionary Board of the Church of God in the Colony, and to make provision for the administration thereof."

## OCCUPATION OF COLONY LANDS

Dr. JAGAN gave notice of the following motions:—

WHEREAS sugar estates control a total of 171,078 acres of land, 82,205 acres of which are freehold and 88,873 acres of which are leasehold at a yearly rental of \$4,222.73 or less than 5 cents per acre;

AND WHEREAS only about 60,000 acres represent the area actually under cane cultivation, and about 20,000 acres the area being flood-fallowed or rested at any given time,

AND WHEREAS acreage tax returns indicate that much of the leased land held by sugar estates are not beneficially occupied;

AND WHEREAS Guianese farmers have to pay as much as \$7.20 per acre for Government lands at Cane Grove, Anna Regina, etc.;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommend to Government that either the leases for lands not beneficially occupied be withdrawn or the rental be increased to a figure commensurate with the rate levied for other Government lands;

## LAND FOR RICE FARMERS

WHEREAS the Report of the Committee (Legislative Council Paper No. 2 of 1944) appointed to enquire into certain questions in connection with Piece Work in Sugar Estates reported on Page 4 that "The reason why available work is not fully taken up is because resident workers find it more profitable to work on their own rice fields and farms, and some non-residents have left working in the fields on the estates for more profitable occupations";

AND WHEREAS in 1943, 13,053 persons were allotted 11,430 acres of rice land in sugar estates but in 1947 only 10,263 persons were allotted merely 9,381.5 acres in 1943, 9,262 persons were allotted 3,445 acres of provision lands, but in 1947 only 6,016 persons were allotted 2,546 acres;

AND WHEREAS the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance does not apply to sugar estate lands;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommend to Government that the provisions of the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance be amended to apply to all sugar estate lands.

#### NOTICE OF QUESTIONS

##### SALE OF PIPE AT ATKINSON FIELD.

Dr. JAGAN gave notice of the following questions:—

1. Does any member or members of the Atkinson Field Control Board get a special allowance for expenses when visiting the Base; if so, how much?
2. How much was paid in honoraria for special work done for the Board: to whom was it paid and what was the amount?
3. Is it true that the Board employed a firm of chartered accountants? If so, will Government state how much was paid to this firm and why were the services of the Government Audit Department not utilised?
4. Is it true that an Upset Price of \$300 was set by the Board on approximately 4,000 feet of 2" and 3" pipes, and that it was actually sold for \$275? Is it also true that this pipe is worth over \$1 per foot? Is Government aware that 1,000 feet of this pipe were sold for \$1,300 to the Berbice Bauxite Company?
5. Is Government aware that in many villages supplied with an artesian well pure water supply scheme, the shortage of pipes has been given as an excuse for the lack of connections and water taps to various parts of said villages?
6. Will Government state whether the pipe requirements for Kitty, Plaisance, Beterverwagting, Buxton and other villages supplied with an artesian-well pure water supply have been fully met; if not will Government state whether pipes sold by the Board as stated in question 4 could have been utilised in the various villages?

##### TRIBUTE TO B.G. DELEGATES AT SUGAR CONFERENCE

Mr. WIGHT: Before we proceed with the Order of the Day, I crave you permission, Sir, to move that we record our

appreciation and thanks for the efforts made by the hon. the Third Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever, and his colleague, Mr. Edun, on their recent visit to England in connection with the Sugar Conference held there. I think I am voicing the opinion of hon. Members when I say that their efforts contributed largely to the present situation which is, perhaps, no so gloomy as it was when they started out on their long journey. I would ask that our appreciation be recorded if it is the wish of hon. Members of this Council.

Mr. MORRISH: I would like to associate myself with the remarks of the hon. Member who has just spoken. My advice from the other side is that Mr. Raatgever and his colleague, Mr. Edun, were untiring in their efforts to do everything they could to assist the sugar industry in this Colony. We all know that everything hoped for has not been accomplished, yet we do — and I speak on behalf of the Sugar Producers' Association of this Colony — sincerely appreciate the efforts of these two gentlemen.

The PRESIDENT: I take it that the Council agrees that its appreciation be recorded in the minutes.

Mr. ROTH: I will second the motion, Sir.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I desire on behalf of my colleague and myself to thank the hon. the Deputy President for his very kind and generous remarks—a little too generous perhaps—because I only did what I considered my duty to the people of this Colony whose welfare is always my chief consideration in all my political career.

Motion put and agreed to.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

##### AFFAIRS OF POUDEROYEN DISTRICT

The PRESIDENT: Council will now proceed with the Order of the Day.

Dr. JAGAN asked and the COLONIAL SECRETARY laid over replies to the following questions:—

- Q. 1.—Will Government state whether North Klien Pouderoyen was a Country District under the Local Government Board in 1931?

A. —Yes. North Klien Pouderoyen was declared to be a Country District in September, 1931.

Q. 2.—If so, what was the reason for reverting the North Klien Pouderoyen into a rural district?

A. —Difficulties of administration as a result of the dams and trenches being privately owned and therefore not subject to the control and management of the Local authority.

Q. 3.—Is Government aware that in August 15, 1938, the residents of North Klien Pouderoyen petitioned Sir Wilfrid Jackson to have the area declared a Village District and connected to South Pouderoyen Village District and the West Coast Drainage Scheme?

A. —No such petition can be traced.

Q. 4.—Is it true that an estimate of \$25,416 was made to carry out the reconditioning of drainage trenches at North Klien Pouderoyen, and that a meeting of the proprietors was held under the auspices of the Drainage Board on August 30, 1947, for the purpose of laying before the proprietors the plans, specifications, estimate, and a copy of the Order in Council No. 34 of 1943?

A. —In 1941, the Local Government Board recommended that North Klien Pouderoyen be declared a drainage area. It was proposed to recondition the dams and trenches at the cost of \$25,416 including an amount of \$5,416 to be paid a private proprietor for the purchase of certain dams, trenches and a drainage koker (the total estimate has since risen to \$62,270). A meeting was held on the 30th of August, 1947, for the purpose of laying before the proprietors the plans, specifications, estimate and a copy of Order in Council No. 34 of 1943.

Q. 5.—If so, will Government state reasons why drainage works have not yet started and how soon is it expected that the job will commence?

A. —The original declaration of the whole of North Klien Pouderoyen as a drainage area was opposed by one of the proprietors in the area and it eventually became necessary to re-define the area and to carry out a new survey excluding the property in question. A new drainage scheme is

now under preparation, but it is not possible to say how soon it will be put in hand.

Q. 6.—Is Government aware that during the last floods, the dam separating North Klien Pouderoyen from Vreed-en-Hoop was cut to permit drainage of North Klien Pouderoyen through Vreed-en-Hoop and that recently this dam has been closed, causing serious floodings of the North Klien Pouderoyen lands?

A. —Prior to the floods in 1949, the proprietor of Vreed-en-Hoop permitted the dam separating North Klien Pouderoyen from Vreed-en-Hoop to be cut to permit, as a temporary measure, drainage of North Klien Pouderoyen through Vreed-en-Hoop. In May, 1950, the proprietor of Vreed-en-Hoop called upon the Drainage and Irrigation Board to close the relief cut as the drainage of Vreed-en-Hoop was over-taxed. The cut was accordingly closed, but has recently been reopened as a result of representations for the relief of further flooding of North Klien Pouderoyen.

#### RICE MARKETING (AMDT.) BILL, 1950.

Council resumed the debate on the second reading of the 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 take it that hon. Members are ready to resume the debate on the second reading of this Bill.

Mr FERNANDES: As Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, I would like to say a few words on this Bill. First of all, I am very happy to see the large number of rice growers, millers, and others in this Council Chamber today to listen to everything that is going to be said on this Bill. I am really at a loss to know why the President of the Rice Producers' Association and his colleagues have gone to such length as to get motions moved, not for the deletion of any particular clause of this Bill but for the throwing out of the whole Bill, because I happen to know that not only himself but the entire Rice Producers' Associa-

tion are in agreement with quite a few of the clauses that form part of this Bill. I do not know whether they realize that rejecting the Bill means throwing out everything. Now, Sir, I say that because Mr. Deoroop Maraj, who is Vice-Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, along with myself, attended at one Bank and met the Managers of both Banks on the question of providing funds for the working of the Board. We both gave an undertaking on our own behalf and on behalf of Government, that the Rice Marketing Board Ordinance would be amended to enable the Board to pledge by an instrument of charge, in the same manner as they have power at present to deal with padi and rice which were the only two items foreseen by those who drafted the original Ordinances as the items which the Board would be likely to handle in future.

Since the new Ordinance came into being the Board has had, among other things, to find sufficient bags for the industry. Now, as the production of rice increases and the price of bags increases; that is a very big item in itself. The new bags purchased for this year's crop will cost a sum in excess of \$800,000. The Board's total capital is \$1,100,000 of which \$300,000 has been set aside for the Board's new premises. That was done with the approval of every producer-member of the Board because it will save the Board quite a lot of money in future, and it is essential if the Board is to stay. It is now a statutory Board brought into being at the request of the industry and I am sure that if it is properly handled it will remain with us for a long time. I do not see that anybody can expect to have that \$300,000 to use a second time. That leaves us with \$800,000, and when it is considered that we require things like ploughs, tractors and so on, it should be obvious to any producer of rice that it would be a physical impossibility for the Board to use the remaining \$800,000 or what part of it is not already expended, on various small items of equipment, for the exclusive purpose of buying bags. If the Board did that they would have no money whatever to pay for rice. Besides the purchase of bags, the Board, at the request of the industry and with everybody's approval, entered into

the purchase and sale of agricultural machinery. That has gone on for quite a few years; some people say that the Board had gone beyond the point which was wise, but only time will decide whether the action of the Board was right or wrong.

A number of producers here present will, I am sure, agree with me that this year particularly, if mechanical equipment was not available, the large acreage of rice which is now growing would not have been planted. The reason is that at the time of ploughing the land in certain areas was very hard—nearly as hard as concrete, I am told. No bull in this country with a plough behind it would have been able to plough that land. As a matter of fact, even tractors would not have been able to plough it if they had used the ordinary Mulboard type of plough, but it was made possible to do so with the use of tractors and disc ploughs. We tilled this land and got it ready in time for planting, and the rice is now forthcoming. There was another reason that influenced me, personally, on the point of putting this machinery into circulation and service, and that was, we had made some permanent contracts with the Islands which bound us to delivering a certain quantity of rice at a fixed price. That price turned out to be not in the Board's favour. The only way, to my mind, that the rice industry of this Colony and the Rice Marketing Board can really benefit from the present high prices would be to produce more rice—sufficient to supply 100 per cent. of the contracts and still have a surplus of several thousand tons per annum for export at the world's market price.

In spite of contrary predictions in this Council, in the newspapers and by many people outside this Council, I said here last year that British Guiana would produce its largest crop of rice in history, I stand here today feeling very happy that I was right, because we produced sufficient rice to supply 100 per cent. of our contracts and were still able to sell 1,000 tons to Jamaica, at \$16 per bag. I am not going to deal with that any further, because the hon. the Financial Secretary and Treasurer dealt with it fully in dealing with the world's market

prices. Personally, I was hoping to have this year at least 2,000 or 3,000 tons to sell at this price, but all we have been able to do without any possibility of jeopardizing our supplies under contract, was to sell the 1,000 tons plus 4,000 bags of broken rice which was sold at between \$7 and \$8 per bag as against the local selling price of \$4.20 per bag.

Now, Sir, I want to make it perfectly clear that the entire amount expended on machinery—I think I am right in saying — was \$750,000 or somewhere in that vicinity, and even if it had taken \$1,000,000 it would have been justified because, if it did nothing else but produce an additional 10,000 tons of rice between now and the end of our present contracts at fixed prices, it would have brought into the Colony money over and above the contract prices when the decision was made to buy this machinery, and that would be sufficient to pay for the entire lot of machinery. I would like to say that the Board, in importing this machinery, has had its ups and downs—there is no question about that—and made mistakes. There is one mistake, however, which we did not make—and I am sure there are few people who can stand up today and say this—we were not caught by devaluation. Every penny of our machinery came into the Colony and was paid for before devaluation came into force. At the time of devaluation the Board had \$382,299 worth of machinery. If you add an additional 50 per cent. on that you will find that a sum of \$150,000 was saved. One item — Rice Combines — is a very important item. The Board had 19 of them in stock, and they cost the industry a sum in the vicinity of \$3,000. Today we still have three of them, and if you walk into the agents' office to buy one and have it shipped to British Guiana, owing to devaluation it would cost \$4,000-odd.

Now, as regards mistakes, you may have read in the newspapers, Sir, or seen statements that the Board has \$300,000—that is the figure I saw in the newspapers and I do not know whether the statement was made or not—worth of antiquated machinery which is no good. Very early in the purchase of machinery an

offer was made to the Board of some used tractors. We could not get any new ones, it was true, but, nevertheless, I stated firmly that I was not prepared to invest any of the Board's funds on used machinery. To my surprise, however, we get a terrific attack from the Rice Producers' Association at that time stating that we should not have missed this opportunity of getting equipment whether it was new or second hand, because it was badly needed for increasing the production of rice, and pressure was brought to bear. That was passed over and, after trying for a long time to get new machinery, another offer came along for something like 60 or 80 tractors which were supposed to have been fairly new—tractors that had not seen any particular service. They were Army equipment and were to be accompanied by a certificate from the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce to this Company. The price was all right and the tractors were, to all intents and purposes, the type of machinery we wanted.

The Board met and it was decided to purchase these tractors. I am not an expert on tractors or machinery, but I know that the tractors in question were shipped to the Board with the necessary certificate we asked for, and which was one of the conditions in the letter of credit issued by the Board and to which I signed my name. When the equipment arrived in the Colony, however, it was found that the tractors were not what they were represented to be but, nevertheless, it was felt that they would work. Now, about two or three months after we started to put them in use we found that they had quite a few worn parts and some bad parts. The tractors were of a standard make, recognized in the Colony as the premier make in that type of machinery—and I refer to the Caterpillar type. We got in touch with the local agents and they found by examination that they would have had to replace quite a lot of parts, and after that had been done the tractors would work. We have sold five of them and we have fifteen left. Of these fifteen, two have been reconditioned up to the moment and the indications are that all of them will be taken up as fast as they are reconditioned. The price at which the Board is

going to sell is the landed cost plus the cost of those replacements. We got hold of the United States Consul and asked him for help. We found that the people who shipped the machinery were in business in the handling of surplus war stores and after apparently selling all their stuff out were no longer in business. They apparently bought it from somebody else who has written—I would not say giving an undertaking because I do not consider a written letter coming from New York to British Guiana is an undertaking — suggesting that he might be willing to give an allowance on it. That matter is under consideration now. I want to make it clear that those tractors are by no means a dead loss to the Board. The impression has been given to the growers of the Colony that the Board threw away the entire money they paid for the tractors. Nothing is further from the truth than that, I am expecting to get every penny invested in those tractors back, but if I fail the Board would only suffer a very small loss. I was very pleased when I made the remark that great pressure was brought on the Board by the Rice Producers' Association to force us to try some of those tractors, when the question was brought up at the meeting of the Board and the present President of the Rice Producers' Association who was a member of the Association at that time denied it, but the then President of the Association confirmed that I was correct that pressure was brought to bear on the Board. I am very grateful to him for admitting that for we had nothing in writing and, had he denied it, it would have been one person's word against the word of another person.

There is one other item of equipment which may cause a loss to the Board, and that is the 4,000 ox ploughs. In the latter stage of the war things were very difficult and British Guiana was faced with a shortage of these ploughs. I am sure all growers know that. One could not leave one's plough outside otherwise it would disappear by the next day. Sir, you may remember, or at least the hon. the Financial Secretary who deals with matters of this kind on behalf of Government would remember, that the Board got Government to put pressure on the Secretary of State in order to find some of those ploughs as we could not get them

in the U.S.A. or anywhere else. Eventually a firm was found in England who was willing to turn a portion of their factory over to the making of these ploughs for British Guiana in accordance with the request of the Secretary of State who was willing to make the steel available for the purpose. But in order to do that it was demanded that a minimum of 5,000 ploughs be ordered. After some argument, the quantity was brought down to 4,000 ploughs. The Board was faced at that time with either having the growers of British Guiana with their oxen and land and no ploughs to plough the land or buying this quantity of ploughs, even though it was known that it would take a very long time to sell them out. The Board decided to buy those ploughs. On the Board at that time were two very experienced rice people—Mr. Rayman and the Hon. Mr. McDoom. Everyone was in agreement and there was no dissenting voice. That was done by the Executive Committee of the Board and at that time the Executive Committee controlled the business of the Board. The minutes of Executive Committee as soon as they were confirmed were circulated to all members of the Board and any matter that happened to have been done by the Executive Committee and did not receive the approval of members of the Board was brought up at the next meeting of the Board by those members. I just mention that to show the true facts in respect of that equipment, because I attended the meeting of the Rice Producers' Association held in the Town Hall recently. I was there from 10.30 a.m. until 1.30 p.m. and if I had not another meeting to attend at 2 o'clock I would have been there to the end. To say I was surprised at how far the truth was stretched at that meeting is to put it mildly. As a matter of fact you could not recognize the little bit of truth that was in the vast amount of mis-statements made at that meeting. That is the reason I am very glad to see so many persons here today. I may say I was given an opportunity to speak at that meeting, and I spoke and threw out a challenge which up to now has not been accepted. I do not think it will ever be taken up. But that has nothing to do with the matter before the Council today.

I will deal with the Bill as I see

it, clause by clause, because as I drove into the premises here I saw quite a few pickets and on nearly every card I saw 'Down with the Bill'. "Throw the Bill out". Members of this Council must be careful with things of that kind. It has been imputed to them that they have promised to throw this Bill out. If the Bill has one or two clauses that any Member of this Council is not in agreement with and there are four or five other clauses of the Bill which nobody can honestly and justifiably have any objection to, I take it that the correct procedure would be not to throw the Bill out but to express your desire to oppose or delete the offending portions at the second reading, and when we get into the Committee stage then it is up to Members to throw out what they would like to have thrown out. Otherwise it would mean throwing out things that are absolutely essential and which, I am sure, every member of the rice industry, particularly the producing members, would heartily welcome. I just mention that because I want Members to be sure that they do not fail to see that point, in view of the reported statement that certain Members of this Council have promised to throw the Bill out lock, stock and barrel.

The first clause of the Bill relates only to the title of the Ordinance. Clause 2 provides an amendment to section 5 of the Principal Ordinance. I will not read it but will leave that until we reach the Committee stage. In fact what is desired there is to add a fourth member on the Executive Committee of the Board. If those Members who take strong objection to this had only stopped to think for a moment what the position was at the very beginning and what it is today, I am sure they would have absolutely no reason to object to that. When this Board became a statutory body on the Executive Committee were two Members of the Legislative Council, neither of whom were members of the Rice Producers' Association. They were Mr. J. I. deAguiar and Mr. Peer Bacchus, nominated by the Governor. The third person was the Director of Agriculture. That is, whoever is functioning as Director of Agriculture is automatically a member of the Executive Committee of

the Board. Then the other three places were non-official or non-nominated but elected and could be filled by anybody. I filled one, Mr. McDoom the other and Mr. Rayman filled the third, all by election. As you know, everybody in British Guiana is looking forward more and more to a democratic set-up in the Board. I am one and will always support that. I have said in this Council before now that I look forward to the day when the Board will be a real co-operative organization, but one cannot just press a button and turn the Board into a co-operative organization. The Board is young and lots of things will have to be learnt and lots of mistakes made will have to be remedied. As you know, Sir, I made a public statement at a Press conference that it was my opinion that the President of the Rice Producers' Association should be the Vice-Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board. I made that statement before the new appointments were made, and you have shown me, Sir, that you had thought in exactly the same manner when you appointed Mr. McDoom to that post, as he was President of the Rice Producers' Association at the time you did so. What happens after that is for it to be a permanent structure. There is nothing in the law that compels Your Excellency to appoint any member of the Rice Producers' Association. You are there to do what was done in the first instance, and that is to appoint three members. If any one of those three members is going to be automatically President of the Rice Producers' Association, it is obvious that you should be given the power to appoint the usual three places plus that one.

That will serve two purposes. One, it will give the President of the Rice Producers' Association, whoever he may be, the opportunity of being an understudy to whoever happens to be the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board with the view that at some future time, as long as he has the capability, he may eventually be appointed Chairman. His capability is not only to do the job but to carry the responsibility of the job. I have heard that this Bill should be thrown out. Let us assume for the purpose of argument that Members throw it out. Let us see what that may mean.



It will mean this: Your Excellency has the power to revoke the appointment. I do not expect you to do that. It only means. Your Excellency will have the right to appoint three members as you think fit and leave the President of the Rice Producers' Association to scramble for himself to be elected on the Executive Committee of the Board. But Your Excellency has no desire to do that. If you did, there would not have been this proposed amendment. As it is, it can be twisted. These are cases in which the truth has been twisted. So as to make sure that nobody misunderstands the reason as I see it, when the Committee stage is reached I will move an amendment and so make sure. Your Excellency has the right to appoint three members, which right you always had, and a fourth member in the person of the President of the Rice Producers' Association so that there will be a balance of power. In the old set-up everyone complained about the 3—3 with the Chairman having a casting vote which he never uses. You will now have 3—4—the same three elected places and the President of the Rice Producers' Association. There will be a majority of one as against the three nominees who used to be referred to as the non-producing members but are now being referred to as consuming members. That word "consumer" is being twisted very much, but I am not going to say further on that.

While dealing with the Executive Committee the next question is the powers of the Committee. The powers, as put forward in this Bill, are the powers which the Executive Committee always had and duties it always performed. Just after the election, I daresay because the members elected did not suit certain members of the Board, the question of the powers of the Executive Committee arose, and the Attorney-General was written to. Pending the reply from Government a very farcical situation arose. The powers of the Executive Committee were reduced to nothing. That is, if any member of the staff was to be employed at a salary above \$100 per month it could not be done by the Executive Committee but by the full Board. As a matter of fact, one member, I think it was the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Raatgever,

actually sought to reduce the powers of the Executive Committee so as not to allow it to spend more than \$100. When the President of the Rice Producers' Association said he did not agree with that, he then said "Make it fifty", but the President of the Rice Producers' Association had meant taking the amount up a little more. For peace and quiet the Executive Committee practically ceased to function. But what has happened? Naturally every little matter had to go to the Board which is 16 strong, and it took a long time—three months—to get down to a letter which was an item under Correspondence because it was at the bottom of the list. That only gives an idea of what happens when you have too unwieldy a Board to attend to small matters of details. Abolishing the Committee has done something else. While last year the cost to the industry and the Rice Marketing Board for travelling and subsistence was \$400 odd for the first four months, for the same period this year it is \$1,600 odd. But it would be interesting if I just give two figures. Half of this \$1,600 was what it cost the Board to have the President of the Rice Producers' Association and his senior Vice-Presidents, one of whom lives on the Courantyne, attend his meetings. The figures respectively are \$377.68 and \$479.18. Those figures, were circulated to all members of the Board and, as everything circulated seems to be public property including the Auditor's query which the hon. Member on my right (Dr. Jagan) had published in his little newspaper, I think I am quite safe in quoting a few things here. Those amounts were just for attending the meetings of the Board only. They are entitled to it according to the Ordinance, but I only want Members to realize what running the meetings of the Board means in dollars and cents. I have heard a lot about the saving of money. That I will deal with a little later.

If it is the wish of this Council that the Rice Marketing Board should be run by the Board only, I would have very great pleasure in suspending the activities of the Executive Committee and let us go on as we have been doing for the last four months. I have no objection. I have said so at a full Board meeting with seven producing members and me alone.

We have had 12 full Board meetings and at ten of them the producer members had a very good majority. They outnumbered those whom they have been told are there to out-vote the producer members. That is in theory, and that is for the purpose of bringing the necessary pressure to bear in matters of this Bill, but in fact it does not happen. In fact they have had a full clear majority without any use of the casting vote in 10 out of 12 meetings. So there can be no particular objection to the Board's business being carried on in future by the full Board as long as everybody understands what it means. I may mention before I leave off this point, as I said earlier, the minutes of the Executive Committee were circulated to the full Board as soon as they were confirmed. Today it is different. The draft minutes are circulated to the full Board at the same time as they are circulated to members of the Committee, and if there is any alteration at the time of confirmation those alterations are also circulated so that the minutes are brought up to date and every member of the Board at present knows everything that has happened at a meeting of the Executive Committee as fast as any member of the Executive Committee who was absent from a meeting for some reason or other.

We come now to the grading. This was something that certainly did give me a certain amount of cause for worry. The Board makes a certain amount of money and if it gives the entire amount to the industry. It cannot do any more. If you lower the grades and reduce the blending profits there is just that left to go in other ways. If you keep the grades as they should be at a steady level, where every grower knows when he sees his rice what he is likely to get, then there will be more blending profits and the money will be given back in the other way. I have been Chairman of this Board for just over two years. On account of the low prices at which contracts were made—low as regards today's prices—every penny of the Board's earnings during that period was given to the industry with the exception of \$1,781. That was not given because it could not be divided into the number of bags we handled, otherwise that, perhaps, might have been passed on. We made \$7,878 in the first year and

last year we lost \$6,096. You will admit that is pretty careful reckoning. So the question of grades was something that one should be very careful about. What happened when these low grades were put in? It was brought to Your Excellency's notice, not by me but I daresay by one of your representatives there, presumably the Director of Agriculture, who had a right to do it. You referred it back to us and it was put again before the Board and certain facts of what happened on the Appeals Committee of the Rice Marketing Board on Grades were put before the full Board. Rice that was not more than ordinary good No. 2 was regraded by this Committee to Extra No. 1, and so those people to whom the rice belonged got quite a few dollars that really they were not entitled to. Any way the samples were placed before the Board and I pointed out that the guides we have now are supposed to be high and if it is possible to have the Board pay the price of Extra No. 1 for that rice, what could happen if the guides were still lower. That matter was considered and put to the vote. There were 7 producer members present and again they had a majority, but only four of them voted against keeping the guides up at the correct standard. The other three were so convinced that it is something that would not run the Board into trouble that they voted for it. So the question of making that section retrospective to the 1st June does not arise.

As I said, the Board has to put its house in order as regards the grades, but I still maintain there should be precaution exercised against such things happening. It can make a difference to the operation of the Board. In the last few years since these standard guides were there and have not been reduced, the percentage of high quality rice has increased year after year, which shows that it does not create any particular hardship. It only shows again that it is not fair to the person who makes an effort to produce good rice to stand by and see other people who produce an inferior quality of rice to his get the same price as he through a little bit of manipulation with the Guide samples. So in my personal opinion the Director of Agriculture should have the right to approve of these guides. I am quite certain with the present

Board with those gentlemen who favour the retention of the present guides, he would never have any cause whatever to use it. It is a very safe clause to be in the Bill and I am going to ask Members to support that.

The next clause—4—is one that has been twisted very seriously—that is the approval of Your Excellency or your successors to the markets at which rice can be sold. I wonder how many people know that you have such powers now. Very few people know that in the past Government has seen it fit to allow the Rice Marketing Board to do their own exportation, but let anyone of my friends in this building try to export rice and he will see what happens. He will be stopped. If he has to export a horse or a cow or a pig he has to get permission of the Controller of Supplies, who has the right to refuse that permission as long as he is exporting to a country not approved. I daresay this is only another way of saying that Government has the right to say to what markets rice should be exported. Even if the clause is deleted and Your Excellency with the advice of your official advisers decides that the Board will have to get an Export Licence from the Controller of Supplies before it exports rice, the same thing would be achieved and there would not be hundreds of meetings in order to show what evil intention Government has in bringing forward this Bill. The powers are there all the time and naturally can be used at will. So I do not think that anyone should pay too much attention to the statement that you, Sir, or your successors, are liable to prohibit the Board from selling rice to its natural markets or will do anything to stop the Board getting a reasonable price for our rice. Government had absolutely nothing to do with the long term contract that is at present in being.

The purchase of agricultural machinery and equipment is dealt with in the next clause. I am sure every member of the rice industry and every member of the Board here would have no objection to the passing of that clause. Something has been done. Though I am representing a city constituency, when I became a Member of this Council, from the very first I sought to have this done, and Government gave the undertaking that it

would be done. An attempt is now being made to make it law. I am sure no one who has agreed to the rice producers' resolution to throw out this Bill will want this clause thrown out, even the President of the Rice Producers' Association, because he has got quite a lot of machinery on easy terms through the Board.

On the question of the approval of the Governor of funds to be given to the Rice Producers Association I have some interesting figures. In their first year the Rice Producers Association received \$5,090 from the Rice Marketing Board towards their expenses. The Ordinance says that the Board may, from its funds, make an annual grant to the Association for the purpose of assisting in defraying the expenses, of the Association. The Ordinance is clear that it is for the purpose of assisting in defraying the expenses, but the Board has borne the entire expenses of the Association, and the figures are very interesting. In the first year the Board gave the Association \$5,090, the second year \$6,650, and the third year \$18,775. That is, I may say, quite all right because we are told that it was given in order to enable the producers to bring into being their democratic organisation, their elections and so on, so as to have a really representative Rice Producers Association, and we were told that next year, which is this year, it would be considerably lower, but up to the moment for the current year they have had \$20,447.

We cannot ask the Association for a statement because, under the Ordinance, the only person entitled to get a statement is the Colonial Secretary, and every member of the Association who is a member of the Board knew that I had asked Government to relieve me of having to make the decisions as to what should be given them and what should not. My reason for that should be obvious. The minute anybody comments on this expenditure the first thing that would be thrown at him by the members of the Association who are members of the Board would be that he would not vote the money because he wants to hinder the work of the Association. Mr. Raatgever made a very strong statement which is recorded in the minutes of the Board. I

think he will remember that he said that the Association had done nothing to justify the enormous expenditure of money which the Board was called upon to meet. In that statement he was ably supported by Mr. Seaford some time late last year. It is not fair to have members of the Board who are not producers put in a position where they have to quarrel every time an application comes up for a large sum of money. On the other hand, if the Board voted \$50,000 in any one year for the Association the growers would take it to task about it, and the Board has to account to them too. Government was approached by the Board and Your Excellency decided that you would approve of the expenditure, which would mean that when you say "Give the Rice Producers Association \$20,000 or \$30,000" we would be very pleased to draw the cheque. I do not think there is any serious objection to that.

Clause 6 of the Bill has been inserted at the special request of Mr. Deeroop Maraj and other producer-members of the Board. The hon. the Financial Secretary will remember that I came to him and asked him if it would be possible for him to say that Government would agree to this third post being created. This happened at a time when Mr. Gadd's appointment with the Board ceased, and he was transferred to the Rice Expansion Scheme after his period of secondment expired. Mr. Raatgever brought matters to a head and these appointments were made. The producer section of the Board wanted the third official on the Board put in the same category as the other two. In other words, that Mr. Mahadeo should be put on the same plane as Mr. Bayley and Mr. Gonsalves. I had absolutely no objection to that, and I joined with them in recommending it very strongly to Government. Now that it has been put in the Bill we have resolutions being passed all over the country to throw the whole Bill out.

I will leave clause 7 for the last. It is a great bone of contention and, strictly speaking, it is a matter with which I will have to deal outside of my position as Chairman of the Board. I will pass to the Schedule in which will be found an amendment which seeks to give the Board

power to pledge its rice, padi, bags, machinery and anything. There is a question which I will ask the hon. the Attorney-General. I am not satisfied about the way it is put, but that is the idea of the amendment. I wonder what opinion the Managers of the two Banks in British Guiana would have of both Mr. Deeroop Maraj and myself if we went to them for money to carry on without providing any security whatever, except an undertaking that we would approach Government with a view to bringing this Bill in as early as possible? Mr. Deeroop Maraj and I saw the Financial Secretary who gave us his assurance that he would try to get the amendment through, but now it has been put into the Bill we have that same gentleman trying to hold the Bill up. Supposing the Managers of the Bank were of a similar type what would happen? This Bill would be thrown out today, and tomorrow not a single cheque of the Board would be honoured, and every person who has rice to sell to the Board, instead of being present here listening to this debate, would be around my office to know where the money is to come from. That is a position I would not like to have to face. Those people have been given the assurance of both of us in our capacity as Chairman and Vice-Chairman respectively of the Board, and I am asking members of the Board to see that that particular amendment is passed, whatever else they do.

Now I come to the troublesome clause 7 which raises a very important issue—the question of making it possible for any Company which has a large percentage of Government money or, shall I say public money, because I have always been told that Government money belongs to the taxpayers—should be exempted from the Rice Marketing Ordinance if the Governor thinks fit. I have listened to all sorts of reasons why Government has introduced this clause. I would like to say here and now that it was not done at my request, because it is not the function of the Rice Marketing Board, but it would affect the Rice Marketing Board. It will be observed that the clauses provide that the Governor may by Order in Council direct that the Company, which is to have exemption in law, abide by all the rulings of the Rice Marketing Board and be subject to it in

the same manner as any other grower of rice has to do.

What surprises me very much are the various reasons which have been put forward by the opponents of the Bill. One is that the Government of this Colony wants to reduce the growers of rice to slavery. All I can say is that if that is Your Excellency's intention then you must have changed considerably since last October when you agreed to allow the Rice Marketing Board to grant an increase to those very people even before the Board had obtained from the contracting parties the money from which that increase was to be paid. In doing that you took a chance of the Board losing \$54,000 a month for two years and three months, or over a million dollars over 27 months. You did that on the recommendation of the Board and on my personal recommendation, because you realized that you wanted the growers of rice to get as much as the Board could possibly let them have, and in this case you are prepared to let them have a little more than the Board could let them have in order that they may thrive instead of becoming slaves. I made that recommendation and Your Excellency agreed to it. Sometimes I wonder whether I was not foolish in making that recommendation.

I say that because I have heard that the Board's finances were in a state of chaos because from the 1st of October, when those prices came into effect, the Board had lost close on \$300,000. That was additional money they had to find, and if it is implied that the Board's difficult financial period which lasted 20 days between the time I saw the Financial Secretary and the Managers of the Banks, and the time we made the agreement that the increase would be paid on the 1st of April, I say that the Board will not lose money this year in spite of all the chaotic condition we hear about. If Your Excellency did that for the growers of rice I fail to see how you could bring forward a Bill of this kind with the specific idea of ruining those very people who comprise a large proportion of the inhabitants of the Colony.

Since I have been here I have done everything possible to help. I do not just

say that. I did something which perhaps my own constituents will punish me for when I voted in this Council to give the reconstruction of the Courentyne road priority over the Atkinson Field road. Of course I will be able to answer when my constituents pull me to bits over that—that I was not representing a rice constituency but what they have thrown at me time and again—a consumer constituency. Because the Courentyne produces more than half of the rice I did what I thought was the best for British Guiana, and not what was best for my own constituency. They will understand it, I am sure. So I would be the last person to support a clause that would put those people into any kind of difficulty whatever.

Just before I left home I was handed a letter by a grower whom I did not know and had never spoken to. He came to me with a copy of a petition which was supposed to have been sent to Government asking that this clause of the Bill be supported. This clause is a matter of general policy. Do we want expansion? Do we want capital from outside? If we do, do we want it in rice? Those are questions which I am asking every Member of this Council to think over very carefully before he votes, because those who, like myself are elected Members are going to have to answer if we make a wrong decision. Personally I do not see any harm in the clause, particularly if the amendment is put forward, but I shall vote against it if that amendment is not introduced—the amendment suggested by the Financial Secretary which would give this Council the right to say on what terms those Companies with Government money are to be formed, and what type of contract we are going to have, and so on.

There have been so many unnecessary attacks in this matter that I am not surprised when I take up the newspapers every day and read of resolution after resolution being passed, because I have here in my hand a copy of a communication from the President of the Rice Producers Association to the Rice Marketing Board dated 1946, which gives the lie to the statement that this thing was done without the knowledge and consent of the gentleman concerned. The letter is

dated, 1946, after the Board had started negotiations. With Your Excellency's permission I will just read two paragraphs of the letter which state :

"1. The Rice Industry of British Guiana is a Peasant Industry, the majority of the Peasants unfortunately have little or no knowledge of economics. The truth whereof could be borne out by the many senseless and Cut-throat competition constantly engaged in by them, and particularly during the reaping season to collect their crop of padi and the Purchase of padi. At this time each tries to undo the other, and the repetition of which renders them all to a hand-to-mouth financial condition.

"2. It seems, and from all probability hopeless, to be able to cure the farmers from this unfortunate trait, at the moment, demented as they are, and lest the Board risk a collapse of the Industry when faced with lean times in the near future, it would be well and proper to initiate steps for its protection. If a survey were to be made of all the rice factories in the Colony it would be found, contrary to expectation, that nearly every one of them are in urgent need of replacement of parts to machinery, and new machinery itself. But there is not the wherewithal to effect same by the Millers, due to conditions aforesaid.

"3. The B.G. Rice Marketing Board is now aiming at a ten-year contract with the West Indian Islands for the supply of this Colony's rice, the success of which would undoubtedly stabilise the Industry for all that time."

Those are the words of my friend, the President of the Rice Producers Association. They are in writing and the Board has them over his signature. He goes on to say in his letter that he would move a motion at the next meeting of the Board, but when the proposal came before the Board it did not find favour, and it was withdrawn. In the opinion of those who preach the truth, the rice producers of this Colony are, or were as late as 1946, demented

Mr. SMELLIE : The hon. Member who has just taken his seat is the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, and I should say his knowledge is second to none on this subject. I have listened with great care and attention to his interesting speech. I do not intend to treat the

matter in such detail as he has done, even though I were capable of doing so. I just wish to confine my remarks to observations of perhaps a more general nature. It is a matter of extremely great surprise to me to see how much controversy this Bill has produced. A sentence in a leading article in one of our local newspapers struck me forcibly by its balance and its sanity when I read it. It read :

"Now Governments sometimes make mistakes but they do not draft Bills with the object of harming an industry or any section of it."

That remark apparently impressed the hon. the Financial Secretary also, since he quoted it in his extremely able speech when he moved the second reading of this Bill. In passing, Sir, I should like to say that in my opinion it was one of the most valuable and comprehensive addresses he has given to this Council since I became a Member of it. As I said before, I find it very difficult to understand why this Bill should have aroused so much controversy. I am driven to the reluctant conclusion that its opponents either do not understand its purpose or, what is worse, they do not understand what is best for the industry.

Clause 2 of the Bill seeks to increase the numbers of the Executive Committee by one. I agree with the view of the Financial Secretary that a body of six is not well balanced, and I also think it is unfair that the Chairman should be placed in the position of having to use a casting vote. There has been a great deal of acrimonious dispute and discussion on the subject of the functions of the Executive Committee and of its relations with the Board. It seems quite clear to me that the Executive Committee must be the instrument of management of the Board, and that it should carry out its general policy. In the words of the Financial Secretary the Board has the power to review, to revise and, if necessary, to reverse any action which the Executive Committee may have taken, in their view, in excess of its powers. Therefore I think that the Board is adequately protected and has adequate safeguards against any usurpation or infringement of its powers

by the Executive Committee. I therefore see no reason for any remarks or suspicion with regard to the person or personality of the extra member to be appointed. As has been pointed out, the person who will be appointed will depend on the time, the circumstance, and the composition of the Committee at the time.

I must confess to be very glad indeed to note the provision in clause 3 which seeks to make the fixing of the grades of rice subject to the approval of the Director of Agriculture. I am very pleased indeed about that, and I feel sure the Director of Agriculture is the most fit and proper person to undertake that task.

Clause 4, as has been pointed out, is the subject of an international obligation which we share with other countries, and one which we cannot evade even though we may wish to do so. In these uneasy and critical days the freedom-loving countries and communities are mutually dependent and must be subject to a certain amount of protection in this connection. In my view it would be a very retrograde step to attempt to throw out the main provisions of clause 5 which seeks to empower the Board to utilize its funds for the purchase of agricultural machinery and equipment for sale or hire, and to validate the action already taken in this respect. I cannot conceive of anything more calculated to benefit the rice producers than this clause.

With regard to the annual grant by the Board to the Rice Producers Association being subject to the approval of the Governor, I entirely agree, and I should have thought that it would have been as welcome to those concerned as the annual visit of auditors to a reputable business concern.

Clause 6 would appear to be the outcome of certain irregularities which have been brought to light, and even in these days when the rights of the individual are being so strongly emphasized it is important to bear in mind that the rights of other individuals have to be protected.

I now come to clause 7 which, as the last speaker remarked, is the chief bone of contention between the supporters and the

opponents of this Bill. I regret to have to use the **cliche** in this connection "Where there is no vision the people perish." We must have capital if we are to have development, and safeguards against exploitation will, when the amendment is passed, be implicit in the powers of this Council.

The hon. the Financial Secretary has remarked that since 1939 he has had the most abiding interest in the fortunes of the rice industry and in the fortunes of the people engaged in it. I believe that, and I credit him with vision. Personally, as a former member of the Rice Marketing Board, I would like to associate myself with his sentiments, though I have not had the same close contact with the industry as others have had. It should be borne in mind, Sir, that it is the second major industry in the Colony and that its possibilities for expansion are almost limitless. I would ask hon. Members, therefore, to take the long view and, with minds unclouded by the mist of prejudice, exercise that spirit of dispassionate-ness and sound judgement for which the hon. the Financial Secretary has appealed, and to pass this Bill into law.

Dr. GONSALVES: I am very glad to have the opportunity of listening to the hon. Member for Georgetown Central who is the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board. My purpose is to present the case of the rice producers as it has been given to me. Before I do this, however, I need hardly say that it is not necessary for me to go further before paying my very warm tribute to the hon. the Financial Secretary for the very able, comprehensive and lucid manner in which he has presented the Government side of the case relating to the proposed amendment of the Ordinance. I also want to say a word of thanks to you, Sir, for your timely pronouncement that Government had no desire to rush this Bill through, but to give Members of this Council an opportunity to read, mark, learn and inwardly digest the implications as put to us. I believe this is the most difficult period for me since my advent to this Council. I am conscious of the grave responsibility which rests upon me to present the case for the people I represent, and I am also

conscious of my responsibility to this Council and to my country. It places me in a different position, but I would like to remind hon. Members of the area from which I have come and to point out that my constituency contains the majority of the rice producers in this Colony. They produce between 40 and 42 per cent. of the padi and, therefore, the rice grown in this Colony.

I am not here to present a case simply because of the history that may have arisen from the various provisions of the Bill, and I would ask this Council, in the light of all the existing circumstances today, to view the whole matter dispassionately — disregarding the history that may be apparent on the surface. I can understand the reason why this Bill has evoked such tremendous and widespread interest. I attended a number of meetings at which it was discussed and the reason was that I wanted to listen to the contention of the people concerned and to find out what was genuine in the Bill, and I would not miss the chance of coming forward to put their case. We quite agree that the purpose of the formation of the Board was to foster the industry. The people of my constituency are conscious of the fact that there were times when rice shipments came back to the Colony as ballast from Trinidad because they could not be sold. I remember that a good many years ago I passed through Trinidad on my way to this Colony from the U.S.A., and I met a friend who told me that he was trying to dispose of some rice in Trinidad but after having spent several days in the island he had, literally, to give it away.

The rice producers of this Colony have been rather busy for some time. They are supporting the formation of the Board and the reasons for the opposition they are raising are very simple. I am not concerned with the contention that exists between the Rice Marketing Board and the members of the Rice Producers' Association; I am only concerned with the contention of my constituency and that contention is based on three simple points. One is that the Rice Marketing Board, as at present constituted, is inimical to the best interests of the rice producers of this Colony, and is also not consistent with

what is being done in the other Colonies under similar conditions. The second point is that we are not opposed to the formation of the Rice Marketing Board, as I have said before, but there must be further amendments beyond those proposed at present in order to bring about satisfaction. After I have outlined these things I shall deal with the Bill as it is before us.

The last point relates to the question of monopoly — monopoly as can be envisaged in the address by the Financial Secretary with respect to the formation of a Corporation of the size of \$10,000,000. There is no objection to that, but if the Corporation will enjoy a monopoly of the kind mentioned by the Financial Secretary it will not only be inimical to the interest of the producers, but it would bring them nearer to financial collapse rather than to the stability which we expect. At the time of the formation of the Rice Marketing Board there were hectic days for the industry, and the time came when, because of war emergency powers, the industry could not progress as it should have done. Therefore, it is right that there should be re-constitution of the Board after the War. Conditions were very exacting for the producers even during the War, but they too were actuated by a sense of loyalty. They realized that they were making a contribution to the War effort and so they did not stint their efforts. While other countries were then receiving far better prices for their rice, the producers of this Colony were entirely satisfied.

After the War, the Board was reformed — if I may use that term — and we all felt that perhaps mistakes were made by the inclusion of certain clauses in the Bill which was passed in this Council. The producers felt that things would soon become normal again and, therefore, that increased benefits would have come to them and brought about the happiness they hoped for. But, instead of that, what happened? We all know that from that time the cost of living has been rising and has gone up to such an extent that it is now very difficult for us to catch up with it. And, to add the straw that breaks the camel's back as far as development is concerned, we do not know whether tomorrow



morning we would have to pay \$4 for a yard of cloth that was costing \$1 some time ago. We are now being prevented from purchasing certain things from certain areas and, so far as I can see, we will not be able to make up for all the disadvantages we have suffered because of devaluation and other things. Perhaps, however, some of us would be able to make whatever efforts are necessary to help the cause. Because of International considerations the producers have to sell their rice in markets within certain areas. They agreed to do so but asked that the Rice Marketing Board be set up so that they could get the same consideration as that received by producers in other places. In Dutch Guiana there is a Rice Board also, but let us see what is done there. An expert comes and prices the padi and pays for it on the spot. What is more, the producers receive a bonus at the end of the year from the revenue earned through the sale of the rice by the Government.

Now, let us see what the Jamaica Producers' Association does with respect to bananas. The producers are guaranteed a certain price for their stems and after they have been properly graded payment is made, but at the end of the year they also receive a bonus in accordance with the number and value of the stems sold. The Nutmeg Association of Grenada operates in a similar manner. Let us see what is done in Trinidad where we sell the greater part of our rice. There is no Rice Board there such as we have in this Colony. The producers there take their rice into bonds where it is purchased and put into bags, and it is afterwards sold by retailers at prices ranging as high as 40c per pint. I think that even padi is purchased and re-sold in the same way. The trader buys at a fixed price, but no one is concerned whether he gets 40c. or 20c. per pint for it afterwards.

Yesterday we saw a paragraph in the *Daily Argosy* which calls itself the most reliable newspaper in British Guiana — and I take it that it is. We have seen from this newspaper that rice sweepings recently purchased by Jamaica were being rushed after and bought up by people in that island for eating purposes. The rice was sold as stock feed,

I understand, and yet people in Jamaica were anxious to use it as food. We can, therefore, see what the position is with regard to demand.

Now, Sir, there is one other reference I should like to make on behalf of the producers. In the United States, we find from the report of the Director of Agriculture, that the amount of money expended for the cultivation of potatoes last year ran into \$224,000,000. It is better for a farmer to sell his potatoes to the Government there at a price fixed by the Department of Agriculture, because he often buys it back at 1c. per lb. to feed his pigs. That is the sort of provision that has been made by the United States Government, realising that exacting terms are not wanted where peasants are concerned. We should be interested in the rules laid down by these large food organizations abroad, and we should not fail to let our own peasants realize that we are doing everything possible on their behalf. These are the people who bear the heat and burden of the day — the people who carry the industry on their backs. They have to expose themselves to all sorts of weather, and there is no wonder that provision is made in other countries so that people of their type are reasonably rewarded. Is that the principle on which the Rice Marketing Board of this Colony has been constituted? What I am saying must not be construed as being levied against the Chairman of the Board or anyone else.

The rice producers in my constituency feel that we should pass such amendments as would remove some of the disadvantages from which they suffer. It is no use telling us that we are the granary of the West Indies and are going to produce very much more when conditions are extremely difficult for the producers. I have already referred to the high cost of living and to what it is costing to cultivate an acre of rice. The figures supplied by the Department of Agriculture in this respect are different from those given by the producers themselves in my constituency. The Department contends that it would take 231 man hours in order to produce an acre of rice, beginning from the time it is sown in the nursery to the time it is in the bond,

while the producers contend that it takes 346 man hours. As regards the use of mechanical methods the Department gives an estimate of 101 hours, but the producers contend that it is 145 hours. I do not think that is a very trivial difference and I cannot understand how it has come about. I am not an agricultural economist and I am not going to attempt to analyse these figures—what is meant by these “man hours” and so on—but I am sensible enough to know what it would cost for the various items, as I have been able to investigate and verify them.

In 1945, immediately after the War, it was given out by the Department of Agriculture that it cost a little over \$60 to produce an acre of rice; let us see whether that is true today, beginning with the ploughing of the land. I have heard that the actual cost of production runs reasonably and well into \$85. The ploughing of the land would cost at least \$9; the planting would cost \$8; the cleaning, between \$3 and \$5; the reaping, \$8; transportation from the field — \$3; threshing — or what is known as “mashing with bulls”—\$5; then there is land rent which would cost between \$5 and \$8. The carting of the padi to the factory would cost \$2.84. We are calculating on an average of 20 bags per acre and the cost of 20 empty bags for the padi would be \$6.60. The cost of milling 20 bags of padi is \$20; while the cost of the seed padi — the padi for planting—would be \$3.66. As I already stated, I took good care to prepare a reasonable estimate. We figured that four persons would be able to handle the ploughing, planting, reaping, and so on, but the milling has to be done by other persons. The workers at the mill have to be paid the Government rate of \$1.28 per day and, therefore, four such workers would cost \$5.12 per day. Since the padi would take three days to be milled — it has to be sunned, steamed, dried and milled — the total cost would be \$15 roughly. When all these figures are taken into account, it would be found that the total cost of producing an acre of rice is in the vicinity of \$85. It is true that if any farmer is capable of producing his rice by mechanical means it would not cost so much, but I am not putting up a case for the miller since I believe that he is

better able to take care of himself than the poor producer.

I have gone into this matter very carefully because it has been said by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, who is the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, that the rice industry is the only peasant industry alive in which a man with ambition and some guts and grit would get on and, perhaps, be able to place a little shelter over his family. I think hon. Members of this Council will remember that when gold was one of the primary industries of the Colony the City of Georgetown benefited greatly when the men returned from the interior, because they brought quite a bit of money and spent it here. Today that industry is dead; and if it is not completely dead then I would give it only a few more years—according to my prognosis. Today gold is being sold in the Colony at \$72 per fine ounce—that is what I have to pay. Sometimes these same rice producers buy a little gold and make some jewellery for their family, and it is this same jewellery they would go and pledge in order to get sufficient money to carry on their crops, and after the crops are reaped they would redeem them. These people like to put aside something in the form of jewellery, and it often proves of much assistance to them. A man came to me the other day after he had made a deal which brought him something like \$250, and when I asked him what he had done with the money he said the first thing he did was to buy a pair of gold bangles for each of his daughters, because when the family ran out of money they could pledge them and raise some. If gold has doubled and re-doubled its value—and you can purchase it in the United Kingdom cheaper than you can do here—one should realize that there is no limit in the rise of the cost of living, and it is necessary to provide the best possible conditions for the peasant producers of the country.

One of the problems with which the producers are faced at the present time is that of loss in the course of transportation of padi and rice. If any Member of this Council goes to Rosignol when rice is being shipped from there to Georgetown, he will certainly get an idea of the loss

that occurs through bags becoming loose. Apart from this loss, the producers complain that they are not paid promptly for their rice as it reaches the Rice Marketing Board. He would receive part payment in New Amsterdam, perhaps, as the rice is submitted to the branch of the Board there; but the balance is not paid within a reasonable time. Many producers have come to me and stated that over three months had elapsed and they had not yet received the balance of their money from the Board. I repeat that these peasants are the people who are carrying the greatest burden in the industry. It would take a number of years to get the industry mechanized to the extent of 80 per cent. or thereabout and, therefore, the peasant is the person to be depended upon. As I have said, this is the only peasant industry in which he can find gainful occupation. Some of them are willing to work on the sugar estates, but they can only get two or three days' work per week there, and sometimes they lose quite a lot of time in trying to get the work. Therefore, if we are going to have a rice industry the peasants should not be made to feel that they are suffering, and should be put on a similar footing to those in other countries. If an employee of the Rice Marketing Board works through the year and after he has been paid his salary he feels that he has a right to expect and receive a bonus for his work, why is it that the peasant workers in the industry cannot be put in a similar position? I am sorry to say that the peasants have fully convinced me that they are getting a raw deal.

With all this, during the last rainy weather we have had much experience. A man had 200 bags of padi expecting to have them milled within two and three weeks. What was the result? After the rains were over he got perhaps less than one-third what he expected to get for it. Some very pathetic cases have come to me. A man borrows money at a very high rate of interest to pay back on his crop, and what happens? When his rice is sent to the Board it takes three months and, perhaps, over that to receive the money for it. But that is not the worst of it. That money is not sent to him, it is sent to the miller, and a

goodly number of times the poor fellow does not even get the balance due to him. When he is faced with the stark realization of what his situation is, he sees he is in a desperate condition. If he is precluded from getting a high price for his rice as the other countries are getting—as I have mentioned Dutch Guiana is getting as much as \$24 and we may look at them with jealous eyes but we cannot talk because at present we are bound by international agreement and cannot sell—he cannot help feeling very jealous of what is taking place in and about him. As it was mentioned also, if we attempt to sell we would soon be stopped, and if we keep the rice in our houses it is said we are not to keep it there. We agree that we must keep within the law. I am not suggesting that the law must be broken, but when we take all these things into consideration I do believe that we can yet see the point the other fellow is making. If this view is taken would it smash this Rice Marketing Board?

We are not concerned with the arguments of the members of the Rice Producers Association and of the members of the Rice Marketing Board. We are strictly concerned with how to give fairplay to this body, and if that is an impossibility then I want to know how it is done in other countries and why it should be so different in British Guiana. Let us go out and face the hardships as they are. Let us see if working under the same conditions as the employees of the Rice Marketing Board who are given a bonus, these people are not entitled to similar treatment. Why not have the same compassionate feeling for them and say as the Jamaica Banana Producers Association do: "We pay you for your bananas and here is your bonus". Even if \$50,000 is paid out to them as bonus it is not going to interfere with the amount of money that can be made by the Rice Marketing Board. I think I have spoken about that point to some extent, and now I want to say something about the contracts.

In dealing with the contracts it was mentioned, Sir, that we have just received an order for 1,000 tons of rice from Jamaica at the stated price of \$16 per bag. Now, Sir, I speak subject to correction. It is my information that when

the producer members of this country said they were prepared to supply to that 4,000 bags of rice in order to receive some of the benefits from that order, they were told that that contract had already left the Mahaicony-Abary mills. It is true that the rice from the Mahaicony-Abary mills passes through the Board, but it is not subject to the same conditions to which the producers' rice is subject. I have seen the rice produced at the Mahaicony-Abary mills and, I agree, it is more an even sample and, perhaps, can be taken for export as it is, but here is the comparison. When the rice producer sends his rice to the Board it is subject to the grades or grading as laid down by the Board or the Executive Committee of the Board. He is restricted in what he receives for his rice. He may receive \$84 per ton for his rice or \$94 per ton according to the grade he supplies to the Board. But, Sir, these grades as accepted by the Board are further broken down and then exported, and the Board makes an additional profit from the breaking down of the grades. With all of this we are perfectly satisfied, but we contend that if these things can be done we have a right to share in the profits. That is the rice producers' contention. I am going to be blunt. I am not going to be as forensic in oratory as the hon. the Financial Secretary. I intend to give in a matter of fact way the producers' case, as I have been made to see it. If that is true, and I have no reason to doubt it and no reason to deny, then it becomes very distasteful when we stop to think, as I have just related, of what is happening in the other countries. What, you may wonder, will we be satisfied with? We will be satisfied with the same conditions as they exist. If you make \$3 today we are satisfied, and if you have to compete with Burma tomorrow we would be satisfied. But what do you find when you compare the prices of rice in the Western Hemisphere? Let us see for the years 1946, 1947, 1948.—

The PRESIDENT: Is the hon. Member referring to some publication?

Dr. GONSALVES: Yes, Sir. It is the Rice Producers' Association's Bulletin.

The PRESIDENT: The local one?

Dr. GONSALVES: Yes, Sir.

The PRESIDENT: I only want to know. The hon. Member knows that if he is quoting from a document he must say what it is and its source so that the Council may know.

Dr. GONSALVES: It is only giving comparative prices. It gives the prices of the U.S.A., Brazil and of British Guiana in British Guiana dollars.

"The U.S.A. — \$215.54 per ton in 1946, \$227.77 in 1947 and \$364.68 in 1948; Brazil—\$179.90 in 1946, \$200.17 in 1947 and \$234.70 in 1948; British Guiana —\$105.42 in 1946, \$115.61 in 1947, and \$115.96 in 1948."

Now, Sir, we realize that it is because of the restriction placed on us as to the area where we must export our rice. But, Sir, the hon. the Financial Secretary told us that our rice is not being sold at much below the prices of the other countries. He gave us the figure, I think \$32 or some shillings per ton.

The PRESIDENT: £32.7s. He gave the prices. It is all down in his statement.

Dr. GONSALVES: Thank you, Sir. But the producers are contending that even when better prices can be obtained, such as £42.1s per ton in Jamaica, they are excluded from any such benefits. If we take the rice industry from the time it started and from the years when rice was practically and literally dumped in Trinidad, we would see how he must feel today when there is a chance for him to build his little home, because we do not know when the other rice producing countries will come back into the market—Australia, Siam, Burma — and there will be strong competition and we will have a life and death struggle to hold our markets. We would be satisfied then with the lean years if we are made participators in the years when reasonable profits are made. I am not concerned with the mistakes made by the Board as it has done a very good job in a sense, but a goodly number of materials and equipment has been bought by the Board which cannot be used. The ploughs are too soft and cannot do the job. We are not criticizing the Board too severely.

Mistakes have been made and we are perfectly satisfied in accepting those mistakes, but not because those mistakes have been made that is all the reason why the poor producer must be made to bear the burden. I am going to deal with the point that he has brought to me about monopoly. Before I go to that I would like to read what the hon. the Financial Secretary said as regards monopoly. I am reading from the *Daily Argosy* of July 21 1950, the day after the presentation of Government's side of the Bill. The hon. the Financial Secretary said:

"He wanted to draw attention to the structure and organisation of the Board. He had said just now that it succeeded the organisation set up under war powers control regulations and it was not difficult to see that the present Ordinance had followed more or less the matter of the control regulations. The Rice Marketing Board, as at present constituted in structure, was a monopoly of the most extreme kind containing in its constitution stringent restrictive powers with corresponding sanctions, imposing severe penalties for infringement of its prescriptions. It was not in any sense of the word a true co-operative — not a compulsory co-operative. It was purely and simply the kind of continuation in the same form of control that was imposed on a vital industry during the war."

What I want to say in answer to that is just this: Monopolies of such an extreme kind are dangerous. They border on dictatorship, and that is exactly No. 1 enemy of democracy. So if we are going to form a joint organization and then we use some of these — what we call — monopolist powers in it, I think some of us may just as well run away from here because when this organization is formed what guarantee have I that I will not receive \$4 a bag for my padi? What guarantee have I that immediately on the purchase of my padi I am going to be paid? Why Government does not place sufficient money at the disposal of the Board for these people to be paid immediately for their produce? These are things, in spite of the people bringing out their padi during the rainy season, they still suffer to a great extent and they still lose a considerable amount thereby. It is a shame to see my wife and the servant sitting down and picking out black rice when she had bought super

rice which is only in name. What is the remedy? The remedy is, as I have suggested, central mills not with monopolies of this kind. Since the bias is on co-operation the world over, then we want central mills giving us a share in the profits and not a measure of this kind. It will be remembered with regard to the bringing forward of central mills in the Colony that I moved a motion, which was passed in this Council, and I suggested strongly that in order to get rid of some of the small mills the best remedy is to introduce and operate on co-operative lines central mills in partnership with Government. If Government is now ready to set its power into a super organization, then we want to know which part of this transaction we come in. If we do not come into this thing, then it is not going to be good for us. Since it is democracy, since — I am to quote what the hon. the Financial Secretary said — we are going to be allowed to speak without let and hindrance provided we stay within the generous limits of constitutional procedure, we may make a clean breast of it and let us know each other. Let us throw our cards on the table. Let us not confuse the issue by saying this is wrong and not lay our cards on the table. We all have, as they say in the U.S.A., "eyes on the whole". We are placing them now on behalf of the rice producers just as how we were made to understand them.

I have been into the rice field; I have travelled the vast extent of the rice producer's place and I do know he is suffering quite a bit. Imagine the jollification of some of them, when there are a few showers of rain and they have not to go to the estate to see if they can get water. My friend, Mr. Ferreira, the hon. Member for Berbice River, must have had similar experience. They are suffering, and that is the point I am trying to hammer. Why should they not be afraid without sufficient safeguards? I am glad the hon. the Financial Secretary saw fit in his wisdom to say there will be an amendment to this part of the Bill which we consider extremely vicious. If a joint corporation of that sort is to be formed no one would be happier than I, because the poor people suffer too much under the present set-up. But am I con-

sistent in opposing this Bill? I am, because if the rice producer is suffering now and without the safeguards, that we expect and that we are asking to be placed in this set-up, he has nothing to look to but stark frustration, and it is not going to stimulate the rice industry as we all envisage in this country. If that is the condition, then we feel that with this added Ordinance—with all due deference to you, Sir, we are not saying that the Governor of this Colony should not have this power but you may be removed tomorrow and we do not know what may be the attitude of your successor—we have to be very careful. We must be worried about all the e things. As I said before, I ask you to consider the fellow who when he goes home at night from his rice field does not know where he is going to get 28 or 30 cents to buy a tin of milk. If that is the case, should we not be very cautious, very careful? Should we not vote on this Bill until we have satisfied ourselves that we are exercising the dictates of our consciences without any sectional interest and in the best interest of the majority of the people of this Colony? If it were not for the producers, who would benefit by it? Even if we do pay one or two cents more per gallon for our rice, if the money is not circulated in the Colony we are going to find conditions in the same way as when we are called upon to pay 10 cents per lb. for imported potatoes, 30 cents per lb. for salt fish. As I have said, a remedy for salt fish has been found and I need not repeat it.

We ask Members to think and not only to say that it is because of the controversy that is raging between the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Producers' Association. That is not the point, that is not the case. It is, as I have told you, how the people see it. This is not the only time the rice producer has approached me, and I would ask hon. Members to believe me that it is not agitated by the meetings brought about and prompted by this Bill. If my memory serves me well, I believe I have spoken to you, Sir, about the feelings of the rice producers in my section of the Colony. You have been there and you know it just as much as I do. This is the climax of a series of events leading to this thing.

They have spoken to me, and I do not know if it is the same experience of my friend, the hon. Member for Berbice River. Sometimes when they come to me I would say to them "Have you seen Capt. Ferreira? Go and see him". You will realize that my territory is large, and you will realize that the majority of the producers are from there. I do feel that I have a fairly good grasp of his reasons and, whether those reasons have any substance in them or not. I believe the fellow needs some sort of consideration. We are not opposed to the formation of a company as propounded by the hon. the Financial Secretary, but there are no safeguards for us, none at all. If these hardships exist with the present Rice Marketing Board, we must be afraid. Sometimes I secretly go and ask the reasons for the New Amsterdam Stelling being crowded with rice up to the top. If I tell you the reason I am afraid I may be doing something to embarrass a Government Department.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member should say it.

Dr. GONSALVES: I have been told that they were ordered not to ship any more rice to Georgetown because the wharves of the Rice Marketing Board are blocked up; the trucks were there waiting but they were not able to keep up with the blending. Imagine, all these things cause a certain amount of deterioration, bags burst and the peasants are waiting to get their money. That is the position. So, Sir, the producers in my section in particular—I do not know about those in the sections close to the Mahaicony-Abary mills—do have a deal of trouble. We have trouble to the extent that sometimes we are not even allowed trucks to transport our rice. We are told, we are restricted and we have enough; it is going to break up the Courantyne road. There are plenty of hardships, and I implore this Council to consider the matter dispassionately and let us see if they have any reason for a grouse and, if they have, let us see how well we can compromise this thing. If in spite of what we are reading that in Korea they are still appealing to reason to bring about peace, we bring about this thing as we have it here, then we

are contributing to war and not to peace. So, therefore, I ask that this matter be seriously considered.

I am going to deal very briefly with the Bill as it is. I have already told you that they are not satisfied about some of the clauses of the Bill. The President of the Rice Marketing Board has given the reasons for bringing them forward. I shall not encourage any such feeling among my constituents to say that there is the tendency to be dishonest on the part of anyone mentioned in this Bill. I cannot encourage it, therefore I want that to be eliminated, but the grouse exists. The explanation of the attempt to add another member to the Board is that the Board is unwieldly. A monopoly of this kind is dangerous if it is not to come under the control of the Board, and one can see why the producer should feel apprehensive of the proposal to add another member to the Board.

The PRESIDENT: Another member is not being added to the Board. There is no change in the constitution of the Rice Marketing Board whatsoever as a Board. It is a member of the Board being added to the Executive Committee, which is an entirely different thing. It is an Executive Committee to manage the affairs of the Board, and there is no intention to put other people on the Board. It seems to me that if people think that that is being done there is no wonder that there is all this outcry. It is this trouble of not understanding what is proposed to be done and what is being said wrongly about the Bill. I received a telegram from a man at Mahaicony yesterday enquiring whether it was a fact that if a rice corporation is established in British Guiana the small farmers would not be able to grow rice, or at any rate, that we would limit the quantity of rice he could produce? If the opposition to this Bill is based on those expressions of fear I do not know where we stand. The whole reason why I said we did not want to hurry this debate through is that we do not want to do anything under any misapprehension of the facts. I am indeed nervous that the people do not know the facts about the Bill. I hope they do.

Dr. GONSALVES: I thank you very

much, Sir, for the explanation. The mistake in the first instance was mine when I said that a member was being added to the Board instead of to the Executive Committee. I am also grateful to you for saying that we must understand the position. The farmer is contending that the proposed additional member of the Executive Committee constitutes a threat to his already precarious position. My instructions are that the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board is contending that the reason why another member is being added is because he is loth to use his casting vote. I speak subject to correction.

Mr. FERNANDES: I have not said anything of the kind. I had nothing to do with the suggestion to add another member to the Executive Committee. That was not done at my request. I knew nothing about it until I saw it in draft. That is one of the misstatements that have been made.

Dr. GONSALVES: I thank you very much. I said I spoke subject to correction, and I was speaking according to instructions received. I am not too sure but I believe I am correct. I believe the hon. the Financial Secretary made mention of that in his very comprehensive and lucid address. I do not know if I am making a mistake, but we have it now from the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Fernandes) who says "No". I accept that.

Clause 3 of the Bill says:

3. (1) Subsection (1) of section fifteen of the Principal Ordinance is hereby amended by the insertion therein between the word "may" and the word "fix" of the words "from time to time, with the approval of the Director of Agriculture."

The rice producer contends that at the beginning of the crop season there is a difference in calorific content of the rice stored, and that it is not the case of breaking down the sample by adding inferior grades, but simply a change in its colour. Your Excellency has given us the assurance that we can speak freely on this Bill. It is said that some very uncomplimentary remarks were made by

the Director of Agriculture regarding the grading of rice — that it is a subterfuge for putting money into the pockets of the rice growers.

he PRESIDENT: That is absolutely untrue. This proposal did not originate with the Director of Agriculture. He did not even suggest it to my knowledge. It is rather distressing how these stories get about.

Dr. GONSALVES: There is therefore all the more reason why these things should be brought into the open. If the Director of Agriculture was so unsympathetic as to make such an unkind and indiscreet statement I should be afraid to put such overriding powers into his hands.

Clause 4 says:

4. Section sixteen of the Principal Ordinance is hereby amended by the addition to subsection (2) of the following proviso —

“Provided that exports of rice shall be allocated and made in conformity with any international agreement subscribed to, or obligation undertaken by, the Colony, with respect to the distribution of food supplies, and the allocation of exports by the Board shall be subject to the approval of the Governor.”

I am going to borrow the word of the Financial Secretary who referred to the devaluation of the pound as “revaluation”.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: I plead “not guilty”. That was Sir Stafford Cripps’s word. (laughter).

Dr. GONSALVES: The Financial Secretary told us that a certain amount of money was voted by this Council in order to cushion the effect of the shock that revaluation would produce on the economy of this Colony. I say again, with extreme deference to you, Sir, that we are afraid because it is our experience that Governors come and go, and we do not know how long you will be here. We have just heard that our Economic Adviser is going to Malaya. We had such wonderful hopes about him but they

have now turned into a mirage. We do not know whether we are looking at a wolf or a goat.

The PRESIDENT: I hope the hon. Member is not referring to the Economic Adviser as a wolf. (laughter).

Dr. GONSALVES: No, Sir. We do not know what tomorrow will bring forth. The fact that we have to comply with this international agreement is all the more reason why we should be very zealous and technical to safeguard our rice industry. I see no reason why we should be so elated over the prospect that we are going to get money from the Marshall Plan. If we are directed that we cannot send our rice anywhere isn’t it right that we should expect to get a fair and decent share of the money coming through the Marshall Plan for the rehabilitation of stricken or underdeveloped countries? Again I ask the Law Officers to be very careful about their advice as regards the structure of these Bills, because they have very secret repercussions — something like bricks wrapped in blankets. There is going to be a cushion but we will suffer bruises all the same.

There is nothing apparently wrong with clause 5 which, among other things, seeks to give the Board power to purchase agricultural machinery and equipment, and sell or hire such agricultural machinery and equipment to rice producers on such terms as the Board may think fit. Let us admit that the Board has done a good job, but are the members prepared to admit that they have made blunders? How are we to know that proper discretion is going to be exercised in the purchasing of machinery and equipment with money which should go to the producers?

I have had no complaints whatever about clause 6. I therefore give it my blessing. I have already discussed clause 7 and stressed the dread that exists in the minds of the rice producers as regards the formation of Companies of this kind, and having heard that Steel Bros. will be the controlling interest in this Company, and in view of what we have heard of Steel Bros., why shouldn’t we be



afraid? That is the reason why we should not allow any Company to be formed unless this Colony holds interests to the extent of at least 50 per cent. The Financial Secretary has told us of the establishment of a Company with a capitalisation of \$10,000,000. I wish I had it, but after all how much is that in considering such a gigantic move? Is British Guiana in such a position that she cannot afford to place an equal amount of stock in that corporation? The rank and file are not satisfied with that. Whether it is Steel Bros., or any other concern they should come within the ambit of this Legislature and not be able to get \$16 per bag for their rice while the ordinary producer gets \$8 or \$6 per bag.

The PRESIDENT: That is another case of misrepresentation. There is no such idea that the producer in this Colony is going to get a cent less for his rice than any corporation. Obviously it is not so. I am sure this Council would not allow it for one moment. I cannot believe that the hon. Member himself believes that such a thing could happen. Before this Corporation can be formed it has to have the approval of the Legislative Council. Is any Member going to support what the hon. Member has said will happen—that the Corporation would get \$16 per bag for its rice while the ordinary grower got \$8 and \$6 per bag? If that is the sort of stuff that is being told the people in the country I am not surprised at the opposition to the Bill. I hope the hon. Member appreciates my point.

Dr. GONSALVES: I do, Sir, but at the same time I hope you will bear with me a few minutes while I read clause 7 and see if that is not the interpretation to be put on it, unless I am not sufficiently intelligent to understand what is meant by it. Clause 7 reads:

"7. The Principal Ordinance is hereby amended by the insertion, after section thirty-six, of the following new section —

"Exemption from this section, the expression of the Ordinance. 36A. (1) For the purposes of this section, the expression 'public rice development undertaking' means any enterprise established in the Colony for the development of the rice industry and the

extension of the export trade in the said industry —

- (a) by the Government of the Colony; or
- (b) by any company in which public funds are invested and which is declared to be a public rice development undertaking by Order made by the Governor in Council.

(2) The provisions of this Ordinance shall not apply to any public rice development undertaking:

Provided that the Governor may from time to time, by Order, direct that the provisions of subsection (1) of section twelve and section thirteen of this Ordinance shall apply to the public rice development undertaking specified in the Order, with respect to all rice manufactured by the said undertaking, or to such quantity thereof as may be specified in the Order.

(3) Any Order made under any of the provisions of this section may be varied or revoked by a subsequent Order made thereunder."

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: May I interrupt for one moment to remind the hon. Member that copies of my address have been circulated to Members — the actual Hansard report — and here is what I said:

"Assuming that such negotiations bear fruit and a Company or Corporation is about to be formed, quite obviously, since it must be a company in which public funds are invested, this Council will become the authority for determining several things — firstly, whether public funds are to be invested at all; secondly, the terms and conditions under which public funds are to be invested, and thirdly, if no funds are to be invested in actual cash but assets are to be transferred—for example those of the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme — the terms and conditions under which that is to be done."

In other words this Council will become the authority to determine, approve or reject the terms under which the Company will be formed.

Dr. GONSALVES: thank the Financial Secretary very much for that explanation, but the Council will remember that I have already praised the wisdom of the Financial Secretary in suggesting an amendment to this clause.

I have been discussing the Bill as it is presented to this Council.

The FINANCIAL SECRETARY & TREASURER: In making that statement about the amendment I made it perfectly clear that in order to make the clause quite clear to the Council and the world I proposed to put in certain words which are really redundant but would nevertheless make quite clear what the intention is.

Dr. GONSALVES: Perhaps I am not as versatile a politician as the Financial Secretary, but the clause is here, and the only way I would not be entitled to discuss it is if a new Bill was introduced. As long as it is here it is my privilege to discuss it. I will give him credit for suggesting an amendment, but neverthe-

less I said I would give an analysis of the feelings of the producers and the reasons why they are apprehensive.

I have spoken at length, and I wish to say to the Council and to you, Sir, that I am extremely grateful for your patience, and I do hope that in some measure I have been able to present some of the points and the feelings of the rice producers. As I said, I am not concerned with the rice miller, not because I am not sympathetic with him, but because I believe he is much more able to take care of himself than the poor producer. I thank you very much.

The PRESIDENT: It being close upon 5 o'clock the Council will now adjourn until Thursday next (August 3) at 2 p.m.