

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Thursday, 12th February, 1959

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. M. S. Porcher (acting)

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

Financial Secretary, Hon. F. W. Essex.

} *ex officio*

The Honourable **Dr. C. B. Jagan**—*Member for Eastern Berbice*
(Minister of Trade and Industry)

„ „ **B. H. Benn** —*Member for Essequibo River*
(Minister of Community Development and Education)

„ „ **E. B. Beharry** —*Member for Eastern Demerara*
(Minister of Natural Resources)

„ „ **Janet Jagan** —*Member for Western Essequibo*
(Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)

„ „ **Ram Karran** —*Member for Demerara-Essequibo*
(Minister of Communications and Works).

Mr. R. B. Gajraj —*Nominated Member*

„ **W. O. R. Kendall** —*Member for New Amsterdam*

„ **R. C. Tello** —*Nominated Member*

„ **F. Bowman** —*Member for Demerara River*

„ **L. F. S. Burnham** —*Member for Georgetown Central*

„ **S. Campbell** —*Member for North Western District*

„ **A. L. Jackson** —*Member for Georgetown North*

„ **S. M. Saffee** —*Member for Western Berbice*

„ **Ajodha Singh** —*Member for Berbice River*

„ **J. N. Singh** —*Member for Georgetown South*

„ **R. E. Davis** —*Nominated Member*

„ **A. M. Fredericks** —*Nominated Member*

„ **H. J. M. Hubbard** —*Nominated Member.*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

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

ABSENT :

Mr. B. S. Rai — on leave

Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E. — on leave.

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 11th February, 1959, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

PAPERS LAID

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex):
I beg to lay on the Table—

Order in Council No. 6 of 1959 made under section 8 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, on the 24th day of January, 1959, and published in the Gazette on the 7th of February, 1959.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

MOTION—ORDER IN COUNCIL NO.
6 OF 1959

The Financial Secretary : I beg to give notice of the following Motion:

“Be it resolved: That this Council in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 6 of 1959, which was made on the 24th day of January, 1959, and published in the Gazette of the 7th of February, 1959”.

PETITIONS

INCREASED EXCISE DUTY ON
LOCALLY MADE BEER

Mr. Tello : Mr. Speaker, I beg your permission to lay on the Table the humble Petition of 88,823 inhabitants of British Guiana praying that this Legislature give consideration to the fact that Bank Breweries Ltd. is the first large-scale industry sponsored by the initiative of local people, financed by local money and administered by local people in the interest of the Colony as a whole; further, to the fact that the start of this industry has made available locally a very popularly priced beer within the reach of humble people; and to the fact that the majority of the people investing in this industry is drawn from the working-class people, and recommend that the proposed increase in the excise duty on beer locally produced be rejected.

I beg to move that the Petition be read.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Clerk read the following Petition:

“To the Honourable Members of the Legislature of British Guiana.

The Humble Petition of the undersigned
88,823 People of British Guiana.

Respectfully sheweth.

1. Your Petitioners were gratified and pleased when in October, 1957 the Peoples of British Guiana were able to have their own locally brewed beer for the first time, especially when it was known that the Brewery had been built by Guianese as a result of Guianese initiative, with Guianese money and Guianese labour.

2. Whereas the Peoples of British Guiana had for years been able only to buy beer at 40 cents or more per bottle, it had now become possible for them to get equally good beer throughout the country at the standard price of 25c. per bottle which is a convenient unit of currency which enables less privileged persons of British Guiana to enjoy this popular beverage.

3. Your Petitioners view with alarm the proposed increase of 50% on the present duty on Beer which will mean that they will have to purchase less beer and to pay more for it in more than one unit of currency.

4. Your Petitioners will remind Honourable Members of the unemployment which at present exists here and which it has been found will increase considerably in the future.

5. All your Petitioners realise that the only way to decrease unemployment is to establish new industries. But what are the prospects of achieving this if, after one year of the establishment of the first large locally owned industry, duties are increased by 50%. No Guianese would want to invest money under such conditions.

6. Your Petitioners hope that the Brewery will not close down for this would be a local disaster. It would put many out of work and furthermore, the high standard of pay and conditions of employment established by the Company would cease to exist.

[MR. TELLO]

7. Your Petitioners consider the proposed increase of the tax on beer very unfair and respectfully request the Legislature to reject the proposal.

And your Petitioners as in duty bound will ever pray.

12th February, 1959."

(Signatures of Rudolph Melville, of Spring Land Ville, Corentyne, and others, follow).

Mr. Speaker: The Petition stands referred to the Public Petitions Committee for consideration and report.

LENGTH OF SITTING

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Porcher) Sir, before you proceed with the Order of the Day, with your permission I would like to give notice, although I am not required by the Standing Orders to do so, of my intention to move that the sitting today should be continued until after five o'clock; to seven o'clock, so that we can have an opportunity to spend more time on the 1959 Appropriation Bill.

ORDER OF THE DAY APPROPRIATION BILL BUDGET DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, we will resume the debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill, 1959, intitled,

"An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current Session of the Legislative Council."

At the adjournment, Mr. Campbell was speaking.

Mr. Campbell: If my memory serves me right, yesterday I was dealing with the raising of loans locally. I asked the question why the West Indian islands, some of them, have been able to raise millions of dollars to carry on their development works, and why it was that the Government of British Guiana could not raise millions of dollars for the same purpose. I said that perhaps there was a

loss of faith on the part of our local people, as well as on the part of overseas investors.

The Majority Party was a very popular government. It always represents, as it says, the people of Guiana. Well, it might be a very good test for the Government if it could raise a local loan to try to get the \$2 million for this year, to be spent on the Development Programme. After all, from next year the manganese and wood pulp industries would be bringing in some revenue to help.

The Majority Party claims it has the welfare of the country at heart. It is agitating for self-government and we are told that it is only through self-government that we are assured of prosperity and progress. Now is the time to tell Guianese to get up and work for the good of the country. There is some money in the country. It can be put into circulation for the good of the country. Why has the Government not encouraged local businessmen to invest in the various economic fields so as to absorb some of the unemployed people?

I do not know much about the mechanics of raising loans but I think that a contributory factor to British Guiana's lack of funds is the political ideology of the Majority Party in power today, for "Thunder", the Party's organ, is forever railing against the "imperialists" and "capitalists". The British, the Canadians and the Americans are the people the Majority Party refer to as "imperialists"—the people with the money bags. British Guiana, can do with some of those "imperialists" cash. You do not get people to do you a favour if you call them names and charge them with all manner of things. Personally, I think that if the Majority Party would "pipe down" on their organ and stop ranting against "imperialists" they might help the cause of British Guiana. We cannot do without the help of England, Canada or America.

The world today is divided into two camps—the Western or democratic countries and the Eastern or communist bloc. This small bit of country cannot afford

to antagonize the Western countries by our bickerings and our silly ideological "mouthings". Why is it that we cannot raise loans in England? Why is it that an Exchequer loan had to be made to us by the British Government? It is because the British public was not willing to invest money in British Guiana, and the British Government had to come to the aid of our Ministers with a direct loan from the British Exchequer.

Taxation, like death, is a must; we have to pay taxes in order to carry on the Government, but those who have to decide what taxes should be levied should think ahead. They should consider what items could be safely taxed and those which would be better left alone. I appreciate the policy of the Government when it says that British Guiana should be made self-sufficient as far as it can be. One of its policies is to grow more food products. I agree with that, but I do not agree with the tax on potatoes which are used by everybody in British Guiana, because before such a tax is imposed a local substitute should be made available in sufficient quantities and at a price even lower than that of potatoes. But we find that our local produce is sometimes beyond the purses of housewives, and while they get full value from a pound of potatoes when cooked, there is a lot of peeling and chopping to be done with local produce, such as cassava, which is often blue in the face and water-soaked. If Government wishes the people of this Colony to eat more local foodstuffs—sweet potatoes, eddoes, tannias, yams and sweet cassava — it should see that the public gets a fair deal. It should see that every pound of vegetables is a pound of vegetables—not half a pound of inedible stuff. Why can't some arrangement be made to ensure a reasonable standard of quality in local foodstuffs, as is done in other countries?

The increase of the tax on potatoes to \$3 per 100 lbs is definitely not going to stop people eating imported potatoes. They are going to buy potatoes because they have acquired a taste for them, and the result of the increased duty is going to be that the cost of living will go up

considerably. If it is the policy of the Government to change the eating habits of Guianese so as to make this country self-sufficient, it will have to think deeply how to increase the supply and quality of local foodstuffs. I go to the markets and I am appalled at the prices of local foodstuffs which are even higher than they were when there was price control and the black-market.

On the question of changing the taste of the people of this country I would suggest the eating of cassava bread which is a very good thing if it is properly prepared. During Hitler's war, when submarines were sinking ships bringing flour to this country, the North West District and the Pomeroun supplied the country with cassava bread and farine. I would advise the Government to encourage the production of cassava bread. In Venezuela many excellent dishes are prepared from cassava bread and corn.

With regard to the increased tax on Banks beer I may mention that I hold no brief for Banks; I hardly ever drink beer, and I am sometimes tempted to put a little sugar into it, but I am against the principle of taxing a new industry. Banks beer is about the only new industry in British Guiana that has caught the imagination of Guianese, and in little or no time a considerable amount of money was invested in it by some 3,000 persons.

For one year now it has been a wonderful success, and I know that a large number of persons has been employed in this connection. At any other time I would have said tax it more than 25%, but at this juncture when Banks beer is an object lesson to Guianese in so far as success is concerned, it will encourage others to follow suit. It will be an encouragement to others to open up other fields.

I believe that if Banks beer is further taxed it will have an adverse effect on local investors as well as foreign investors. We want to see foreign investments in British Guiana; we want more

[MR. CAMPBELL]

local investments in industries, otherwise, no matter how politically free we are, we will remain economic slaves.

I see for the first time in this Council a case containing a Petition signed by thousands of people. Now, if so many thousands of people have signed their names begging the Government to reconsider the tax on Banks beer, that alone ought to melt the hearts of Members of the Government. I repeat that at another time I would have said tax beer, tax rum, tax any alcoholic beverage, but now I am afraid that this tax is somewhat shortsighted.

With regard to sugar, there are others in this Council more conversant than I am on this matter and I will not touch the subject.

I notice two placards put up in prominent places allegedly by the Government. The hon. Member for New Amsterdam has already spoken about these placards. These placards struck me, and I was very interested in reading them. Both of them were asking the public to support the proposed taxes introduced. They asked the public to pay more for non-essentials so that the children in British Guiana will have a better place to live in, because these taxes are supposed to bring a tremendous amount of development to the country. On the opposite side I saw another placard with a list of non-essentials. I saw potatoes, sugar and I almost looked for rice as a non-essential. Well, words have lost their meanings nowadays. I thought that non-essentials were the most unimportant things of life. From a male point of view I will grant that cosmetics are non-essentials, but the ladies will tell you a different story. I do not think that potatoes should be classed as non-essentials. Potatoes are the staff of life, and I would add sugar to this list. Motor cars are non-essentials. I have not used Banks beer in this Town, and I do not call it a non-essential. In this modern time mechanical things have come to stay as essentials.

However, the public is asked to pay these taxes willingly without having any bad feelings about them. There is a lot of bad feeling over these taxes, but, as I said yesterday, the object and the aim of any Government should be to make the people happy. The people are certainly not happy about this.

The Members of this Government always pose as the champions of the people. Is this championing their cause by sending up the cost of living? This taxation will not hurt people in the upper strata of society or the business men in Water Street, but it is going to hurt the masses and the middle-class people. Whenever there is taxation, or any rise in the cost of living, the merchants usually pass it on to the masses.

Some Members of this Government look upon themselves as experts on very many questions, and I want to say something about this ethnic group in British Guiana. I do not know whether this is the time and place to say it. In Finance Committee myself and others made representations that a certain allocation should be increased. We were told that Government would consider the matter, but I have seen no increase mentioned in the Report before me. They promised to do something for the Amerindians, and I take it that they have forgotten them. I am not famous in this Council for speaking for hours so, Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much.

Mr. Davis: May I be permitted to offer my congratulations to the hon. the Financial Secretary for his marathon address on the Budget. He said that it is his third Budget in this honourable Council and so we can see that, like the artist he is, he has used very choice language and has left the most unpleasant part until the end.

This is the second Budget speech I have listened to, and I must say that it is the more controversial of the two. However, it was well prepared and we who have heard it first hand know now that it has given us a lot of food for thought.

May I be permitted to revert to the Budget and reiterate what I said last year when I made reference to certain proposals. Looking across the Table I am sure my colleagues will agree with me that we have there, perhaps, very good politicians; a very good dentist, a very good lawyer, two or three good businessmen, but I do not think in the most generous terms we can describe them as an able team of recognized and expert economists. I would like to reiterate that point here and now.

I feel that we have reached a stage in our development and planning where we need the advice of qualified economists. We would like to know whether Government is getting enough out of the various industries; whether Government is getting what it should from the rice industry, the sugar industry, the bauxite industry, the timber industry and so on.

We see other large countries, some of them half-developed and others more fully developed, adopting the principle of employing a qualified economist. It is my view therefore that we should follow this trend. We would like to know whether our rice industry has developed as far as it can safely go. We would like to know which of our development projects should receive accelerated priority and so on.

The hon. Leader of the Majority Party on his return from the United Kingdom stated that he had made contact — I believe an Indian contact — and I would urge that he should not allow complacency to step in. He should endeavour to follow the principle adopted by other countries as early as possible, because I feel certain that the country as a whole, perhaps this Council in particular, will benefit therefrom. I am sure that this Government will benefit from some such sound advice.

He may have considered this, if not, I throw out the suggestion to the hon. Minister, to arrange for scholarships to be given to some likeable and enterprising youths who would come

back and grace the Planning Department or Economic Unit. This in my view is vital for progress here.

Might I touch on another subject mentioned last year? It is rural electrification. Four or five weeks ago I tuned in to Trinidad, and heard one of their excellent broadcasts giving a résumé of what took place in the Legislative Council, and the subject was the electrification of the rural areas. It is known that Trinidad has one of the best rural electrification systems in the West Indies, yet they are not placid about it, and they are making efforts to light up the countryside still further.

The previous Government in British Guiana allowed the Development Secretary to tell the people in the countryside that rural electrification was just around the corner. Rural electrification was promised by the end of 1958. We are now in the early part of 1959 but we are still very far from that goal. It is very frustrating, and I feel we should press on regardless, in this particular direction. It would stop the drift of people from the country districts to the City who join the ranks of the unemployed.

There is the old cry, "where is the money to come from?" It is a hackneyed cry, and I wonder if my friends on the other side do not know this to be so. I travel as far as Mara and Rose Hall and down to Parika, and I have asked very many people if they would support a proposal for rural electrification financing by putting up their money, say \$50 or \$100 as shares, in a scheme. I have not met anyone who discredited that idea, and I feel that if a loan was floated in the local market, particularly in the rural areas, the inhabitants there would respond readily and warmly. I do not think that it is good enough for my friends on the other side to sit back and say, "where is the money to come from?" They must get up and make an effort to see that the money is raised.

There is also the old question of roads; here again we have been rather complacent. Mr. Speaker, if I use that

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word too often it is because I think that the complacency in this particular matter is jarring to responsible people. I asked in Finance Committee about the roads, and the Minister said he could tell us nothing; except that he mentioned that by the end of 1959 they would complete the East Bank Road. Nothing has been said about the other roads.

This week I was travelling on the East Coast Road with the hon. Member for Western Berbice. I mentioned to him the condition of the roads in his constituency, and he told me that recently he had sent a telegram to the Minister and he had only been able to effect a change of overseer!

The one and only cattle trail, to the Interior and Rupununi which should be considered as a road, is not being provided for, as Government in its wisdom or otherwise has decided to delete the sum of \$18,000 for its upkeep. I think this is a most deplorable step. We raised it in Finance Committee and the promise was made then that the Government would have second thoughts on the matter, and although I have searched, I can find nothing in my records of the Committee that the matter has been reconsidered nor have we been so informed. But the fact does remain that the money has been withdrawn from the Budget.

Looking at some of the utterances of the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry in the past, I see that in the *Hansard* of Thursday 5th February, 1953 (col. 3676) he said that the vote should be abolished. To use his own words, he felt it was "really a subsidy to the Rupununi Development Company, which does not need a subsidy".

I mention that in all fairness to him, because he said so then and he has been at least consistent, but I do feel he has been badly advised. I have reason to believe that he listened to an expert from the Colonial Office, a certain Mr. Excel who is an expert on flaying — I have seen his work. But when this individual touched on the subject of beef by air as

against cattle by trail, I think he was treading on a subject on which he was quite uninformed and to which he was quite unfamiliar. I do urge that in this particular respect he be taken not too seriously.

As I understand it, the Rupununi Savannahs are divided into two halves, the Southern and the Northern. It has been the custom for cattle in the Southern Savannah, mostly belonging to the Rupununi Development Company, to use the trail, and cattle from the Northern Savannah, from the smaller ranches, like Gorinsky's, D'Aguiar's, Hart's and others, to use B.G. Airways. If the trail is closed, which I reasonably expect would happen now, it would mean that the supply that comes through the Berbice River to Tacama, Kwakwani and New Amsterdam would be completely shut off; this would also apply to cattle exported to Surinam. Let us face those facts, and this, that in due time there would be an increase in the price in New Amsterdam, which must affect the cost of living there.

These matters should be brought to the notice of the Ministers in order that they may know what is the position. They would not then be able to say that they were not apprised of them by people who are in a position to help them.

With regard to shipments by air it is my considered opinion that B.G. Airways will be unable to transport all the beef by air unless they make two or three trips per day. I feel that the fabric of B.G. Airways is unable to take such strain, and that there is bound to be a bottle-neck. Perhaps we will hear that the big ranchers are throwing their weight about and seeing that their meat is put on the plane to the inconvenience of the small ranchers. All in all I can see that there will be a bottle-neck and an increase in the price of beef, because there is going to be created an artificial shortage. The cattle trail is used by the small ranchers who are unable or unwilling to use the facilities of B.G. Airways, and a point I wish to emphasize is that when the small ranchers bring their

cattle down through the trail they purchase their supplies on the coast and they go back through the trail on their pack horses and pack oxen. Let us not forget that recently the Government — again in its wisdom — found it necessary to increase the outward air freight rates to outlying districts. I consider that imposes an unnecessary hardship on those people who live and work in our savannahs where the amenities are very few, and this is also bound to increase the cost of production in the Rupununi.

The next point I would like to touch on briefly, but nevertheless firmly, is the apparent complacency with regard to our Industrial Committee. With commendable alacrity the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry set up an Industrial Committee last year, and from what one reads in the Press it seems that the Committee has done a very good job of work, but something seems to have occurred. I know that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, took over the chairmanship of the Committee from the Minister of Trade and Industry, but there is so much hush-hush about the report of the Committee. I remonstrated with him a few minutes ago and he has just handed me a copy of the report which I shall peruse at my leisure. I feel that we should not allow complacency to retard our progress. There are many men who are willing and able to render assistance, and I would suggest that we should avail ourselves of their help. The point I wish to make is that whatever recommendations the Committee makes we should not forget the many small industries which have kept the country going in the past.

Government, and the Minister of Natural Resources in particular, are to be commended for their attitude towards the coconut industry. They have put into operation very progressive plans which should bear fruit. If they do not it would not be because the farmers have not responded. But in its plans Government has completely forgotten the pig industry. There was a time when we had over 200 crude oil manufacturers, and at one time there was

actually a glut of pork for which we had to find foreign export markets, but because of the Minister's desire to see that the price of oil was maintained at a low level in order that the cost of living should not be affected, and for other reasons, our small pig rearers have suffered from a scarcity of pig feed which was obtained from the crude oil manufacturers. Of the 200 odd pig rearers whom I knew on the coast four or five years ago, only about 30 or 40 now remain. We have just had almost a porkless Christmas. It was very difficult to get pork. I would commend to the Industrial Committee, and I also intend to move a Motion in this Council, that there should be an inquiry into the pig industry, and I hope it will receive the support of Members of this Council.

Recently there were some visitors to the Colony, some from England and others from Trinidad and Barbados, who asked me to outline for them the potentialities of this country. I was quick to get off the mark with rice, which I said could be expanded one and a half times its present capacity. I also referred to our sugar industry in which there is increased production, and to our bauxite industry in which there has been a recent recession from which it is now recovering. We then got on to timber and cattle, and I was asked what was being done to foster the cattle industry. I feel it my duty to draw it to the attention of the hon. Minister of Natural Resources that the cattle industry needs a stick in the arm if it is to play its full part in the economic progress of this country.

I would like to touch on the question of rice, but after hearing the views expressed by the hon. the Attorney-General yesterday I wondered if it would not be necessary for me to disclose the extent of my interest in rice. However, I was relieved yesterday afternoon by Your Honour's observation on the subject. Therefore, I shall proceed to give my views on rice, and if I should use the word "complacency" again hon. Members will again please excuse me. The situation at the moment is that we are burst-

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ing at the seams with the rice we have on hand, but I feel that if it were not for a great degree of complacency exhibited, that situation might have been averted if we had jumped into the problem a little earlier. I would like first of all to pay a public tribute to the Chairman of the Rice Producers' Association for his courage in taking the recent decision to order that the milling of rice should cease temporarily.

In my view the situation is a serious one and the step he took calls for a certain amount of courage. He took it, and I wish him luck. The point I wish to make is that I differ from the view expressed by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, when he said yesterday that we were wrong to try and sell padi. That is not my view, and I am with the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry on these points.

Mr. Tello: On a point of correction. I said that it was wrong to sell padi without making provision for the loss of wages to the mill workers.

Mr. Davis: The point of correction is unnecessary, and the term "a distinction without a difference" can be applied to it. I accept the correction, and I will pass on. The point is that there are many Members who have heard me saying this before. I do not believe that there is a very large surplus of rice to be sold. It is my considered view that the yield for the last year has not been as buoyant as we had anticipated. Although larger areas were reaped, I feel that the amount of padi we have collected would be just sufficient to meet market demands and leave a little in excess. However, time will tell whether I am right or wrong.

I hope that the hon. the first Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board, will forgive me for making this suggestion. I am making it in all humility and sincerity. I feel that the time has come when we must send a Trade Mission to make an impact on the World Rice Market. I feel that in making this suggestion I am

in good company. I observe that when the Canadians ran into trouble with the sale of their flour, etc., they sent a high level Trade Commission down here to see what could be done in the matter. I also observe that the Japanese did the same thing last year, and New Zealanders are doing similarly next week. There is no good reason why we should not do that too.

I know that some people in this country are not in favour of Trade Missions—at least for the sale of rice. I have heard the view expressed that when these deputations or teams go abroad to sell rice that they have a good time enjoying cocktails. I am one of those who have been abroad in this connection and I, perhaps, have enjoyed a cocktail here and there, but, so long as the teams as such return home with the bacon, I believe they are entitled to their cocktails, and the rice producers will be satisfied with them.

I make the point with this view in mind. Within recent times I have been travelling to and from the East Coast. I have been watching rice preparation in the Mara, Mahaica and Mahaicony areas, and I observe that a very much larger area has been placed under rice cultivation than last year. I should like to include the West Coast Demerara and also West Coast Berbice in my comments. As I have just stated a large amount of rice had been cultivated last year but the number of fields that I have seen ploughed and prepared up to the present moment is by far much in excess of what was ploughed last year.

If we have reasonably good weather and a reasonable amount of rain, I warn those who are responsible for storage bonds and the like that it will tax their capacity to store the padi that will be reaped. Further, that they will have a large amount of rice on hand and the Trade Mission may be able to find a market for it. At least we would be able to get our toe in the door, so that when we begin to reap our rice crop later this year the problem of finding markets would be taken care of.

While I am on my feet I would like to bring something forcibly to the notice of hon. Members on the other side of the Table. I am very glad to see that the hon. Minister of Natural Resources has found it convenient to return to his seat, because I want to make a point regarding the Black Bush Polder. It is envisaged that the Black Bush Polder will give us about 22,700 acres of new, rich rice lands with an adequate water supply. I believe it is the intention of the hon. Minister of Natural Resources to bring into fruition and cultivation this year 5,000 acres of the Black Bush area. Those were his plans a few months ago, and I have not heard of any change in them. If his plans go according to schedule, I believe by the end of the year 5,000 acres of land will be handed over to people in the area.

I am familiar with rice farmers at Mahaica, Mahaicony and other places, and I know that if that amount of land is put into their hands by the end of 1959 they will endeavour to get in a spring crop. If they get a spring crop, is it not reasonable to assume that they will reap about 50,000 bags of padi or an average of 10 bags per acre? Let us assume that will be the position. What are we going to do about the question of milling in this area?

We know that several talks and discussions have taken place with regard to the type of milling machinery we should use: whether we should have central mills, medium mills, or small mills for this area. I have not yet heard that a decision has been taken on the matter. I know that some expert or representative from overseas will be coming here to discuss this matter at a very high level. I understand that certain talks have taken place and, from the secrecy and hush-hush maintained, I assume that matters have not gone, perhaps, as well as Government would have liked.

This is indeed a very serious situation. We are now practically in March, 1959. Let us assume that my arguments are correct, that the farmers will get in a spring crop, and we will have to find

milling facilities for our padi. The point I want to stress is that the Black Bush area has been so created that it is different from other areas. It is slightly different by virtue of the fact that there are no dams and no roads on which trucks can be used. The only transport facility in the area—if my concept is wrong, I shall welcome correction from any source—is by way of water. This will be a new thing in the rice industry, but it should work all right.

My view is that such matters are not arranged overnight like the switching on of electric lights. I think I have used an unfortunate analogy here—these things cannot be done by the snapping of fingers. Plans will have to be instituted and co-ordinated after careful consideration has been given to all of those things to which I have referred. I am asking that the Members of Government pay heed to my words and do not allow complacency to take hold of them in this particular project, otherwise terrible results must accrue. I want hon. Members to remember that, in this particular matter, time is not on our side.

May I now touch on the question of housing briefly. As every Guianese who is worth his salt — I hope that some people think I am worth my salt—I am alarmed and perturbed over what is happening recently in our housing project. But let me use the language of my confrères in rice 'what done done already'. Not because we have lost many thousands of dollars—a regrettable loss — we must slow down our activities in this direction.

I would be wanting in my duty if I did not express myself on the housing project. The housing project has not been licked by any means. I appreciate that funds for this and other development plans are hard to get, but I urge that we get funds to implement certain aspects of housing not only in the rural areas but in Georgetown and the Greater Georgetown because some of our people are living under very bad housing conditions.

[AVIS]

am told that bad housing is responsible for a lot of the social evils which eventually result in people going to prison. I learned recently that the cost of keeping one man in prison each day is a little over \$2. The figure I use is the one given to us by one Mr. Fairm, who said that it cost \$700-odd per year to keep each prisoner. I do not doubt that much money in this direction has been mis-spent, but I feel that if we spend a little more money we shall in due course receive abundant return — it would be money well spent.

Yet a little nearer the Budget. May I say that I disagree with the view expressed by my hon. colleague, Mr. Tello that Government was wrong in trying to accumulate extra money in order to meet the Development Plan and its obligations. That is a short-sighted view. I still feel that Government has adopted the correct policy. Whether the tax is directed at the right source is entirely another matter. I could see Government was in a predicament and they wanted to raise the money as 'irksomeless' as possible. May I mention the tax instituted on sugar? When we consider that the Budget is \$47 million, \$160,000 to \$180,000 might be considered a small amount, but what about the ethics of the situation?

I have been reading the Report of the Venn Commission which made a number of recommendations. One which was agreed to was the withdrawal by Government of the sugar tax, upon which the sugar industry would create certain amenities. The industry went ahead making arrangements for increased housing facilities, community centres and certain bonus benefits for people who qualify for them. I do not think that the Pension Benefit Scheme has been fully undertaken, but an attempt has been made. I am not in a position to say what percentage of the recommendations has been put into effect.

Anyway, Government has now found it necessary to reintroduce this tax; it is a small tax, but it does raise a certain amount of principle.

The only other tax I shall make reference to is that on fruit juices. It is my sincere opinion that the time is not ripe to put this tax on imported fruit juices for the reason that our own fruit juices have not yet developed commercially to reap the benefits of the tax on imported juices, and we cannot yet fulfil the requirements of the area. I know efforts are being made at Mara, as the Minister mentioned, to put emphasis on citrus production. All credit to that, but I do not think the stage has been reached where we can shut out other fruit juices.

The tax on potatoes is also an effort to get us to use our own vegetables. But if the Government had done nothing about this, they would have been seriously criticized. I feel it was courageous of them to introduce this particular measure of taxation in the Budget because it affects people from whom they draw tremendous political support. Time will tell whether what they expected from this particular item will accrue or not. I have myself no hard feelings particularly about this tax.

Let us get down to Banks Beer. I do not see any cardboard "axe the tax" axes around today; they must be outside. I feel the managing agents have greatly overplayed their hands, though they have a moral case. I would really like to know just what the "axe the tax" campaign cost. In front of me I see the case in which the petition lies.

I went to Mara over the week end and I was informed that a special boat was hired to bring back some of the people who went there to press their case home. The arrangements seem to me to have been lavishly done. I am somewhat in sympathy with the protest but now I must have second thoughts. Do people who can spend money so lavishly need sympathy? Anyway, I will not say in which direction I will cast my vote.

Sir, I have certainly used up my allotted time—

Mr. Speaker: One hour and four minutes — that is all.

Mr. Davis: Sir, not having heard from you earlier, I thought I was on safe ground.

Mr. Speaker: You are still on safe ground. I thought you were inquiring how long it was.

Mr. Davis: All these criticisms, if you can call them that, have been made very objectively. They have been made by me as a Guianese who has faith in this land of Guiana. I have made them in good faith, and I do ask every Member who has heard them to accept them in this light.

Mr. Fredericks: In the opening paragraph of the hon. the Financial Secretary's Budget Statement he states that the two major external influences which will have an adverse effect on our economy in 1959 will be the world industrial recession and the shortage of capital for investment purposes, especially for under-developed countries. While the former has almost completely disappeared, the menacing shade of the latter still looms threateningly, and it is apparent that the relatively small Exchequer loan eked out by a benevolent United Kingdom Government is only a very small percentage of the capital we will require for developmental works which would have the effect of alleviating the grievous unemployment situation.

I do not, however, share the Financial Secretary's pessimism with respect to our 1959 estimated revenue of \$47,100,000. I do not think he has taken fully into consideration the ending of the recession abroad and the impact of the accumulative effects of the increased exports of sugar and bauxite, and also our income tax returns. An estimate of \$4½ million below the 1958 figure is far too low. A revenue estimate of approximately \$50 million is, I feel, a far more realistic figure. However, I do not have the experience or the knowledge of the hon. the Financial Secretary, and I merely mention this fact because I feel that we may have on our hands an extra \$2 million surplus, and to be over cautious at this stage is to impede unnecessarily the pro-

gress of our developmental plan which we hope to more or less the standard of living for everyone.

Some time ago the World Bank sent here a renowned economist, Mr. Adler, who was very much impressed with the economic position of the country, and he said it reflected a promising picture of healthy and vigorous growth. I therefore invite Government's reconsideration of the unbudgeted surplus, and to make the necessary plans now for the proper and beneficial utilization of the same. The charge has been made that the delegation to London last June did not go with detailed plans. I feel that those plans are of vital importance if we are to expect the maximum economic value from funds expended, irrespective of whether those funds are obtained by loans, grants or surplus revenue. I would therefore suggest to the Government that although much time has already passed by it should try to obtain the services of an experienced and competent economist who would be able to review our Five-Year Development Plan and work out the full details in connection therewith, so that the next delegation to London in June will be fully equipped with the necessary plans so as to be able to explain why it requires the amount of money asked for.

Regarding the Budget I would like to deal with two aspects pertaining to the taxation proposals — whether it was absolutely necessary to introduce new taxation proposals to raise an additional \$2 million for the Development Plan, and whether the increased taxes have been put on items least likely to affect the cost of living. As regards the first aspect, the hon. the Financial Secretary has gone into considerable detail to provide us with the necessary background with respect to the \$21½ million he needs for the Development Programme. This figure includes the \$2 million surplus which he has budgeted for, and he states that this amount is the minimum requirement necessary in order to prevent a slow-down of the programme, with the attendant waste and unemployment. The point now arises whether the \$2

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million should have been borrowed or raised by means other than taxation, and I fully agree with the Financial Secretary that we must be required to play our part in financing our Development Programme and not leave everything for others to do.

In this connection I would like to quote from Mr. Adler's statement, in which he said:

"This brings me to the final point of my remarks, to the difficult issue of finance now facing the Government. Development programmes, like everything else that is desirable, have the unpleasant habit of costing money, and the Programme which the Government is now considering is no exception. I would hope that as large a proportion of the total as can be possibly managed will be paid for out of Government revenue because even if the grant contributions from the United Kingdom Government continue there is bound to remain a large part of the Programme for which loan funds will have to be sought. In my opinion it would be an error of judgment to burden the country's debt-carrying capacity to a point at which loans — to help to pay for still another and a third and fourth 5-year Programme — cannot be obtained or cannot be obtained at reasonable terms. To put my concern in another way; the financing of British Guiana's next 5-year Programme presupposes not only a search for funds to supplement Government revenue but also a detailed and painstaking scrutiny of recurrent expenditure."

It will be seen, therefore, that Government did the correct and wise thing to introduce new taxation proposals, more so when it is considered that interest and sinking fund charges already exceed \$5½ million. The question now arises whether the Development Fund of \$12½ million should have been spent on other sectors of our economy, such as the social and industrial sectors, rather than on the agricultural and transport sectors. In my opinion this country is far too poor to expend more on the social sector at the expense of the agricultural and industrial sectors, and I fully agree with Government's policy to concentrate on the agricultural sector and put it on a sound and proper basis to form a productive backbone for our

economy, rather than concentrate on the industrial sector which entails more risk-bearing and long-term proposals. With Your Honour's permission I would like to quote again from Mr. Adler's statement on that particular point. He said:

"I am convinced that the rate of economic growth can be maintained and given a few breaks; it may well be surpassed in the next 5 or 10 years. This is a diagnosis rather than a forecast. It does not mean it **must** happen; it only means it can happen. It can happen if there is political stability at home and abroad if Government successfully pursues policies aiming at a high rate of capital formation both in the public and in the private sectors, and if priority is given to economically productive projects rather than to amenities of social welfare."

Mr. Adler went on to say:

"I have been informed about the Government's tentative Development Plan for the next 5-year period. It would be presumptuous for me to comment on the programme in detail, but from what I have seen it is clear to me that the top priorities have been correctly selected. There is no question in my mind that the provision of more agricultural land through drainage and irrigation and the improvement and expansion of the transportation system, particularly through better and more roads, deserve top billing."

I now come to the second aspect pertaining to the taxation proposals — whether the tax increases have been levied on items least likely to affect the cost of living. I shall only deal with the three most controversial taxes, or shall I say the most discussed increases — that on Banks beer, the sugar tax and the potato tax. As regards the Banks beer tax there is no doubt whatsoever in my mind that it will not adversely affect beer consumption, provided the quality remains high and uniform, nor will it reduce profits if the increased tax is passed on to the consumers. However, I cannot agree with the principle of increasing duty on the product of an industry which has been granted pioneer status, once an agreed rate of duty had initially been fixed, irrespective of the fact that, as an after-thought, Government reserved the right at a later stage to increase the Ex-

cise duty rate. I feel that this tax will have a detrimental effect on both local and overseas investors who are considering the possibilities of local investment. However, I must say that abuse has been wrongly showered on the hon. the Financial Secretary for the imposition of this tax, as any political tyro will appreciate that the person responsible is not the Financial Secretary but the Leader of the Majority Party.

I would like to pay public tribute to one of the ablest, most conscientious and christian-like gentlemen it has been my good fortune and privilege to meet. I refer to the hon. the Financial Secretary. It has been a source of deep concern to me that he has been unjustly attacked in public by one held in high esteem by the community and from whom one expects a better example.

The tax on potato will be felt by everyone, rich and poor alike, because everyone more or less utilizes this commodity. I do not feel that it will have the effect of curtailing consumption and, consequently, it will be purely revenue-raising. I also do not think it is high enough to make this commodity prohibitive.

I trust that every effort will be made by the Agricultural Department to raise the quality of locally grown provisions, so that our locally grown products will be more widely utilized in greater volume thereby having the effect of curtailing the great quantity of potatoes being imported to a point where it does not form such a large percentage of our food imports.

As regards the tax on sugar, it has been widely publicized that the imposition of this tax, to a net value of \$137,500, will materially affect the wage increase anticipated by sugar workers. This is an erroneous viewpoint, because if the net amount of this sugar tax is distributed among sugar workers, each sugar worker will receive far less than \$5. Consequently I do not envisage that this tax will cause undue

hardship on the sugar worker or on the industry as a whole.

I would like to refer hon. Members to page 17 of the Budget Statement which was presented by the hon. the Financial Secretary. Paragraph 41 states :

“ . . . It is a particular disappointment that the estimated deficit on Transport and Harbours should have increased in 1959 despite the large amounts spent on rehabilitation during the past few years, and a thorough economic appraisal of the railways is called for as soon as possible”.

On the question of the railways, the hon. Minister of Communications and Works had this to say in the annexure to the Governor's speech :

“The railway system will continue to be maintained at as high a level of efficiency as is possible during 1959. The permanent way is expected to be in a satisfactory condition and further minor improvements are planned. The need of replacement of some of the rolling stock in use is being examined in the light of considerations regarding the future of the system, particularly of the Georgetown—Rosignol railway”.

The Industrial Advisory Committee of which I am a member has gone into this matter very fully, and has come to the conclusion that the railway system can never be economically run. As a matter of fact no short line railway in the world is profitably run. The Committee further recommended that, as a long term policy, the railways should be abolished and that serious attention should be given to the question of road transport. I commend to Government that a firm decision be taken on this matter as early as possible, because the yearly deficit of the Department of Transport and Harbours is increasing.

Earlier in this debate I quoted from Mr. John Adler's statement. With your permission, Sir, I would like to quote from another paragraph which states:

“I would be less than frank if I did not say in this connection that in my view not all public expenditure is put to its best possible use. To reduce and ultimately to eliminate the loss incurred year after year by public enterprises particularly in

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the field of transportation, and to cut expenses on subsidies for this commodity for that would make a substantial contribution towards meeting the cost of development”.

One would have thought that the Government would have taken heed of this valuable piece of advice and would have made every effort to see that public expenditure is put to the best possible use. I had expected to see every department examining its expenditure in detail in order to keep down expenditure and increase operational efficiency. But what do we find the Government doing? Government is merely making arbitrary 10% cuts on travelling allowances and miscellaneous votes. I think that this reduction savours of irresponsibility and leaves one with the impression that the Ministers are not fully conversant with the working of their respective departments. Government, apparently, has paid no heed whatsoever to the suggestions and advice given by this side of the Table during last year's debate.

We are still saddled with enormous recurrent losses from incompetently run government enterprises such as the Marketing Section, the Milk Pasteurisation Plant, the British Guiana Airways Limited and so on. Government should do everything possible to put these enterprises on a more business-like basis. I would also urge Government strongly to give priority to the implementation of the Resolution which was passed unanimously by members of the Industrial Advisory Committee to establish a Board or Corporation similar to that existing in Jamaica. Such an Industrial Board would be of inestimable value, and, in addition to its other functions, it would provide the wealth and experience from which Government could freely draw to help chart its course.

[*After a long pause.*]

Mr. Speaker: Is this the end? It seems as though no other Member wishes to speak. If that is the position, I shall ask the hon. the Financial Secretary if he wishes to say anything in reply. A long time has elapsed for the incoming

batsman to replace the outgoing batsman—two minutes is the usual time. If the hon. the Financial Secretary does not wish to say anything I shall put the question. Do you wish to say anything?

The Financial Secretary: No, Sir. I would prefer to speak in the Committee stage and in introducing the taxation Bills.

Mr. Speaker: I am giving members every opportunity if they wish to say anything on the Bill to do so now, because when I rise to put the question I am not going to permit any more speaking on the principles of the Bill. The question is that the Bill be read a Second time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a second time.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Council resolved itself in Committee to consider the Bill clause by clause.

Clause 1.—*Short Title* — passed as printed.

Clause 2.—*Accountant-General to defray expenses of Civil Government.*

The Financial Secretary: Might I suggest, Sir, that we defer this Clause until we have the approved total in the Schedule?

Agreed to.

Clause 2 deferred.

Schedule.

GOVERNOR

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the figure of \$52,078 be inserted.

The Chairman: The Question is, that the figure of \$52,078 be inserted.

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Chairman, as I understand it, the Schedule is referable

to this blue book (1959 *Estimates*) which we have here, and not the Finance Committee Report. We are not considering the Finance Committee Report, and therefore if the hon. Member wants to move something, he must do so at the relevant point in the Estimates.

The Chairman: He took it at the Head, Governor.

Mr. Burnham: At which point? The Head, Governor has several sub-heads.

The Financial Secretary: The actual figure is \$18,478, which is that in the Estimates. I included the figure from the Civil List provision. I would therefore move instead, that the Head be passed at \$18,478.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed at \$18,478.

GOVERNOR'S SECRETARIAT

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the Schedule be amended by the insertion of the figure \$42,900 at the Head, Governor's Secretariat.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed.

LEGISLATURE

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the Schedule be amended by the insertion of the figure \$45,654 at the Head, Legislature.

SUPERNUMERARY OFFICIAL REPORTERS

Mr. Burnham: May I ask the Financial Secretary why the increase on the submitted *Estimates*?

The Financial Secretary: The increase on sub-head 1 is for the appointment of two Supernumerary Reporters on the salary scale of A10, and the increase in sub-head 6 allows for one post of Class I Clerk to be substituted for one post of Class II Clerk. It is in the Report of Finance Committee.

Question put, and agreed to.

Head passed.

AGRICULTURE

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the Schedule be amended by the insertion of the figure \$1,840,368 at the Head, Agriculture.

Mr. Gajraj: I beg to move the reduction of this vote by \$1. In doing so, I desire to take the opportunity to inquire through the hon. Minister of Natural Resources as to what are the plans of his Ministry in particular and of Government in general to provide a suitable or proper substitute for potatoes, which by virtue of the proposals put before this Council are being taxed because they are imported.

We have been told that the intention of Government is to encourage the people of this country to use local vegetables instead. I make this inquiry because I cannot reconcile some of the statements that have been made on behalf of the Government. On the one hand we find the hon. Financial Secretary suggesting that the increase in the tariff would bring increased revenue. On the other hand we find Ministers of the Government saying that we should not be importing such a considerable amount of this vegetable, but instead, people should change their eating habits and turn to local vegetables.

I am a native of this country—I was born here and I have spent my life here — and I know the vegetables produced here. I have eaten them, and I am not satisfied in my own mind that we do produce vegetables which can be a proper substitute and an acceptable substitute for potatoes. It has been stated very clearly that potatoes do not merely constitute the food of those who can afford to pay a little more than they have been accustomed to pay, because potatoes are used in British Guiana by people of all classes and income. All of the races or racial groups do have potatoes as a very important

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item in their diet, and I cannot myself see that the increase in duty to 3 cents per pound will have the effect of preventing people from eating potatoes to the extent that they used to. On the other hand, a considerable amount of local vegetables can be used more than they have been used.

I feel that people will still buy potatoes but it is possible that at the beginning, when the impact of the higher price is felt, the quantities purchased by housewives may be slightly less, but a little later, because of the need of the household and the acquired taste which one cannot change easily, housewives will be forced to buy more potatoes and thereby utilise a greater proportion of the income brought into the house for the purpose of supplying food. If, therefore, it does not assist the proposal to increase the use of local vegetables then definitely the tax will have lost what, in my opinion is its main purpose. It is no use, therefore, to speak of this tax as a protective measure. It is nothing else but revenue earning. Government should be bold enough to say that what they have in mind is not to protect the local farmer but to increase the capacity of the revenue side of the Budget.

But if that were all one might be tempted to let it pass by, because of the exigencies with which Government say they are faced, but when one considers that the small benefit of the revenue which might result from the imposition of this increased duty will be completely nullified by the considerable amount of ill-will which has been generated already, and which will continue to be generated amongst those whom we call our friends and big brothers up North, the Canadians, one has to consider this matter very seriously. Our Canadian visitors have made it clear that they consider this increased tax on potatoes not as a tariff taxation but an embargo upon an item of their export which they have made to this country over a long period of years.

When our own Minister of Trade and Industry made it clear that he wished to

get as much help from Canada in the form of investments, etc., for the purpose of increasing trade between that country and ourselves, we cannot reconcile that desire with the effect which this imposition might have. If we felt that there was some plan by the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture to provide us with similar produce grown in British Guiana then we might be able to argue that the increased tax on potatoes is a protective measure. That is why I mentioned when I began that it would be very interesting if the Minister of Natural Resources would tell us in what way his Government proposed to give to the people of British Guiana an acceptable and a proper substitute for potatoes.

The Financial Secretary: With respect, Sir, I do not think the hon. Member was in order in speaking as he did on this particular Head at this particular stage, but it was interesting to hear what he had to say, and he has raised several important points. The first was that this is a protective tax, but in my Budget Statement I was very careful not to say it was a protective tax, for obvious reasons. I said that the increase of the duty on potatoes was designed to assist local production of vegetables, and that it was also incidentally revenue raising. If Members look at the figure of the estimated revenue they will see that it is something like half a million dollars, which is not a small item as the hon. Member has said. If, therefore, one feels that the increase in revenue is going to be half a million dollars one obviously does not think it is an embargo on potatoes, but that the tax is designed to assist local production; not to shut out potatoes but to encourage the sale and therefore the growing of local substitutes. As I said at the time, this is a country which grows starchy vegetables, rice, cassava and other foods, and it is anomalous to import such a very large amount of potatoes.

The next point is a rather delicate one which the hon. Member has raised about our relations with the Canadian Government, and I would like to tell the Coun-

cil that in accordance with my practice, before the Budget proposals were announced, I wrote to the Canadian Government. I have not had a reply yet but have no reason to think that there will be an official objection to the breach of the Canada-West Indies Agreement from the Canadian Government, because I think the Canadian Government realizes our difficulties here.

There were statements made about embargoes and breaches of this and that when the Canadian Mission was here. It was said, for example, that it was a breach of G.A.T.T., and the newspapers and everyone took it up in a big way. The Mission said they thought it was a breach of G.A.T.T., but I do not think it is, and even if it were, the correct procedure would be that the Canadian Government would protest and show that the tax has had an unduly adverse effect on trade with Canada. Nevertheless, everyone rushed to the conclusion that it was a breach of G.A.T.T., but when we have heard what the Canadian Government has to say we will be in a better position to judge that particular aspect of the question.

I think it is misguided to say that it is entirely a protective tax, or that it is entirely revenue raising. In the revenue raising aspect of it I have allowed for a comparatively small diminution in imports of potatoes from Canada or the Netherlands, which is the only other source of supply.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: If there has ever been a tax which is unpopular it is this tax on potatoes, and let no Government, majority or otherwise, fool itself that it is helping the working class people or the farmers by imposing a tax on potatoes. If it is the idea of the hon. the Financial Secretary, the Government, or the Government aided by the Financial Secretary, a wrong has been done to this community. Those who are accustomed to eating potatoes will continue to do so, and I would like the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry to tell me if he will not. This Government imagines, in its wisdom, that it can change the food habits of the people by putting an em-

bargo on the importation of potatoes, thus increasing the cost of living to the poorest section of the community. Instead of being a benevolent Government it is unconscionable and incapable of ruling in the interest of the working class people.

The Minister of Trade and Industry: (Dr. Jagan): I do not want to ask the hon. Member not to speak on the tax proposals, but I am wondering whether he is speaking about them at the right time. He does not have to agree with Government's policy, but I am wondering whether, having missed his opportunity to speak on the principle of the Appropriation Bill on the Second Reading, he is trying now, when we are dealing with Agriculture in Committee, to speak on the tax on potatoes.

The Chairman: The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, spoke on the question of the tax on potatoes, and the hon. the Financial Secretary, made some observations on that point. I therefore think it is too late now to stop the hon. Member for Georgetown South from speaking on the same subject of potatoes.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Thank you, Sir. It seems that the hon. Minister is not too happy about what I have to say on this matter of potatoes.

The Chairman: So long as it is not repeated under another Head.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I am a farmer to some degree and I also practise other professions, but my first profession was agriculture, and I am in continuous and close touch with the farmers of British Guiana, from the Waini Point to the Corentyne, and when the farmers are dissatisfied with the Majority Party they usually ask me. When the imposition of this tax on potatoes was announced farmers flocked to my chambers and to my home up to 10 o'clock in the night. One farmer told me that he grows tannias, eddoes and cassava, but in spite of that he buys 100 lbs. of potatoes every week for his family. He has been accustomed to eating rice and potato

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curry all his life, and I do not think Government should deny him his right to that way of life. Government has not taken any steps to augment the earning capacity of the ordinary working class people who eat potatoes, and they're mostly sugar workers.

The Chairman: We have discussed the general principle of the Bill and are supposed to have exhausted every aspect. We have now come to particulars, and we are dealing now with the Head Agriculture. Do not let us have an exhaustive debate, recounting your experience in agriculture.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I suppose the Minister will tell us how many million tons of tannias, eddoes and cassava we can produce by way of a substitute for potatoes, and what steps he has taken to supply the community with those things when they are out of season or supplies are not available. It would be a good thing if the Minister would tell us how he proposes to have supplies made available.

Mr. Tello: I also propose to make use of this opportunity, through the timely Motion of my friend the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, to inquire about items 19, 25 and 29 which deal with Artificial Insemination Service and Dairy Farming Expansion — Maintenance Expenses and Capital respectively. These two items involve expenditure in the sum of \$133,000. I have no doubt that the expenditure is justified as there is great need for expanding the dairy industry in British Guiana; that the hon. Minister of Natural Resources has no qualms about it and is in no way uncertain of his plans, because in the annexure to His Excellency's speech he says at page 13:

"The dairy industry will be expanded still further in an effort eventually to replace imports amounting to some \$4 million annually."

My opinion is that already there is a distribution problem facing the milk industry, and I want to have an assurance from the hon. Minister of Natural Re-

sources that he will not have another crisis involving unnecessary expenditure on flights here and there. These things take time to organize. Items 19 and 25 will contribute towards the expansion of the dairy industry. Without the impact of this development, we are already facing a glut in the milk industry because of the unfortunate failure in the development of the distribution machinery. What assurance can this Council get that this \$133,000 of the taxpayers' money will not create another unsurmountable problem in the near future?

Yesterday I quoted from "The Co-operator", but I have no intention of doing so today. The leading article of "The Co-operator" mentioned that Government's plan is a one-sided affair, and that the people had fully co-operated with Government by increasing production. In another article it pointed out that because of this unfortunate lack of vision on the part of Government, it has resulted in the unnecessary paring down of allowances and the introduction of new taxation.

I am simply warning the hon. Minister of Natural Resources that this one-sided policy must be corrected now. I have listened with great interest to my hon. friend on my left, Mr. Davis. Government has not yet recognized that so far as the rice industry and other industries are concerned, certain things cannot be done by the mere snapping of fingers, and that if the timing and organization of a programme are not correct you will pay for it. Nevertheless, it is not the few Ministers who will pay for it, but the unfortunate people who are already heavily burdened with taxation and moreso the people at the bottom rung of the ladder, the working people, a high percentage of whom are now unemployed.

I desire another assurance and I hope this Council will get it, because I was actually misquoted in this matter. We want an assurance that the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry will make some provision to accommodate the mill-workers in the rice industry for the loss of wages by the direct sale of padi. We

find that in British Guiana when something is initiated because of an exigency, it soon becomes a permanent matter similar to the War Tax. It was imposed during the War, but it has gone on indefinitely. Therefore, the moment there is a loophole for the Minister to get away from the snag of marketing rice through the medium of marketing padi the mill workers will be affected. If we cannot get it in wages, we must get it from some sort of welfare fund.

The sugar industry has provided a welfare fund for the sugar workers. Three separate funds have been set aside, and the people concerned have not forgotten a share for the workers.

I think we should set the example here, because the rice industry is playing a major part in the country's economy. In my opinion it will always remain of major importance to the economy of British Guiana. It is known that every industry must take into consideration the welfare of the working man. I expect the Minister will give this Council the desired assurance.

Are you going to encourage people to grow more cattle at a time when we cannot find a market for the milk? If that happens the people will have to slaughter their milch cattle and they will become more frustrated. You may then find that instead of having an excess of milk you may have a shortage of that commodity and, automatically, the price may go beyond the price of the working man. I ask that an assurance be given to us in this matter.

My hon. friend on my left, Mr. Hubbard, told me yesterday that I overstated my point when I said that Government has not done anything. I have not forgotten that Government was good enough to protect the match industry. I am very grateful for what Government has done in that connection, but that is a different matter from what I was talking about. Government did something to prevent the match industry from going from bad to worse.

With regard to the point I made yesterday, it was not a question of Government creating an alternative but protecting something that was in existence. This protection offered no alternative to the workers who are retrenched by private enterprise or by the Government. I want to place on record that I, in my capacity as President of the General Workers' Union, am very grateful for what Government has done for the match industry.

I have been a rice-mill worker, and I know that the Mahaicony-Abary area is one of the few places that employ people more continuously than other places where there is a high degree of partial or seasonal employment. If we are going to worsen the employment position by finding a market for padi instead of rice — up to now Government has not taken advantage of the tide of affairs at the proper time — the rice-mill workers will suffer. I know that this thing has been done as an exigency by selling padi when we could not sell rice, but it will grow into part of the policy of the Government.

Mr. Beharry: I rise to explain the position for the benefit of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello. He queried two items: the Dairy Farm Expansion Programme and the Artificial Insemination Services. The policy of this Government is to make this country as self-sufficient as possible with respect to the supply of milk and dairy products which we import from abroad.

British Guiana imports approximately \$20 million of foodstuff. Out of this amount \$4 million goes to dairy products. Government is, therefore, endeavouring to produce sufficient milk with a view to reducing the amount of imported products and keeping the money circulating in this country.

It is true that there is an increase in the supply of milk. The policy is to increase it every year, because we want to avoid this large amount of dairy products. As a result of this expansion programme, last year the Pasteurisation

[MR. BEHARRY]

Plant bought 477,000 gallons of milk as compared with 268,408 gallons in 1957. It is also true that the supply of milk has increased as a result of the programme for improving the breeds of cattle by the use of artificial insemination.

I can assure the hon. Member that the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry is making every effort to get a condensary established in this country in order to convert some of the excess supply of milk into condensed milk. Government is doing its utmost to make full use of the natural resources of this country. It is understood that the only crop that can be grown profitably on pegasse soil is grass.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: On a point of order. I would ask the hon. Minister not to trespass on grounds he knows nothing about.

Mr. Beharry: The agricultural policy is to get cattle to convert grass into human food, and Government has embarked on a programme to utilize this natural resource by growing grass on pegasse soil and encouraging dairy farming, so that we can reduce the importation of dairy products into this country. Government is making every effort to convert some of the excess supply of milk into some of the by-products now imported from abroad.

Mr. Tello: This is not the first time that we have had to pay tribute to the hon. Minister and the Ministry of Natural Resources. I would like to know what he proposes to do in the interim.

Mr. Beharry: There are two things that confront Government at the moment. If Government tries to discourage the farmers from producing more milk by not buying the supply of milk which the industry produces, that will kill the industry. In the circumstances, Government will have to carry the burden of expenditure until such time as it is able to convert the milk into condensed milk. A condensary cannot be established in a day,

but as soon as one is established here the excess of milk will disappear.

Mr. Burnham: Can the hon. Minister kindly tell us with authority what he means by "every effort is being made"? What negotiations are being conducted, and what are the possibilities? I cannot see why he should make himself the Sir Galahad for the Minister of Trade and Industry. Let us hear from the Minister of Trade and Industry what he is doing about getting it, because today over 600 gallons of milk, according to very reliable information, in excess of the market requirements are either being thrown away or sold at uneconomical prices.

Mr. Beharry: I rise to correct the hon. Member. No milk is being thrown away. This Government will not throw away milk when we can give it to deserving institutions.

Mr. Burnham: Let us hear about the condensary.

Mr. Gajraj: I believe the hon. Minister of Natural Resources was in his seat all the time. In the course of my remarks I directed inquiries to him. I asked whether he could tell us if the Government has any plans for recommending to the public a substitute for potatoes. He has not answered. I wonder if he is incapable of answering; if he is, he can say so.

Mr. Burnham: Sir, may I draw attention to Standing Order 5 and to the time?

The Chairman: I am familiar with it.

Mr. Burnham: It says you must adjourn at 5.

The Chairman: It says something else. Look at the top of the page.

Mr. Burnham: If you believe that by a short extension after 5.30 we can complete the business, may I congratulate you on being so sanguine.

The Chairman: I doubt if the Motion can be moved in Committee. We would have to resume. If it is the wish of Members that we should go back into Council now, so that a Motion can be moved for the adjournment, I am quite willing. I am always willing to meet the wishes of Members of this Council.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Thank you, Sir; we know that. The Government must move.

The Attorney-General: I beg to move that Council temporarily resume.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: There is no such thing as "temporarily resume".

The Attorney-General: I beg to move that the Legislative Council resume.

Question put, and agreed to.

Council resumed.

ADJOURNMENT AND PENDING BUSINESS

The Chief Secretary: I beg to move that the sitting of this Council be continued after five o'clock, until seven o'clock or before, if it appears we are getting through the business.

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Speaker, I cannot for a moment believe that the Chief Secretary is being serious, and I would like to congratulate him on his sense of humour. Does he expect this Council, which has been sitting since two o'clock will continue without refreshment until seven o'clock?

There is no great urgency; in any case we have gone further than most of us had anticipated. If the hon. the Chief Secretary wants to be serious he may press for a reasonable extension of time. None of us here is on fast, and none of us propose to go on fast between two and seven o'clock.

The Chief Secretary: I do not know what kind of work the hon. Member does, but on this side of the Table it is

nothing unusual for us to work for hours without food.

[*Interruption*]

Mr. Speaker: Order, order! The Chief Secretary is on his legs.

Mr. Burnham: To a point of order: if the Chief Secretary is replying, he would be replying to the Motion and closing the debate, and Members — or rather, many Members—have not spoken yet.

The Chief Secretary: Then the hon. Member must have seconded my Motion.

Mr. Burnham: I was speaking on your Motion.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I wish to move an Amendment, that we sit from 8 p.m. to two o'clock next morning.

Mr. Speaker: Are you serious? The Amendment is not seconded.

By this time, certain members had left the Chamber.

Mr. Tello: I do not want to make fun of this, because it is a serious matter. While I am in sympathy with the idea that we should finish the business as soon as we can, I cannot see in it such a degree of urgency that we should come here unprepared to go on until seven o'clock.

Possibly, the Chief Secretary might accept a very simple suggestion, that is, that we adjourn now and come back tomorrow with the intention of going on until six o'clock. We will thus come prepared for that. I ask the hon. the Chief Secretary to withdraw his Motion and intimate to Members of the Legislative Council that tomorrow we will be sitting until six o'clock.

Mr. Davis: It really bothers me why all this urgency now. The Government had this Budget since last year. They brought it before this Council on the

[MR. DAVIS]

8th of January this year; unprecedented lateness. I must offer my humble objection. I had not come prepared to sit longer than 5 or 5.30 p.m. If the suggestion made by the hon. Member, Mr. Tello, is accepted, then we will return tomorrow with a certain amount of extra vitality.

Mr. Speaker: I think your recollection will bear me out that yesterday I intimated that there was a likelihood that we might have to sit even at night, and I warned that we might have to sit for longer hours today. I gave a general warning, but whether that was sufficient is a different matter. The Chief Secretary also intimated that.

Mr. Kendall: I think I remember that Your Honour also intimated that if it were necessary for us to sit after 5.30 p.m. light refreshment would be provided.

Mr. Speaker: I was most careful. I would never say that refreshment would be provided. It would be more in keeping for me to say "without meat or drink." [*Laughter.*]

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Does the Chief Secretary withdraw his Motion or accept my Amendment?

Mr. Speaker: There is no Amendment because it was not seconded.

Dr. Jagan: May I suggest that we go on until 6 p.m. and possibly from tomorrow we go to 7 o'clock.

Mr. Burnham: Is that an Amendment to the Motion?

Dr. Jagan: Yes, I am moving an Amendment that we go to six o'clock.

Mr. Burnham: Speaking on the Amendment I say that six o'clock is just as arduous as sitting until seven o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: We may go on talking like this until six o'clock.

Mr. Burnham: If the Government thinks it has everything I may mention that we have some ammunition.

Mr. Speaker: Isn't the point made that you may be talking like this until six o'clock?

Mr. Burnham: They sat down there and said nothing, and suddenly it is suggested that we sit until seven o'clock. It is unreasonable to expect Members to come here under Standing Orders which provide that the Council shall sit from 2 to 5 p.m., and at the last moment propose such a ridiculous Amendment that we should sit until six o'clock. If the hon. Minister is losing his patience he could relieve us of his presence. What I am saying is that perhaps it may be better for us tomorrow, with full notice, to decide that we will sit in the evening. I had reason to remind the Chief Secretary in the lobby of this Chamber, that there are some of us who earn incomes from sources other than our legislative activities, who have made provision for engagements after five o'clock, and who have already had an inroad on their time, but they are not prepared at short notice to make an inroad of another hour. This is highly unsatisfactory, and if the Government does not just want to push the Bill down the throats of Members, and is a democratic Government, it will withdraw the Motion, and perhaps we may amicably agree tomorrow to a prolongation of our sittings.

Mr. Jackson: I am opposed to the Amendment moved by the Minister of Trade and Industry and I am saying that until I came here it was not my knowledge that there would be a prolongation of this session, or that there would have been this Motion by the hon. the Chief Secretary. I have already made plans for other activities based upon my knowledge of the Standing Orders, and I cannot agree to any prolongation of the sitting this afternoon.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I also cannot agree to the Amendment by the Minister of Trade and Industry, and I am sure the Government would not like to carry on

the debate on this Head in the absence of Members on this side of the Table. If it is the intention of Members of the Government to go ahead with their Amendments under all circumstances, they can do so.

The Chief Secretary: A few hon. Members have complained that they have not been given due notice of our intention to carry on after five o'clock. I gave a specific indication last night that I would move a motion today asking for an extension of time. If certain hon. Members leave this Council before the normal closing hour, they can hardly blame me or anyone else for what takes place in their absence.

The question of debating the Budget is a matter of prime national importance, and we should endeavour to get it through within a reasonable time. That is why I, personally, consider that we go on at least until six o'clock. I think six o'clock is a very reasonable hour to adjourn.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: If they think it best to run the Government by themselves they can do so.

Mr. Tello: In spite of the suggestion by the hon. the Chief Secretary that six o'clock is a reasonable compromise, I am still appealing to him that it would be much better to adjourn now. He can see that the hon. Members do not have their minds on the business of this Council at the moment and cannot be expected to do their best in the circumstances. Why not accept my suggestion that we come here tomorrow with a definite understanding that we will sit until six o'clock? Tired men cannot do justice to the business of this Council, and why force them to continue? Why this unhappy ending to a good day's work?

I am appealing to the hon. the Chief Secretary. I understood yesterday that he was making a suggestion that refreshment should be provided. If I remember correctly, Sir, you said that you had no control over the financial provision whereby refreshment could be provided.

We left here with the understanding that if we had to work late we would be provided with refreshment. We are not asking to be provided with refreshment tomorrow. We are merely asking to give us a chance to come here tomorrow with our minds made up to work until six o'clock. I wish hon. Members on the other side of the Table will accept my suggestion.

The fact that most of the hon. Members on this side of the Table are willing to leave the Chamber is not an insult to this Council, but it is merely an expression of their feelings at the moment. Tired, hungry men cannot do justice or good work for this country.

The Chief Secretary: I appreciate the sincerity of the hon. Member's remarks. The lack of refreshment is, I confess, a good point. If we go into recess for half an hour and then resume I think it would be much better. I do not want to bulldoze anything. I am quite prepared, if my colleagues agree, to withdraw my motion. I want to make it clear that we must make an effort to work harder on this Budget. We cannot go on working from week to week without making progress. I would like an assurance that hon. Members will remain tomorrow until seven o'clock. We can have refreshment at 4.30 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: If the Clerk of Council can arrange that and hon. Members are desirous of sitting until that time, I have no objection.

The Chief Secretary: Will it meet the wishes of Council if we adjourn now? We can meet tomorrow at 2 p.m.; take our refreshment at 4.30 p.m. and then sit until 7 p.m.

Mr. Tello: I think we could go on without refreshment for half an hour. I know that Government wants to avoid expenses, so let us do without refreshment and sit until six o'clock. The half hour for refreshment will only make us delay the business of this Council for a longer period.

The Attorney-General: On a previous occasion we had to face a similar problem in this Council. Honourable Members went away and returned refreshed, and we were able to sit for another two or three hours. Having been done satisfactorily before, I suggest that the same procedure be followed on this occasion.

Mr. Campbell: It seems to me that the most undignified behaviour has taken place before my eyes, and I do not know whether it is part and parcel of our procedure. One Member says six o'clock, another Member says seven o'clock, and it is going on to half-past five. In the meantime our ranks are depleting on this side of the Table. Are you going on until six or seven o'clock?

Mr. Tello: I think that the question of refreshment will put matters right.

Mrs. Jagan: Do you want refreshment?

Mr. Tello: The hon. the Chief Secretary has suggested that refreshment will be provided. I am merely saying that hon. Members should be informed as early as possible that they will be asked to work until five o'clock, adjourn for light refreshment, and then work until seven o'clock. I am sure hon. Members will accept that. I think the principal objection to carrying on after five o'clock is due to the fact that hon. Members would be hungry.

The Chief Secretary: On that basis, I beg to withdraw my motion and to move the adjournment of this Council until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council adjourned at 5.25 p.m.