

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Saturday, 14th February, 1959

The Council met at 10 a.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 Hon. 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*

” **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. W. O. R. Kendall—excused

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 Friday, 13th February, 1959, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL

BUDGET DEBATE

Council resumed consideration of the Second Reading of a Bill intituled:

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

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

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

Schedule

AGRICULTURE

TWELVE AGRICULTURAL OFFICERS

The Chairman: When the Council adjourned yesterday we were considering an Amendment moved by the hon. Member for Georgetown South to subhead 1, item (19) — **12 Agricultural Officers.**

Mr. Gajraj: While we are still on this item, may I take this opportunity to make a few observations on the use that is being made of these Agricultural Officers. It seems to me that when Agricultural Officers are appointed and sent to rural areas, they are expected to assist the farmers as much as possible by imparting to them the knowledge of modern methods of agriculture and not merely by imparting it by word of mouth, but by demonstrating the methods that should be followed. It would appear that that particular aspect of the Agricultural Officer's job needs tremendous stressing, because we have seen from time to time over the years the steady trek of people from rural areas into the City. We have heard of lamentations many a time that the trek should be stopped, and that people in rural areas

should be able to find conditions more genial to their mode and manner of life so as to encourage them to remain on the land and be of an economic benefit to the country.

We have also seen that time and again attempts have been made to get the people who have gravitated to the City to go back into the country areas and settle on the land. What has been the result? People have attempted to go back but, being disappointed, they return to the lights of the City where, at least, they can find some measure of employment to keep body and soul together. The answer to that, as has been told to many of us, is that they have been unable to make the land pay them a reasonable return together with a good living.

Since we have sent our sons out to the Centeno College in Trinidad to study the practical aspects of agriculture; since they have to work on the land there and produce crops therefrom at the most reasonable cost and in the most efficient manner, I feel that Government should consider — indeed it is its duty to consider — and possibly give an administrative direction whereby these Agricultural Officers in addition to visiting the farms of people in the rural areas should themselves, by practical demonstrations, work areas of land contiguous with the holdings of the farmers and prove to them that by modern methods and efficient farming by proper use of fertilizers and things of the kind, a living could be made from the soil.

In other words, it is no use allowing highly paid officers to go around speaking in theoretical terms if no attempt is being made to show the practical results that can accrue from working the land properly. I feel that one of the ways in which practical results can be passed on to the farmer is by way of demonstrations of the kind to which I have referred. We hope that Agricultural Officers will take plots of land similar to that of farmers, work them and make them pay, so that the farmer will understand that if he follows the advice of

the Agricultural Officers he will be able to maintain his family and himself.

It is quite possible that Agricultural Officers may consider that this is not part and parcel of their duties. But if they want to get down to the people; if we want to give them the assurance that by sticking to the land and by changing the age-old methods which, perhaps, they have been using all along for the modern methods which have been demonstrated to them it would make a lot of difference in the economy of the country. If we can do these things, we can build a strong foundation for an efficient and prosperous peasantry.

I make these comments in the hope that the Government and the Minister in particular may be prepared to give consideration to them.

Mr. Hubbard: I should like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Minister of Natural Resources and the Director of Agriculture for the recent decision to assign an agricultural technician to the relatively new and highly efficient poultry industry. In passing, let me say that the remarks of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, seem to contain some contradiction. The Agricultural Officer is a whole-time officer, and the farmer has a full-time occupation — if he will achieve anything, it must be full time.

But coming back to poultry, the most significant thing about the growth of this new industry is that it has been founded by persons who have originally been employed in the City, and who have left the City and given up their jobs to go in for farming of this type. I think that this provides an example for all our people, and I hope that that aspect of the matter would be recognized and publicized, because the general trend has been all along for people to leave the countryside and come to town.

Here we have people who have entered into farming as a full-time occupation. It is an idea to be commended and it deserves public support.

Mr. Tello: Actually, I would like to support the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, in his remarks about the Central Agricultural Station. What is the good of all this expenditure, if the Station is not going to pass knowledge on to the farmer, who is really and truly the contributor to the economy? This Station was only put up so as to investigate in the interest of the farmer who cannot afford to do so. It is not for the convenience of some junior officer experimenting on a two-by-four plot.

For some years in the small island of Barbados there has been a practice whereby, if an agricultural officer evolves a theory, the Department does not say to the farmer, "if you do A, B or C, you will make a profit," but it pays the farmer a land tax and on the farmer's own land, the officer and the farmer work together. There is nothing like seeing for yourself — that is how you believe more firmly in something.

I remember myself and Mr. Gajraj plugging for these things in another place. I think that those people who have identified themselves with the farming community, and having taken such steps in the poultry industry, they will expand this industry further; and Government may note that co-operatives have been given full support and protection, and these have stepped up co-operative enterprises considerably. We must be certain that the money to be voted this year will do. I am certain the hon. Minister will agree that \$330,000 being spent in the interest of farmers who cannot afford it themselves is not too much, and that he will accept the suggestion of my hon. Friend and discuss it with his technical advisers in order to start some practical scheme from which farmers can benefit.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: The hon. Member speaks immaturely in a matter not quite within his knowledge. Let me say that the Agriculture Department is one we must respect, but when Mr. Hubbard goes on to say that the Agricultural Officers were responsible for the poultry industry—

Mr. Hubbard: To a point of order!

The Chairman: What is the point of order?

Mr. Hubbard: I did not say the things he is suggesting.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: He should have raised it under "Veterinary" or "Animal Husbandry", which include poultry rearing as is done in British Guiana. Here, let me point out that it is private enterprise that has established the poultry industry in British Guiana.

There is the firm of Correia Enterprises who, by their initiative established the poultry industry. Their's is a type of expansion work that has paid off in British Guiana. The Correia brothers have sought to provide a fairly good poultry industry, in which soft chickens three, four or five months old are ready for the market. Credit must go to private enterprise, and to two Guianese who started it.

To go back to "Field and Extension Work". Field and extension work, as the hon. Member, Mr. Gajraj, has said, assists in ensuring better methods of cultivation. It also carries out the principle of testing new crops in the field. But outside of the experiments on jute and cotton, how much more are taken on? Tobacco, of which our imports runs to more than \$1 million, is a crop that needs to be considered for expansion locally. We can grow more tobacco, as far as I am concerned. We import onions, and I am sure that if the seeds are made available to farmers they can be grown, in time and with the right methods, to a point where we can be self-sufficient in this crop. We are paying 36 cents to 40 cents per pound for peanuts. There is where organized production and marketing come in. There is a potential for peanut production in British Guiana, and it is the duty of the Minister of Agriculture to explore these matters, and bring about results.

Yesterday, the hon. nominated Member, Mr. Robin Davis, placed

before the Minister the question of fertilizers. The use of fertilizers is a very important thing. Applied to coconut production, the reaction would favourably affect the output of edible oil within, say, a year.

The hon. Minister must realize that extension work is most important for the betterment of our agricultural industries generally. To single out the rice industry: after the Autumn crop is reaped, the land is left barren and leached, and no other crop is grown on it. Here is where extension work has failed to reach. We can very well grow cow peas, black-eye peas or water melons. In this respect, the farmers are hungry for information.

I have a little farm of my own, and after the rice is reaped I plant those crops on the land. I go there once in every ten days, and farmers from all around come to see what is done. I am not myself a very progressive farmer, because no farmer must go and spend one day only at his farm, but the point is, these and new methods the Department of Agriculture must adopt.

Maybe the Minister's imagination is limited in the field of agriculture, so that he is unable to dictate his policy to the Head of the Department. For that reason I think he should take advice from this side of the Table and not fight us back, as it were, and try to find excuses. He should take our advice for what it is worth and keep his eyes open so that the people of the country may benefit.

Mr. Campbell: On the question of Agricultural Instructors I wish to associate myself with the views expressed by the hon. Nominated Members, Mr. Gajraj and Mr. Tello, when they suggested that emphasis should be placed on demonstrations by those officers in the rural areas. Theory and practice should go together. Farmers all over the world are a conservative lot; they are highly independent in spirit and think they know all there is to know about farming. They do know quite a lot as a result of everyday practice, but I know that theory and practice should go together in order to

make a success of farming. The point I wish to make is that in sending out Agricultural Instructors to the rural areas they should be briefed by the Head of the Department or the Ministry. They must not ignore the practical aspect and the human relationship; in other words they must be good mixers. They must know how to gain the confidence of the farmers by listening to what they have to say, and then endeavour to put some of their theoretical or scientific ideas into practice.

There was one Instructor in the North West District who was so much liked that when he was to be transferred to Georgetown in order to qualify for a higher post the people sent a petition asking Government to keep him there. They were quite satisfied with him and did not want anybody else, no matter what degrees he held. They wanted that officer because he had gained their confidence and they were quite ready to accept his advice. The Department, however, ruled that he must come to Georgetown for further studies. I championed the cause of the new officer who was sent to the district, and appealed to the farmers to give him a chance. It turned out that he also gained the confidence of the farmers.

The point I desire to stress is that if farming is to be a success in British Guiana the Agricultural Officers must know how to approach people so as to gain their confidence and co-operation. The farmer knows how to dig a hole and put in a plantain sucker, and he thinks he knows all about it. He does not know about diseases or what measures should be adopted to combat them. That is where the Instructor comes along and tells him what should be done and what should not be done. A more practical approach should be adopted by the Agricultural Instructor in imparting his knowledge to the ordinary farmer, and I desire particularly to stress that agricultural officers should be men who are not afraid of the bush, who do not dislike being away from the City; men who are dedicated to their work.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Beharry): I would like to con-

gratulate the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, for his observations with respect to the Extension Service, and his suggestions with regard to a better dissemination of information and knowledge to our farmers. I would like to draw to the attention of Members that there is to be a complete reorientation of our Extension Service, starting this year. In my first year of office a programme to make more lands available to farmers was instituted, and we have seen the results in increased production. There is to be a complete reorientation of our Extension Service. We intend to carry out a programme of educating our farmers in more scientific methods of production by the use of fertilizers and better agricultural husbandry, so that they could produce more on their existing holdings. A farmer can double his production on his present holding. For this purpose we have ear-marked a sum of \$17,000 for a Progressive Farmers' Scheme. There are to be established in this country this year 40 demonstration farms on farmers' holdings, in order that the farmers can see the benefit of research methods and modern agricultural husbandry. It is proposed by the Department that in a particular district it would select the most respected farmer in the community, a man who has won the regard of his entire village, and on his farm we shall select a piece of land to carry out demonstrations of modern technique in farming, so that the entire village may learn from this modern system of farming.

I agree entirely with the observations by Members on the other side of the Table, and I want to assure them that provision has been made in this Budget for the setting up of these 40 demonstration farms. The idea is to raise production not only by giving out more lands to farmers but by increasing yields on existing cultivations. It is this policy that has influenced the Director of Agriculture to change some of the designations of officers, so that there should be less rigidity about their functions and more co-ordination of their efforts to assist the farmers in bringing about increased production. The whole idea is to give more assistance to our farmers. Last year the accent

[MR. BEHARRY]

was on quantitative production; to make more lands available to farmers, but this reorientation is based on qualitative methods of production. We intend to demonstrate to the farmers the benefits that can accrue from more scientific methods of farming. We will watch to see what the results will be.

With respect to the poultry industry and the compliment paid by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh) to private enterprise, I agree with him that private enterprise has been responsible for the increase in poultry production, but I would like to draw the hon. Member's attention to the fact that the Department of Agriculture should also be complimented for the assistance and advice it has given to poultry farmers. I can assure the hon. Member that the Veterinary Officer visits Mr. Correia's farm every week and gives advice in respect of any disease that may attack his poultry farm, and as regards methods of increasing production. So it would not be fair for the hon. Member to say that the Department of Agriculture did not assist private industry or encourage it to make this country self-sufficient in poultry production.

It is true that in pre-war days peanuts were sold in our markets at 8 cents per lb., and so were several other commodities. Standards have risen since the war, and farmers as well as manufacturers are demanding more for their produce because wage rates have risen. There has been a general rise in standards of living, and one should not relate present prices to pre-war prices. I do admit that there is need for us to make supplies of all produce available in abundance so that they may reach the consumers at reasonable prices, but to suggest that they should be sold at pre-war prices, I do not think that is possible in the world today. I would like to assure hon. Members that everything possible is being done to educate and disseminate knowledge of modern agricultural husbandry so that our farmers can reap more of the fruits of their labour in the field of agriculture.

Mr. Jackson: The hon. Minister of Natural Resources has this morning given a lesson to his colleagues on his side of the Table, but I wish that some of them had not vacated their seats so that they would have learnt how to deal in this Council with matters which are of very grave importance to the economy of the country, taken as a whole. The Minister can be assured that as long as he adopts the attitude he has adopted this morning he will get from this side of the Table (I think I can speak with confidence for all the Members on this side) all the support he deserves. I would ask him to maintain that attitude, for only by so doing can the field which he covers produce the success which he hopes for with all his heart.

He says that there is going to be a re-orientation in the field of "extension services" in the Colony, and that this year we will see the farmers turning from the quantitative stage by taking up more land or all of the land which was available last year. This year we will see farmers turning to qualitative production we are told. I assume that by qualitative production it is an indication that not only will the farmers be told what should be planted in the land, but where to plant it. It is known that all crops are not efficiently produced in every area. There should be some system whereby farmers could receive financial assistance until their crops are reaped, in order to prevent them from following unfair practices so far as their labourers are concerned. Farmers should be farmers, and they should be given financial as well as agricultural assistance.

I think the hon. Minister of Natural Resources misunderstood what the hon. Member for Georgetown South said when he mentioned that peanut was once a commodity which was sold in pre-war days at 8c. per pound. I think the hon. Member was trying to point out that peanut could be successfully grown in this country, and that nothing has been done by way of research to encourage farmers to grow peanut. No survey of the soil has been made so that

the farmer would know whether it would pay him to plant peanut.

We have been told that there will be a progressive farmers' scheme where 40 plots of land will be given to farmers who will be specially chosen to work them. A man may be highly respected in a community, but it does not follow that he will be the right sort of person to work a plot of land. I hope the highly respectable farmer referred to will not be a social one, and that consideration will be given to the farming ability which the farmer has demonstrated in the field all along.

In view of the difficulties we have seen in districts where farming is carried out, we can say seriously that the farmers the hon. Minister has in mind are now suffering from frustration. I think, if my mind is focussed correctly, that many of the good farmers have given up their cultivations in the villages and have trekked into the City.

As the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajarj, has said it is a situation which we find in our midst today. The people who have been working on the land have found it unremunerative and they have removed to the City to swell the ranks of the unemployed. It is to be hoped that these things will be taken into consideration by the hon. Minister of Natural Resources, and we will see not only a general but also a detailed account of his proposals placed before this Council during the current year.

The Department of Agriculture is to be commended. It has certainly done a good job by way of assisting people in the poultry, cattle-rearing and rice industries. We regret that it is necessary for us to criticize this Department after it has done such good work.

I will now refer to what has taken place at Bartica. Extension work begun in the Bartica/Potaro area some time ago. The people were encouraged by the Agricultural Department to embark on the cultivation of citrus and the rearing of cattle. Officers in the Agricultural

Department encouraged the people to purchase pedigree cattle, but now that there is a surplus of milk in the area the Department has suddenly changed its policy. I understand that the Agricultural Officer who was giving very good advice to the people has been transferred to the Pomeroon District.

I feel that it is unfair to the Agricultural Officers and to the Department to keep moving these officers around at short notice. A transfer should be made on the assumption that officers have certain responsibilities not only to Government but to their families. It is therefore unfair to be changing them around because the Departments want to change the pattern of extension work.

So far as Bartica is concerned, those people were encouraged to purchase pedigree cattle from the Agricultural Department, but milk is now sent from Georgetown to Bartica where there is a surplus of that commodity. The farmers have complained about this aspect of the matter, and I wonder whether the hon. Minister of Natural Resources has any knowledge of it. If he has no knowledge of it, I wonder whether he will take the necessary steps to remedy the situation? The Department should not encourage people to improve the breed of their cattle and increase the production of milk today, and tomorrow change the entire system. The people at Bartica are now in a worse condition than hitherto and they are frustrated.

With regard to the designation of Agricultural Assistants, I believe that it will take away from Agricultural Officers a great amount of their prestige. I think you can call a farmer an agriculturist, and his assistant will simply be a man who works with him planting seeds, tilling the soil and so on. If it is proposed to change the designation of these officers it should not be changed from Agricultural Instructors to Agricultural Assistants, because it will interfere with the work and prestige of the officers concerned. An Agricultural Instructor is looked upon as somebody with higher training than an Agricultural Assistant.

[MR. JACKSON]

I understand that the object of the change in the designation of these Officers is to enable the person in charge of Department to keep shifting them around in order to make them do work which does not come within their particular sphere of duties. If we are going to develop our agricultural potentialities; if, as the hon. Minister says, there is going to be a re-orientation of things in the Department, it will be necessary to have skilled people working in the field. The Minister will be starting something new and different from what has been done before, and he should have men who specialize in certain things doing certain jobs.

There is an item under this Head dealing with artificial insemination. I understand it is the intention of the Department to use the Agricultural Instructors who are now called Agricultural Assistants on the job of inseminating cattle. I also understand it is the intention to reduce the number of workers who are doing very good work in this particular field, and make the Agricultural Assistants do the job.

Several of these Agricultural Officers are called upon to sit on Economic Committees and take part in other phases of agricultural development. It seems to me that the hon. Minister of Natural Resources will be well advised to take very good care when accepting suggestions from some of his officers with respect to the way in which certain work should be done.

[The Minister of Natural Resources left the Chamber].

The Chairman : Yes!

Mr. Jackson : I was speaking to the hon. Minister of Natural Resources who has just left the Chamber, and it will serve no useful purpose speaking in his absence.

The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran): The hon. Member should address the Chair.

Mr. Jackson : I was addressing the hon. Minister of Natural Resources through the Chair. I was saying that I hope the hon. Minister will examine very carefully the suggestions he receives from his officers before he acts upon them, so that we, on this side of the Council, who are here to assist him in his work will be assured that he is not doing anything to bring about the destruction of his good intentions. I hope he will take the advice we have been giving him from day to day and will continue to give him next week.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: This is indeed a matter of great concern to this community. I did not intend to deal with this matter at this stage, but since it has arisen I might as well deal with it now. I read in the newspapers — and I take it that there is some authenticity in it — that about half a million dollars, worth of corn was sold. But still I see on the vans and elsewhere advertisement of poultry feed — Lipscombe, Pillsbury, Low and others — and we import \$1½ million to \$2 million worth of this commodity each year.

This country is suffering from unemployment. We are producing the main items required for the production of poultry feeds, and yet the Department of Agriculture is putting embargoes on agricultural production. If the Minister can persuade the community by means of extension work by the Department of Agriculture to use local feed, he would not have to export his corn. All his broken rice would be used to supply the main starches required in the preparation of poultry food. It is true that he may have to import certain proteins or mineral matter. In so far as proteins are concerned, however, he can use meat or fish products available here and now going waste.

The hon. Minister has thought fit to do something about this. Pork is being sold here at 60 cents per pound, and pig snouts and other meat are being imported. The Minister in his lack of vision, instead of converting corn into meat, is exporting corn. Let him understand that

it is vision that saves a country, not chaos.

He referred us to the extension schemes. What manner of extension work can ever be done on 40 farms with \$17,000—just about \$400 to each farm? The hon. Minister must realize that we on this side have some vision or understanding about these matters. Probably he has in mind a single acre of land and doing the work in a half-hearted manner. What results can he expect then? Does he realize that it is in the interest of the farmers of this country that we should have more money for extension work? Either the Minister lacks courage or he lacks the courage to tell his colleagues of its importance. Most of the Agricultural Superintendents are people who drive in their motor-cars and say 'oh, they are planting corn there—I wonder if they will grow'. Can we help the farmers merely by talking? We want a practical demonstration.

While I am on this subject, I want to refer to the question of cassava. They were 2½ cents per pound and the Minister made them 1½ cents. Maybe he can consider this matter again.

Maybe he can consider the matter of extension generally, bringing in meat production, whether from sheep, goats or else. Do not let this remain the concern of private enterprise only. Increase the vote of \$17,000 to \$80,000, allocating at least \$2,000 to each farm. This will show loyalty to the farmers, and, through better production, a better way of living for the people of British Guiana.

Mr. Jackson: As I said a while ago, it seems we will be on this Head today and all next week. It is quite true that we have to import poultry feed into this country and that poultry producers have to pay high prices for it, as they have embarked on bigger production as a result of the encouragement given them by the Department of Agriculture.

I noticed in the newspaper some weeks ago a controversy between Mr. Humphrey of the Tower Hotel and the

B.G. Broiler Council with respect to the price of poultry, and quite suddenly the price of local poultry went down to the price at which poultry from the United States is landed here. It was clear that something was wrong, and we could not get the local article at the same price or cheaper than what it was imported from the United States for. But yesterday I said that in producing the local commodity to replace what is imported, three factors ought to be considered: that is, the price of the local commodity, the quantity which will be put on the market, and the quality of it.

I believe I am right in saying that an attempt was made by the Agriculture Department to produce poultry feed, but I am certain that the Department would admit that the quality of that product was very poor indeed, and so the feed did not take on with the local growers of poultry. People had to continue importing this article at very high prices. It is my opinion that it is not in the best interests that it should be done by a Government Department, and the expert knowledge that we need is to tell us how to manufacture better feed locally.

I shall refer during the course of this debate to other fields into which Government should not enter, but I want to say now that what Government should do in this field is to give the growers the benefit of research in order to help private enterprise to go in for production on a more elaborate scale than it does at the moment. I hope the Minister will reject any ideas that poultry production should be a Government venture, for then we will not have the results we ought to have.

Mr. Beharry: I have already stated in this Chamber that there is to be a complete re-orientation of the extension services. That includes teaching farmers to use excess produce to feed their livestock. The local demand for corn has been met, and what has been sold to Trinidad—and I may say at a favourable price to this country—is our excess supply.

On this question of Government em-

[MR. BEHARRY]

barking on the manufacture of feed for the poultry industry, I agree with the hon. Member for Georgetown South, and I may say that it is Government's policy to have this handed over to private industry; and private industry would manufacture local poultry and livestock feed under the guidance of the Department of Agriculture. I want to assure hon. Members that private industry, in collaboration with one of these manufacturers that the hon. Member for Georgetown South mentioned will start a feed factory in this country.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh : The only point I will reiterate to the hon. Minister is that the Field Extension Officers are not working hard enough to show people by practical means that they must use corn in British Guiana, especially since there is now a difficulty in obtaining copra meal which is even greater than before.

Corn helps to produce an excellent type of pork that is very good to the taste, and it is the duty of these officers to show by practical methods how it can be done. Their pigs can be turned into the market at a much earlier stage than ten months or a year. It is a practical proposition in large corn-growing countries like the U.S.A. and Argentine where an enormous quantity of corn, millions of bushels, is used for animal food and converted into pork and beef. That is what I am trying to impress on the Minister—that the Government should subsidize the use of corn through its Extension Service until the farmer is able to see from practical demonstration that it is in his best interest to make use of corn. If that is done there will be no need to export a single pound of corn.

Mr. Tello : Is the hon. Minister in a position to tell us if the great programme for the use of fertilizers on coconut estates, which he mentioned yesterday, is being carried out under the supervision of any one of these officers, and will be extended throughout the country, and the precise areas that have been dealt with so far?

Mr. Beharry : I read from a report which shows that fertilizers are used on certain coconut estates on the East Coast. I will make inquiries and let the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, know which estates are using it, so that he may adopt it on his own estate. I have not had an opportunity to discuss the matter yet.

Mr. Tello : Will the Minister also inquire whether the experiment with the use of fertilizers is being carried out under the supervision of a qualified officer.

Mr. Beharry : I can assure the hon. Member that the Department is carrying out an educational programme with the coconut estate proprietors in the use of fertilizers in order to increase their yields. It is being done with the guidance and advice of the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Davis : When I made that inquiry it was not for the purpose of any personal gain. I wanted to get that information so that I could do some free extension work for the Department.

Mr. Gajraj : I was about to say that I am grateful to the hon. Minister for clarifying that particular point, because his remarks yesterday led me to believe that the programme of experiments with fertilizers was part of the Department's Extension Service. Today we hear in no uncertain words that the fertilizing of these coconut areas is being done on private estates with the guidance of officers of the Department.

One would have expected that in a matter of this kind an area would have been chosen for the experiment by the Department, even if that area was privately owned, and that proper reports and records would have been kept so far as that experiment went, so as to be able to pass the experience on to others. When my colleague, Mr. Davis, asked for the precise areas yesterday I quite agree that it might have been difficult for the Minister to answer in precise terms, but one would have thought that since we were meeting today, and since the

particular sub-head had not been disposed of, the information would have been available to the Council today. The hon. Nominated Member did not ask for the information for his own benefit, but that the knowledge should be available to Members of the Council, so that as we come into contact with people we would be able to pass on the information in the same way as Mr. Davis said he would have been willing to do some free Extension work for the Department.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: As we have ventilated this subject and given our view to the hon. Minister, I beg to withdraw my Amendment.

AGRICULTURAL ENGINEER

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I beg to move the reduction of item (20)—“Agricultural Engineer,” \$6,354 — by \$1. As we travel about the country we see various types of machines operating on agricultural lands — machines owned by Government and by private enterprise. We see steel wheeled and caterpillar type tractors owned by co-operatives, by individual farmers, by large companies and by Government itself. We also see a large number of Government machines used for agricultural purposes lying abandoned, some of them incapable of being repaired. Thousands of dollars are thus lost in the export market. We see farmers being ruined and becoming insolvent through the use of the wrong types of machines. We have not yet seen a circular from the Ministry of Natural Resources, or from the Department of Agriculture, suggesting to the agricultural community the best type of machine for any specified type of work. I have seen no directions as to the best types of machines to be used for digging ditches, ploughing, etc.— whether the Ferguson, Fordson, David Brown, International or Caterpillar types of machines should be used for certain kinds of work. There is no direction from the Agricultural Engineer who is supposed to do Field and Extension work. I do not even see him moving from one part of the country to another. We do not know where he is stationed,

or whether he is moved from place to place. It is time the Minister gave us some information in this matter so that we might pass it on to the farmers. There is need for some guidance from the Agricultural Engineer as to what types of machines the farmers should purchase.

Mr. Hubbard: If I have misunderstood the hon. Member's suggestion I will withdraw the remarks I am going to make, but it seems to me that his suggestion would transgress a well established principle of commerce. I would resent a Government officer issuing a directive that a particular make of machine should be used by farmers. All manufacturers are entitled to put their products on the market and they supply technical advice as to the use of their machines. To suggest that an officer of the Government should go around selling people's tractors is something I would not endorse at all.

Mr. Davis: I think that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, is completely confused. I own a couple of tractors and I wish to say here and now that I have never seen the Agricultural Engineer on any part of my farm, or even passing through. I suppose he flies over. That is the point the hon. Member for Georgetown South was making — that the farmers do not get the benefit of the Agricultural Engineer's knowledge and experience. Mr. Hubbard has got a completely wrong slant and should be told so.

Mr. Hubbard: If the hon. Member mean that by the issue of a circular from the Department of Agriculture the Agricultural Engineer should teach people how to use the machines, well the confusion is elsewhere than with me.

Mr. Fredericks: I do not agree with my Friend on my left (Mr. Hubbard). I think what the hon. Member for Georgetown South intended to say was that the Department of Agriculture should have made tests of the various machines for ploughing, bulldozing and other agricultural jobs, and publish their findings so that the farmers might have

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the benefit of those tests and act accordingly; not that the Department should recommend a particular make of machine.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: For the assurance of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, my remarks were intended to convey that from his general knowledge and experience the Agricultural Engineer should be able to advise generally on the best types of machines that should be purchased to do special types of jobs. As far as brands are concerned that is a minor matter. The Majority Party in its heyday and at the hustings has advocated co-operative ownership, importation in bulk and bulk distribution. If the Agricultural Engineer had recommended special types of machines Government would have been able to suggest what was best for the farmers. I join with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, in saying that I have never seen the Agricultural Engineer even flying over, and apart from seeing his designation on the Estimates I do not know that he exists.

Mr. Hubbard: Now that the hon. Member has made his point clear I feel that I should say that his suggestion is quite good.

Mr. Beharry: We have one Agricultural Engineer attached to the Agricultural Department. If the hon. Member thinks that he should have seen this officer on his estate, I can assure him that the officer has a lot of work to do.

Mr. Davis: On a point of correction. If the hon. Minister does not know, he should be informed that two engineers are employed by Government in that Department at the moment.

Mr. Beharry: Subhead 20 states that provision is made for one Agricultural Engineer. I do not know whether the other man works free for Government.

Mr. Davis: I do not want to call names. I know that a young Guianese who has recently returned to this country is now working as an Agricultural

Engineer in the Department. There is another Agricultural Engineer who is, perhaps, in charge of the Mon Repos Station.

Mr. Beharry: We are dealing with subhead 20 — "Agricultural Engineer," Department of Agriculture. I am saying that there is only one Agricultural Engineer provided for under this Head. I cannot understand how the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, and the hon. Member for Georgetown South could assume that because they have not seen this officer on their estates that he is either not working or not doing good work.

I agree that there is need in the country for such an officer, because the country is becoming more and more mechanized and people are getting accustomed to the use of machines. The hon. Member says that there is need for more Agricultural Engineers and that they should give information as to what type of machinery farmers should plough their fields with, how they should reap their crops and other aspects of the use of machinery.

I have had reports from the Department of Agriculture over and over showing where the Agricultural Engineer went into the country districts and instructed farmers as to the correct way in which their machines should be used. Because the hon. Members have not seen this officer on their estates, it does not necessarily follow that he is not doing a good job.

The Engineer of the Department has been trying to find a machine that could plant padi, and he hopes to be able to plant rice with machines instead of using manual labour. The Department is also trying to find a machine that could reap rice. We are hoping to get rid of red rice by planting rice with machines.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Is the hon. Minister now seeking to obtain a machine that can plant rice? He is certainly living in the past, and is not paying attention to what is going on in

the country so far as the rice industry is concerned. We have gone beyond the day when we transplanted rice.

Mr. Beharry: The hon. Member is referring to people with large holdings. Over 50% of the farmers are people with small holdings and they have to transplant rice.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: The small holder has no machine, and he does not even dream of owning a machine. The Government should be prepared to make machines available to the small holder, and the experience of the Agricultural Engineer should be placed at his disposal.

The hon. Minister spoke about the work the Agricultural Engineer is doing. I have a farm on the West Coast, and the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, has one on the East Coast. I am not desirous of seeing the Agricultural Engineer on my farm, because he may be incapable of giving me beneficial advice. I merely tendered my personal knowledge and the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, did the same thing to show that we have farms in the areas and know that the person who is supposed to give advice is a mere myth and is not doing extension work. The hon. Minister must realize that we are merely raising these matters in the interest of the public, and we hope that he will be goaded to make his officers work in the interest of the country rather than idling complacently while thinking of theories.

If the Agricultural Engineer is stationed at Mon Repos, I think that Extension Station is too much of a model to be used for the purpose. He should not be working at Mon Repos, but he should be doing extension work in the field. I want the hon. Minister to understand that I have nothing against the Agricultural Engineer, and I am merely trying to give advice in the hope that it will be accepted. I am not going to seek advice from someone who is unable to give it to me.

I have referred to the West Coast and East Coast areas to show that he has not done work there. Essequibo is a very remote area, and I do not think he will ever reach there.

Mr. Campbell: With regard to the question of machines, the Agricultural Engineer should be able to advise farmers on what type of machine they should use in mechanized farms, especially in the rural areas. One of the most crying needs on the farm in the North West District and elsewhere is a machine capable of weeding grass. Up to now no machine has been evolved in any part of the world to answer the question. The weeding of grass is the most expensive item on a farm. If a machine can be made to weed grass without breaking down continually, I would like to hear about it. If the Agricultural Engineer can tell us something about such a machine, the farmers will be very glad to hear about it.

Mr. Jackson: I would like to say something in the presence of the hon. Minister of Natural Resources, so I will have to take my seat until he returns.

The Chairman: I do not know if anyone else wishes to speak. If the hon. Minister does not return in five minutes, shall we sit in silence?

Mr. Jackson: I do not anticipate that, but I am sorry the hon. Minister is not present. Since we met in Finance Committee I have had information which makes me question the number of Engineers under this item. I gather that there are two officers working in the Department of Agriculture. If there are two then where is the money coming from to pay the other officer? I understand that the policy is not to name officers, and I should be grateful if the hon. Minister of Natural Resources would return in time to reply to my question. Why are we providing for one Agricultural Engineer when two are actually working in the Department? I understand that one is working in the technical field and the other one is working on an administrative level, so there is something wrong

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with the Estimates and with what is happening in the Department of Agriculture.

Mr. Campbell: I take it there is no answer about these weeding machines.

The Chief Secretary rose—

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I rise again to ask the Government — that is, the responsible Government — what is the Agricultural Engineer doing outside of the rice or the sugar industry? They have taken steps to protect other agricultural crops by placing a high duty on potatoes. What steps are now being taken to introduce machinery for the protection of tannias, yams, cassava, eddoes and other crops of that nature? It is true that the Agricultural Engineer finds himself in the rice field, but that crop is largely in the hands of private enterprise. The Minister of Natural Resources is not here, but the Government is responsible as a whole, and maybe the Minister of Trade and Industry will answer.

Mr. Gajraj: I wish to say that the Members on this side seem to be addressing empty chairs. Points are made and they should be answered by the Ministers. If the Ministers are otherwise engaged, then perhaps Your Honour might consider taking an application for an adjournment to a later stage. It is useless our talking merely for the record.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: In addition I wish to add this to what the hon. Member, Mr. Gajraj said: we have met this morning at the instance of the Government, and it is a discourtesy to Members of the "Opposition" to see empty chairs on the other side of the Chamber. If the Government is absent in this matter, we will await their pleasure, and debate the issue when they have the pleasure of attending.

Mr. Beharry: Mr. Chairman, I am very sorry, but I had to go out of the Chamber. The Agricultural Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies paid us a visit, and I just wanted to say

good-bye, as he is leaving tomorrow. In fact I had asked to discuss our Programme with him before he leaves. I just went outside for that reason, and I meant no discourtesy to Members of the "Opposition".

Mr. Gajraj: I am sure that none of us here would not wish the hon. Minister to continue having discussions with the Adviser, and if he wishes, a Motion for the adjournment may be entertained on this side.

The Chief Secretary: To answer the question raised by the Member for Georgetown South about the Agricultural Engineers, I understand the position at the present time is that we have one Agricultural Engineer on contract. This contract is about to expire. Another Engineer who has been in training, has recently assumed duty and he will take over from the contract officer. Money is available to pay two salaries during the year. I understand that the contract officer is coming back afterwards as an Agricultural Officer.

Mr. Gajraj: May I inquire if the Agricultural Engineer is expected also to give advice on the maintenance of machines? I ask this question because it is generally appreciated that a large number of our agricultural machines — mechanical equipment — find themselves in the possession of small farmers, who may cultivate as many as 20 acres of rice land. I believe that if these farmers do not get proper training in the operation and maintenance of their machines, they will not get good value from their investment. Suggestions have been made in the past for some arm of Government to extend its services by way of schools in the various farming areas. I do not know whether it is considered one of the functions of the Agricultural Engineer, and maybe the hon Minister will enlighten us.

Mr. Beharry: On this question of the use and maintenance of agricultural machinery, I said before that our Agricultural Engineer, from the time he came back to this country, has been

holding talks with farmers in the districts, and that is one way of trying to educate the farmers. Arising out of a Committee meeting held by Government, it was discovered that it is necessary for the commercial undertakings selling machines to farmers to assist farmers in the proper use of their machines through agents in the districts and otherwise.

I think the Minister of Trade and Industry has already written the commercial undertakings asking them to make available more information in this regard. With the limited resources of the Department, the most we can do is being done right now. The Agricultural Engineer was in the Corentyne area, and he is expected to be back in Georgetown on Monday.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I asked what effort was being made by the Ministry of Natural Resources to channel some information and some engineering knowledge into the field of production of such crops as tannias, eddoes, yams, cassava and plantains, now that we have this protective and revenue-raising tax on potatoes, in order that we may be able to produce those products and at a much lower cost than we have done thus far, and in greater quantities to meet the demand that will naturally arise. I want to know whether the Agricultural Engineer has taken any steps to recommend suitable machines to the farmers, and whether Government intends to make such machines available to our farmers.

Mr. Beharry: As I have said before, investigations as to the use of machines are being carried out by the Department of Agriculture and will continue to be carried out in the field of production, whether it is rice, tannias, eddoes or cassava, and, wherever possible, information will be passed on to the farmers.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Will the Minister say whether those investigations include the cultivation and reaping of tannias, eddoes, yams, cassava and plantains

by mechanical means? I would also like to know where in British Guiana is this Field and Extension work being carried on.

Mr. Beharry: I do not know if the hon. Member is really confused, or is trying to confuse this Council. I know that farmers who plant cassava, eddoes and such things use bulldozers, tractors and such machines to prepare the land, but there is no machine in the country at present which can reap tannias, eddoes, cassava and such crops. If and when we can find machines which can reap such crops the Department of Agriculture will advise the farmers.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Is the Minister investigating the availability of those machines himself? To my knowledge they exist—maybe not in British Guiana. There are machines for the reaping of root crops. A farmer in the U.S.A. reaps his potatoes by means of machines; he does not reap with his hands. He also uses a machine to plant them. I want the Minister to realize that we are interested in reducing the cost of production so that these products may reach the market at low prices, and the farmer may be able to produce them in abundance so that they may be used not only for human consumption but for feeding animals. This is Field and Extension work and we want some work done in that field. The Agricultural Engineer should be instructed by the far-seeing vision of the Minister to do some work in this respect.

Mr. Beharry: I do not understand how the hon. Member can compare farming in the U.S.A. with that in British Guiana. There is a subsidy of \$8 million to farmers in the U.S.A. as compared with \$310,000 in this country, and even that expenditure is criticized from time to time. I visualize, and I think the hon. Member should be able to appreciate, that farming is a tremendous industry in the U.S.A. Farmers in this country are peasants, producing eddoes, tannias and other peasant crops. I can assure the hon. Member that everything is being done within the limits of the funds provided for the Department of Agriculture,

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to find the answers to these problems.

The Chairman: We are supposed to stop at twelve o'clock. If the discussion on the item is not concluded now we shall have to return to it later. We have to resume in Council and then adjourn to another day.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: As Your Honour wishes.

The Chairman: If we have to resume the debate we will. I am not stopping anybody.

The Financial Secretary: I move that the Council resume.

Agreed to.

Council resumed.

INACCURATE NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

The Chief Secretary: May I make reference, Sir, to a matter of some importance and apologize for not doing so at the proper time. There is a mis-statement of fact in the editorial of today's "Daily Argosy" which I feel should not go unchallenged, because it does cast a reflection on the whole Council, I think, and not just on those of us on this side of the Table. Since I am personally involved I should like to read the particular passage in the article which says:

"The rushing of the Budget through its second reading after the strength of the Opposition had been depleted by the walk-out of four of its members might be called a clever manoeuvre of the Government . . ."

Then the article goes on to be critical. An editor is entitled to express his views but that statement is completely wrong. The Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill was taken with all Members present, and I should like the statement in the article to be corrected and the correction put on record.

The Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan): I also would like to refer to the same editorial, because I think it is a violent and vicious attack on me person-

ally. I would like to read the particular paragraph which says:

"We are well aware of Dr. Jagan's dislike and intolerance for opposition . . ."

Mr. Burnham: I rise to a point of order! That is not a matter of privilege. An editor is entitled to his opinion of any politician. I intend to speak on the matter later.

Mr. Speaker: I think the question which has been referred to by the hon. the Chief Secretary is properly mentioned. I have not yet seen the Hansard report, but my recollection is that when the vote was taken on the Second Reading of the Bill the Council was full. I think that is correct. There may have been one or two Members absent, but I think the Council was full. The hon. the Chief Secretary is right in that regard.

I have not had the opportunity of reading the article and, at this moment, I can say nothing of it myself. If it is a matter of opinion or comment, surely there are other remedies and I do not think this is the moment to discuss it.

I permitted what was said by the hon. the Chief Secretary, because he said that he was referring to a statement of fact which could easily be dealt with, but if there is going to be a matter of controversy I am afraid we cannot deal with it today. If no proper reference can be made to any other part of the article—I do not know whether there are any proper references to be made or not—I think another opportunity should be chosen to deal with that.

Dr. Jagan: If you are not going to permit me to state my point now, I want to inform you that I will speak on the matter at the next meeting—

Mr. Speaker: I am still on my legs! Whatever it is, I think a better opportunity should be chosen to deal with it. I can express no opinion on it because I do not know what it is. I will adjourn this Council until—

Mr. Burnham: I will ask your indul-

gence to say that I agree with the hon. the Chief Secretary that the matter should be corrected. As one of those who left the Chamber, I would like to say categorically that there was no question of the Second Reading of the Bill being taken after the Opposition had been depleted. I think the article is absolutely inaccurate and should be corrected.

Mr. Speaker: I have already said so.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I feel that the deliberations of this Council should be broadcast to the public in the same way as is done in Trinidad, and I should be grateful if Government would take the necessary steps to have that done.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think this is the proper time for that. I should like to know when we are going to resume the debate on the Budget.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Secretary: What about Monday, Sir?

Mr. Hubbard: Tuesday.

The Chief Secretary: I would suggest Monday at 2.00 p.m.

Mr. Fredericks: I would not be available on any Monday.

Mr. Davis: I am in the same position as the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, and I would suggest Tuesday.

The Chief Secretary: I beg to move that this Council adjourns until Tuesday, 17th February, 1959, at 2.00 p.m. It may be necessary to adjourn at 5 p.m., and resume at 8.15 p.m. in order to get through the Budget.

Mr. Speaker: This Council stands adjourned until 2.00 p.m. on Tuesday, 17th February, 1959. There may be evening Sessions at 8.15 p.m., if you so desire.

Council adjourned at 12.05 p.m.