

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

FRIDAY, 1ST FEBRUARY, 1946.

The Council met at 2 p.m., His Excellency the Governor, Sir Gordon 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. F. J. Seaford, C.B.E. (Georgetown North).

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

The Hon. A. G. King (Demerara River).

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. T. T. Thompson (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 31st of January, 1946, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

LEAVE PASSAGES FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Heape) communicated the following Message:—

MESSAGE No. 16

Honourable Members of Legislative Council,

The question of the grant of leave passages to public officers has been under consideration from time to time during the past ten years and Government is of the opinion that it has now become a matter requiring serious and immediate consideration.

2. A scheme of assisted leave passages for public officers on the Pensionable Establishment was introduced in this Colony in 1921 under the authority of Combined Court Resolution No. XLII of the 6th December, 1920, and was abandoned in 1927 as the result of Combined Court Resolution No. LXII of the 15th of December, 1927, owing to financial stringency.

3. In 1933, a Colonial Office Committee under the Chairmanship of the Earl of Plymouth was set up to review the leave and passage conditions for the Colonial Service, and this Committee strongly urged on Colonial Governments that free leave pas-

sages should be provided in the case of all members of the United Branches of the Colonial Service and officers holding posts of corresponding status. In a despatch dated the 8th of March, 1935, with reference to the Plymouth Report the then Secretary of State for the Colonies made the following comments relative to leave passages:—

“But perhaps the most important changes which the Committee recommend in the present leave system relate to the grant of passages. At present officers receive no assistance from the Government towards the cost of passages when they are proceeding on, or returning from leave. In this respect the policy followed in the West Indian Colonies is at variance with that followed in other Colonies generally, which with few exceptions grant some assistance towards the cost of passages not only for the officer himself but for his family. It will be seen from the Report that the Committee recommend that free passages should invariably be provided for an officer who is granted vacation leave on the conclusion of the prescribed minimum tour or on medical grounds. They lay the greatest stress on the recommendation, holding that failure to accept the liability to provide passages is inconsistent with the obligations which the Government can and should reasonably be expected to undertake, and that the cost should be regarded as a necessary and not an optional item of public expenditure. Hardly less emphatic is their recommendation that a similar concession should be granted for officers' wives, that is to say, in effect, that they should be granted a free passage if required once each way each tour.”

4. A local committee appointed in 1936 to advise on the proposals in the Plymouth Report did not favour the introduction of the grant of leave passages at that time and no action was taken upon it. However, the Secretary of State has continued from time to time to urge that some provision should be made for leave passages—particularly for the benefit of officers recruited from outside the Colony. Apart from the desirability of the concession from the points of view of the officers themselves, the Secretary of State has stressed the disadvantage which this Colony suffers in recruiting senior staff owing to unfavourable comparison with these colonies which grant such facilities as a matter of course.

5. The Civil Service Association have made repeated representations that the concession originally granted in 1920 should be

revived in their original or some alternative form when hostilities ceased, on the ground that most officers would otherwise be financially unable to take leave. Representations on the subject have also been put forward by a number of Heads of Departments in a letter the concluding paragraph of which reads as follows:—

“6. As a result the majority of senior Officers see little hope of being able to find the money necessary to enable them to obtain passages when the War is over, and this is inducing a feeling of hopelessness which is definitely detrimental to the morale of the Service. We regard the question as being so serious that we feel justified in taking the somewhat unusual step of addressing you on the subject and stressing the very urgent need for consideration of the question.”

More recently, a number of officers recruited from the United Kingdom or the Dominions now serving in the Colony have addressed a Memorial to the Secretary of State for the Colonies in which they plead for assistance on the ground that they are financially unable, after lengthy periods of service, to return home on leave, and claim that there are some officers who, without such assistance, “will find themselves literally stranded in the Colony.”

6. The attitude of the Government in this respect has always been that there should be no discrimination or distinctions in the terms and conditions of service as between officers recruited from abroad and those recruited in the Colony. Furthermore, such a distinction is invidious and almost meaningless where, as in this Colony, there are a number of officers who, though recruited from outside the Colony, are of West Indian origin or domicile. Nevertheless, it is obvious that any scheme by which free leave passages would be granted to all pensionable officers and employees throughout the Public Service is now financially impracticable having regard to the enormous expansion of the Pensionable Establishment which has resulted from recent reclassifications and revisions of salary scales. Consequently, any resuscitation of this privilege must be limited to cover those cases where the need is most urgent or the concession is otherwise desirable and justifiable on grounds of the public interest.

7. Government has given the most careful consideration to all aspects of this question and, with the advice of the Executive Council, it has been decided to recommend that the grant of leave passages should be introduced with effect from 1st January, 1946, applicable only to those officers who are “senior

Officers" within the meaning of this term as defined by the Public Officers' Leave (Amendment) Regulations, 1940. This definition is as follows:—

"Senior Officer means an officer who holds a post—

- (a) the maximum salary of which is not less than \$2,880 per annum or
- (b) the initial or fixed salary of which is not less than \$2,400 per annum".

(It should be explained that "Senior Officers" are entitled to six months' vacation leave after completion of a tour of service of three years and officers who are not "Senior Officers" on completion of a tour of service of four years).

8. "Senior Officers" embrace practically all those holding responsible posts in the Public Service whether recruited within or outside the Colony. There are, however, a few officers holding responsible posts recruited from abroad who are not "Senior Officers" whose cases may require special consideration, and it would accordingly be desirable to allow, in any Regulations framed to govern the grant of leave passage, for the admission of any individual case of an officer recruited abroad not otherwise entitled to benefit.

9. The total number of serving Senior Officers to whom the proposed concession of leave passages would apply is at present 198 of whom only 59 are normally domiciled outside the Caribbean area. There would accordingly be no discrimination in favour of officers recruited from the United Kingdom or the Dominions.

10. A copy of the proposed Passages Regulations is appended to this Message. The Regulations set out the terms and conditions under which the grant of free passages would be applied.

11. It is not possible to arrive at any accurate estimate of the annual cost at the present time. It is however expected that under normal conditions when the taking of vacation leave by senior officers can be resumed on a regular footing and steamer passages at reasonable rates are obtainable the cost should not exceed the comparatively small sum of five to six thousand pounds per annum, and might be substantially less.

12. I invite the Council to approve of the introduction of the proposed Leave Passages Regulations with effect

from 1st January, 1946, and to undertake to provide the necessary funds to give effect thereto.

GORDON LETHEM,
Governor.

PAPERS LAID.

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

Report on the causes and circumstances of the fire in Georgetown on the 23rd of February, 1945.

Report of the Transport and Harbours Department for the year 1944.

Report of the Directors of the New Widows and Orphans Fund for the year 1944.

Report of the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board for the period 1st October, 1944, to 31st March, 1945.

GOVERNMENT NOTICE.

LEAVE PASSAGES REGULATIONS

The COLONIAL SECRETARY gave notice of the following motion:

That with reference to the Governor's Message No. 16 dated 22nd January, 1946, this Council approves of the introduction of Leave Passages Regulations as indicated in the Message and undertake to provide the necessary funds to give effect thereto.

ORDER OF THE DAY

BILLS—FIRST READING

The PRESIDENT: As I said yesterday, I think it would be useful to take the first reading of the four Bills on the Order Paper in order that we may make some progress with them some days later. I will therefore call upon the Attorney-General to move the first reading of the Bills.

On a motion of the Attorney-General seconded by Mr. Woolford the following Bills were read the first time:—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to render illegal certain agreements and transactions affecting bidding at auctions."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide that houses let for human habitation shall be and shall continue to be in repair and in all respects reasonably fit for the purpose of letting."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the taking from time to time of a census of the Colony or any area therein and for otherwise obtaining statistical information with respect to the population."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the preservation and maintenance of the navigation markers for the Demerara River and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

RICE MARKETING BILL.

The Council resumed the debate on 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."

INACCURATE NEWSPAPER REPORT.

The PRESIDENT: I have been asked by one of the Members yesterday to make a correction as to a press report. Members will remember that I had said that the best way to treat the matter was to take advantage of the second reading and have set out the views of Members as to the pros and cons. It is of course very necessary that there should be accuracy.

The hon. Member for Essequibo River is reported in one of the newspapers as having stated.

"The rice growers of Wakenaam and Leguan suggested that there should be an Executive Committee of the Board consisting of the Colonial Treasurer as Chairman and the Director of Agriculture as Vice-Chairman."

The Member says that what he really said was the following:

"The Chairman should be one of the Elected Members of the Legislative Council, the Director of Agriculture as Vice-Chairman and the other member to be nominated by you to be, if you so desire, the Colonial Treasurer, and I stated that a member of my Constituency suggested Mr. McDavid to be that other member."

From memory I confirm what the hon. Member states. I trust that this will satisfy the point raised to me by him. I would just like to comment further that it is difficult to expect the Press here to give detailed accuracy to a speech lasting fifty-six minutes as did that of the hon. Member yesterday, and it might be worth his while to make out his own precis in as much detail as he wishes—which I should say I find necessary to do myself.

I would just like to add a comment on what I said yesterday on adjourning the debate, that is on the question of price. I entirely appreciate the point made by the hon. Member for North Western District the rise in price of imported stuffs going on against us—leading as he said to subsidization by Government—while we seem to be prohibited from steadily raising our price for export against outside buyers who really are in serious need of our rice, must seem to growers wrong. It is easy and tempting to say that we might have made a lot of money by putting up our price to a high figure. I do not think, however, we should allow ourselves or the ordinary producer to be deluded by that dream.

I said quite seriously that any rise in price beyond the reasonable figure would have led to substitution of other things in the consuming markets and our rice left on our hands for want of shipping. That is quite true. I speak with experience of the consuming markets in the West Indies. On the first

intimation of the rise in price in 1940 or whenever it was, I was in one of the West Indian islands and engaged in direct discussion with a Chamber of Commerce as to the purchasing of supplies from Canada and U.S.A. The intimation of the rise in Guiana's price of the rice came to us then and led to the immediate proposal by unofficial opinion that we should cut out altogether the importation of Guiana rice and secure a larger quantity of flour and other substitutes from Canada.

Members must realise that the rise in price of our rice coupled again with further rise in 1943, has had reactions against us, particularly our making our export price higher than our local price. I do not say that they were reasonable or fair to us, but we have to recognise these things. What I am quite sure of is that any attempt to put our price to the Islands at a high figure, such as the hon. Member indicated yesterday, would most certainly have led to the action I have indicated—greater supplies of flour and other things to the Islands, which would have been taken out of our quota. That would have been altogether to the advantage of the shipping position, a reduction in shipping space on the long journey down here and a washing out of shipping space for rice from Guiana to the Islands. It must be remembered that one of the factors in keeping our market for rice in the West Indies during the war has been a reasonable price, and for that reason our rice was taken in spite of the awkwardness of supply in shipping to and from this farthest point of the Caribbean area.

Some of us may feel that this is an imposition from outside, and that may be true in the circumstances of the war. But we in this country have had peace and reasonable plenty and even some prosperity and money and have not had a great price to pay for it. It may be different in the future in peace time, with a freer market.

I think we must also record that there has in fact been a substantial rise to the producer. No doubt there are several Members of this Council who can thoroughly vindicate that, and by and large that price has been favourable to producers and certainly led to maintaining expanding area production.

There is one other point touching prices. The hon. Member talked about "world price" as being something much higher than we have been getting. Now the price of rice in fact varies in different countries. Where consumption is low per capita price may be very high. That is the case in the United States and in Australia for example. In such countries the consumer does not mind paying a high price for the small quantity used.

But in countries where there is a high consumption of rice per capita there will be no business unless the price is competitive and fairly low. The great mass of consumers will be unable or quite unwilling to pay fancy prices such as might be obtained in a few low consuming countries. Our export from this country is 50 per cent. of its production and might be more, therefore the life-blood of the industry must be export, and we are not going to be able to secure or maintain a high export to the countries likely to take our rice unless we can keep down to a competitive price.

That is one of the long view advantages of the single seller organisation. I have myself many criticisms of the Rice Marketing Board which, I hope, can be met with the new organisation. But this is one of the services it has performed and can in future perform—a steady market at a stabled price. A "free-for-all" export trade, asking for fancy prices in fancy places will not get the rice industry in this country, as a main industry, anywhere.

As I have said, while I do appreciate the point made by the hon. Member, and his natural feeling about it, I think the greater wisdom lies with the long view and the competitive price for big consumer markets.

Mr. JACOB: I am very glad that Your Excellency has endeavoured to explain the remarks you made before the adjournment was taken yesterday afternoon because I had intended to say something on the subject, but I still think it necessary for me to say a word or two about the remarks you have made. Before I do so I want to say just one thing about the report in the *Guiana Graphic* on page 7. I am reported to have said that the rice industry was now worth \$1,000,000. Perhaps the dollar sign is put in the wrong place; it should have been £1,000,000. I quite appreciate the position of newspapers trying to condense speeches, but I have always found—and I say with regret—that when my speeches are condensed the worst parts are reported in all sections of the Press. (laughter). Hon. Members may laugh, but some of them hardly take any interest in what they see reported. Let me just read the paragraph I was referring to. It reads—

“He believed that the production of rice now in the Colony had reached 50,000 tons and that the Industry was now worth \$1,000,000.”

One gets an entirely wrong impression when one reads that paragraph. It is so garbled that I need say nothing more.

The PRESIDENT: I might have mentioned it. I did not notice it, but I thought it was so obviously wrong that everybody would know that \$5,000,000 was meant.

Mr. JACOB: Apart from the error in the figure I am concerned with the way it is put. Of course I cannot say anything because I have no control over the newspapers. This Council has no control either. In the same newspaper Your Excellency is reported to have said:—

“The PRESIDENT: If the Board had done what the Honourable Member represented we should have jolly well had to eat our own rice and get nothing else—no flour, no split peas, no pickled meat, nothing at all. We might have been asked: “You want a high price for your rice?—Eat it!” (Laughter).”

I think the substance of that paragraph is correct as to what Your Excellency stated on that important point. According to the last report of the Rice Marketing Board (in fact the last printed one to 30th September, 1944) we have been selling rice to Trinidad (Army), Barbados (Army), the Windward and Leeward Islands, Jamaica and Surinam. The quantity exported to Surinam was just 201 tons, and to Jamaica 1,326 tons.....Those places could not have told us they would not give us flour, split peas and pickled meat. They certainly could not. My point is that the Board has picked out the worst possible markets to sell the bulk of our rice, and it is a disgrace and a shame that this Government should have sponsored such a business when it knew perfectly well that most of the rice producers eat rice three times a day. Of course they ate their rice; they could get nothing else. They could not buy pickled meat because of the low prices paid for their rice. Who is responsible but the Rice Marketing Board which has been in existence for 13 years? The position of the rice producers is just as bad now as it was 20 years ago, if not worse. As a matter of fact, I know that before the Board actually took control the position of the rice producers was very much better. As Your Excellency rightly stated, most of these people eat nothing else but rice; they cannot buy anything. They are in such a state of penury and want in some of the districts that they can do nothing else but eat rice, and the degree of malnutrition among them and their children is very high.

The Board should have sold rice to markets which would have paid higher prices, and not to such places like Trinidad and Barbados which cannot afford to do so. The position of some of the people in those Islands is just as bad as that of the people in this Colony. Who is responsible for that ultimately and finally? I say the Imperial Authorities who control the mode of living of the people in the British West Indies. In order to give a sop to the people in the West Indies it was arranged that the slaves in British Guiana should supply them with cheap rice. So much for Your Excellency's remark "Eat your rice."

Your Excellency has said that the export trade in rice is the life blood of the industry. I submit with all confidence that that is not so. According to the official figures the export of rice during the last thirteen years was on an average less than 15,000 tons per annum, while the local consumption was around 28,000 tons per annum. How can the export trade be considered the life blood of the industry when it is only about half of the local consumption? I know that Your Excellency is very busy and that you are unable to get at these figures. I also think you have been grossly misled by your advisers about figures and in regard to statements you make from that chair from time to time not only about rice but other matters. It is time we got correct information from the highest Executive Officers of this Government. I object very strongly to being misled by Government Officers, particularly the highly paid ones. I said yesterday I could not believe certain figures given by the hon. the Colonial Treasurer which I took with reserve. Some Members may laugh about it; they are not concerned. Yesterday the hon. the Colonial Secretary attempted to correct me when I stated that we should have sold rice to other places. He whispered to the Colonial Treasurer while I was speaking and then interrupted me. If the hon. Mem-

ber expects respect from me he must be very careful when he gets up to make corrections?"

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of order, sir! With your permission every Member is entitled to rise to a point of order. We have free speech in this Council and I say exactly what I feel is correct, but I will speak the truth I hope the hon. Member will do likewise.

Mr. JACOB: It is not the truth when the hon. Member interrupted me to say that my statements were not correct. Let the hon. Member prove from the records of the Rice Marketing Board—not from what the Colonial Treasurer might say to him while the debate is going on—to which countries British Guiana rice has been exported during the period of the war from 1939 to 1945. I gave the Rice Marketing Board figures and information of value which I had obtained at considerable expense, but the Board refused to pursue the matter because it suited it best not to sell rice to certain places. It is a far-reaching policy of this Government, and that is why the rice industry is in its present state.

I have no personal interest and I do not want any job with the Board. I have been accused of wanting a job. I do not want any job with Government particularly the British Guiana Government, nor do I want a job with the Rice Marketing Board. I am speaking as one of the people's representatives and I know what I am talking about. I object very strongly to the Colonial Secretary making statements that are not borne out by facts. He will have an opportunity to reply and I challenge him to name the places other than those recorded in this report, to which the Board sold rice. Maybe other places have been fortunate in getting our rice, but they are not recorded in any printed document. At least I have not seen it. Perhaps that document has not yet been

printed, but from information at my disposal and the documents I have perused I say that the Board deliberately did not export rice to markets which could have paid double the price without feeling the pinch.

When I was in England in 1933 I interviewed a London broker and on my return to the Colony I actually shipped rice to London, making a very handsome profit. The people in England were quite willing to pay any price provided they got a proper article. They imported 10,000 tons of rice annually. That is the figure I got from the London broker. I shipped the rice to London, and apart from a few minor defects it was liked. I made specific arrangements to ship the rice and the type that was wanted. I still have in my possession a sample of the rice which I shipped. I think it was early in 1940 or late in 1939 that I submitted proposals to the Rice Marketing Board with respect to the shipment of rice to the United Kingdom but the Board did not even treat me with the courtesy of acknowledging the receipt of my letter. Ships take sugar from this Colony to the United Kingdom. Why can't they take rice too? It does not suit the sugar producers who I think are still bossing the Government. It does not suit them to foster a rival industry. When rice is shipped away the freight paid is double that paid on sugar. Why shouldn't it pay the same rate? It would not suit this Government and the Imperial Government to have such a state of affairs existing. With the rice industry rivaling the sugar industry on equal conditions the sugar industry would be doomed in 10 years. That is something for this Government and the sugar producers to think about. That is one of the reasons why Government will not attempt to do anything which would make for real progress of the rice industry.

I say that the Rice Marketing Board ought to sell rice, coffee and other

products to the United Kingdom in the same way as we export sugar. The United Kingdom Government gives sugar special preferences. If Government was really keen on helping the rice producers it would also obtain a preference for our rice in the United Kingdom market. I have been connected with the sugar industry for 30 years and the rice industry for about the same period. I know and I challenge anyone to doubt that I know why Government or the Rice Marketing Board has not negotiated for the sale of our rice in the United Kingdom and for an Imperial preference on rice.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: A preference against India and Burma, may I ask?

Mr. JACOB: That is so much nonsense (laughter). Doesn't this Colony get a preference on its sugar against other colonial sugar—sometimes a higher preference?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No.

Mr. JACOB: I do not believe these things and it is a disgrace that the Treasurer should make such a statement. I know it is not true. I am prepared to tell any officer of this Government what I think about him. Why shouldn't British Guiana get a preference on its rice even against Burma? Why not? What have we to do with Burma? The rice producers are competing with the sugar producers in the employment of labour. The rice producers have to pay for the production of rice the same prices as and sometimes more than what the sugar producers pay in the labour market. Since the sugar producers receive a preference of £5 per ton or one cent per lb., how can the rice producers possibly compete with the sugar industry? Rice is at a disadvantage. You put a bag of rice on the wharf for shipment and you have to pay a higher freight rate than that for sugar. The financial expert of Government laughed at the

idea when the suggestion was made that rice be given a preference in the United Kingdom market. We admit all goods from the United Kingdom under preferential tariff, why not under the general tariff? But, no; these experts believe that no one here has the ability or brains to see through this thing. It is a serious imposition on the people of the Colony and on the rice producers, and the Government ought to be ashamed of itself for not attempting to make the lot of the rice producer better than it is.

So much about the United Kingdom market. What about the Canadian Market? This country has had an export trade with Canada for a long time. It was not in very large quantity. In 1939 before the outbreak of war I had planned to go to Canada and arrange for shipments of rice to that country. There is, however, difficulty about it. The Canadian people would buy our rice provided someone with skill and knowledge can guarantee the particular type of rice wanted. Why was it not done in the Canadian market where you can get a far better price? No, the British Guiana rice producers must not get that. I say that every member of the Board is too lazy.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I think the hon. Member ought to know that I said, since 1942 the food requirements of this part of the world have been controlled by the international organization. First the British Supplies Mission at Washington and then the Combined Food Board have to authorise it and then you proceed to arrange for the shipping and so on. It is not within the competence of this Government or the Board to sell rice to Canada. I do not think the hon. Member need proceed with the point any further. We did not want to deprive our neighbours of food, but we could have done otherwise as the war was on.

The PRESIDENT: In the war years any question of selling to the United Kingdom or Canada was entirely off the map. If the hon. Member wishes to argue that we should attempt to obtain markets in the United Kingdom and Canada when normal conditions return, I entirely agree with him.

Mr. JACOB: I was talking about 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941. The hon. Colonial Treasurer says 1942. I say that in those years we exported rice. In 1939 I had planned to return to the Colony from the United Kingdom via Canada and to reorganize the rice trade with that country.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is perfectly right in saying so, but he is giving the impression in his speech that in these quite recent years the Board has prevented the grower from getting better prices. The hon. Member has now made it clear that he only meant before war conditions came along or in the future we ought to try to sell our rice in the largest possible market.

Mr. JACOB: I am sorry for the impression Your Excellency has about something I never said. I made it clear when I said, that when I returned to the Colony from the United Kingdom early in 1940 or late in 1939 I submitted proposals to the Rice Marketing Board and I was not treated with the courtesy of a reply. Now the hon. the Colonial Treasurer and the President say I am speaking about 1942. I am still dealing with 1939. The Rice Marketing Board had this industry for thirteen years and has made a thorough mess of it and is going to continue to make a mess of it. Let me go on. This is an opportunity for me to say all I want to say. This Government is determined with a constituted Board, with Government supervision or with Government monopolizing everything there, not to give the rice producers a fair deal. If it is intended that the

new Board should do that, if you are going to have men of ability and initiative on the present Board who are going to work for the rice producers as for themselves, then it is another matter. But I have had the experience. We had a glaring example of the Transport Board. I am going to refer to that. This Board should have during 1938, 1939, 1940, 1941, and 1942 sold rice to other parts of the world, except the British West Indies and possibly the Dutch West Indies. If even it is admitted that some higher authority says "You must not do this or that" should we not make representation pointing out that the rice producers are complaining bitterly that they are not being paid a fair price for their rice in these markets and that they should be allowed to sell a certain percentage of their rice in markets which are paying a better price? But it is not in the ability of the Board to do that. It is not the concern of the members some of whom just sit there and draw their salaries. They are paid to oppress the people. I say so conscientiously.

The PRESIDENT: I am not quite sure I should not rule the hon. member out of order!

Mr. JACOB: I have not heard you!

The PRESIDENT: However I have not. You are alleging that this Government is paying persons deliberately to oppress a certain class.

Mr. JACOB: I have not said "deliberately". I am saying, sir, that here we have two markets where we have regular steamship lines. I hope the Board will bear that in mind and see that we sell rice to the United Kingdom and to Canada and to places that will pay us a good price. Apart from that, does the Board not know when Messrs. Booker Bros. and Co. exported padi to Liverpool in 1938 and, I think, 1939? Did the Board follow it up? I know suggestions were made through Messrs.

Booker Bros., while I had the honour to advise them and to control the rice export trade. It may be well to export padi to the United Kingdom and let it be milled there. I am certain representations were made to the Board to follow that up. Whether those representations were withdrawn at a later stage is another matter. But the Board would not do that.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: When the hon. Member was a member of the old Rice Marketing Board why did he not get all those things done? Why did he not advise better prices? Why did he not get those things done then?

Mr. JACOB: The answer is quite simple. I can only speak for myself. I have gone to England and done some. Had it not been for the entire control of the industry by the Rice Marketing Board and Government I would have had a fine export trade to the United Kingdom, Canada and other places. The hon. Member himself knew when my firm began an export trade in 1930. We were the pioneers. We sent a resident agent to Jamaica, Haiti, Cuba and to several new markets and spent large sums of money to build up an export trade. We did not only want an export trade but we had a rice mill. The hon. gentleman himself knows that. He is in charge of confidential information of Government. I was in charge of a rice mill that collapsed through Government's action.

Mr. WOOLFORD: I have no desire to unduly interrupt the hon. Member, but I rise to a point of correction! I think I am correct in saying that the pioneer exporters of rice in this Colony were Messrs. Garnett & Co., and they did so to Trinidad long before R. E. Brassington & Co., ever existed. The hon. Member said they were the pioneer exporters of rice.

Mr. JACOB: I can quite appreciate the hon. Member's anxiety to correct something that needs no correction. I said, when we started in 1930, possibly 1928. In 1930 we were the pioneers then (laughter). Of course hon. Members cannot appreciate logic. From 1930 when we came into the industry we were the pioneers in exporting rice to Cuba, Haiti and several other places. Let the records be looked up and it would be seen that it is so and that we did it at our expense not at Government's and not at the expense of the rice producers.

I want to say now what progress has been made in regard to the production of rice in the various parts of the Colony, particularly in Demerara and Berbice. I am going to name a few places so that it can be faithfully brought to the mind and knowledge of hon. Members of this Council. Let us take the East Bank for instance: There were five rice mills at least on the East Bank, Demerara, in 1939. Today there is none. There is not a single rice mill on the East Bank Demerara. I had the honour to put up there one of the best mills in the Colony, a mill with a steam-drying apparatus and a large ground drying area. It is still there at Pln. Hope. The whole thing became a white elephant because Government did not honour its promise to one of the Executive Members of this Council, the late Hon. R. E. Brassington, my senior partner, to irrigate and drain a large flourishing rice area there. That was an assurance given by Sir Edward Denham.

My mill was leased from the Haly Brothers at Pln. Hope. I think it is used now as a cowpen. We did not only want to export rice and get rebates as one hon. Member stated. We wanted to procure and mill it also. We wanted to take a big hand in the rice industry. We have our own capital to do it; not on a very large scale but in a small way so as not to beg and borrow. But it is Government's duty now to irrigate and

drain the land so that the people can plant rice. It is to the everlasting credit of the Rice Marketing Board that five rice mills on the East Bank, Demerara, which were there in 1930 are not there today. Sugar, however, still holds sway on the East Bank, Demerara. While the rice mills have gone completely out; the sugar mills have flourished and, I have no doubt, the sugar production on the East Bank, Demerara, has increased by quite a handsome percentage.

Let us take the East Coast Demerara within a distance of 12 miles from Kitty up to Nonpareil. In 1930, I believe, there were many mills. At one time I sat down and computed the number that went out of existence. It is not less than 15 mills between Kitty and Nonpareil, a distance of 12 miles. Let that remain to the everlasting credit of the Rice Marketing Board. My hon. friend who is sitting on my left (Mr. Peer Bacchus) says production has increased. Yes, by the juggling of figures the production has increased, but you cannot juggle the figures and export that amount.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: To a point of correction! I never spoke.

Mr. JACOB: It is true my hon. friend has not spoken today as yet. I will probably speak until 5 o'clock and we will not hear him today. We have it to the everlasting credit of the B.G. Rice Marketing Board that 15 mills had to go out of existence within 12 miles of Georgetown on the East Coast Demerara. Sugar production too may have decreased between Kitty and Nonpareil. Then of course I may be told that my figures are all wrong. I looked up the hon. the Colonial Treasurer's Budget for 1946 and saw there the revenue expected from rice mills is \$185. That represents \$1 from each rice mill, and so there are now only 185 mills and at one time there were no fewer than 225. So we have it, 225 mills have been

reduced to 185. I have given two glaring examples—one on the East Bank, Demerara, and one on the East Coast, Demerara. Let them be disputed. And so I can continue to give examples on the West Bank and the West Coast, Demerara, on the Corentyne Coast, and on the West Coast, Berbice.

It is true that rice production has increased on the Essequibo Coast, in the Islands of Leguan and Wakenaam, but that is because the sugar industry has disappeared from there completely. That is the only reason why the rice production has increased there. If those people had to depend entirely on irrigation and drainage the production of rice in those islands would never have increased. So I say again, let it be to the everlasting credit of this Government that there is no drainage and irrigation in some areas although promised years and years by successive administrators. For the last 20 years nothing has been done and yet we expect that the British Guiana Rice Industry is going to expand and its production increased.

I have dealt with certain general aspects of this industry and I think I have made it clear that the Rice Marketing Board has not played the game. With all the powers it had—with the Defence Regulations and with legislation giving it power to buy and sell and export, in short a monopoly—the Rice Marketing Board made no progress in regard to the production and export of rice, with the result that a large number of people who would have continued to invest money in the industry have declined to do so. Before the Rice Marketing Board took over this industry some of the largest firms here—Garnett & Co. Ltd., Wieting and Richter Ltd., Booker Bros. McConnell & Co. Ltd. and Curtis Campbell & Co. Ltd.—helped financially to build up the rice industry. But how did they do it? They were attempting to kill the goose that lays

the golden egg. They would lend money on mortgages, charge a very high rate of interest and make it a condition that you must sell your rice to them. In addition to collecting interest on the loan they collected a certain percentage on the sale of the rice by them and bought supplies for the industry which they sold at a fixed profit. And so the rice producer or miller had to pay a high rate of interest, seller's commission for the selling of his rice, buyer's commission for his supplies, and storage and other charges. I think most of those firms have lost money and so had to give up the industry.

Just before the Government took over the industry most of the big merchants and most of the people had made handsome profits from other activities in the Colony, but they refused to advance money for the production of rice. That was left to such firms as J. P. Santos & Co. Ltd., Resaul Maraj and H. B. Gajraj, who continued and, I believe, have not come out very successfully because they continued to overcharge the people, to extract high rates of interest and impose other conditions which the producers of rice and the millers could not afford to pay. Then the big interests thought the best way to effect control over this industry and keep the production within certain limits was to get this Government to bring forward what is now known as a "single-seller" organization. Who were the sponsors?—Hon. E. M. Walcott and Mr. H. G. Seaford. We know what happened to the hon. Mr. Walcott. We know that his firm, Messrs. Sandbach Parker & Co. Ltd. lost much money.

Mr. SEAFORD: Is this the place to discuss that?

Mr. JACOB: It is. The names of Messrs. Walcott and Seaford were mentioned by the hon. Mover of the motion. I am keeping strictly within the limits of the debate. Those people were responsible for losing their firms' money and got this Government to con-

trol the industry and bring it to the position it is in now. They were unable to manage and control an industry run by peasants because they would not treat the peasants properly. The result was Government came in and controlled the industry and the position of the grower became worse than ever. Maybe owing to war conditions some of them have become prosperous.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: To a point of correction! I may remind the hon. Member that there was a motion tabled here by the Attorney General long before the war, asking this Council to create a "single-seller" organization.

Mr. JACOB: That may be ancient history, but not while I was a Member of this Council.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: In 1935. I said so yesterday. It was during the time the hon. Member was a pioneer.

Mr. JACOB: If the Attorney-General did it he had absolutely no knowledge and must have taken his clue from Messrs. Walcott and Seaford, the bosses of the sugar industry, who must continue to control the industry.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: Again, sir, must correct the hon. Member. It was a recommendation by a Select Committee of this Council.

Mr. JACOB: I enjoy these interruptions. They are not throwing me off my balance. I was pointing out—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Let us get this point clear. The Select Committee of this Council was under the chairmanship of the Attorney-General and the members were Professor Dash, Mr. A. V. Crane, Mr. A. E. Seeram, Mr. J. I. deAguiar, Mr. Peer Bacchus and two Nominated Unofficial Members—Mr. Seaford and Mr. Walcott.

Mr. JACOB: Exactly, we have got the two names there. I am quite within my right to refer to those two gentlemen particularly, Mr. de Aguiar is not here; Mr. Seeram is somewhere else; Mr. Crane has thought it best to accept a job with Government; the Attorney-General is no longer in the flesh; I was wondering whether the question cannot be now put. I am just told that the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Peer Bacchus) is supervising some experiment there. I have heard a few things about it. Perhaps the hon. 4th Nominated Member (Mr. Edun) would deal with that point when he speaks.

I was making the point that the hon. E. M. Walcott has failed completely with everything he put his hands to and who because of his failures—that seems to me to be the policy of the Rice Marketing Board to take men who have proved failures with their own undertakings and make them control, manage and advise Government undertakings—was appointed on that Board. The hon. Mr. Walcott, I think, before he left this Council and when he was advising actively the Board, was going bankrupt. His business ultimately went into liquidation. That is the gentleman who advised this Government about a "single-seller" organization. He could not make any more money out of the industry nor the firm he represented, and so he thought that no one else should and advised that Government should come in and squeeze the people. As regards Mr. Seaford, I do not think I would say much about him. His brother is here to speak on his behalf. The hon. Member for Georgetown North is on the Government Executive Council and some of us know what happens. This is what I would say about Mr. H. G. Seaford: Whilst he was taking active steps to introduce all kinds of new-fangled ideas in this rice industry he was, I think, Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Rice Marketing Board. I was a member of it and would not attend and took

very little interest in it. I resigned after a period. Mr. Seaford had started the same idea as in this Bill—a Rice Association. I now come to the Bill proper and will begin with the Rice Association.

The interpretation clause of the Bill states:—

“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;”

What a travesty? I do not know how else to describe it. Government wants to establish what the mover called “a co-operative organization of a democratic character” after it has messed up the rice industry for 13 years, and it wants to start that organization by misleading the producers that it is going to form an association, as if there was not one before, and there is not one now. Government wants an association which it can control. Mr. H. G. Seaford, while Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Board, managed to wangle an Association of which he became the first President. That was in 1933, immediately after the Rice Marketing Board was formed. Each Governor comes with new ideas and the people of the Colony are expected to twist and turn every time a new Governor comes. There is no continuity of policy. When a new Governor is told what the previous Governor has done he says: “I have nothing to do with that; I am here to see things for myself.”

The PRESIDENT: Do not say things like that. I have never said such a thing.

Mr. JACOB: May I remind you, sir? It is true that when there are conversations at Government House

Annexe they are private and I do not want to commit a breach of confidence, but I have an everlasting impression that I have not only spoken to you once but on several occasions. I have not only spoken to Your Excellency but to Sir Geoffry Northcote and to the late Sir Edward Denham. They were never concerned about what their predecessor had done except on questions of broad policy. I say that Government is now trying to mislead the public. Maybe some of the rice producers do not know that a Rice Association was formed in 1933. I am going to say what happened. Mr. Seaford was the first President but I do not think he got the Association to work as he wanted it. He did not succeed because the people did not trust him, and I use that word advisedly. They could not trust him with the rice industry while he was actively connected with the sugar industry. I suggest nothing dishonest. The result was that he got thoroughly fed-up; he could not get things done his own way. He was not re-elected President the following year. I was then Vice-President and I was elected President of the Association.

When Sir Geoffry Northcote arrived in this Colony an address of welcome was presented to him by the Association in which certain specific things were stated. Among them it was suggested that if Government wanted to help the rice industry it should begin by establishing an agricultural bank or some co-operative bank with large capital for the purpose of making loans to rice producers on the security of their mills and land at a rate of interest not exceeding 6 per cent, and that freight rates and other matters should be gone into. The records are there. The address was presented to the Governor in this Chamber and he said: “Yes, I will do what I can.” We know what he did—nothing. The result was that the following year I refused to continue with the Associa-

tion and Mr. H. B. Gajraj, the Vice-President, was elected President. The Association died a natural death. In fact Mr. Gadd, the present Manager of the Rice Marketing Board, was secretary to the Association. When I was elected President, Mr. Gadd could not find it convenient to attend the meetings of the Association. He therefore resigned and we elected someone else. The so-called Association sponsored by the Rice Marketing Board failed, and failed miserably. We are now told—this Bill begins with that—that an Association is going to be established with the authority of the Governor etc. What guarantee have I got that this new Association is going to be a success? In fact I am sure it will not be, except of course underhand methods are going to be employed—Government officers going around getting people and paying their subscriptions. Yes, they do.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I rise to a point of order, sir. Do you think the hon. Member ought to say that Government officers do that, sir?

Mr. JACOB: I understood the mover of the Bill to say that the Association would be financed by Government.

The PRESIDENT: There is provision in the Bill for financial assistance nothing about Government officers going around and paying subscriptions.

Mr. JACOB: I think what I said may have been badly put, but it means the same thing. As a matter of fact I have not read this Bill very carefully; I refused to read it (laughter) because I am opposed to the whole thing. It savours of corruption—the whole thing. Whatever Government does it is Government's business.

The PRESIDENT: Did you say "corruption?"

Mr. JACOB: Yes, sir.

The PRESIDENT: We take notes of these things, you know.

Mr. JACOB: I know what happened in the previous Rice Marketing Board when certain members were challenged about dealings with certain markets. My licence to export rice was suddenly terminated. That was the penalty I had to pay in respect of the Colonial Rice Mill. I appealed to the Governor in Council but never got a reply. The Secretary of the Board said to me: "You cannot export rice, you are not supporting us. You are criticising and you are associated with someone else in another undertaking." Because I was associated with the late Hon. R. E. Brassington in the export trade in rice I was not to export rice for the rice mill. I think the Colonial Treasurer was one of the principal movers in the matter.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I had nothing whatever to do with it. If the hon. Member would like me to give the Council my recollection of the incident in connection with which he was punished I would do so.

Mr. JACOB: I was punished before I was convicted. That is the kind of justice we get in British Guiana.

The PRESIDENT: You admit the conviction (laughter).

Mr. JACOB: Admit what conviction, sir? It is not a laughing matter. I see Your Excellency is looking at the rules of debate. I have been prejudiced here over and over, and I have been punished wrongfully. My licence to export rice was suspended and the Treasurer says I was punished for certain things. When I appealed to the Governor in Council the Secretary of the Board wrote to tell me "You may continue to export rice." I lost trade and business for

six or seven months. That was the punishment I got for speaking the truth. Maybe I will be punished by expulsion from this Council very soon. I would like to say that if I had not been elected a Member of this Council I would never have been here. I say that to the discredit of this Government.

Returning to the proposal to establish a Rice Association I wish to emphasize that a previous Association failed completely, but Government now proposes in this Bill to establish and finance another Association.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is not the case. Government is not going to finance the Association.

Mr. JACOB: When we reach the Committee stage I will read the Bill and speak about it, but I have the impression that Government wants to create a watertight business so as to exercise entire control of the rice industry. It is proposed to establish a co-operative organization of a democratic character by having an Association which will be assisted from Government funds.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: No, sir. I again repeat that the Association will not be financed from Government funds. Under this Bill the Board will be empowered to make an annual grant to the Association. That is analagous to what is being done by the present Board which makes a grant to the Central Rice Committee for the purpose of defraying its expenses. It is the same sort of thing.

Mr. JACOB: I will not pursue the point; I will think about it. The real point, according to the Treasurer, is that we will have organized marketing for the benefit of all concerned. I want to know if this new marketing organization will provide maximum

benefit to all concerned—certainly not the producers. If the new Board is going to continue to sell rice in markets which pay the lowest possible price it certainly will not give those primarily concerned in the industry the fruits of their labour.

The new Board is to be composed of four persons who are officers in the public service, eight rice producers and four other persons (not being officers in the public service or rice producers) of whom two will be Members of this Council, but before the new Board takes over the Governor has the right to carry on the new organization through the members of the existing Board. I think I am strictly correct there.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is not correct, sir.

Mr. JACOB: The present Board is to carry on the industry until this Bill becomes law.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That is correct.

Mr. JACOB: When this Bill is enacted and before the new Association is set up to be financed by the Rice Marketing Board, apparently these gentlemen are going to carry on the rice industry; The Colonial Treasurer, Chairman; the Controller of Supplies and Prices, the Director of Agriculture, the Hons. H. C. Humphrys, K.C.; J. I. de Aguiar and Peer Bacchus, Mr. H. G. Seaford, Mr. R. V. Evan Wong and Mr. G. H. Smellie. I think Your Excellency has had representations from time to time—hundreds of times I believe—that the Board as constituted is not suitable for the rice industry. With the Colonial Treasurer as Chairman one can find little objection because—

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Thank you very much.

Mr. JACOB: I was saying that as the hon. mover has said that Government will assume heavy financial responsibility, he as Treasurer of the Colony will be able to see that that responsibility is properly safeguarded. I wonder whether the Board has not got sufficient money now to permit of an elected Member of this Council being appointed Chairman. The hon. gentleman is Government's financial expert and adviser, and I am hoping that he will recommend that something more be done to help the people who produce the rice by advancing them money — not a few thousand dollars through the Co-operative Credit Banks. I do not know what sum those Banks have actually lent the producers. If it is \$200,000 that would be a tidy sum. I should like to see the industry given an advance of at least half its worth—\$500,000. Why can't a man be advanced half of his annual income? No, the rice producers must not get that. I hope that if this Bill goes through some provision will be made whereby the Treasurer will put aside 2½ million dollars for advances to rice growers, millers, and landlords at a cheap rate of interest for the improvement of the industry. At present some of the growers borrow money at high rates of interest with other imposed conditions. Hasn't the time arrived when Government should lend those people money and take the burden away from the merchants?

If the Board is to continue I think the Colonial Treasurer should be its financial adviser, but why a member of the Board? Some people think it is well to have him as a member of the Board because they can use him in some respects, but I think all these experts should be mere advisers; they should have no direct responsibility. I think it would be better for them, the industry, and all concerned. The Colonial Treasurer should advise Government to provide 2½ million dollars for loans to rice producers at certain specific rates of interest and under specific

conditions. Will Government entertain such a proposition? I think not. Government is not concerned as to how the rice is grown or how the seed is sown. It helps by some expert advice as to the type of rice to be grown, but that is all. It is not concerned about how the people live after the rice has been planted, but assumes the responsibility for selling the rice that is eventually produced.

I do not know anything about this subject; perhaps the members of the Board know all about it. If the Colonial Treasurer continues to be Chairman of the Board he will have a heavy responsibility to the growers of rice and to those people who pay him his salary and provide for his future. How is he discharging that responsibility? That is the responsibility I want the Colonial Treasurer to have—responsibility to the people who produce a million pounds worth of rice every year. No, he sits down here and grins, and he says: "No, my job is to go around and do what I can according to instructions received. I have no responsibility to anyone else." An elected member of this Council would have some responsibility to the people, and he alone should be the Chairman of the Board to control the fortunes of the rice industry if it is to be controlled. In England the nationalization of the coal industry does not mean that the industry is controlled by civil servants. According to Press reports it is going to be controlled by experts who know about the industry, but in this Colony the rice industry is controlled by non-experts. Yesterday I was told that because I know too much about the rice industry my advice was not sought. I have made a tremendous success of it but my advice is not sought. I suppose I am expected to ask that my advice be sought, but this man will not do that. If my advice is wanted I must be approached in the proper way. The Chairman of the Board is the paid servant of the people and he ought to

see that they are properly treated. He has failed to do that. We are to have a new Board and I suggest that an elected Member of this Council, one who knows something about the industry, should be the Chairman and not the Colonial Treasurer.

The position of Vice-Chairman should also be filled by an elected Member of this Council. I disagree with my friend, the hon. Member for Essequibo River (Mr. Lee) when he suggests that the Director of Agriculture should be Vice-Chairman of the new Board. Like the Colonial Treasurer, I think the Director of Agriculture should serve in an advisory capacity. They must attend the meetings of the Board but they must have no vote. They must not be able to influence anybody. This influencing of people has gone too far in this Colony.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: Is it worth while giving advice which is not intended to influence anybody?

Mr. JACOB: I am grateful to the hon. the Colonial Secretary for breaking the monotony at times. I say that these experts should serve in an advisory capacity with no power to influence. It may be undue influence, I do not know. I merely say influence but I know what has happened. Then we have the Hon. H. C. Humphrys as a member of the Board. I am not going to say very much about Professor Dash because I do not know whether he will be here for any length of time, but as a scientist I think he ought to be able to advise because I wonder whether the members of the Board know the difference between Creole rice and Blue Stick and No. 79, and whatever varieties may have sprung up recently, and which market will buy a particular type of rice. I wonder whether members of the Board take that much trouble. I know that the Hon. H. C. Humphrys does not know; he has admitted it to me.

"I do not know why I am on the Board," he said. It would be interesting to know how many meetings of the Board he has attended.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Mr. Humphrys is not a member of the Board at present and has not been for some months now. I suggest that the hon. Member need not pursue that point against him.

Mr. JACOB: Nothing against him. I think in legal matters he should do well, but he knows nothing about rice and should never have been put on the Board. He was put there for a certain purpose—to adorn it perhaps. The last report of the Board in my possession is dated the 30th September, 1944.

The PRESIDENT: Haven't you got one before you to-day?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: There was one laid quite recently dated 31st March, 1945.

Mr. JACOB: Possibly I have it in my office.

The PRESIDENT: I have it in front of me here.

Mr. JACOB: This is the one I have. I have not the time to look into all these things so minutely, but I think I have a general idea. As regards the Hon. J. I. de Aguiar, I think he is a useful member of the Board in many ways. He is a Member of this Council and whatever his faults are they will be properly reviewed at the next General Election. If he is found wanting he will not be re-elected. I have no objection to Members of this Council being on a Board constituted as the Rice Marketing Board is, provided they are actively interested in the Rice industry. Maybe the hon. Member is actively interested in the industry. I do not know and I do not pretend to know. My point is that the

Board as constituted now will have to go sooner or later, and rice growers, millers and producers should control the industry. However, I have nothing much to say about the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) who has many good points. He has been a very successful businessman. He has done exceedingly well and has a very good idea about certain aspects of the rice industry. Whether he has the time to give the attention this industry deserves to make it a success is another matter. The hon. Member himself knows.

The hon. Member for Western Berbice, Mr. Peer Bacchus! I have known this gentleman, who is sitting at my left, for a considerable time. I have known him to be a rice miller. I think I bought rice from him. I know his house, his mill, etc., but I think in 1930 this gentleman had ceased to be a rice miller and to have much to do with the rice industry except by renting out his land. I think the Rice Committee purchased his rice mill buildings and, I understand, he has sold certain other buildings there to the Rice Marketing Board or the Rice Committee, which I do not know. But this gentleman is a member of the Committee. He has not, I submit without meaning anything derogatory, made a success of his rice business. He ceased to mill rice when the Government took over the industry. Possibly he had no confidence in the Government managing the industry, but he is an active member of the Rice Marketing Board. I understand the hon. the Fourth Nominated Member is going to say something about the Mahaicony Scheme that collapsed, and the hon. Member is supervising there. So we have one active rice miller at one time and landed proprietor on this Board, and he has not made a success of this business. I say so in no ungenerous spirit, but it is my duty to examine the composition of this Rice Marketing Board and see who control it. So I say the hon. gentleman

is not what I would say, one who fits in at the present time with what I think the Board should be composed. The Board should be composed of people who are actively engaged in the industry and not those who have ceased to have an interest in it except in an advisory capacity.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: That includes the hon. Member himself.

Mr. JACOB: Exactly. I would not be on it as I have better use for my time. I resigned from the Rice Committee and have been asked over and over to go back but I will not as long as it is composed as it is. I have no financial interest in the rice industry except a general interest. I am grateful for the last report of the Rice Marketing Board. It has the Hon. H. C. Humphry's name on it still and there is practically no change in the composition of the Board except the substitution for the name of John Fernandes of that of Captain Smellie. The report of the Rice Marketing Board of the 30th September, 1940, is still of value while I speak. I think it is grossly unfair to the rice producers to have a Board with people who have no direct interest in the industry and people who have no financial interest in the industry.

The PRESIDENT: The hon. Member has now spoken for one hour and 55 minutes and is going on repeating himself over and over again. If he would make his points more quickly.—

Mr. JACOB: If I was not interrupted I could have finished.

The PRESIDENT: What I ask you is, do not go on repeating, as you are frequently doing, the arguments you use. You have the ambition to be parliamentary. You cannot go on repeating over and over again what you state.

Mr. JACOB: I submit most respectfully I do not repeat myself, but I may repeat certain words. I am referring to the composition of this Board now, and I am dealing with the individual members. I did not do that before, and I went on to refer to Mr. H. G. Seaford. I had called his name because I had to deal with the Rice Association. Now he is in a different capacity; he is one of the principal men on this Board. According to the hon. Mover of the motion, he was one of the men who gave exceedingly valuable services on this Board. What are Mr. Seaford's capabilities? He is an excellent businessman actively engaged in the sugar industry, a rival industry to the rice industry. Why does he not leave the rice industry alone to those people who can look after it? No; Government wants him there, and I say it is grossly improper that one actively engaged in the sugar industry should be engaged in the destiny of a struggling industry like rice. I think it is grossly unfair that he should continue to be a member of this Board. Whether this Bill is enacted or not, I think, Mr. Seaford should gracefully retire from the Rice Marketing Board and it is the duty of Government knowing the feeling that exists to see that is done. Is Government going to say that people engaged in the sugar industry must be meddling with the rice industry? If it does not know that, let it know that now.

You have Mr. Evan Wong on the Board. I do not know if he takes much interest in the industry. He is a successful businessman. Why should he be on it? He has never been engaged in the rice industry. What does he know about the industry, notwithstanding his business ability?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Was he not Chairman of the old Rice Marketing Board?

Mr. JACOB: What he knows about it? He was simply pitchforked

there, because he knew nothing about it. It is because he was pitchforked there first as an impartial individual that gave him the credential to continue as a member of the Board.

Then there is Mr. John Fernandes! I think he was exceedingly wise in resigning and he would have done so before but pressure was brought to bear on him. He was advised: "You must be there. You give it colour." But Mr. Fernandes, a wise man, thought it best to come out of the industry and Captain Smellie, one of the principals of Messrs. Garnett & Co., was brought in. I have the utmost admiration for Mr. Smellie. I think he is a fine gentleman. His firm was unable to do anything successful in connection with the rice industry in all its aspects. Having failed to do something for his firm he is now to control the destinies of other people. Captain Smellie, good businessman as he is, knows practically nothing about the implications of the rice industry to be on the Board, and I say Captain Smellie should gracefully retire from the Board. If these people were to tell this Government "I think it improper in the interest of the rice industry I should be on the Board," Government should accept their resignation. If Government does not do that, they should come out of it and leave the people to look after their business themselves. Why is Government so anxious to have these strangers looking after the rice industry? Will this Government dare attempt such a thing with the sugar industry or the Bauxite industry? It dares not.

As regards the General Manager and Secretary, they are Executive Officers of this Board. I do not know what to think about them. Whether they are performing their duties satisfactorily or not, I am not in a position to say, but if I am to take what I have heard and what I have conveyed to Your Excellency, if I am to take

the Court proceedings that are going on now, if I am to take what happened at Pln. Anna Regina, if I am to take what happened at the Mahaicony-Abary Scheme, then I think something is fundamentally wrong with the Executive of the Rice Marketing Board.

The PRESIDENT: I am going to rule the hon. Member irrelevant. If he addresses himself to the Bill he can go on. The hon. Member must stop talking about past history of the past and present Board. He has been speaking now for well over two hours.

Mr. JACOB: I am dealing with clause 4 of this Bill.

The PRESIDENT: As long as you are relevant you can speak on.

Mr. JACOB: I am speaking of the composition of this Board. I am speaking about the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman.

The PRESIDENT: That is the Board as laid down by the Bill. Reference to the personnel of that Board is strictly relevant, but you take so long in making your point. I do not want to rule you out of order.

Mr. JACOB: I am prepared to abide by Your Excellency's ruling. When Your Excellency ruled me out of order on one or two occasions I sat down. When Your Excellency would not listen to me, I think, I asked leave to withdraw from the Council for the balance of the day. If Your Excellency feels I should not continue in the way I am dealing with the clauses of the Bill, I would ask leave to withdraw.

The PRESIDENT: I have not said that. I said a great deal of what you said under clause 4 was irrelevant to the formation of the new Board. I would allow you to go on without rising again. It was the repetition of your argument that I referred to.

Mr. JACOB: I am a busy man and have work to do. I am not here on sufferance. I am exercising a constitutional privilege. If Your Excellency feels I am wasting the time of the Council, I am going to abide by Your Excellency's ruling. As the King's Representative whenever Your Excellency feels I should stop speaking I will do so. I was going on to say this Bill provides that until this Rice Association is set up the present Board is to continue.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: It does not do that. As soon as this Ordinance is passed and it is assented to and brought into force, the old Board goes out and the new Board comes in. The Association is something different. I said, I hope that will come on at the same time. Do not tie the Association to the Board.

Mr. JACOB: Put another way, the existing Board will continue until the Bill is passed.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Exactly.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: The longer the hon. Member speaks, the longer the existing Board continues.

Mr. JACOB: It has done so all the time for thirteen years. Let it continue for another thirteen months. I am going to move that this Bill be deferred for a period of six months. I am going to do what I consider right. We have been told, it is hoped from the hon. the Colonial Treasurer's speech that this Bill will come into operation on the 1st April, All Fools Day. Perhaps when it comes into operation it will continue to fool and mislead the people. I will not be a party to that. I was saying, sir, that the present Board which must continue until this Bill comes into effect is bad in its set up and the Executive Officers are not doing their duty if what appears in the Press is correct.

The PRESIDENT: Irrelevant! Confine yourself to the Bill.

Mr. JACOB: I am not going to say anything more to-day. I am going to read this Bill thoroughly and take up the various points in the Committee stage.

The PRESIDENT: Thank you!

Mr. EDUN: Mr. President, I had taken the precaution to table a motion for the rejection of this Bill. I have done so purposely in order that I should take every constitutional advantage, because I mean to push opposition against this Bill as my constitutional means would provide, because I feel that this Bill is an iniquitous one designed to rob the producers of the fruits of their labour and to shackle them into economic serfdom. I have listened very carefully to the hon. Mover. I was astounded when he made the statement—and I quote his words—“I would do my best to help the Board to be converted into a co-operative organisation of a democratic character in the management and control of which those engaged in the industry would take an important share.” That is exactly what the hon. Mover said. In other words he means that the producers will have complete autonomy in the internal management of the producers by the producers for the producers. By that statement he means that, but I am certain, sir, that within his soul he does not believe that this Bill conforms with the principle of economic democracy at all. If he does, then I would unhesitatingly say that he does not know anything about economic democracy. I considered that statement a travesty of truth when I read through the Bill again. I want to examine his mind to see whether he understands what is economic democracy or whether he was principally concerned in foisting this Bill on the peoples of this Colony because he happens to be in the posi-

tion of Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board. In my own mind I feel he does not believe that this Bill has any ingredient of complete autonomy for the people concerned, but because he is the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board it is his duty to do so and he is doing it.

I would like to know what is the hon. Mover's conception of economic democracy, a term he used so fluently to-day. I am sure he should have weighed those words, because I am going to prove to him what is economic democracy and that the purport of this Bill is a contravention of economic democracy altogether. If he wants to know something about the democratic constitution of an organization he should go and worship at the feet of the Labour Commissioner, Mr. Bissell and, perhaps, take some lessons from very well known leaders. But in my own mind I am convinced that this Bill is designed for one purpose, and that purpose is to control the industry in such a manner that the cost of living should be at a certain level all the time. Rice being a staple product is essential that Government should have the control in order to control the cost of living index in the interest of the employers of labour. That is the real purpose of the Bill, because the hon. Mover himself has said that this is putting into the hands of the Rice Marketing Board a large monopoly and because of this ingredient of a large monopoly Government should come in in accordance with a clause of the Bill, to control the price in order to control the cost of living. That is the real purport of the Bill.

I would refer to a booklet, which I have in my hand, entitled “The Co-operative Movement in Britain” in order to show what is real economic democracy—what is the idea of complete autonomy within an industry and what is the real plan of co-operative society of which and about which the hon.

Mover made so much fuss. It is stated here that the co-operative movement is an organization from the bottom and not from the top. That is, the organization must begin from the bottom. Supposing we take the rice industry as a whole, we consider the producers or growers of padi to be at the bottom. The organization must therefore, begin with them. But in this Bill what we have seen is that the cart is placed before the ass and it is expected that the Rice Marketing Board would pull both the cart and the ass upside down up the hill. Instead of this Bill having within its principal purport an organization of the rice producers we find that it is stated definitely that a Rice Producers' Association is not a primary consideration and may not be formed at all, and if there is any reason for it not to be formed then the Government with the Rice Marketing Board would still carry on the Board without the Rice Producers' Association. Now that has given away the whole idea behind the scheme. Let me read that clause of the Bill referring to the Rice Producers' Association in order to bring home the point very forcibly. Clause 4 paragraph (3) reads:

"The persons to be appointed under paragraph (b) of sub-section (2) of this section shall be selected from the members of the Council, or other governing body of the Association; provided that until the Association has been established or where for any reason the Association ceases to function or fails to elect a Council or governing body, or there is an insufficient number of members of the Council or governing body of the Association, the Governor shall elect such rice producers for appointment as in his discretion he considers fit."

That is certainly the death knell to the formation of any association at all, and it is a contravention of democratic principles to think of a democratic association sponsored by Government and financed by an organization from the centre. This Bill contains everything here which is

arbitrary in principle. The co-operative movement is also concerned with education and cultural matters because the desire is to raise the standard of living of people in all directions, not only economically.

The hon. mover particularly laid stress on the point that the new organization is to have a democratic character. He has tried to convince this Council that the new Board will be a co-operative organization, but that is not so. When I heard him make that statement I went through the Bill again in order to see whether there was that ingredient. In order to elucidate my point I will quote further from this very excellent booklet in which the foreword is written by a prominent figure in the British Empire, the Rt. Hon. A. V. Alexander who writes:—

"The ideas behind co-operation in Great Britain have been taken up in countries all over the world and applied to the needs of producers as well as those of consumers. The democratic spirit inherent in voluntary co-operation no doubt was one of the main reasons which led to the destruction by Hitler and his gangsters of all that had been built up in the co-operative societies in Austria, Germany, Czechoslovakia and Poland."

Because of its voluntary nature Hitler thought of destroying the co-operative movement in Europe, and when I see in this Bill that the Rice Producers Association will be financed by the Board and will be an instrument of Government I am reminded of Hitler's policy. Instead of teaching our people something about co-operation we find Government issuing this challenge to the people to take their industry away. That is why I have described the Bill as iniquitous and suggested that it ought to be resisted by every right-thinking democratic person in this country. It pains me deeply to find this very Government talking about democracy and preaching it all over the world, and now that

there is an opportunity to practise it we have a Bill of this nature putting the cart before the ass and expecting the animal to walk backward. I was wondering whether the mover had given any attention to the complete autonomy of these companies, and whether or not the Rice Marketing Board should have been designed in the form of a corporation. It is not in the interest of Government to do so because it has been definitely stated by the mover that the price of rice will be under the sole control of Government in conjunction with the Rice Marketing Board. That gives the clue to the whole story.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Please do not misquote me. What I said was that the new organization would not be able to fix prices at its complete discretion without consultation with the Governor. There is nothing in the Bill to prevent the Board dealing with new export markets.

Mr. EDUN: I will give every kind of co-operation in this matter because entangled in it are the very lives of the people whom I happen to represent in this Legislative Council. Some people may say, and perhaps it has been said somewhere that even I was hand-picked by the Governor. I am a Nominated Member and perhaps I can be placed in the same category as the members of the Central Rice Committee, whom the mover took the opportunity to consult. He could say, rightly too, that he consulted the members of the Board and the members of the Central Rice Committee and they agreed *in toto* with the provisions in the Bill. It is, I agree, a justifiable view to take, but I was reading recently the speech made by Your Excellency on the 26th May, 1943, when, under the peculiar circumstance of the coming into effect of the new Constitution, I happened to be nominated a Member of this Council. This is what Your Excellency said on that occasion:

the sixth nominated member representing, I hope, particularly the East Indian agricultural community, and we do want to give an adequate voice to the actual workers in the fields outside Georgetown;”

In accordance with the new Constitution and Your Excellency's own words I took the precaution, when I saw this iniquitous Bill, to invite the growers, millers and producers generally to a meeting in the Town Hall on the 6th of January. At that meeting there were representatives of the rice industry from all parts of the Colony — from all three of the Counties — more than the Central Rice Committee, and the members of the Rice Marketing Board combined. They were actual rice producers, so that it cannot be said that the mover is in a better constitutional position than I am here, representing as I do the entire East Indian agricultural community. Apart from that, did the hon. mover put the facts before them and let them decide for themselves? That would have been the real democratic way of doing it, but it was not in the interest of the mover or the Government to do such a thing. They were not interested in democratic procedure. Government is interested in shackling the industry in order to keep the cost of living down. In keeping with the principles laid down in this worthy booklet I think this Bill should be referred to a Select Committee. Why didn't Government consult me when I was and am the representative of the East Indian agricultural community?

The PRESIDENT: Will you read that extract from my speech again? May I see it? (Copy of speech handed by the Clerk to the President). I see I said “I hope.” I was not quite positive. You say you are; I say I hope you are. (laughter).

Mr. EDUN: That is a question to be answered. Why, even for the sake of courtesy, weren't some Members of this Council consulted? Why weren't they asked to hammer out something that would be in the interest of all? It

did not suit Government's purpose because, somehow, we stand for right and the democratic way of life, and we are not liked on that account. I consider this Bill an arbitrary measure which gives the rice producers no control of the industry. The whole thing should have been framed on the law of supply and demand. I guess I will be told that we should proceed with the Bill and in due course a co-operative movement would be built up, but there is nothing in the Bill which gives me any hope that the Rice Marketing Board will be transformed into a co-operative movement at any time. The whole industry is to be shackled for one particular purpose. The hon. mover said:

"The services of 'middlemen'—to use a term generally understood—are often valuable to an industry or the community; but in this instance their almost complete disappearance from the field has, I am sure, been of great benefit to both producer and consumer."

Will the hon. mover be prepared to admit that although the middlemen have disappeared by a process of elimination a vast parasitical organisation is controlling the industry? The whole Rice Marketing Board stands in the same category as the middlemen and costs money to run.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Of course not. The profits of the middlemen go into their pockets; the profits of the Rice Marketing Board are used for the benefit of the industry.

Mr. EDUN: The profits of the present Board have been used to buy equipment for the introduction of the plantation system in rice production. That is where the profits have gone without consultation with the growers and producers generally. I see no difference between the middlemen and the parasitical organisation you call a Rice Marketing Board, and it costs money to run the organisation.

The mover was at pains to give much credit to the General Manager of the Rice Marketing Board, showering flowers also on the members of the Board. That is why I think he does not believe the words he uttered, because the Board has done nothing on its own ingenuity to stabilize the price of rice or to give the producers a better price for their rice. It was simply war conditions that gave the industry the impetus it has got. I would have credited the Board with some achievements if during the lean years prior to 1939 it had given the rice producers some tangible return on their crops. Therefore when the mover in his zest showered flowers right and left, he conveniently forgot that war conditions alone were responsible for the prosperity of the rice industry today.

The hon. the Colonial Treasurer was at pains to tell this Council about the proposed Rice Producers' Association but I would suggest that he ask Mr. Bissell whether there is any semblance of a democratic constitution in this Bill. I doubt whether the Rice Producers' Association as sponsored by the Government will have any constitutional status at all. I am sure that the first thing the Rice Marketing Board will do will be to make all members of the Central Rice Committee executive members of the Board, perhaps with a stroke of the pen. That is the kind of action I detest because being a democratic person myself, believing in democracy as the only solution to the problems of this world, I feel sore that this Government has taken it into its head to force this Bill down our throats. I want to lay this charge: that if Government did not think it would get the support of this Council it would have thought a hundred times before putting a Bill like this before this Legislature. The indecent haste with which this Bill is being rushed gives me the idea that Government is afraid to bring a Bill of this kind after a General

Election, because members who are elected to this Council in a democratic way would not tolerate a Bill of this kind. That is what Government intends to do because of the present constitution of this Council. Unfortunately this is a moribund Legislative Council and this Bill will be carried, but if Government had a little backbone it would have decided to carry on with the present constitution of the Board and not disrupt it.

The PRESIDENT: I ought to say that the authority to continue the Board lapses on the 25th of February. It may be possible, if certain action is taken in London, to continue it, but the normal way we expect to replace that authority is by statutory action at a certain date. It is, however, quite open to any Member of the Council next year or the year after to move an amendment to the Bill or that it be repealed and another substituted. There is nothing that fixes this Bill permanently around the necks of the people of the Colony.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: May I add a third important point? It is that we are getting ready now to start negotiations with our West Indian markets, and it is very desirable that those negotiations should take place between those markets and some kind of body knowing its future. The present Board, with the possibility of going out under the Defence Regulations and not knowing where it stands, has not got the power to enter into such negotiations.

Mr. EDUN: Do you want to tell me that this Government has not got character abroad? I appeal to Government to allow the present Board to continue until after the General Elections and refer the Bill to a Select Committee for the purpose of putting it into proper shape. The tendency to rush the Bill gives the impression

that there is something sinister behind it, and Government cannot escape the charge of indecent haste.

The PRESIDENT: Every time a Member of this Council does not like a Bill Government is accused of rushing it with indecent haste. It was the same story with the Franchise Bill, the Income Tax Bill, the Labour Bill and the Town Planning Bill. This Council has been well aware for a year and a half that the time was coming when we would have to replace the Rice Marketing Board by a statutory authority. The form of statutory authority has been under discussion since last July, and throughout September, October and November it has been under particular discussion with the Central Rice Committee which, after all, does have some standing with the rice industry, and with persons who have a very considerable connection with the rice industry. You may say they are not representative, but that is a matter of opinion. You might have been consulted. You made quite a good point—I have it marked in my notes here—that we might have consulted you personally. We might, but may I again remind Members that I have given them the widest opportunity to have an informal and easy discussion of every matter of importance coming before this Council in what I call a General Purposes and Finance Committee, and it is only because of the tedious reiteration and no general expression we have had in this Council that I have had to follow a different procedure. It has now come into Council. There has been a considerable period since the first reading and a considerably longer period for the second reading. There is no rushing of the Bill.

Mr. EDUN: Very well, sir. I accept your word that there is no need for rushing it. If there is not, what harm there is if it is referred back to a Select Committee of this Council?

The PRESIDENT: No harm at all if it is the wish of the Council. You may say the Council is not representative. Well, this is the instrument I must work and I must follow constitutional procedure

Mr. EDUN: I think I have made my point.

The PRESIDENT: May I point out that the Bill has been six weeks before the Council.

Mr. EDUN: I was endeavouring to make the point that the members of the Central Rice Committee did not consult the producers in their district about this Bill.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I must interrupt to say that is not so, to the best of my information. I was told by three or four members that they have talked it over with the people of the district, and I must believe what they told me.

Mr. EDUN: I live in a district and I am aware that the growers were not consulted. That is a statement which with the hon. the Colonial Treasurer's would be just as wide as broad. But what I want to bring forward in this discussion is the idea of economic autonomy for the growers—the millers and producers generally—to know what is their status within this Bill. I find nowhere any idea of distribution of profits. I have seen that provision is made in this Bill for a reserve fund, but there is actually no provision for the distribution of profits at all, and that alone is a principal objection because if you are to give complete autonomy to the growers, millers and all combined within the Board, then this question of distribution of profits would be of permanent importance to this Bill. But there is no provision for it at all, although there is provision for reserving the profits. In the Defence (Rice Control) Regulations Act of 1939

clause 19 indicates specifically what should be done with the reserves. I would ask with your permission to read it in order to place it on record:

"(1) The Board shall out of the ascertained profits of each accounting period of six months duration create and accumulate a reserve fund into which there shall be transferred 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ per centum of the profits. No part of the reserve fund shall be used for any purpose except with the sanction of the Governor.

(2) The profits remaining after the deduction on the percentage specified in the preceding paragraph of this regulation may be utilised for the purpose of increasing the price at which rice shall be purchased by the Board during the next succeeding accounting period and whenever that price has been increased the Board may fix such an increase in the minimum price of padi as will ensure a corresponding benefit to the growers of padi."

The Defence Regulations had given the producers the right of having enhanced prices for their product when there are profits even in the emergency of war. That was a very wise provision indeed. In the case of this Bill there is only the creation of a reserve fund which would be utilised by the Board and the Governor.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I must object to that expression "utilised by the Board and the Governor". Certainly not; the Governor will have absolutely nothing to do with it. In the use of the Board's finances a certain portion of its fees will go into revenue. There is nothing in the Bill about that.

Mr. EDUN: In this Bill there is no provision at all for the distribution of the profits. There is no provision that if there are surpluses they would be utilised in enhancing the price of rice or padi to the producer.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Will the hon Member look at clause 20 (2)

of the Bill and try to understand what it means?

Mr. EDUN: Recovery of loss!

The COLONIAL TREASURER: How will the loss arise?

Mr. EDUN: That can be in many ways. If on the face of this pledge given under the Defence (Rice Control) Regulations to the producers of rice that is not honoured by the Board, then I say in a loose Bill like this the word or pledge of the Board will not mean anything at all.

The PRESIDENT: Where is the pledge?

Mr. EDUN: It is there in the Defence (Rice Control) Regulations of 1939 that whatever surplus there may be is to be used to increase the price of rice and padi. That was not done except in two cases—in 1940 and in 1943.

The PRESIDENT: It was done. The price was increased twice.

The COLONIAL TREASURER: I do not want to make a speech at this stage, and so I will have to defer my remarks until I am replying.

Mr. EDUN: The hon. Mover has stated that there is a surplus of \$600,000. Why was not this money used to increase the price of rice or to subsidise the grower, or to give back to the growers the fruits of their labour? Nothing of the kind was done. If even in the case of such a pledge given by an Act it was not honoured, then in a less kind of way you are going to tell—

The PRESIDENT—: Let me see this so-called pledge. I have heard so much loose talk here about pledges and guarantees of Government. Which is the regulation and where is the pledge?

Mr. EDUN: Regulation 19 (1) and (2).

The PRESIDENT (*after reading the Regulation*): Where is the pledge? It is perfectly clear that the Board shall—that is an order—pay a portion of the profits into a fund. The profits remaining after the deduction may be utilised to give higher prices in the next succeeding period. That has been done twice. Am I not correct?

The COLONIAL TREASURER: Yes, sir.

The PRESIDENT: That is precisely what has been done. I do not think you can use the word “pledge”. The Board has done twice what it is empowered to do. The hon. Member is rather giving the impression that there is something in the Defence (Rice Control) Regulations which orders that the profits shall be distributed.

Mr. EDUN: That is so.

The PRESIDENT: I do not see it in the wording of the Regulation which says “may be utilised to increase the price in the next succeeding period.” That has been done twice.

Mr. EDUN: I hold this Defence (Rice Control) Regulations Act is a pledge to the growers. Whatever construction Your Excellency may want to put on it does not concern me in any way. I hold it is a pledge, because Government had commandeered the growers’ product and had told them “We shall use this in the interest of the general community. We shall sell the product and whenever there are surpluses we will increase the price of rice to you.” But I shall go back to where there was a definite pledge on the part of the Board to distribute the profits sooner or later in my whole review of this matter.

The PRESIDENT: If you can show me I would be very interested.

Mr. EDUN: Despite your construction of the Regulation it is a definite pledge to the rice producers.

The PRESIDENT: Where is it?

Mr. EDUN: The more I look through this Bill I must confess truly that it reminds me of an analogy of the sugar ship produced in the "*Guiana Review*" some years ago. With your permission I shall read it. It is "The analogy of the sugar ship on the Esse- quibo Coast." It reads thus:

"A chartered ship sailed the high seas with a full complement of Captain and crew and with a community of 500 pioneer settlers destined for a strange land.

"It was an uneventful voyage until near destination was reached when the ship suddenly struck a rock at midnight.

"It appeared to be sinking fast and a panic ensued. Instead of the Captain and crew quelling the panic-stricken settlers, they too had become panic-stricken and they took to the boats, abandoned the ship and left her to a black fate.

"Some of the settlers perished. But she didn't sink as at first anticipated, and the intelligent among the remaining settlers communed among themselves and a way was found to patch up the vessel and she limped her way on to a safe destination after a week's hard and strenuous work.

"The Captain and crew had preceded them to the same destination with their boats, and as soon as the vessel appeared on the scene of safety they banded themselves and endeavoured once again to gain control."

I am thankful you have given me the opportunity to read this analogy which was published in the "*Guiana Review*," a weekly newspaper, some years ago. This is exactly an appropriate illustration of the sugar ship going burst on the Essequibo Coast and in the Islands of Wakenaam and Leguan, and at Philadelphia, Vergenoe- gen, Hague, La Jalousie and Windsor Forest on the West Coast Demerara. At the beginning or in the middle of the 18th century sugar was king in those areas and thousands of immigrants were brought from India within the functions of the sugar industry in those district. Things went on well until at the beginning of the 19th century when

the sugar ship struck a rock and was foundering. Would you believe me, sir, the sugar companies with their directors, managers and staffs simply abandoned the ship, scurried away, sold out lock, stock and barrel and left the unfortunate immigrants without even a hope from the Government of this country. And would you believe me if I tell you that an Administrator himself went through those districts and said that in certain areas those immigrants and their descendants were rotting in their feet and were doing so for a long number of years.

The PRESIDENT: Is that a phrase I used?

Mr. EDUN: Yes.

The PRESIDENT: Where?

Mr. EDUN: At Leguan.

The PRESIDENT: I used it at a welcome at a place called Mara.

Mr. EDUN: You had gone to Leguan the same time.

The PRESIDENT: They are rather far apart.

Mr. EDUN: That too had belonged to the captain and crew of the sugar ship when they ran away and left the immigrants there to fence for themselves, and the intelligent ones among them with their own resourcefulness, their own energy and initiative, and without a copper from the Government, and without any assistance at all—Imperial or otherwise—succeeded in building the rice industry which weathered the storm and came safely into port. Now I see an attempt on the part of those very people to gain control of the rice industry. Although they had run away from the threatened disaster yet I find, and rightly too as the hon. Member for North-Western

District had stated, that the whole Board comprised of persons who had no interest at all in the rice industry. I am sure, sir, that with the constitution of the present Board, if this Bill is passed into law, a continuation of the same policy would result. That is my fear. If I had in my soul believed that this is in the interest of the producers, why, I would have gone 100 per cent. in support of something of the kind, because I do feel there is a great and urgent need for organization, capitalization and leadership among the rice producers of this Colony. But I doubt whether this Bill will be able to give them the kind of leadership I am looking forward to. I fear this Bill as I fear a nightmare.

I have not the time to be coming here into the Legislature and wasting its time just to criticize Government. I would be the first, if anything is done by the Head of the administration or any Government Officer in the interest of my people, to go out of my way to shower blessings on him. But when I feel that this Bill is designed not in the interest of my own people, what else do you expect me to do? Apart from being their representative in this Council, I am President of one of the most virile organizations in this Colony—The Man Power Citizens' Association—having 4,000 members, more than half of whom are producing rice. Have I not to watch their interest here too? But I was not consulted. I was not asked, though I represent the most virile organization in this Colony with an influence which no other local organization can hope to get within a few years. And I want to tell you something about that influence. Perhaps you have read the report of Dr. Benham. In that he had referred to the influence of the Man Power Citizens' Association. I am General President of that association and if I feel in my own mind that this Bill would be in the interest of those who grow rice, certainly I would go out of my way to give it support.

That is the reason, sir, that in November last I went in to see you and actually beseeched you to continue with the Defence Regulations and get a competent officer from the United Kingdom or U.S.A. to advise us on the whole constitution of the Board in order to put it in a democratic way. But was that idea heeded? I do not think this Government did anything of the kind, although I went out of my way to see you, sir, at Government House Annexe without being called. I have here a B.P.I. communique which states (and I quote):

“The Co-operative Organiser did not arrive in the Colony from Jamaica until May, 1945, but in the meanwhile the District Officers who were in their districts carrying out surveys had come in for a conference at Head Office and were prepared to have co-operative development where possible.”

Could we not have waited until this Organiser came from Jamaica to give us the benefit of his experience and advice? In spite of making all these representations to the Head of the administration, begging, you, sir, not to go through with this Bill because I thought it was not in the interest of my people but to call in a competent adviser and carry on with the Board as at present, because there is a bit of confidence in the present state of affairs, and I am sure if this Bill goes through that confidence would be undermined and it would take a long time restoring it, no heed is taken. I have done all that in order not to embarrass your Government but in order to assist this Government to arrive at something which would be in the interest of all the parties concerned. When the hon. Mover said that this is a large monopoly granted to the Board, he was right. He saw the danger himself. That was at the back of his head. Today in Europe and all over the world monopolies are being crushed. Even in the U.S.A. there is a committee examining these things—cartels—and here we want to have a large monopoly hindering the people. What

gave away the whole argument was when he said "I am interested. I would do my best to have the Board converted into a co-operative organization." Yet on the other hand he says it has a large monopoly. You see how inconsistent he has been. "I am sure if he is true to himself and re-examines this Bill he would agree to let us put it before a committee. Let us hammer out something that will be acceptable to everybody, and I am sure we can do that. I remember the Town Planning Bill, when Members said: "Oh, no; we ought to have a conference with the Attorney-General and discuss this thing. What happened? That did go a long way to meet the wishes of everybody.

The PRESIDENT: Does the hon. Member care to continue as we have to adjourn for a number of days?

Mr. EDUN: No, sir. I still have a long way to go. I am not even half-way.

Mr. SEAFORD: It is unfortunate the hon. Member has made that statement, as there may not be a quorum on that day.

The PRESIDENT: I would just like to say the hon. Member closes again with an appeal to hold up the Bill, and I have already said this is an appeal which has been made to me far too often. This Government is often accused of getting nothing done and when it does come forward with a practical measure it must be held up because some section of the community does not wish it. The proper place to have it out is in this Council. I think the Colonial Treasurer and myself have given good reason why we should go on with this Bill.

I would just like to say this with regard to the objections. The matter seems to divide itself into two. One is a period of real difficulty confronting this industry particularly in main-

taining its export at a fair price. To cope with that difficulty we want an efficient machinery in the Colony. That is the first object of the Bill. Opinion differs considerably as to what the set up of that Board may be. I have had representations as equally strong as the representation of the hon. Member that there should be a small solely Government-managed machine. We have it on the other side that there should be no Government Officer except one, or that the great majority of the Board should be rice producers. Between these two extremes the Bill has a certain middle way—to give half representation on the Board to the rice producers of the industry themselves. Whatever we do the Bill must be an effective instrument. That is one side of the picture.

Then there is the ideology, to use the term of one hon. Member, of a co-operative association of rice producers throughout the Colony upon which to have the broad basis of such a machine. With that I am in complete sympathy, and I am only too pleased to see some effective measure whereby District Rice Producers' Associations can function effectively. One of their functions would be the nomination of members of some central body or some panel representing the rice industry on this Board. That I would be only too pleased to see. Can we stand aside and wait an indefinite number of years before such an effective Rice Association is established? The whole history of co-operative movement in all countries, including England, has been this—extreme difficulty of getting small co-operative associations of producers really on their feet. I remember twelve years ago reading about action of this kind in Ceylon and India and its difficulty. It is a plant of slow growth. It is not a question of getting a person from England and "hey presto" the association springs into being. You have to go about it slowly and wisely.

The first foundation of it incidentally is finance, and that is precisely where co-operation, particularly communal co-operation, has come to grief. Nowhere is it so glaring as in India where great effort has been made. Hence this provision in the Bill whereby the Board should be able to give some financial assistance to such an organization. So, as I have said before, I would be only too glad to see that pursued. If it starts in that way it is possible to get the association springing from below in the country districts and working into the machinery at the top. Representatives of the rice industry on the Board would be only too

glad to see it. I said that to the hon. the Attorney-General who has a new Bill in mind.

We will adjourn, I take it as the general feeling, to Thursday next at 2 p. m., in which case we will proceed first with the other Bills including the Census Bill and, perhaps, some of these motions. I am somewhat doubtful we can go on that day with the second reading of this Bill. Perhaps we may sit on Friday and resume the debate then.

The Council adjourned to Thursday, 7th February, 1946, at 2 p. m.