

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**

*Thursday, 14th February, 1946.*

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G., President, in the Chair.

**PRESENT:**

The President, His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon James Lethem, K.C.M.G.

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

The Hon. the Attorney-General (Acting), Mr. F. W. Holder.

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

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

The Hon. C. V. Wight (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. J. I. de Aguiar (Central Demerara).

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

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

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

The Hon. M. B. G. Austin, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. Percy C. Wight, O.B.E. (Georgetown Central).

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. H. C. Humphrys, K.C. (Eastern Demerara).

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

The Hon. J. W. Jackson, O.B.E. (Nominated).

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

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

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

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

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 8th February, 1946, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

**GOVERNMENT NOTICES.****INTRODUCTION OF BILLS.**

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Holder) gave notice of the introduction and first reading of the following Bills:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current session of the Legislative Council."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Tax Ordinance, 1939, with respect to the sale of medicated wines and to trading in gold and precious stones."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to Regulate the working hours in bakeries and for purposes connected therewith."

#### ORDER OF THE DAY.

#### RICE MARKETING BILL.

The Council resumed the debate on the second reading of the following Bill:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the establishment, constitution, powers, duties and functions of the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

The PRESIDENT called upon the hon. the Seventh Nominated Member to continue.

Mr. EDUN: Sir, I presume your procedure would be to ask hon. Members to speak and I shall take advantage of that opportunity.

The PRESIDENT: I do not quite follow.

Mr. EDUN: When the Council was adjourned you said, sir, that I should allow other Members to speak. I readily agreed to that procedure. I think I shall follow it today.

The PRESIDENT: I shall be very sorry if my interruption made you finish what you were saying to us. I spoke, as I said at the time, because I did not expect to be present at the next

meeting so I had to take the opportunity just before the adjournment. Do not take my remark too seriously. If you care to continue to say something to the Council you can certainly proceed.

Mr EDUN: I have much more to say about this Bill, but having regard to the fact that Your Excellency referred to the procedure and said that you would like other Members to speak, that will suit me admirably. It will give me an opportunity to examine this Bill.

The PRESIDENT: I could not permit you to speak again. After other Members have spoken I should put the question and we should then go into Committee. So you would not be able to make a second speech on the second reading.

Mr. EDUN: That is what I understood the procedure to be when Your Excellency said you would like other Members to speak. In any case I am willing to go on.

The PRESIDENT: Very well.

Mr. EDUN: The observation made by you, sir, was fully published in all the newspapers and while Government's side of the debate was given full publication in the Press the opposition side did not find favour perhaps in being afforded a full dress report of what was said in this Legislative Council. So you can see, sir, that it places Members at a disadvantage when one side of the story secures advertisement more or less and the other side is not given at all to the public. But be that as it may, I will not quarrel with the Press nor is it my intention to tell them that that is not playing the game of cricket. Unfortunately the peasants or rice producers of this Col-

ony do not stand in the same category in the eyes of the proprietors of the Press, perhaps, as the President is and the hon. Mover is. However, I only make that observation in the hope that the Press would think clearly as to what constitutes a democratic presentation of both sides of a question. My own speech was not fully published.

Mr. FERREIRA: To a point of order! Has that anything to do with the debate before us?

Mr. EDUN: Certainly it does have a lot to do with this debate when the President's observation was fully published in the newspapers and the observation I made was not published at all. It is the privilege of Members of this Council to raise it here. So why the hon. Member is getting uneasy about these things I cannot tell. I am not going to question what the Press should do or not do at this time, but if I am to take the opportunity to examine Your Excellency's observation then I would simply consider it as a belated attempt, perhaps, to boost the Government's side of the matter. I rightly said, sir, during my speech that Your Excellency's word will weigh heavily at the Colonial Office against the word of perhaps myself and other Members of this Council. The reasons are obvious. But would Your Excellency endeavour to give out the idea that the Government is very sympathetic to—I quote—"an ideology", as he calls it himself, "with which we may have a great deal of sympathy." Well, sir, I have read it somewhere that the road to hell is paved with good intentions, perhaps sympathy too. Perhaps this Government wants me to lead my people down that road. I would not agree at all that I have been confusing the issue here. It is all well and good for Government to say that in this matter of the Rice Marketing Bill the Executive should be efficient and

businesslike. I agree with that sentiment myself, but if I am to take the present state of the Rice Marketing Board's efficiency and businesslike manner as an indication of the future then all these excellent sentiments expressed by Your Excellency as to the efficiency and businesslike manner of the Board will not help the rice producers at all. I am thinking of an organisation which will be in essence one of the producers, by the producers and for the producers. I want to ask whether Your Excellency has given consideration to this Bill. Perhaps I may ask whether any deep consideration has been given to the nature of this Bill and whether there is in the whole gamut of the Bill any provision for this idea of a producer's association run by the rice producers for the benefit of the rice producers. In my own opinion I am satisfied that it is not so, and when I come to examine the Bill clause by clause I am going to prove to this Council where this Bill defeats the principle as understood.

When Your Excellency made out that this Government has a reasonable mandate from the industry, I questioned that statement because if I had gone on the Corentyne Coast myself and had held three or four meetings there, perhaps it would have been a difficult proposition for Your Excellency to get a hearing even,—very difficult indeed. I want to make that statement definite. I have here in my possession dozens of letters refuting this idea that Government has a reasonable mandate from the industry. I know how far-reaching this statement will be, and that is the reason why I want to make my representation as strong as I can. What is a reasonable mandate? A reasonable mandate is something taken on the principle of a plebiscite. I regret very much indeed that Your Excellency has given the weight of your own personality to this issue, and I do not wish

to question at all the motive nor do I wish to question Your Excellency's sincerity. If I personally had felt that the producers would get all they need in this matter I would say it is a matter for Your Excellency alone, but it resolves into the creation of a Board which will not be comprised of members elected by the producers themselves. So you see, sir, if the rice producers of this Colony could have the administrators of the Board imbued with the same spirit like Your Excellency there would be nothing wrong. But, sir, if the present functioning of the Board is an indication of what will be its future, then I say this Bill is principally designed to take away their liberty also. That is the worst and most heinous side of this Bill, and it will go down in history as an attempt to gaol the producers even if they happen to be hoarding their padi in the hope of getting a better price.

Sir, I want you yourself to examine every law in the whole gamut of the British Commonwealth and the British Colonies, and you will not find a law of this kind existing anywhere, but in this Colony an attempt is being made to do a thing of this sort. You talk about efficiency and businesslike manner in respect of the marketing organisation. Ask the Canadians about such organisations. Where is there such a penalty involved—that because a producer happens to hoard his padi he is to be sent to prison? That is the essence of the Bill. I will refer Your Excellency to clause 26 of the Bill. It is definitely stated there:

“(1) If the Board is of opinion that any person is wilfully hoarding padi in such quantities as to interfere with the effective operation of the provisions of this Ordinance, the Board may serve notice on such person requiring him to deliver the same to a manufacturer within the time specified in the notice.

(3) Any person who fails to comply with the terms of a notice under

subsection (1) of this section shall be guilty of an offence against this Ordinance.”

The hon. Member for Essequibo River made the same point on this clause. It is a natural urge on the part of every agriculturist to hoard his product in order to secure a better price later.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I ask the hon. Member if that is co-operation with the others?

Mr. EDUN: That is not co-operation I do agree, but when we have co-operation it must be free. In this case you do not ask the producer to co-operate. You say to him: “If you do not do so and so I shall send you to gaol.” You will make a criminal of that producer and, apart from that, you will herd him with other criminals simply because he had worked hard to produce some padi and hoarded it so as to get a better market for it later. Tell me if there is any ingredient of economic democracy in a thing like that. When I come to that point I shall show this Council that this Government and the Rice Marketing Board are landing themselves into a legal issue apart from the international issue which I raised the other day. This is the legal side of the whole question, and I want to refer to the Defence (Emergency Powers) Regulation, No. 30 of 1940. It is definitely stated there, sir, — I do not want to read the regulation — that if there are profits accruing to the Board after deducting and setting aside thirty-three and one-third per cent, the balance of the funds must be used for increasing the price of padi and rice. This regulation was enacted in the year 1939, was revised and is the law as it stands to-day. Therefore, if during those years there was an accumulation of profits and 33½ per cent. thereof was put aside as a reserve fund, then it was the duty of this Board

by law to increase the price of padi and rice. But in the course of six years—1939 to 1945 — the increase was given but twice, which means that every producer has the right to go to the Supreme Court and ask for — perhaps one of the legal Members present can assist me with the term—an injunction and that the Board be made to give an account as to what has been done with his rice all those years, show how much profits should accrue to him and, further, be compelled to give him those profits. It is a legal matter altogether and if a test case is made I do not know what would be the result. The Board will, perhaps, be put in a difficult position to answer such a summons. But apart from the fact that it is a legal matter pure and simple, it is also a moral issue, and that is why the Board should not keep back the increases to the producers.

I heard the hon. Mover remark that traders would sell the rice back to the Board. If that is the only reason then I can only describe it as an attempt to draw a red herring across the trail. Why can't there be some law or regulation to prevent a person from buying rice at a cheap price from the Board and selling it back to the Board at a higher price? Why can't the Board do something to prevent such malpractice? There is no rational explanation of the problem and I do not accept the reason given as a good one. I think it was advanced in order to avoid giving the rice producers the best reward for their labour and industry.

While on this subject I submit that every producer who has been doing business with the Board during the last six years has the right to call upon the Board to account. I am not a legal man, but I maintain that any court of justice in these parts would uphold the right of the producers to bring the Board to account.

I will now deal with the Bill proper. I have made the point that there is no element of co-operative ideal in the Bill. If Your Excellency has studied this Bill you would see that the Association to be created by the Board —

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I again object to that? The Board is not going to create the Association.

Mr. EDUN: Shall I read the clause? It says:

"2. In this Ordinance—  
"the Association" means the British Guiana Rice Producers Association being an association of rice producers to be established by the authority of the Governor for the protection of the interests of rice producers under an enabling Ordinance to be hereafter enacted;"

Then in clause 18 (2) it is stated:

"18 (2) The Board may, from the funds of the Board, make an annual grant to the Association for the purpose of assisting in defraying the expenses of the Association."

Isn't it a reasonable assumption that the Association will have the authority of the Governor, will be financed by the Board and be an instrument of the Board? Only one who is dense would not appreciate that. So that the idea of a free Association is altogether outside the periphery of this Bill. If this Bill becomes law and the Association functions somehow with grants from the Board now and again, there will be corruption in this Colony which will sicken the hearts of every truly democratic person. The members of the Central Rice Committee, for the mere bagatelle of receiving a transport pass to and from their homes, and perhaps a small subsistence allowance, have sold the rights of the producers by accepting the Bill. What would they not do if the Board makes a grant of

\$5,000 a year to the proposed Association? Your Excellency has stated that you have received a resolution from a Sub-Committee of the Central Rice Committee, but that is nothing short of an effort to bolster up a bad case. After all, the Central Rice Committee is a hand-picked entity. The idea of a reasonable mandate is altogether out of the question.

Let us have a test of it. Let us call the members of the Central Rice Committee together and examine them on the objects of the Bill clause by clause. I do not think anyone of them would be able to answer my questions. Perhaps the Board had something to hide in not going about the matter in a democratic way. The Bill teems with penalties. I have been looking up some company laws and I have asked one or two legal men to tell me something about them. I do not see any penalties involved in them, but simply an arrangement between a set of people to carry on their business by common agreement and common acceptance. In this Bill, however, penalties which were only instituted in the war emergency are being perpetuated. This idea of interfering with the liberty of the subject is not only un-British and un-democratic but immoral in the extreme. The Bill will no doubt be carried, but it will be a blot on the good name of this Council.

I will have to refer again to Your Excellency's speech in order to bring my point into focus. This Bill is a ponderous document with legal phraseology which is hard to understand. One has to read it over and over in order to understand it, but I think I have been able to comprehend it very well indeed, though it took me some time to do so. What benefit would it be to go into a rice-

field and ask 15 rice producers: "Do you agree with the Bill?" I am sure that all the people Your Excellency met do not understand this Bill. The only way to make them understand it would be to spend 5 or 6 hours explaining the Bill clause by clause. If a rice producer were told that if he hoards his padi he would be sent to jail he would say straightaway that he should not go to jail for his own padi.

I have it on good authority that many members of the Rice Marketing Board do not agree with the penalty of one thousand dollars or imprisonment for six months provided in clause 8 which states that information obtained as a member or officer of the Board shall be secret and confidential. What information can there be secret and confidential in the operation of the Board, having regard to the fact that thousands of rice producers are involved? The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) rightly queried what would be the position of a member of the Board who finds himself in the minority in respect of a decision of the Board which he considers against the interests of the producers? He would have no right to divulge any information although he is a representative of the producers. In view of this clause he would do so at his peril.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Surely the hon. Member is overstraining that clause. All it requires to be kept secret and confidential is information relating to the fixing of grades and prices of padi or rice before publication.

Mr. EDUN: But the clause is so broad. Does the hon. Member wish to tell me that the draftsmen did not do their job thoroughly? Why didn't the clause say that during the fixing of prices nobody should give away any secret?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is exactly what it says.

Mr. EDUN: You term it a co-operative movement based on democratic procedure, but the more I examine this Bill the more I feel sorry for this Government. Would the hon. mover dare suggest such a thing to the sugar producers, the sugar companies, Fogarty's or any of the other companies, and tell them that he wants to put his nose into their business? Why not leave the rice producers alone to carry on their business? We are returning to normalcy in the ordinary affairs of everyday life. Why does Government want this emergency organization to be created in order to hem the people in? I wish to compare the 1940 Defence Regulations with this Bill, and I am going to prove to this Council that the emergency Regulations were more liberal and generous than the provisions in this Bill.

For instance, there is no provision in the Bill for a distribution of profits. Such a provision is an essential ingredient in Articles of Association with respect to any company or corporation. In the Defence Regulations there is provision for a reserve fund and the increasing of the price of padi and rice for that purpose, but in this Bill there is no such idea. The mover would certainly enlighten this Council if he would admit that at the inception of the Rice Marketing Board a pledge was given to the producers that the surplus funds of the Board would be distributed among them in the form of a bonus. I have tried my level best to get hold of that document and I am sure the mover will be able to help me in the matter. If the radio broadcasts by the Secretary of the Board are any indication of the idea of a distribution of the profits, then I submit respectfully that the Board has violated a pledge made to the

producers, and I am sure the producers will be prepared to bring a test case. There is not even a suggestion in the Bill of a distribution of profits, but there is provision for a transfer of the assets and liabilities of the parent Board to the new Board, and the creation of a reserve fund. Clause 20 (2) says:

"20. (2) The ascertained loss of any accounting period in which there is an excess of expenditure over income shall be met by an appropriation from the general reserve fund of such amount as may be necessary to cover such loss."

The hon. mover wants me to believe that this clause means that if the Board increases the price of rice and padi and incurs loss thereby, such loss would be met from the reserve fund. Isn't that stretching the imagination too far? If this Bill does not contain provision for a distribution of profits I submit most respectfully that it would not only be a violation of a pledge but it would be immoral in the extreme to rob the producers of the fruits of their labour and industry. If the Bill is to go through, clause 20 and several other clauses should be amended.

Your Excellency is aware that I have tabled certain amendments. I am not merely concerned with criticizing the Bill on general principles. I wish to tell Your Excellency that the producers agree with the single-seller idea, but I could not be a party to influencing their support of a Bill which would have the effect of shackling them for all time. It is not suggested that the Bill is an experiment which will be tried out for a year or two. Your Excellency referred to "perpetual succession" of the Board, but at the next General Election new Members may be returned who may be opposed to the rice producers, and may not

agree to any amendment of the Ordinance. Why, then, should there be this idea of perpetual succession?

I am not criticizing this Bill because I want to do so, nor am I talking merely to let the world know that I can speak. (laughter). Some people feel that way and I want to get that idea out of their heads. I think I have shown everybody what is my method. In this case I am moved by the urge to reform the rice marketing organisation in such a way that the producers of rice will have the democratic right to elect members of the new Board.

I have an idea, sir, that Your Excellency is aiming at a kind of quasi-co-operative movement. That is, you will have this association, but it should be a free association. If you have a free association then you will perhaps get the Labour Department to assist in getting that association to elect a panel of members from which Government will make elections to the Board. You will have a transition stage in which Government will have some authority. I appreciate that and also the fact that my own people are not yet fully developed to comprehend the movement. But this Bill, sir, is defeating that. It is just what you call a facsimile of the Defence Regulations Act. There is no difference between the two and that is where I object in principle to the whole Bill. I have made an attempt to get a Select Committee to consider this Bill. Your Excellency will recollect that the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Bill which is now law and a kind of conciliation, is based on bringing two units of production together — harnessing them together. Although the law has a provision for what good management and a good tenant should be, yet there is no penalty involved. No question of liberty of the subject is involved. Although this Bill has the

idea of improving production, distribution and consumption of rice yet you are bringing in a penalty which will make criminals of the people whom you want to encourage to produce. What, I think, should be embodied in the Bill is some kind of ostracism as a penalty; that is, make it difficult for anyone who does not want to co-operate with the Board that he will find it is not possible to do otherwise than co-operate. But no, it is not in the interest of Government to think of anything of such a gradual growth.

But apart from that, the hon. Mover will tell us—I am sure he will—that there was a certain time when energetic, enterprising and resourceful millers produced a super quality of rice, gave it their own brand and captured markets abroad with it despite all the competition from Burma. But the Government in this Bill endeavours to kill private urge, private enterprise. It does not give anybody a chance to compete against the Board in order to get a better price for the producers. That is the reason I made the analogy of a corporation having its own articles of association. That is the kind of thing I thought the Government would have put before this Council. To the contrary, I see something here that gives me a feeling of the creeps. I see to-day there is a case going on in the Supreme Court. I do not know if it would be contempt of Court to allude to it here, but the Crown Prosecutor.—

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of order! The hon. Member should not mention any matter that is *sub-judice*.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member cannot make reference to such a case.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member cannot allude to it.



Mr. EDUN: Very well, sir, I bow to your ruling. But all is not well with the functioning of the Board, and if all I hear is true, then an inquiry should be held as to what extent the Board has lost money. I will say just that and leave it for the time being. Perhaps in due course an attempt will be made to secure that inquiry.

I see in clause 18 the Board is being given power to acquire, encumber and dispose of property, to draw and negotiate bills of exchange and to make grants to the Association. If there is a reserve of \$660,000, cannot provision be made also for loans to farmers? If the Board can do everything else why should it not hold mortgages on farmers' property and lend them money to carry on their production? I think that phase of this clause should be considered. I made the point in my opening remarks that the designation of this Bill is to become a kind of barometer for the cost of living. Sub-clause (3) of clause 15 reads:

"The Governor may from time to time fix the price at which rice may be sold by retail for consumption in the Colony."

I will at no time question the prerogative of the Head of the Administration to fix the price of any article at a time of an emergency, in time of war. But, what is passing through my mind is this: Is not this a matter for the law of supply and demand? I feel in my own mind that this is an attempt to keep the standard of living in such a manner as not to have any repercussion against the employers of labour. I am of the opinion that the Board should function as a selling agent and should have the right to determine in accordance with the law of supply and demand what should be the price of rice for local consumption. I see danger in this. I agree with the hon. Mover where he says that to give the right to the Board to fix the price

of rice for local consumption will be tantamount to giving them a large monopoly. But where is this ideal that can be made practicable—complete autonomy within the law from the rice producers to the Board? It is a business. Your Excellency has particularly mentioned that this is like a business. Sugar production is a business. The sugar planters sell their sugar and try to get the best price they can both here and abroad. Why should not the Board? The hon. mover says no, Government has been fixing the price for many years now. But that is so far as the power which the Administration has in the time of an emergency is concerned.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I interrupt to remind the hon. Member that the price of sugar has been fixed by law for many years and not only since the Defence Regulations came into force? It is fixed under its own regulations and the price is actually stated in an Ordinance.

Mr. EDUN: But I do not see any potency in that statement!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I merely said that because the hon. Member suggested that rice is being treated somewhat different from sugar.

Mr. EDUN: I did not say that. What I do say is this: If you visualise the great economic strides, the wide expansion and enterprise which have been achieved by the people of Great Britain and the people of the U.S.A., you would see all that was the result of private enterprise being given a chance to expand. In this case I would have agreed to have the same Government institution if the Government of this Colony was of the people, by the people, and for the people. But at the moment it is not. I do not know whether it is a bureaucracy, or what it is, but there

is no such Government as yet. I rightly maintain that Government is putting the cart before the ass, because here we have not complete self-government, not even a quarter of it, and yet Government is endeavouring to nationalise the rice industry. That is what it amounts to. If this Government was a Government of the people, by the people and for the people, I could not stand here and make the statement I am making. I am sure the intelligentsia of my people fear the consequences of this Bill. It is all well and good to say that some producers like the organisation. They have received benefits certainly, but I have dispelled the idea that those benefits were as a result of the ingenuity of the members of the Board. It was because of war conditions. We have to praise the war for making the rice industry what it is to-day. So you see, sir, this idea of Government fixing the price gives away the clue to the whole situation. Why should not the Board, functioning as it is as an entity of complete autonomy, have the right to fix the price by the law of supply and demand? Why should not the Board, having this complete autonomy which I wish it should have, be able to sell rice abroad at the highest price without Government interference? I have heard it said—

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: May I just interrupt the hon. Member to say it is not the intention of Government to fix the price for export.

Mr. EDUN: It is not the intention of Government to fix the price for export! I accept that statement. But what guarantee is there? I have no faith at all in that in view of what I have already brought out in this Council that the Board has violated its obligation. What guarantee is there that the Board will not further violate its obligation? If there was a provision by which the producers had the right

to call the members of the Board to book, then it would have been a different thing altogether; but there is no such provision here by which a set of producers can meet and demand an inquiry. In this case the Board, although having the right to sell rice at the best price abroad, will not have the right to sell rice here in accordance with the law of supply and demand. Clause 22 (4) says no person has the right to sell rice in any district and it is an offence against the Ordinance, and as a result you find in clause 26 there are penalties involved. But what I am asking is that all these penalty clauses be deleted—clause 11 (3) providing for a penalty of \$500 or six months imprisonment should anyone export rice; clause 26 (4) providing for a penalty of \$20 for each day or part of a day should anyone hoard rice after service of notice to deliver; clause 32 (5) providing for a penalty of \$250 or six months imprisonment should anyone commit an offence against the Ordinance. I am afraid that this is going too far. It gives me an impression of fear. Why should not anyone who has planted a number of acres of rice, mill it into good super rice and take it abroad to sell? Is there anything morally wrong about that? Is it a moral offence? If there is an emergency or there is a shortage of rice it would be different. I want to ask what guarantee is there that if there is a great production of padi and rice that the Board would be in a position to absorb all that production?

Look at the inconsistency. The Board will determine when it will purchase and when it will not. Clause 30 gives powers to the Board to suspend the purchase of rice. That gives me the impression that there is no idea of expansion of rice production. If there is overproduction, then the carry-over would be at the expense of the producers. The Board can simply say: "Well,

we will not buy rice at all but will suspend purchasing for three months." What will happen to the producers? There is no provision in this Bill for the Board to lend the producers money to enable them to carry on during those three months. Then eventually the Board will be telling the producers; "Go back to the millers during those months and borrow." Your Excellency has said that the Board has been responsible for the producers getting out of the hands of the millers and landlords. I do not see any instance here where the producers have benefited from the Board by financial advances. Eventually the millers and the landlords will be financing the industry. The producers themselves are financing the industry. They plant, they reap—

The PRESIDENT: I am afraid I must call the attention of the Council to the fact that the hon. Member has taken more than three and a half hours of our time in indulging in a great deal of tedious repetition of his own argument and that of other speakers. I would suggest that in those three and a half hours we got little wheat amongst a great deal of chaff. I suggest it is really time now to permit other Members to address themselves to the Bill.

Mr. EDUN: Very well, sir. You will not mind permitting me to make one observation before I sit down?

The PRESIDENT: Certainly, go on!

Mr. EDUN: This Bill contains many clauses each of which synchronises, and if any Member wants to examine them he would be in a position to see how easy they do synchronize; all having a certain purpose. It will take some time to examine the clauses in detail. I bow to Your Excellency's ruling.

Mr. JACOB: May I rise to a point of order for some clarification? While I was speaking Your Excellency adopted the same attitude and I said I reserve further comment. If Your Excellency intends to limit the debates in this Council, I think notice should be given beforehand. I question the right and propriety of the Chair to act as it did when I was speaking—

The PRESIDENT: I am sorry. I did not stop you. You withdrew at my suggestion and the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member withdrew at my suggestion. I cannot sit here and see this Council descend to the level where it becomes a complete mockery of a Legislative Assembly. If honourable Members are not inclined to get across what they want to say in less time, we might as well give up this kind of constitution. Certain Members are reducing it to a very low level indeed. I have certain powers to limit the time of debate at its beginning. Once the debate has begun I have not that power, but any Member has the power to ask that the question be put. We will have to come down to that kind of procedure unless we conduct ourselves in an expeditious and businesslike manner. Therefore when I do come to a point like this, I am allowed under the Rules of Debate to invite the attention of the Council to what has happened, if there is much repetition, and to call upon the Member to take his seat. I have not called upon you or the other Member, but you have both fortunately resumed your seats.

*The PRESIDENT then called upon the Member for Western Berbice, (Mr. C. V. Wight) who had risen, to speak.*

Mr. JACOB: May I rise to a point of order—

The PRESIDENT: No. You may resume your seat.

*The PRESIDENT again called on the Member for Western Berbice.*

Mr. JACOB (*still standing*): I rise to a point of order.

The PRESIDENT: I must ask you to resume your seat.

Mr. JACOB (*still standing*): Your Excellency—

The PRESIDENT: May I ask you to leave the Council?

Mr. JACOB: I have risen to a point of order.

The PRESIDENT: May I ask you to leave the Council? I cannot have the proceedings of business interrupted in this way.

Mr. JACOB: I was endeavouring—

The PRESIDENT: Mr. Jacob, Mr. Jacob, I ask you to leave the Council.

*Mr. Jacob then left the Chamber.*

✓ The PRESIDENT: I call upon the hon. Member for Western Berbice to address the Council.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: First of all I wish to join the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. King) in congratulating the hon. the Colonial Treasurer on having so ably introduced this Bill. It has taken him time and thought, and I feel certain that he has shown a perfect knowledge of the subject. Although it may be necessary to make some amendments in the Bill, it is clear that it is a strong foundation on which a complete structure can be built for the control and marketing of rice in the best interests of the industry. Among the many handicaps encountered in the past the marketing of rice has been an important contributing factor in retarding the progress of the industry. In

addition to the competition with rice produced at low cost in the East, there was the very disturbing element of the local exporters underselling each other to the detriment of the industry.

Before this system of control was put into operation rice was being sold in the street at between \$2.40 and \$2.50 per bag. We must not blink at facts however unpleasant they may be at times. I feel certain that but for the war which caused Government to assume the full responsibility for the control of rice the industry would have gone into extinction. I had hoped that even the most pessimistic would have been convinced that a marketing organisation of the right kind, with the minimum of politics, is in the best interest of the industry. We have had our experiences in free and uncontrolled trade; we have had experience of rice associations, and we have had bitter experience of grading and price control. Are we to drift back to those conditions because of the disruptive opposition which has been exhibited in this Council by only a few Members?

I may be inclined to agree with the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) that the members of the Central Rice Committee did not hold meetings throughout their respective districts, but can he doubt the fact, after what he has said in this Council, that the rice producers of Wakenaam and Leguan support the principle of a marketing organisation? The question of the re-organisation of this marketing system has been before the rice growers for five or six years. Was it therefore necessary for the members of the Central Rice Committee to discuss the principle of a single-selling organisation with them when they knew that they supported it and were even supporting the present organisation? In support of that the hon. Member has himself said that the

rice growers of Wakenaam and Leguan had requested him to ask that the Colonial Treasurer and the Director of Agriculture should continue to serve on the Board. Isn't that support and proof of their appreciation of the services rendered by those two officers, and proof that the organisation has given satisfaction at least to the growers of rice in those islands?

I have said that I had hoped that even the pessimists would have been convinced that the rice marketing organisation had proved a success, but the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) took up the same attitude when he rose to speak on this Bill as he did 13 years ago when he appeared before a Select Committee of this Council. On that occasion he went so far as to say that it was only by competition that the rice industry of this Colony would prosper. In his speech on this Bill I think he began by saying that some of the clauses (although he said he had not read the Bill) had a wicked and corrupt tendency. I am going to analyse his suggestion as regards the proposals in the Bill before the Council.

Dr. SINGH: I rise to a point of order. Is it right for a Member to vilify another Member when Government is represented here and is able to make an appropriate reply?

The PRESIDENT: I am afraid I did not catch what the honourable Member said.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I was referring to the speech made here by the hon. Member for North-Western District, which I claim I have every right to do. The hon. Member for North-Western District attacked the Board and attacked me personally also. I claim the privilege to reply to the hon. Member's remarks. I was trying

to compare his suggestion with the proposals in the draft Bill before Council. I say that if anything has a wicked and corrupt tendency it is the suggestion of the hon. Member for North-Western District that the marketing of rice should revert to the local exporters. I feel certain that had the hon. Member made that suggestion in a rice-growing area he might have had to seek police protection. I say that it was even more wicked and corrupt when the hon. Member said: "I have no financial interest in rice but I have to speak for those people who cannot speak for themselves," implying, of course, that it is the wish of the rice growers that the industry should be run by the exporters. He also said that the rice industry was in a state of "perpetual insecurity," again implying that if there was again free exportation of rice that would give the industry security, although he admitted in his speech that the merchants had "killed the hen that laid the golden egg." What representation of those people who cannot speak for themselves!

The hon. Member went on to say that the Board had completely failed to do anything to improve the industry. I make bold to say that the Board, besides fulfilling its duties and obligations to producers and consumers, has gone much further at many times to assist the rice industry. Among the many things done by the Board I may just mention the pure-line seed padi scheme which was initiated by the Board. Figures at my disposal show that in 1941 the Board purchased 166,822 bags of rice and after grading there were 13,669 bags of No. 3 rice. In 1944, although the Board's purchases increased to 292,162 bags of rice there were only 4,282 bags of No. 3 rice as a result of the grading. Isn't that improvement, I ask the hon. Member? I consider it an achievement which has placed the rice industry in a strong position to meet post-war competition.

Here I am tempted to ask the hon. Member for North-Western District what has he done for the rice industry as a pioneer exporter? He may take this much to his credit, that when he entered the field as an exporter of rice in 1930 (of course he claimed then to be a pioneer exporter) the price of rice in the street was between \$3.80 and \$3.90 per bag, but in 1939 immediately before the control of rice was introduced, rice was being sold at between \$2.40 and \$2.50 per bag. In the face of that the hon. Member claims that if the exporters had been allowed a free hand the industry would have progressed. During the period of years when the hon. Member was an exporter of rice there was a drop in price of about 40 per cent.

In his speech the hon. Member referred to the Rice Association and said that Mr. H. G. Seaford was the first President. He went on to say that it was grossly unfair to the rice producers to have in the Association anyone who was not financially interested in the industry. Whether for good or for evil, after the close of the first year it was thought by some people that Mr. Seaford should not be re-elected President of the Association for a second term, and they spared no time and money. They canvassed rice growers all over the country, paid their membership fees and got them to vote by proxy. That is how the hon. Member was elected President of the Association for the second year. The hon. Member referred to another Association in existence now. I do not know whether he referred to the Association which I think was formed on January 6th last year. A meeting was summoned on that day when there was no train either to or from Barbice. It was a meeting of rice growers summoned to be held in Georgetown, and at that meeting a Committee was appointed to represent the rice indus-

try. The personnel of the Committee included the hon. Member for North-Western District and merchants, shopkeepers, lawyers and goldsmiths who, I presume, have financial interest in the rice industry. Again I say: what representation of those people who cannot speak for themselves!

The hon. Member for North-Western District has attacked me and described, not my qualifications but my disqualifications for being a member of the Rice Marketing Board. In reply I will say that I have never been engaged in, connected or associated with any business concern that has gone into liquidation, neither have I abandoned an occupation for which I had some training, for another and yet another. I may be considered somewhat immodest, but for the information of the hon. Member I will say that I am so satisfied with the success of my business that I have decided to retire. The hon. Member went on to accuse the Board of having caused many rice mills to close down between 1930 and 1939. He actually mentioned 1932 as the year when the present Board assumed control of the rice industry, whereas in truth and in fact the Board did not come into existence until after the outbreak of the war which has just ended.

The hon. the Fifth Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) took fully two hours to labour the point of co-operation and what is a co-operative organisation: He went so far as to say the Colonial Treasurer has not the right conception of a co-operative organisation. The hon. Member's idea of a co-operative organisation is that the Board should be constituted entirely of producers. The Bill before this Council proposes to control and market rice for the benefit of the grower. It also gives the Board the power to fix prices to the consumer in the Colony. The grower has an interest, but hasn't the

consumer also an interest in the organisation? Would it be a co-operative organisation if the grower only is given representation on the Board and not the consumer? The hon. Nominated Member's idea of a democratic co-operative organisation is that the consumer should have no voice at all but must pay whatever price is fixed by the producer. That is the hon. Member's conception of a democratic Association. From past experience we know that the rice growers cannot get together and organise themselves, and after many years of appeal Government came in and afforded some protection to the industry. Government was reluctant to assume control, but having done so as a result of the advent of the war, I make bold to say that the rice industry as a whole is supporting the principle of a single-selling organisation.

It is not my intention now to discuss the composition of the Board because I have already given notice that in the Committee stage I intend to suggest—to the displeasure, no doubt, of the hon. Member for North-Western District and the Fifth Nominated Member—that even the proposed representation of the producers should be reduced. I feel certain that the principle of this Bill has been accepted by 99.99 per cent. of the rice growers in the Colony.

Mr. LEE: I rise to a point of correction. I would like my friend to withdraw that statement because I have held meetings. He must not say to this Council what he does not know.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: The speech made by the hon. Member in this Council some time ago gave no other impression.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: May I intervene just to reply to the

hon. Member for Essequibo River? I would just like to say that I have before me here a letter from Wakenaam asking me to say that they are fully behind the Rice Marketing Board. It has just come and I will show it to the hon. Member.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I was saying that even the hon. Member's contribution to this debate gave no other impression to this Council than that the rice-growing communities in the islands of Wakenaam and Leguan are supporting fully the principle of a single-selling organisation. I also think that representation has been made to Your Excellency in Western Berbice requesting you to put this Bill before this Council as early as possible. The Bill has my full support as I know fully well that it will benefit the industry as a whole.

Mr. LEE: In reply to the hon. the Colonial Secretary I would like to say that the letter he referred to has come from Devonshire Castle which is not in my constituency but that of the hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight).

Dr. SINGH: I am in sympathy with those Members who have suggested that the rice industry should be maintained and controlled by the people who have developed it. I desire to say that the appeal made by the hon. Members was an earnest one. It is a disgrace to those people who are engaged in the rice industry that after so many years the industry is not to-day under their control, but it is their fault. They had enough time to make themselves efficient; they had sufficient time to organize themselves.

But instead of that, the desire of the three elements who are concerned with the rice industry—the landowners

or estate-owners, the millers and the farmers—was and still is at the present time to outwit each other. Instead of organising, the landlord sought by what means he could increase the rent, and the miller also sought how he could increase the price for milling the padi into rice, and the farmer, always a cunning individual, tried to see how he could hoodwink the others. I first became interested in the rice industry in the year 1901. At that time the industry was in the hand of these three elements. They exported the rice; they marketed the rice, etc. But what did we see later on? Instead of exporting good rice they used to put bad rice in the middle of the bag and good rice around the corners. As a result there was a hue and cry from the West Indian Islands. Subsequently they sent out samples of rice to be exported, but the exported rice was far below the samples in quality. Then in the year 1930 or 1932 when I was a member of the Board, although the price was fixed locally, there was the question of rebate. All sorts of subterfuges were resorted to. Today the rice industry is undoubtedly in a better position.

I will support this Bill, but as soon as the people who are interested in the rice industry—the farmer, the miller and the landowner—can come together and be organised they must be allowed to manage the industry. As regards the Bill I support it except the penalty clauses. There are too many of them. I do not know how you are going to change that. I would like to ask that whenever in the opinion of Government the people have become equipped and organised that they should be permitted to handle the rice industry themselves.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not propose to be very long, except to say

that I support entirely this Bill before the Council. There are one or two amendments that may have to be made—mere details—and those can be discussed at the appropriate time when the clauses are reached in Committee. As one whose firm platform is mainly in the interest of the producer in Essequibo as against the miller and landowner, I have no hesitation in saying that the Essequibo farmer is primarily interested in the rice industry and supports this Bill wholeheartedly and the organisation of a Rice Marketing Board. Indeed I may say that for years those who worked and toiled in the field were oppressed severely by those who owned the lands and rice mills, and who controlled the prices. I do say that this Bill in one particular only merits the support of this Council in its entirety, when the Bill envisages that the minimum price to be paid to the farmer should be fixed by the Board, a body interested in the community and seeking no gain for itself as owner. Need I say that on the Essequibo Coast padi fetched 80 cents per bag. That amount was produced merely by a combine of three of the largest rice millers and landlords on the Coast forming a market to purchase the padi from those poor people. Today, owing to the Rice Marketing Board's activities in fixing the price of rice, the price of padi on the Essequibo Coast has risen considerably. I would further say that I am indirectly interested in the industry as a trustee for some people who own an estate and everyone of their tenants satisfied with the way in which the Board has treated them. No one will say that every tenant and every rice farmer is perfectly satisfied with the running of the Board, nor will I say that we are all aware that those are matters which can be overcome.

The speeches of the hon. Member for North-Western District and the hon.



the Fifth Nominated Member cannot be described as being in the interest of the rice producers, whom we have been told the hon. Members support so wholeheartedly, and if properly analysed are apparently to further the interest of those person whom I have already described. They were amusing to this Council. Need I say, let us have private enterprise going out and obtaining the best markets for the industry, let these middlemen who are going to come in take to themselves the commission which should go to those interested in the industry. The hon. Member for North-Western District clearly and unhesitatingly says: "Let us get the best markets." Who is to get them? He did some work in London for the industry. Others have done the same. They have got the best prices. Have any of those who made a fortune in selling rice returned the substantial profits they made in the best markets? Have they turned around and said to the rice farmer who gave them the opportunity to make such profits "I am going to distribute my profits and let you have what I think you should?"

It is the boast of financial independence of the hon. Member, that he made substantial sums out of the industry, and he now comes and says the Rice Marketing Board must distribute its profits among the rice farmers, while the profits made by private individuals were not. They never told the farmers "I have made so much profit, take this \$25 or \$50 out of the amount." Nothing of the kind was done, but the Rice Marketing Board must do that. The Rice Marketing Board must go out of existence and allow private enterprise to come in. I am a strong advocate of private enterprise, but I am opposed to the man who is just going to sit at a desk and manipulate the price in the market. Who is the sufferer, not the miller, not the landlord but the rice producer. I have no hesitation in saying

that the rice producers of this Colony—99.99 per cent. of them—are behind the Rice Marketing Board. I have been behind the Rice Marketing Board from the start and I will stand behind it again. There are lots of leakages to be stopped, and they can be stopped. I see no reason why. Let us carry on. I feel sure this Council unanimously will be doing a service to this country and to the rice industry and to the rice producers and farmers when it passes this Rice Marketing Board Bill with such minor amendments of detail as may become necessary. The hon. Member for Essequibo River has joined the opposition camp—

Mr. LEE: I never joined the opposition camp. I stated the facts as told to me and said the Rice Marketing Board is a necessity and suggested amendments to the Bill, a copy of which was sent to the hon. the Attorney-General. I did not say I was opposed to the Bill.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I am glad to hear that, and I accept the hon. Member's assurance that he will give all assistance in the passage of the Bill. Therefore the Bill should go through very quickly and should be passed through its entire stages by tomorrow. The hon. Member knows fully well the statement I made right through. He was one who joined with me in approaching Your Excellency to appoint a committee to investigate the hardships of the rice producers. He will not doubt that I have always been behind the Regulations for fixing the price on behalf of his voters and supporters in Leguan and Wakenaam. I am glad to see he has joined our forces, and I hope he will help us to accept this Bill and stop this wanton waste of time in opposing something, which we know the people themselves want and yet we are saying we are the champions of the people. We are opposing their interest and yet on the

other hand we are saying that it is the Rice Marketing Board and other persons who are keeping under the poor rice farmer who desires help.

Mr. JACKSON: I desire to be permitted to say very few words in connection with this matter. I do so by saying that I support wholeheartedly the Bill before this Council. I have had opportunities of moving among the rice growers, and I am satisfied that they are pleased with the amounts they are receiving at the present time for their product. I know as a matter of fact that there was a hue and cry some time ago not so much about the price they received but about the hardship they endured from millers and others. There have been, undoubtedly, some millers and landlords who have been kind to the people, but I know of many cases in which the rice growers have suffered a good deal at the hands of millers and landlords. I am perfectly satisfied that it is the wish of the growers that this Bill should go through and I do earnestly hope that it will go through, if possible, this afternoon.

One hon. Member spoke of ostracism during his speech—the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member—but I have often felt that if it were possible to ostracise from the debates of this Council those Members who take three or four hours to speak without any purpose and so prevent them from wasting the time of this Council it would be a very good thing. The hon. Member complained that his speeches are not reported in the Press. I am satisfied that the newspapers did not report those speeches because they felt there was no merit in them. A good deal of loud talk and a good deal of nonsense spoken by Members waste the time of this Council, and if the newspapers discriminate by not publishing their speeches it serves them well. I often wonder whether it would not be a good thing for some of those very

lengthy speeches to be reported verbatim and let the Members who uttered them see what nonsense they are capable of speaking sometimes. I support the Bill.

Mr. CRITCHLOW: In rising to support this Bill with any reasonable amendment I can assure you, sir, that I would like to associate myself with the last speaker's remarks. I always had it in mind that a time-limit should be placed on speeches in this Council and I was glad when to-day Your Excellency took a stand against the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member who had been talking for over three hours and might have been talking until now but for your action. The hon. Member seemed to have forgotten altogether that there are several other Bills for consideration and that some of us are very anxious to see them through as early as possible. The Rice Marketing Bill should not be allowed to take up all our time. I do hope we will get through with this Bill this afternoon and not tomorrow.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I am grateful that this Bill has reached the Council at a time which more or less coincides with my return to the Colony, thus giving me the opportunity of contributing to this debate. I am particularly grateful too; the Government has at last taken courage in its hands to produce a measure which, in my opinion and in the opinion of several persons who are connected with this industry, will put on a very firm basis the future prospects of such an important industry. While I sat here for the first time this afternoon and listened to the speech of the Fifth Nominated Member, I could not help expressing surprise, and on some occasions with disgust, at some of the words used by him in denouncing a Bill which he knows—if he does not know then it is his business to know—savours of good for this industry. I do not propose to take him to task for the number of

things he has referred to in so far as the present Rice Marketing Board is concerned. We have had that Board debated in this Council in season and out of season. Members have come here and criticised that Board, and in fact some of them have repeated the same criticism time and again, even although on several occasions the lie has been given to their criticisms. It is nothing less than that the lie has been properly and promptly nailed. How they have the effrontery to keep on coming to this Council and repeating the untrue statements they have made from time to time is beyond my comprehension. However, human nature being what it is some of us have such thick skins that even an auger will not get through them. The best thing to do when such things occur is to leave those persons to themselves and let them sink with their own weight. I have no doubt that time will tell, and if they are gentlemanly enough they would come back to this Council and admit, even if it is only for once, that they were wrong in their deliberations.

As a simple illustration, the hon. the Fifth Nominated Member this afternoon was trying to tell us about co-operation and private enterprise. I made a note of just those two words. I would like to ask him whether he knows that the two things cannot go together. They have never been together. You cannot have the co-operation and private enterprise together. There is too much rivalry, too much jealousy. If he did not know that, he should ask the hon. Member for North-Western District who would tell him that private enterprise and co-operation cannot go together. I am sure that hon. Member knows the rice industry very well. He has been in it a long time and, like the hon. Member for Western Berbice, came into it at a time when the price of rice was reasonably good and left it when it was very bad. He would be able to inform the hon. the Fifth

Nominated Members how difficult it is for co-operation and private enterprise to work together. There is one thing, however, he says. Practically in the same breath in the course of his remarks he said all the producers agree with a single-seller idea. It is beyond me to understand the two statements being made together. Well, sir, if he agrees with what the producers say, then it is his duty to come to this Council and support the Bill which has for its object the continuance of the single-seller system. Single-selling was introduced here immediately after the outbreak of the war, and I would like to say right here and now — and I speak with a certain amount of knowledge of this industry—that there are numbers of people who have come to me personally and stated that they hope the Board in its present form will continue because it has been of very great advantage to the producer.

The hon. Member for Western Berbice gave a simple illustration in one direction where considerable improvement has taken place, but there are several other directions and you do not want any better example or better evidence of the fact that the industry has improved within the last six or seven years since the single-seller system has been adopted, than that if you attempt to put up for sale a rice estate you would find ready a hundred buyers or more. No one wants to buy a bad thing. I am a commercial man and I know that if a rice estate is put up for sale you would find numbers of buyers after it in order to make a living out of it. I do not think those people who buy rice estates are doing so with their eyes closed. They have bought estates during the last few years and during the existence of the Rice Marketing Board bad as it was—though those people have never said the Board was bad—and they are very competent businessmen and know all about it and will not buy something unless they know it is being run on proper lines and that Government has every intention of

stabilising the industry because Government has realised its duty. We have heard so much about duty to the producers, duty to the millers and duty to the landlords, but I have not heard any Member in this Council talk about duty to the consumers. Who has to look after these people but the Government, and I say it is Government's duty to set up an organisation which has for its object benefits to all parties—the producers, the consumers, the millers and the landowners and whoever enters into the business. Who is going to tell me that the consumers did not benefit. Members are quite right not to touch on that. They could not because if they had they knew the General Elections are coming off very soon and no one wants to tread on certain people's corns. Why did they not bring in the consumer and say the Bill does not benefit the consumer? No; they are afraid to do that because they know that the consumer has benefited and a great deal at that.

The same hon. the Fifth Nominated Member has expressed fear that if the present set-up of the Rice Marketing Board is an indication of what the future would be for the rice industry, he had no faith in the proposed legislation as it would not help the producer. It is a repetition of his previous statement, but I submit that he has not produced any evidence to support that at all. What is wrong with the set-up? The proposed set up is a very simple procedure to my mind. There is to some extent the old set-up of the Rice Marketing Board, but in principle the set-up is quite the same, and so long as this Government has no serious complaint as to how the Rice Marketing Board was run under the Defence Regulations, it seems the proper thing to do is to continue it by statute. Hon. Members must remember that it is their privilege, their duty, if they find that in six months or ten years no improvement can be effected, to approach Government for an amendment of the Ordinance so that the desired improvements could be effected. Nothing is

perfect at once. It must not be thought that this is the last of everything. It is not. It is merely, as I said before, a continuation of what is already in existence and which, I submit, has proved to great advantage to those people who are particularly concerned with the industry.

Hon. Members complain about this proposed Bill giving the organisation perpetual succession. It seems to me that they do not understand it, and, in that case it would be a simple matter for them to ask questions before they raise questions which have no merit and waste time. Can they expect an organisation of this kind to be set up without perpetual succession, when this organisation has to contract debts, grant mortgages and treat with people? You are bound to create perpetual succession otherwise you will find that no one will trade with it. I will not trade with any organisation which has no perpetual succession, as there will be no security in it. When Members raise trivial questions like that, it is only their vanity in wanting to hear their voices here or to be destructive in their criticism. I cannot be too strong in my remarks about that. I have listened very carefully to what the hon. Member said when he was talking here for over an hour and I did not hear one constructive suggestion from his lips, nothing at all. What does he want? Does he want the rice industry to go back to the state it was in prior to the introduction of the Defence Regulations in 1939? If he does, then I am positive he would not find support from those who are particularly interested in the industry.

I would like to warn this Government not to be influenced by all these speeches, some of which I heard this afternoon. I have just returned to the Colony. I have just passed through Trinidad and several Islands of the West Indies and, although I have no authority to say it, I have sensed that there is a feeling of waiting existing in those markets at the

present time. I cannot describe it in any other form. They want to see whether there is going to be security in the industry in the future or whether it is going to revert to what it was in the past.

Government having made this experiment six years ago by the introduction of a single-seller system, it would be criminal—it would be a ghastly crime against the rice industry—if steps were not taken to continue the organisation such as is proposed in this Bill. I do not say it is perfect; I do not think the hon. Mover would say that the Bill is perfect in every detail. Certain Members say they have amendments to move. I will willingly listen to them, and I probably have some too. A measure of this kind will undoubtedly benefit the rice industry, and it seems to me that what we ought to do is to assist Government to produce something that will work satisfactorily. There are many people who wait until Government passes legislation and then try to see where the loopholes are. I do not refer to the legal Members of this Council alone; there are many people outside the Council who do so. We have had that experience before.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not think any Bill has been absolutely watertight, otherwise we would probably find lawyers becoming rice farmers. (laughter).

Mr. deAGUIAR: I entirely agree with the hon. Member's views, therefore I think he agrees with mine. We cannot expect to have something that is absolutely perfect. It is true we have had six or seven years' experience, but I still claim that we have some more to learn. We will have a lot more to learn when Burma re-enters the field. It is true that that time has not yet come; let us hope it will be postponed for a while, but it is not too early for us to set up an organisation of this kind so that when that

unequal competition is introduced again we will be able to meet it. We are doing very well.

When a few days ago I told a certain dealer in Trinidad that we find it extremely difficult to export No. 3 rice from this market he was shocked. He wanted to know why they could get No. 3 rice. The answer was obvious—the quality of our padi has improved, the milling process has improved, and we are getting very little of the low-grade rice. We do not want it. What I want to see is that we are able to sell the highest grade at a reasonable price. If anyone should say that definite progress has not been made during these few years with the experiment of a single-selling organisation, I would say that such persons, whether they are Members of this Council or not, are not familiar with the subject. That is the mildest form in which I can put it, but perhaps if I am tempted I would probably say that they are entirely against the rice industry, and I do not think that is something which this Government or this Council should countenance.

I am supporting the Bill because I am perfectly satisfied from the experience we have gained, that a single-selling organisation is the best means of not only assisting but of developing the rice industry—a development which I feel sure is natural to this Colony. I think we should produce far more rice than we do, but that can only be done if there is a certain feeling of security in it. No farmer is going to produce rice if he finds himself at the mercy of the wolves, and there are many of them around. It is surprising how easy it is for wolves to ban together when they want to serve their own ends. I hope there will be no further opposition to the Bill and that we will proceed to the Committee stage.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The debate on the second reading of this Bill has been somewhat protracted, and I do not desire to prolong it any longer than is necessary, but I wish to make a few general observations on the principle of the Bill. I may be told that I know nothing about the growing, marketing or grading of rice, but I wish to emphasise that I speak from a purely impersonal point of view, purely objectively. As I see it, the Bill is an attempt on the part of this Government, to put on a permanent peace-time footing an organisation which has existed for some years, and which, particularly during the last few years of stress and strain, has been able to do extraordinarily good work. It has achieved a great measure of success not only in this Colony but throughout the Caribbean area, and I am sure it is a source of very great satisfaction to the people of British Guiana that during the dark days of the war, through the organisation they had built up they were in a position to help their brethren in the islands of the Caribbean. I particularly wish to express my appreciation of the rice which was sent from this Colony to Barbados during those dark days when the people were rationed and had to make shift with a small quantity as compared with what the people of this Colony got. Therefore, I say that it should be a matter of great satisfaction to all in this Colony to know that by their production and their marketing they have done something to help the war effort along.

Has that organisation been successful? If it has been, it is statesmanlike for us in this Colony to turn to good account the experience which we have gained during those years, or are we to let the organisation just go a-begging, and all the method built up during those years to be abandoned and allow the people

to grade, market and sell their rice just as they please? I venture to suggest to hon. Members that it is wisdom to turn that experience to good account in the interest of the rice farmers, millers and consumers of the Colony as a whole. If we do not do that, we fail the people of this Colony.

What are the points which have emerged in the course of the years this Colony has had the benefit of this organisation? Various criticisms have been levelled against the personnel of the Board. They have been taken one by one, analysed, dissected and turned inside out, but that is not the way, I suggest, to approach a matter of this sort. A statesmanlike approach would be to decide: is it in the interest of this Colony? No one can say with truth that this organisation has not been and will not be in the interest of the Colony. On the other hand there have been expressions of a desire that the Rice Marketing Board should continue, and even the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, has said that if he could believe that the members of the Board had the interest of the industry at heart he would support it. If he could believe that out of the new Board there would develop machinery which would be of the greatest possible interest to the industry he would give it his full support.

In the analysis of the hon. Member's speech there emerges one fact — that the principle itself appeals to him—but the question of the personnel of the Board is a totally different matter. We are dealing with principles; we are considering the principle underlying the Bill, not the personnel of the Board or whether the hon. the Colonial Treasurer is Chairman, or a public officer. The point is, are we satisfied in our minds that an organisation such as this ought to be continued, and that its functions will ensure benefits to all concerned in the industry? I repeat that the answer is definitely in the

affirmative, so that the opposition to the Bill revolves around the hon. Member for North-Western District (Mr. Jacob) who is not present. He started off by saying that the Bill was iniquitous and unjust, but he finished up by saying that he had not read the Bill. I believe the hon. Member has not read the Bill carefully, but to admit that he had not read it after making very strong criticisms tends to negative the force of any argument which he put forward.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) accepted the principle of the Bill but suggested certain amendments, so that the whole opposition resolves itself into this—that Members of the Council view with favour the principle underlying the Bill and agree that it should receive its second reading. If that is so, then the amendments suggested will be considered when the Bill is in the Committee stage. Several Members have raised questions about the penalties provided in the Bill. Those penalties have existed before and were in the Regulations from which this Bill is now framed. They are admittedly severe, but why are they severe? It is in order to preserve the machinery and to ensure respect for the Ordinance if and when it is passed. It is no good having penalties of a minor nature which might induce a member of the Board or a Committee of the Board to put information he has obtained as such to his personal account or to the account of his friends, and to secure material financial benefit and perhaps pay a fine of \$20 or \$50. I would like to believe that we have reached that Utopian period when people would accept a rule of conduct and live up to a high standard of rectitude, but we have to be realistic and bear in mind that on occasions people do not play the game. That is why Law Courts exist and why lawyers exist, and that is why penalties are provided in Bills.

It will be appreciated that the necessity for these penalties is very

great. We want the machinery which this Bill seeks to bring into existence, or to keep in existence, to be successful. We want the standard of the rice we grade in this Colony to receive satisfaction and to be accepted in the other Colonies. We want to know that when a merchant in Trinidad, Barbados or Jamaica, has ordered rice of a certain grade he knows he is going to get the grade of rice he has ordered. In the language of the commercial world we want to foster and build up goodwill, and I suggest to hon. Members that that can best be done by having a single-seller created by this Bill. It is not, as one hon. Member suggested, a Government-sponsored organisation. It does not negative the idea of co-operation. Rather it is intended to foster co-operation, but as the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Edun, has admitted, the time is not yet ripe to get all the people together and to organise all the goodwill of the people in the villages to plant and mill rice. Consequently, as any good parent would do, Government is directing the line the growers and millers should follow. When they have reached the stage when they appreciate the desirability and necessity of coming together in order to create an organisation which will produce rice of good quality at reasonable prices and without any difficulty then, of course, all hon. Members will agree that it will be appreciated by Government who will do everything to foster and stimulate such a movement.

At the present time there is a great shortage of food in the world, and we must endeavour, whilst there is no competition in these markets, to maintain the markets which we have secured during the last few years, and try to widen and expand those markets. Now is the time and not two years from now when, as the last speaker has said, Burma might come into the market again. There is a world shortage of food, consequently any organisation which we have which has done such splendid work—I have read

all the reports which have been published—we should endeavour to preserve and strengthen and, I think, we should give all credit to the members of the Board who have given their time and attention and have worked in the interest of the industry and of the Colony. I hope I have made my point clear with regard to the question of penalties.

I wish also to refer to the point made by the last speaker about the question of perpetual succession. It only means the continuance of this organisation until such time as the Legislature thinks there should be some change. This Bill does not seek to make the organisation perpetual in the sense that it goes on like a brook forever. It only seeks, as the last speaker has emphasised, to put the organisation on a secure basis, so that in its transactions with the local consumer and the merchant abroad they will know that they are dealing with an organisation which will not change from day to day. In other words, there will be some security in dealing with that organisation. It does not mean that if and when the Legislature realises that there should be an amendment or that the Ordinance should be repealed, that that cannot be done.

There is one other point—the question of the composition of the Board. Hon. Members have made criticisms and have said that the Board will be Government-sponsored and will not be sufficiently wide to embrace farmers, millers and those who are particularly and primarily interested in the industry. If hon. Members would look at the Bill they would see that provision is made for a Board of 16 members and how those members are to be appointed. Arising out of that the hon. the Colonial Treasurer has told this Council that a Bill is in draft relating to the Association to be formed and it is hoped in a very short time to put that Bill before Council. In any case the suggestions which have been put

forward by hon. Members will receive our consideration before the Bill comes before the Council. Consequently I think there will be some machinery whereby the people in the districts will have a voice in the election of their officers from whom eventually eight rice growers will be selected to help to form the Board. In other words, it is proposed that the farmers in the districts should have the opportunity of selecting representatives who will then vote for those who should form the Central Association, and from the members of the Association the Governor will select eight persons to join the Board. Therefore, every attempt will be made to give as broad a democratic basis as possible to the organisation of those who are interested in the industry.

With those general observations sir, I wish to say that I support the Bill purely from an impersonal point of view, and I hope that arising from it and the experience which will be gained from the working of an organisation of this nature something else may turn up in connection with the other industries of this Colony, because it has to be borne in mind that this is a large and undeveloped country, and it is the business of Government to take an interest in any development which ensures the good of the Colony as a whole and of those who are interested in any particular line of industry in the Colony.

Mr. THOMPSON: I would just like to say that I support this Bill most heartily; I think it is quite timely. In moving around the country districts I have met millers, producers and landlords, but in no case have I heard anything but a feeling of satisfaction with the Bill before Council, for which I have to congratulate the hon. Mover. I think Your Excellency will bear me out when I say that on the West Coast of Berbice everybody is in hearty agreement with the Bill. I wish to make a few general observations on the Bill, but as they will deal



with references made by hon. Members who are now absent, I will reserve my remarks until the Bill reaches the Committee stage.

The PRESIDENT: I propose not to call upon the hon. Mover until to-morrow when the question will be put immediately after his address. I think on the adjournment now I should make some comment on the regrettable incident at half-past three. I do think that the procedure and the patience of this Council have not been infrequently most unduly strained in these eight months since this session began on the 13th July last year. I, as President, have been exceedingly, I think perhaps excessively tolerant, to faults of Members, a limited number of Members, in procedure, and the Deputy President, sitting in my place, has also been excessively tolerant of such incidents.

There are two faults which I have observed. One is the excessive length of speeches, and the other is the excessive number of interruptions to points of order or things of that kind. Now we have not got in this Council the practices or rules such as Parliament, which is our model, has found it necessary to introduce, such as, for example, the practice whereby the Speaker would be advised of those Members who wish to speak principally upon any measure, and even to some extent about the length of time they wish to speak, so that public business could be arranged; or that other procedure whereby certain time having been reached, the guillotine automatically falls and the House passes to the next business. We have not got that sort of thing in this Council. The matter is left to our own commonsense and discretion, and we would play up to that. In our sister colony of Jamaica they have recently come to that very conclusion and made a self-denying order whereby

a Mover will limit himself to 45 minutes, and any other speaker will limit himself to half an hour. Nobody can say that that is an ungenerous allowance. Members of this Council who wish to conduct public business effectively must learn to put their points in such reasonable time.

As to the other point—this excessive rising to points of order—a great many Members of this Council do that too often, but very particularly the Member for North-Western District, and the time has come when we must take a little more notice of that. The point of course is that if a point of order has been raised and answered and settled by the Chair, and the Chair calls upon another Member to speak, the Member who has risen to the point of order must resume his seat, especially when called upon to do so. If the Speaker rises no other Member may remain standing. After I have called upon a Member to do such a thing and he does not do it, my only remaining power is to ask him to withdraw, and of course the withdrawal is only for the day's meeting. If I consider these powers are not sufficient, I can ask the Council for a motion of suspension, which of course suspends the Member for a period of time. I do not think in this particular case a step of that kind is necessary. All that is necessary is that this day's incident can be regarded as closed, and the Member is free to resume his seat at our next meeting.

We have now come to the time of adjournment. I propose to adjourn the Council until 2 o'clock tomorrow when I will call upon the mover of the Bill to reply to the debate on the second reading, and thereafter put the question for the second reading. I accordingly adjourn the Council until 2 p.m. tomorrow.