

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

{*Constituted under the British Guiana
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)
Order in Council, 1953*}

THURSDAY, 12TH JULY, 1956

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT:

The Deputy Speaker,
Mr. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E. — in the
Chair.

Ex-Officio Members :

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. M. S. Porcher, (Acting)

The Hon. the Attorney General,
Mr. C. Wylie, Q.C., E.D.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. F. W. Essex.

Nominated Members of Executive Council :

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid,
C.M.G., C.B.E., (Member for Agriculture,
Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Hon. **W. O. R. Kendall** (Member
for Communications and Works).

The Hon. **G. A. C. Farnum, O. B. E.**
(Member for Local Government, Social
Welfare and Co-operative Development).

The Hon. **R. B. Gajraj.**

The Hon. **L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.**

Nominated Unofficials:—

Mr. T. Lee

Mr. W. A. Phang

Mr. C. A. Carter

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb

Mr. H. Rahaman

Miss Gertie H. Collins

Mrs. Esther E. Dey

Dr. H. A. Fraser

Mr. R. B. Jailal

Mr. Sugrim Singh

Clerk of the Legislature

Mr. I. Crum Ewing

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. E. V. Viapree (Ag.)

Absent :

His Honour the Speaker, Sir
Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C.
— indisposed.

The Hon. **P. A. Cummings** (Member
for Labour, Health and Housing)
on leave.

The Hon. **R. C. Tello.**

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.
— on leave.

Mr. J. I. Ramphal — on leave.

Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E.
— on leave.

Mr. E. F. Correia—on leave

The Assistant Clerk read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council, held on Thursday, 28th June, 1956, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPEAKER'S ABSENCE

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I have to record that His Honour the Speaker is unfortunately unable to be here today, and therefore I have the honour to preside in his place.

Leave has been granted to Mr. Cummings, Member for Labour, Health and Housing, from 30th July to 13th August, to Mr. Sugrim Singh from 14th July to 24th July, and to Mr. Macnie from today's meeting.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Porcher, acting): I beg to lay on the table:

The Third Report of the Public Service Commission for the period 1st January, 1955 to 31st December, 1955.

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

Order in Council No. 39 of 1956 made under section 8 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, on the 3rd day of July, 1956 and published in the Gazette on 7th July, 1956.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 1956-60

I also beg to lay on the table:

Sessional Paper No. 8 of 1956—Development Programme 1956-1960.

With your permission, sir, I would like to say that this Programme would have to be adopted in two weeks' time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In that case, Mr. Financial Secretary, that would be rather short notice. This matter is so important that I think perhaps Mem-

bers should be given a longer time to consider it. Unfortunately, Members do not have any knowledge of what is in that Paper.

The Financial Secretary: Well, I do not know how much longer Members may wish.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I take it that it deals with the \$90 million Development Programme.

The Financial Secretary: Yes.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Well, it is a matter of great importance to the people of this country. Speaking as a Member of this Council and not as presiding officer, I am not happy about the way in which the money has been spent on the last Development Programme, and I would want to consider very carefully what is in this Sessional Paper before discussing it — and I am sure other Members will agree with me. If it would not unduly interfere with the carrying out of the works, I would suggest that a longer time be allowed.

The Financial Secretary: Yes, sir. If that is to be the case, I shall ask that it be put on the Order Paper at a later date.

The Attorney General (Mr. Wylie): On behalf of the Member for Labour, Health and Housing, I beg to lay on the table:

The Report of the Government Analyst for the year 1955.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

CURRENCY (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to give notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to amend the Currency Ordinance.”

LOCAL GOVERNMENT
(AMENDMENT NO. 2) BILL

Mr. Farnum (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): I beg to give notice of the introduction and first reading of a Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to amend the Local Government Ordinance with respect to the charging of fees by a Local Authority for burials in a cemetery or burial ground under its control and for a copy of an entry in a Register of Burials.”

ORDER IN COUNCIL NO. 39 OF 1956

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

“Be it resolved:

That this Council in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 39 of 1956 which was made on the 3rd day of July, 1956, and published in the Gazette of 7th July, 1956.”

TELECOMMUNICATIONS LOAN

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

“Be it resolved:

That, with reference to the Public Loan Ordinance, Chapter 297, this Council approves of an issue of \$1½ million of the loan authorized thereunder for defraying the cost of the reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Telecommunications System being raised in the Colony, such issue to bear interest at the rate of 5% per annum and to have a currency of 30 years but with the right of redemption after the expiration of 10 years from date of issue being reserved.”

ORDER OF THE DAY
PENSIONS (SPECIAL PROVISIONS) BILL

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move the first reading of the Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to make special provisions with respect to the computation of the Pensions of certain persons.”

Sir Frank McDavid (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines): I beg to second the motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the first time.

FISHERIES BILL

Resumption of debate on the motion for the second reading of the Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to regulate fishing in the waters of the Colony”.

Sir Frank McDavid: I moved the second reading of this Fisheries Bill as far back as on the 17th of May. I do not propose to ask indulgence to make a second speech, but I would like to draw attention to the proposed amendments to three clauses which have been circulated yesterday and today. These amendments are important inasmuch as they seek to clarify the intention of the Bill in some respects, and in the case of one amendment, to correct an obvious drafting error. I think therefore that it will be agreed that it is desirable I should explain these amendments now, because they may have a bearing on the attitude which Members may have to the Bill itself.

The amendments have been circulated on two sheets. I shall deal with the second sheet first. The first amendment deals with the Interpretation Clause, and it seeks to introduce the word “habitually” between the words “means” and “selling” in the definition of “commercial purposes”. The reason for that is to make quite sure that the real intention of this Bill is given legal effect. As I have said in moving the second reading, casual sale of fish by any private person does not in itself constitute selling for commercial purposes. This word “habitually” itself appears in certain other Fisheries Ordinances or Acts in other parts of the Commonwealth.

The next amendment is that of sub-clause (2) of Clause 12. If Members

will turn to that subclause as it is printed in the Bill, they will find that it says:

"No person shall erect, maintain, use, remove or have in his possession any kind of fish trap, fish pen, net, line with more than three hooks or other instrument or appliance for fishing except under and in accordance with the terms of a licence to fish for commercial purposes."

It is quite obvious that this restriction should apply only to fishing—for commercial purposes—but as the subclause stands it might even create an offence for a person to stock these things. Obviously, there is a drafting error there, and this new draft subclause seeks to make the intention quite clear. It reads:

"(2) No person shall for commercial purposes erect, maintain, use or remove any kind of fish trap, fish pen, net, line or other instrument or appliance for fishing except he is the holder of a valid licence issued under Section 11 of this Ordinance."

If one is going to fish for commercial purposes, then he must hold a licence.

The third amendment is to Clause 34, subclause (3), which, as printed, prescribes that:

"All regulations made under this Ordinance shall as soon as possible after they are made be submitted for the approval of the Legislative Council and if not approved shall cease to be regulations from the date of the disapproval, but the non-approval shall not affect anything done or suffered under the regulations between their coming into force and their rejection by the Legislative Council."

It does not specify any time limit, and the wording of this amendment makes it quite clear that a regulation must be approved by resolution of the Legislative Council within forty days of the date on which it was laid in that Council. That is the usual period for United Kingdom legislation. If the regulation is not approved within that period, then

it becomes void, but without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder, or to the making of new regulations. That is, in substance, what the amendment seeks to do.

I do not think I shall detain the Council any further. If there are any questions to answer, I will answer them in the Committee stage. Most of what I would like to say has been said more than two months ago. I have caused the Clerk to circulate to Members the speech I made on that occasion so as to refresh their minds. I would like to add that I am indebted to the Press for having published in full my speech in view of the fact that the matter is of some public interest.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak?

Mr. Carter: There are so many laws in British Guiana, Sir, to govern 460,000 people that if they are put into operation the entire population would find itself in prison within half an hour. This Bill, if passed into law as presented to us, would send hundreds of our people to prison unnecessarily and would be a stunning blow to the simple economy of thousands of people who depend on catching fish in one form or another to supplement their meagre income. It is a travesty in the first place, and it is an insult, I think, to the integrity of the Members of this Council. It could not have been presented to an all-elected Legislature and passed as it is. If it did, I would be fearful of the safety of those representatives.

The *Interim* Government has been accused and abused for much of the legislation that has passed through this Council; why heap more coals upon its head? I am very sorry that it has fallen to the lot of the hon. Member for Agriculture to present this Bill.

Paragraph 1 of the "Objects and Reasons," of the Bill states:

"As a result of the rapidly increasing population of the Colony, a greater number of persons have turned to the fishing industry both in an endeavour to provide food and as a means of earning a livelihood. It is considered desirable, therefore, to enact legislation with a view to protecting the fishing industry. This Bill reflects the result of a comprehensive examination into the needs of the fishing industry, and has been endorsed by Dr. Hickling, Fisheries Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies."

Firstly, I would like to know for what and for whose benefit is the fishing industry being protected? Secondly, anyone who has studied Dr. Hickling's report on Fisheries in British Guiana, which was forwarded on May 20, 1954, would find it impossible to believe that Dr. Hickling has ever seen this Bill, far less to endorse it. If he has—and I still believe he has not — then he could not be looked upon as a reliable source of information, because in the very first paragraph of his report he stressed the need to promote the fishing industry and to encourage the people engaged in fishing by setting up a Board of responsible and qualified persons, forming a Sea Fisheries Committee whose functions are clearly outlined in the said report. Dr. Hickling goes on to say that a similar Committee to advise on fresh and brackish water fisheries might also be set up, but he saw no urgent need for such a body at present.

So far as I know, Sir, neither of these two Committees has been set up, and if we look at paragraph 2 of the Hansard of the 17th May, 1956, while moving the second reading of the Bill the hon. Member for Agriculture is quoted as saying:

"Dr. Hickling expressed himself as being strongly opposed to the introduction of unnecessary legal prescriptions which

profess to regulate fishing, and more particularly, fishing in offshore marine waters. Dr. Hickling pointed this out in very clear and forceful language."

Now, in the face of what is recommended in Dr. Hickling's report and memorandum we have a Bill before us that is a deliberate and calculated attempt to pull wool over the eyes of Members of this Council in the name of Dr. Hickling and to place a totally unnecessary and undemocratic set of dictatorial restrictions upon the working class people. If this Bill is passed as presented it would not protect but hinder and discourage the progress of the fishing industry in British Guiana, and also bring about starvation among most of the people in the country.

As regards the question of the pin seine which has been referred to, I shall try to explain how it operates. The seine is pinned on the mudflat at high water and when the water recedes thousands of small fish and shrimps are left in the seine, mostly dead, and these are collected and sold to persons of the poorer class. If the Bill is proceeded with, it would prevent fish of a certain size from being caught and this would not only affect the livelihood of fishermen all over the country but also the economy of the classes who have to buy that type of fish. If Government wants to create a bigger and better fishing industry in the Colony to ensure a steady supply of fish for the consumer, and to encourage the manufacture of by-products from waste and discards, it should assist the people engaged in fishing for a livelihood by providing marketing and distribution centres, refrigeration facilities, loans to improve and maintain their equipment, and technical instruction to improve their method of fishing. All this can be accomplished with less than half of the restrictions contained in this Bill.

As soon as the Bill leaves sea fishing for commercial purposes and looks inland, we encounter sheer nonsense and disorder. It is a travesty, in that it is intended to deal with sea fishing while it really deals with fishing in general. It is supposed to promote something but, as it is worded, it restricts everything. Therefore, the best title I can suggest for it is the "Fisheries Restriction Bill." It seeks to make the Director of Agriculture, policeman, prosecutor, judge and jury—in fact the kingfish.

I desire to draw attention to portions of paragraphs 4, 5 and 10 of the Hansard report of the speech by the hon. mover of the Bill. I have numbered the paragraphs myself. In paragraph 4 he states :

"No one, I am sure, really believes that the Government proposes to prevent people from catching fish in the rural canals and trenches and to limit the number of hassar, patuas and other fish he may wish to take. That is sheer nonsense."

In the next paragraph of the speech the hon. Member for Agriculture says :

"The first important point to note about the Bill is that although it contains enabling powers directed to the conservation of fish generally, it is concerned mainly with the regulation of fishing for 'commercial purposes'. Those words are defined to mean 'selling, exposing for sale, exchanging, bartering, or consigning fish, whether fresh or preserved in any manner.' The Bill is therefore concerned primarily with fishing for gain—fishing as a livelihood; it does not seek to control fishing as a sport or casual fishing; it certainly does not affect me when I get a rod and go to the Lama and catch a lukunani or any other fish. It does not affect the numerous residents of our rural areas who engage in and enjoy the art of fishing for themselves in the many canals and trenches, and it does not even affect those people when they catch a lot of fish—more than they need for themselves — and dispose of some to their neighbours. That is not

fishing for commercial purposes — not fishing for gain. Therefore, that definition—'commercial purposes' — coupled with the definition of 'fish', is rather important in deciding what the Bill really embraces. It seeks to regulate commercial fishing, that is, fishing for gain, in fishing boats designed and used for commercial fishing, and, of course, mainly fishing in the sea. There is some fishing in rivers for commercial purposes but not as much as fishing in the sea."

In paragraph 10 the hon. Member reiterates :

"I have already endeavoured to explain that the term 'commercial purposes' means what it says. It does not mean casual fishing in a trench and disposal of the catch."

People in the rural areas catch more fish than they need for their immediate domestic use, and exchange or barter the surplus with their neighbours for plantains, cassava, rice and what have you. If this Bill is passed it would be an offence if a fisherman does not have a licence to fish for commercial purposes. The person with whom he barter his fish would also be committing an offence if he knew that the fisherman did not have a licence to fish for commercial purposes. In the first instance the fisherman could be fined \$50 under clause 12 of the Bill, and under clause 27 the person with whom he bartered would be liable to a fine up to \$10 for every fish he obtained in exchange.

Let us go back to the interpretation clause and see what "fish" "fishing" and "waters" mean. It says :

"fish" includes all or any of the varieties of marine, estuarine or fresh water fishes, crustacea, whales, porpoises, manatees, mollusca or other marine or fresh water animal life;"

"waters" includes the sea and any harbour, bay, creek, lake, lagoon, pond, river, stream, trench or canal."

There are a few things left out—bath tub, bucket and so on. This in-

terpretation makes the whole of clause 12 as rank as fish, and proves that the Bill says one thing and means something else. If we make the mistake of passing this Bill as printed (which I do not propose to subscribe to) I hope the hon. mover will supply policemen, Magistrates and Judges with copies of the true interpretation of these various clauses.

Sir Frank McDavid: And copies of the hon. Member's speech?

Mr. Carter: Clause 13 deals with licence to export fish and the refusal of the Director of Agriculture to grant such licence, if he so desires. I wonder whether the hon. mover means fish used for food, or also the small tropical fish exported for aquarium purposes. In paragraph 11 of his speech he says:

"Clause 13 relates to a third form of licence—a licence to export fish. There again, Council will, I am sure, agree that in these days we must take care of our own food supplies and must not deprive ourselves of our right to control exports if we find it necessary to do so. At the moment all commodities can be controlled in that way, because there are certain emergency powers still in force. I do not think that we are exporting fish at present, but it may be that we may find ourselves capable of doing so, and in that event we must be able to regulate it so that supplies we require for our own purposes must not be allowed to go out when we are in need of them".

If the licence is for the export of fish for food purposes I heartily agree with the clause, but I do not think it should be necessary to have a licence to export small tropical fish which never grow to food size—hardly more than one or two inches—which are a source of bringing hard currency into the country. I would suggest that there should be some amendment of this clause to prevent the exportation of that species of tropical fish to Trinidad and other West Indian Islands

which buy them very cheaply for re-export to the U.S.A. where they earn dollars which we need.

Clause 17 of the Bill states:

"17. (1) The Director may at any time by notice in the Gazette cancel any licence issued under this Ordinance or any regulations made thereunder, and the said licence shall cease and determine on and from the date of publication of such notice in the Gazette."

It would be terrifying for an investor, foreign or local, to wake up one Saturday morning and discover in the Gazette that his licence has been cancelled as from the date of the publication of the notice. No appeal to the Governor in Council would help, because no sane person would be willing to invest thousands of dollars and utilize his skill and time and be dependent on the good graces of one individual, the Director of Agriculture.

Clause 24 (a) (b) (c) (d) and (e) and clause 28 are positive and undemocratic attempts to provide fisheries officers, policemen and holders of fishing licences with powers equal to those given to the Secret Police in Soviet Russia.

Dealing with clause 34 of the Bill the hon. Member for Agriculture said:

"I do not know if all Members are aware that in most fishing centres of the world provisions have to be made, taking into account things of this sort, with the sole purpose of conserving the products of the sea. This applies more particularly to temperate waters and other waters where there is a gigantic production of fish of certain kinds. I think Mr. Macnie will agree with me. He, like myself, has had the good fortune of seeing something of the salmon fishing industry in Canada where the regulations are most precise: the hour and time the fishing fleets are

allowed to set out, the exact hour at which the fishing season closes (after which no further fishing can take place), and the size of the fish to be caught. This sort of provision is very necessary in cases where there are likely to be takings by fishermen which would only result in the destruction of their own living. We in British Guiana are very far indeed from that stage — if we ever reach it, I cannot imagine any circumstances within our lifetime which would require the limitation of catches per man or kinds of fish in our inshore waters, the sizes or weights of the fish and things of that sort. We just do not have that kind of fishing here—at least I have not heard of it.”

The fish the hon. Member referred to was the salmon. I doubt whether Members of this Council know the characteristics of the salmon, I will mention that one of them is that the fish returns to the place of its birth to spawn once a year and to die. They swim for hundreds of miles from the sea, and in this particular case up the Columbia River in Canada. There must be regulations governing the catching of that particular fish, because if they are caught before they spawn within a few years the salmon would become extinct because there would be no eggs to reproduce the specie. Permission is therefore given to catch after they have spawned. But in this country, there is no necessity to impose any restrictions and regulations to hinder people from catching fish.

Dr. Hickling introduced the idea into British Guiana of the culture of a fish called tilapia. It is :

“an East African fish, having a distribution . . . in eastward flowing rivers from the Debi Shileli in Ethiopia to East London in the Union of South Africa. In 1939 it made a mysterious appearance in Java . . . and had already become widely distributed in that island by 1941. The Japanese introduced it into Malaya, and it became widely cultivated there.”

The tilapia was introduced into the West Indian Islands and fish ponds were set

up in which to breed them. It is a fish with some good characteristics because it grows quickly and it has much flesh and very little bone.

The Fisheries Officers that we have here had most of their training in the United Kingdom, and to all appearances, know very little of our local fish. The introduction of the tilapia into the West Indies was an absolute necessity because there are almost no rivers in those islands and the culture of that kind of fish had to be developed and protected by regulations. Does the hon. mover know how many thousands of rivers, creeks, ponds, etc., we have in this country and how many hundred species of fish? I wonder if the Hon. Member (Sir Frank McDavid) knows how often some species of our local fish spawn and how many thousands of eggs they lay.

Sir Frank McDavid: I had not come prepared for this.

Mr. Carter: A number of our local fish spawn between five and six times a year. From the figures that I have, about 2,000 eggs per spawn are produced; and as far as I have learned, our fish, if left unmolested for two years would number enough to cover the entire surface of British Guiana. I would have preferred to read that our Fisheries Officer was advising our people who are interested in fish ponds and fish culture to grow our *mullet*, *patua*, *hassar* and other fish. If he knew as much of our fish as he appears to know of tilapia I think he would encourage the culture of those fish, rather than bringing tilapia to British Guiana.

Once again another effort is being made to ask the Governor in Council to decide appeals. I am left to wonder if the Governor in Council has nothing else to do. The question of appeal is

bound up with Clause 6. Clause 34, which also brings in the Governor in Council, is controversial and makes the Bill even more odorous. The Governor in Council is empowered to make regulations for carrying out the provisions of the Ordinance without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing clauses. Among the regulations which he may make is that contained in Clause 34 (1) (h),

“to limit the number of fish which may be taken by any one person in any one day or in any other period;”

We know that in this country there is an old saying: “Every day is fishing day but every day is not catching day.” Clause 34 (1) (p) empowers the Governor in Council to make regulations

“to prescribe areas and periods of time within which fish or any particular species or size of fish may not be caught, or within which any particular method of fishing is prohibited;”

I want to know what will become of the fisherman who is told, “you can fish only down yonder”—in a given area—or, if he has been catching small fish all the time and finally gets large ones, to be told, “throw it back”. As soon as the water recedes from a pin seine, all the fish die, and I imagine that most of the fish caught would be of a size the fisherman would not be allowed to catch. I will have to be a bit ridiculous or unusual to make my point. We have in this country a fish called *bungo mary*. They are caught in sizes from three inches up. If the regulations state that no fish of that type should be caught below four, five or six inches in size, then a lot of fish will have to be left on the mudflat to feed cranes, gauldings and crows. The fisherman is not going to discriminate which fish he must catch, and if his pin seine retains 100 or 200 pounds of that small-sized *bungo mary*, prohibited by the regulations,

then the people who will also suffer will be those who go to the market to purchase four cents or a shilling of that size of fish for themselves and their families. I do not see why we should be asked to permit such regulations to be made.

As regards the prescribing of areas and periods of time within which fish of any particular species may not be caught, do the Fisheries Officers of this country know enough, if anything at all, about the spawning seasons of local fish? The Canadian Government obtained its information after much observation. If this Government wants to develop statistics which will eventually give it the necessary information to bring forward regulations, then let it establish more fish ponds and carry out a series of studies of the various fish.

I would like also to comment on Clause 34 (3). As printed in the Bill, it reads:

“All regulations made under this Ordinance shall as soon as possible after they are made be submitted for the approval of the Legislative Council and if not approved shall cease to be regulations from the date of their disapproval, but the non-approval shall not affect anything done or suffered under the regulations between their coming into force and their rejection by the Legislative Council.”

The mover saw it fit to bring forward an amendment to this subclause, which reads:

“(3) All regulations made under this Ordinance shall be laid before the Legislative Council as soon as may be after they are made and if not approved by resolution of the Legislative Council within forty days after having been so laid, such regulations shall thenceforth be void but without prejudice to the validity of anything previously done thereunder, or to the making of new regulations.”

(4) In reckoning any such period of forty days no account shall be taken of

any time during which the Legislative Council is dissolved or prorogued, or adjourned for more than seven days."

This amendment is in substitution of the original clause, but it only gives a period of time within which regulations must be approved. The amendment I would like, is that "no regulation shall go into effect until it is approved by the Legislative Council". What a regulation may attempt to do may involve thousands of dollars on the part of fishermen, and if it is not approved Government has no responsibility for regularizing their losses. Why should Government believe that individuals or any concern would enter into fishing under those conditions?

Finally, I would like to find out how many Members have seen or studied Dr. Hickling's report. I assume not less than half the number of Members here. About three or four copies were probably sent around, and I am asking that this Bill be further deferred until copies of the report can be circulated and Members have studied it. The Bill does not contain any of the recommendations made by Dr. Hickling, and I cannot support it.

Mr. Speaker : Does any other Member wish to speak?

Mr. Sugrin Singh: The obvious hesitancy on the part of Members to rise and speak against this Bill must not be taken as an indication that "floor" Members are 100 per cent in its favour. I rise however to oppose the Bill, and I want to say at the outset that in my view it is untimely, unnecessary and uncalled for. I do not see anything alarming in the fishing industry in this Colony to necessitate such stringent regulations as those proposed in this Bill, the sum total of which would

result in more chaos and confusion than that which existed in the past, because the rural population is turning away from the fishing industry.

I have had a fleeting glance at Dr. Hickling's report and I have also seen a general statement in the Objects and Reasons relating to the Bill, which I would like to read. It says:

"As a result of the rapidly increasing population of the Colony, a greater number of persons have turned to the fishing industry both in an endeavour to provide food, and as a means of earning a livelihood. It is considered desirable, therefore, to enact legislation with a view to protecting the fishing industry . . ."

I would have liked the hon. **Mover** of this Bill to have spent some more time on this particular aspect of the matter—as to why there is this need for protection—to show how the country would suffer without such protection, and so on and so forth. From this general statement, however the inference appears to be that because the population of the Colony is increasing and because a large number of people are turning to fishing for the purpose of providing themselves with food and for commercial purposes, therefore these regulations are necessary. British Guiana is a country with its own peculiar problems and its own peculiar conditions, and one has to be mindful of these conditions before passing, willy nilly, legislation which exists exclusively in some of the progressive countries in the world.

Some little time ago the Fisheries Department gave an indication of what was intended when it started the establishment of fish ponds and distributed literature among the public showing how they were to be run. One finds, however, that while a fish pond is going in full swing on a private property, the Sanitary Inspector would come along

and ask the owner who gave him permission to carry on the pond. Very often the matter is taken to the Magistrate's Court and much time is spent before it ends one way or another. Right now I have a case of that kind in the Georgetown Magistrate's Court, but I must apologise and refrain from mentioning anything further because the matter is *sub judice* and I cannot discuss it.

These conditions have led to considerable difficulties and bad feeling among certain residents in the Colony. Recently we found also a great amount of public inconvenience being caused by certain traffic regulations, but they have been withdrawn. On these occasions it is our duty to raise our voices in this Council on behalf of the inhabitants of the country whom we represent. We are public men and have to listen to what we hear. In cases like these we often get a barrage from the public asking "what are you people doing that you sat down and allowed such and such a thing to happen?" One's patience is sometimes exhausted, but that is the kind of thing we meet with every day.

Mr. Deputy Speaker : I must ask the hon. Member to keep to the point.

Mr. Sugrim Singh : Very well, Sir; I was conscious of the fact that I was digressing. To go back to the point, I was asking whether there is any urgent need at the moment for these proposed regulations. Are they designed to give protection to some foreign Company or to somebody who wants to go in for fishing on a large scale? We have heard about a fishing fleet and a big fishing industry coming down to this country, but we have all the fish in our waters which would be necessary for us to feed the population of the country for years to come.

There is no question of spawning or anything of the sort.

The hon. Mover of the motion, in his opening speech, tried to clarify the situation as regards people who fish for their own personal benefit and those dealt with in the Bill which is concerned particularly with fishing for gain. While there may be a few persons who fish for their own benefit at the Lama and other places, there are many people in the villages and estates in the rural areas who cannot find employment every day, and therefore they catch fish as a means of supplementing their family income. Must we eliminate these people from the picture? They have a right to benefit from their activities in such a case, although people better off might be able to avoid fishing for gain.

The hon. Mover of the motion has made it clear that if a man wants to catch fish for his own food or to give some of his catch to his neighbours, he can do so. Most of us know where fishermen reside in the country districts and where to find them at such places as Buxton and Beterverwagting. Many of these men are fishermen by tradition, and in turn they hand down the occupation to their children. Should we disturb any of these men if he happens to be the owner of a boat by compelling him to register it and things of that kind? Several of these people also make a little money—a few dollars or a few shillings—out of these boats by renting them out and so on. What would happen to these people if this Bill becomes law is not quite clear. I am afraid they will have to prove that they are not fishing for commercial purposes, and I can foresee that innumerable difficulties are going to arise.

We should consider also the question of fines to which people would be

liable for offences under this Bill. I think the hon. the Attorney General will agree with me when I say that there is hardly any room for a Prosecutor in the Magistrate's Court and that improved seasing accommodation is necessary for such officers. A poor fisherman in the country would have to use a bicycle and probably travel a great distance to answer any charge such as failure to register his boat, and if convicted the penalty will be \$100 or six months' imprisonment. I am not saying that legislation is not necessary in this matter, but even Dr. Hickling has warned — as the hon. Mover of the motion has stated in his opening speech—that we must avoid "the introduction of unnecessary legal prescriptions which profess to regulate fishing."

The hon. Mover of the motion has stressed this fact—no doubt with the best of intentions — but I still think that the Bill is a bit premature. I should like to hear a little more about the registration and inspection of fishing boats, and so on. What are people suffering from? Is anybody stealing any other person's property? Is anybody objecting to the fact that we are in this fishing business? My hon. Friend (Mr. Carter) who has just spoken, has referred to the hazards which the small fishermen have to face as pioneers of the industry. At the moment they have to buy ice and take it along with them when they hope to secure an important catch, and they have to meet other problems of that kind.

I have noticed in the neighbouring Colony of Surinam that there is no difficulty on the part of the residents in purchasing fish in the ordinary markets, and that there is provision in those markets for keeping the fish in good condition. In British Guiana however, there is no similar provision and the small fishermen often have

to try and sell their fish before it deteriorates, since there is always the need for money. There is a great demand for fish at the present time and people are buying almost anything in that respect. I think it is also necessary that better transportation be provided to enable the fishermen to distribute their fish to consumers in the City. In some of the fishing centres of the Colony large catches are sometimes made, but the fishermen are unable to get them into the City quickly. I am sure that you, sir, as a Guianese, are aware of these facts and telling you about them is like carrying coal to Newcastle. Owing to the peculiar conditions existing in Georgetown, when the big catches are brought in by the fishermen some often have to be thrown away. I think we should see that these conditions are improved and the fishermen given more encouragement.

It is not good to realise that as soon as a fisherman is charged with an offence under this Bill he is liable to be fined \$100 on conviction by a Magistrate. There is no wonder that many of these small men are not even willing to come to Georgetown and engage in things like selling ground provisions. As you know, sir, there was a time when large quantities of ground provisions were grown in the rural districts and brought to the City for sale. I myself used to assist in producing them on my father's farm in the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: And we used to export hundreds of barrels of plantains to Trinidad also. I can remember that very well.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I knew that I would have been carrying coal to Newcastle in attempting to explain these things to you, sir. You know the way in which the people developed some of the peasant industries, but there has been a dropping off in recent years.

The same thing applies to the milk industry and I am grateful to Dr. Fraser for having referred to it. We have been hearing for quite a long time that a pasteurisation plant is being brought down, but it is not here as yet. First, we were told that it would be here in February, and now we are being told September. I do not know what efforts are being made to improve dairy farming in this Colony, but the Livestock section of the Agriculture Department is supposed to be providing facilities for rearing these cattle on the right lines and although it has some of the best bred cows and so on, it is being run at a loss. How and where are we going to get the milk required for use at the pasteurisation plant? I have some further remarks to make on this question of the registration of fishing boats—in the hypothetical regulations—but perhaps it would be better for me to hear something more about it.

Sir Frank McDavid : My speech (in moving the second reading of the Bill) has been circulated, and there is one paragraph in it which deals with these so-called hypothetical regulations. I would ask the hon. Member to read paragraph 7 of my speech; I said that this provision is very necessary. I went on to say (in par. 10) that there was a third form of licence—a licence to export fish—and pointed out that we in British Guiana must take care of our own food supplies and must not deprive ourselves of our right to control exports if we find it necessary to do so, but I do not think we have reached that stage as yet, if we ever reach it. I cannot imagine things of that sort taking place here; we do not have that amount of fish. At least, I have not heard of it. Therefore, the hon. Member need not read the balance; the hypothetical regulations do not exist.

Mr. Sugrim Singh : With all due respect to the hon. Member, I want to

say that we have had hypothetical regulations in this Colony already, and I refer to the Motor Regulations which we had here. For 25 years we had regulations whereby hire cars were allowed to pick up passengers, but now we find that they cannot do so any longer. We had regulations which were not being put into force.

Sir Frank McDavid : Those regulations were made by the Legislature and I am sure they met with the approval of Members.

Mr. Deputy Speaker : I happen to know that special conditions were imposed in the Motor Regulations in order to protect the East Coast railway on which the Government was losing something like \$1½ million a year. The Colony has to maintain that railway and it had to be protected, so the regulations were amended. I happen to know that the Hire Car Regulations were enforced on the East Coast because the hire cars were competing with the railway which this Colony was subsidizing to the extent of \$1½ million. These Regulations were enforced only on the East Coast.

Sir Frank McDavid : That is the law.

Mr. Sugrim Singh : My point is : why provide machinery in the law which, it is said, will not be used? While it is there it can be used, as is the case with respect to hire cars on the East Coast. I regard such Regulations as traps, pitfalls into which innocent people will unconsciously fall and find themselves in a difficult position. Are we here to set traps and put obstacles in the way of people engaged in this industry which has gone along very well, simply because the people in Georgetown cannot get fish? What about the Amerindians? At one time we had smoked fish coming into George-

re-storage. Cold storage facilities should also be provided in New Amsterdam. As one hon. Member put it, instead of erecting barriers Government might have started to climb by degrees. It is inherent in human nature to dislike laws which seem to change old customs. As a peaceful man I believe that the best method of approach might be one which proceeds step by step, and as the Colony develops the Bill as a whole might find its rightful place. Essentially, I would say, the Bill as proposed is a good thing but, as I have said before, it is something which, taken as a whole, would serve better in a place which is bigger and much more developed than British Guiana.

Dr. Fraser: I rise to support Bill in principle, because I feel it is an effort on Government's part to regularize the fishing industry. I think that much of the controversy that has arisen over the Bill or part of the Bill is due to the fact that it contains measures to protect inland fishing and covers the aspect of preserving wild life.

There is one part of the Bill which I would like to get quite clear in my own mind, because it does embrace a large segment of people in the rural areas who fish with cast nets. Clause 11 states:

"The Director may on application made to him in the prescribed form issue licences to fish for commercial purposes."

The Bill goes on, in Clause 12 (1):

"No person shall fish for commercial purposes in waters to which this Ordinance applies, unless he is the holder of a valid licence issued under section 11 of this Ordinance, and such licence shall be carried by the licensee whenever he is engaged in fishing."

Where fishing is done with cast nets in the districts, the catch is often

low, and the venture a small one. Would a licence have to be taken out in this case? If so, is it the owner of the boat who will have to apply to the Director, or the fisherman?

These provisions do affect a fairly large number of small fishermen in the rural areas who, as Mr. Jailal said, try to make a living out of it apart from planting rice. I would like the Member for Agriculture to say quite clearly if these people will have to take out a licence, because I do feel that great hardship on their part is possible.

Mrs. Dey: It would not be right for me as a woman to sit and hear this debate on fish—so many cries of 'fish', 'fish', 'fish' until it smells — and not make my contribution. As a trained, qualified and recognized cook for over 40 years I am supporting this Bill. My reason for supporting it lies in the fact that a penny has two sides, but this wife is going to give the edge of the penny. We as Guianese are inclined to do things how we like to do them, when we like to do them and where we like to do them; and as soon as something happens and the time comes for us to do these things in an organized manner, we raise objections. If my own mother were alive she would have opposed this Bill even as she would have sent me to the Mental Hospital if I had told her years ago that people would travel in aeroplanes.

As a housewife, I go to market five out of seven days. I spend a lot of time choosing fish because I am a lover of creole fish—there are only two that I do not like, and those are *hoari* and *yarrow*. We housewives spend a lot of money to get the *bungo mary* we have been hearing about, and No. 2 *butter fish*. *Bungo marys* and *butter fish* of three, four and seven inches in length have no place on the housewife's

table, and the fisherman must learn that he should not catch those sizes of fish. As I see it, this Bill seeks to organize the fishing industry. When matters of this type come up, we get grumbles, but soon we find we have fallen into line and we cease the grumbling. Perhaps, if we women were given the traffic control regulations to devise, we would have got away with them; but we were left out. Let us not leave women out of a say in this matter. I feel that through the Bill, fishing would be carried out in a more organized manner and we would get more fish on our table.

Mr. Lee: There is no doubt that regulations are necessary in order to protect commercial investment in the fishing industry. Also, if Government desires to control fishing in the ocean or the rivers, it is all right; but it should not try to control fishing in the trenches and the ponds, and I would like this Bill to be considered in that light.

Here we have an Inland Fisheries Officer who is proposing an experiment under his supervision, and according to this experiment if I intend to go in for fishing I would have to take out a licence. On the other hand if I go in for cattle rearing I would have a free hand. I would not like to discourage the Fisheries Officer in his efforts, but this Bill as it stands would be creating a hardship on a certain section of the fishing industry that is now being built up.

The Creator gave to us the fishes in the rivers and it is our right to seek them for food. I saw on the West Coast this afternoon people fishing in the trenches. Usually, when they catch a surplus they would sell it. In future, the position would be that the persons buying the surplus would pre-

sumably be heavily fined in court by a magistrate who does not know local conditions (if the magistrate is familiar with local conditions, he might reprimand and discharge the offender).

We want to develop inland fisheries in order to provide more meat for the people of the Colony. But do not let us exercise too much control, otherwise people who would spend money on fishing would say, "we are being controlled and we are not going to employ people in fishing."

When I used to cross from Leguan to Wakenaam by launch there was a man who fished by the riverside. He caught a lot of bunderie crabs by setting traps and he had a good market for them in Georgetown. He spent many years at it and made it a success, eventually owning a two-storeyed building, cattle and rice lands. Now, if that man were controlled he would never have been able to make a success of fishing.

I am not saying that laws, having been made, cannot be amended; however, I am asking that there should be no control in regard to fishing in ponds and trenches in the rural areas. If there is to be, then sportsmen who go into the Abary and catch as many as one hundred *lukunani* and *tarpon* should be also controlled.

They could not eat all themselves and so they brought the balance to Georgetown and distributed them among their friends. Let us assume that fish is protected and that the industry is developed; are we going to continue with these licences and regulations? That is why I have asked the Member for Agriculture, now that the country is developing, not to impose so many restrictions on the industry.

It has been said that experiments have been made in the rearing of certain types of fish and that they have proved successful in ricefields and other places, but we should remove restrictions on the small farmers as much as possible. I am not asking anything derogatory of the Governor in Council; I am just asking that there should not be too many laws and Orders in Council, since they would lead to too much trouble and confusion. If a man goes to his rice field and catches some fish to be used as food, with or without the assistance of anyone else, I say it would not be right to tax him.

Rev. Mr. Bobb: After having listened to the other speakers, I think I should make my contribution to this debate. Some Members have expressed my own opinions, and I would not repeat what they have said. I think the hon. Member responsible for bringing this Bill forward has had in mind the decentralisation of the industry, and has recommended only such legislation as is necessary at the moment. I agree that it is unfortunate that this Bill should come at a time when the fishing industry in this Colony is far from mature and has to stand the weight of all this legislation. I think there is need to have legislation which would help to protect fishermen. We know about conditions in the Corentyne River and the hardships that fishermen experience there, and we also know about what happens elsewhere. It is, in my opinion, advisable to protect the fishing industry.

I am very doubtful whether the Bill in its present form is giving as much protection to the fishing industry as I would like to see. While a considerable sum of money is being spent to develop the industry, there should be time for

the people themselves to find their feet. There is a psychological value in giving them that time, and we should not impose any kind of legislation which would hamper their progress. I do not share the view that the Bill in its present form — with these regulations — will have the effect which the hon. Member, in all sincerity, expects it to have even if there is co-operation within the industry itself.

Very many things are not yet ready for this Ordinance to become effective. The fishing industry is not yet ready. The poor fishermen will have to be educated by some efficient officers so as to be able to operate something like this successfully. This Bill, according to clause 24, will impose additional duties on these officers and, quite apart from what these duties are, I wonder whether it would be prudent at this time to introduce functions of this kind on an already hard-working Department. It would be creating or expanding the Department which is to implement an Ordinance of this kind. Therefore, while I agree that an Ordinance of this kind is necessary for the protection of the industry, I think it would be necessary for these regulations to be modified and to find recourse to legislation which would give the fishermen who operate in our territorial waters what they so abundantly need.

I think the protection which is being given to them at present is inadequate, unless we are going to place a new interpretation on clause 22 of the Bill. There is nothing specific which would apply to fishermen other than those in the fishing industry, and so I congratulate the hon. Mover of the motion for adopting the suggestions given by Dr. Hickling, the Fisheries Officers and

other responsible people in introducing some kind of legislation which offers a measure of protection. I do feel, however, that the wide scope of this Bill is premature. I also desire to underline what certain other Members have said, and that is if the Bill is well timed it might bring the desired results. On the other hand, it might bring about very undesirable consequences as it is. I would repeat that while the licensing of boats and the registration of fishermen is desirable and should be legislated for, I hope the rest of the Bill will be postponed or withdrawn until such time as the industry has expanded and is able to take the weight of this legislation.

Mr. Phang: It has only just occurred to me, Sir, that next month—August—will be crab-hunting time in the rural districts, and there will be hundreds of people catching crabs on the seashore in my constituency. I just wonder what would happen to these people. Have they got to take out licences and register their corials? I wonder what would happen if this Bill is passed? I do not think I would be able to go back to the North West District at all. There will be dozens of people spending their holidays there (in August) and doing some crab-catching in the meanwhile. I should also mention that I am a member of the Fishery Committee and, so far as I know, this Bill never came before it for consideration. I am opposed to it.

Miss Collins: After leading a deputation from the Fishermen's Union to the hon. Member for Agriculture, I was surprised to find that this Bill was tabled in its present form, and I therefore think it should be deferred or that some of its clauses should be withdrawn. I am not prepared to

accept the Bill as presented to this Council. It would create hardships not only on the fishermen themselves, but also on the poorer classes who are the chief consumers. Certain clauses in the Bill—especially those referring to control of the size of fish that may be caught—would interfere with the economics of the people in the entire country. There are some housewives who might be able to send to the markets and buy a fish for a dollar or 72 cents, but the many poor housewives who have children to provide for, have to look for cheaper fish like *bungo mary* to buy. I do not know if the hon. Member for Agriculture has considered the Bill from this point of view, so I am appealing to him to defer it or withdraw certain of the clauses. I think the Bill should be discussed clause by clause.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As no other Member wishes to speak on the Bill, I will put the motion for the second reading.

Sir Frank McDavid: I desire to speak, Sir. I think we have had an extremely interesting debate, and I am deeply indebted to Mr. Jialal for throwing some light on certain aspects of this matter of which I was not entirely aware. However, I will return to that later. I attempted to clarify what this Bill actually will do at this moment if passed. If passed into law, the Bill will immediately require the registration of fishing boats; that is the first thing. All fishing boats used for fishing for gain, are to be registered. The next thing the Bill will do, if passed, is to ensure the licensing of fishermen who fish for commercial purposes. I have already explained in my first speech what the interpretation of "commercial purposes", as in

cluded in this Bill, means. I tried to emphasize that the casual catching of fish by people and the disposal of such fish for cash or by barter or any other means, is not commercial fishing, and I think far greater assurance has been given in this respect since the Attorney General has suggested an amendment by which the word — “habitually”—will be inserted in the definition. Consequently, it should be clear to all Members that a person who merely exposes for sale or barter in the disposal of fish, cannot be held to be fishing for commercial purposes. Therefore the limitation of gain in the Bill is clear.

There is one point made by Dr. Fraser which is important. He did say that the Bill attempts to cover too wide a field. It covers the regulation of the industry and it also, to a large extent, is intended to provide a measure of wild life protection. Of course, it is perfectly right that the powers provided in clause 34 enabling the Governor in Council to restrict the size of fish and so on, might more apply to fish in our interior than to our sea fish. Let me again say that I can conceive of no possibility of the Governor in Council ever being asked to make regulations which would control the size, the weight and the times of catching of our marine fish. I cannot see that we have the fish which would require that. I can see that the Fisheries Officers and the Fisheries Department may want to control the size of the mesh of nets used by people to obtain fish but no more than that.

We have had a graphic description from Mr. Carter as to what happens when a pin seine is taken out to sea—how it catches enormous quantities of small fish and so on. He was wondering how in all the world the regulations would work in the circum-

stances, since the fish would be already dead when the water has withdrawn. Consequently, there will be nothing to be gained by putting the fish back into the sea. What the Fishery Department will undoubtedly do, as I have said, is to control the size of the mesh so that only fish of a certain size would pass through.

The one point that exercised the minds of two or three hon. Members, which I regard as very important, is the question of fishing inshore by people who are not fishermen throughout the year, but part-time fishermen. I think Mr. Jailal referred to people who are rice farmers part of the year and may be fishermen during the other part of the year, fishing inshore, in the conservancies and so on. My answer to that is that if a person comes within the scope of the definition of “habitually selling or exposing for sale fish which is caught,” then he is fishing for commercial purposes, and, consequently, unless there is some change in the Bill as drafted, he would have to apply and get a licence. That is all that would happen to him.

I do not know whether circumstances such as Mr. Jailal has mentioned would make it necessary for some amendment to be made which would give the Governor in Council power to waive the taking out of a licence to sell fish, because restricting those people is not the intention of the Department at all. The intention is to encourage fisheries, to encourage the stocking of public ponds and private ponds with particular kinds of fish. Therefore I do not think for one moment that the Fisheries Department would wish to do anything that would interfere with the ability of people to catch as much fish as they want. If it is considered that we should not ask people who do part-time fishing in the interior for com-

mercial purposes to take out a licence, then I think some amendment might be made which would permit that particular part of the proposed legislation to be waived in so far as such people are concerned.

Mr. Jailal also asked one other question which is very much in the minds of people now that an American firm is coming to British Guiana and, we hope, are about to go in for commercial fishing on an extremely large scale. The Department of Agriculture and my Ministry have been particularly concerned about this, naturally, because we want to attract capital investment here. We want to have knowledgeable people in this industry, and they have promised to inculcate in our own fishermen the most efficient methods of fishing which Mr. Jailal is anxious to see us adopt. But we do not want any such undertaking to interfere with the livelihood of our fishermen, or to interfere with our consumer's market. We do not want those two things to happen, so we are trying very hard to attract them here and get them to come here, but at the same time obviously we will have to use our best endeavour to prevent any such disadvantages from arising.

From my discussion with them I feel quite sure they are going to be of value to this country and to our fishermen. Mr. Jailal's question was: if those people go out in their boats into extra-territorial waters, bring fish inshore and then export it, do they have to get an export licence? The answer is "yes". The particular clause of the Bill is quite clear. Anybody who wishes to export fish has to get an export licence.

Mr. Jailal: I do not think the hon. Member for Agriculture has fully covered the question I asked. My point was that if those people go fishing outside our territorial waters and use local

facilities which they will establish themselves ashore, would we during a period of shortage of fish in this Colony restrict the export of such fish, having regard to the fact that they might have to fulfil certain contracts abroad?

Sir Frank McDavid: The question is extremely hypothetical. What we have been worried about is those people coming here and catching an enormous quantity of fish and throwing it on the local market to the detriment of our fishermen. The hon. Member has put the question to me: supposing these people come in and catch fish, and we want their fish, are we going to prevent them exporting it, thereby failing to fulfil contracts they have made abroad? I do not want to answer that question deliberately, because it is hypothetical at the moment. If British Guiana was starving for food it would not matter what kind of contracts existed. As long as there is a law which says that an export licence has to be obtained we would use our powers to prevent the fish going out of the country.

But I do not think that question arises at the moment. This firm is looking for a particular kind of shrimp and a particular kind of fish which are not easily obtainable, and we hope they will find them. We also hope that their fish meal manufacturing plant will take all kinds of surplus fish which our fishermen catch and cannot sell. All of that would be to our good. I hope the hon. Member will not press his question which is too hypothetical for me to answer at the moment.

It seems to me a very curious thing that some hon. Members have found the Bill premature. I was looking through my file and I found that in Trinidad they passed their Ordinance ever since 1916, with more or less precisely the same powers. For the comfort of my friend, Mr. Phang, I will

read section 3 of the Trinidad Ordinance which says:

"3. (1)—The Governor in Council may make regulations—

(c) to prevent the taking of fish, oysters, crabs, shrimps and turtles at such times and within such areas as may be defined in the regulations;"

The holiday spirit still prevails in Trinidad, as it does here. I am sure nothing is going to be done by the Department of Agriculture which would prevent the annual holiday sport during "crab-marching" time.

In Barbados similar legislation was passed in 1947 with even more stringent provisions. I think the honourable the Attorney General may have had something to do with that at that time. One Member, Mr. Lee, used these words: "Don't kill the efforts of the Fisheries Officers"—who are doing such good work in the development of the fishing industry in British Guiana, he might have added. This Bill is what those officers want; they say they must have a law of this sort to help them in the development of modern fishing, and they began to move in the early days to draft this legislation themselves. So I am sure that if they thought it would kill their efforts in any way they would have made representations. The Fisheries Officers are very anxious to have this Bill.

I hope the motion for the second reading will be put this afternoon, but I do wish to speak through you, sir, to my friend, Miss Collins, who has repeated here this afternoon something of the argument she used when she brought a delegation to my office. She implies that what is being done in this Bill is going to prevent people from catching small fish, such as the *bungo Mary*. She implied that the Bill was intended to harm the small person who cannot buy large fish in the market. I wish to assure the hon. Member that

this Bill does nothing of the kind. All that it does now is to make registration of fishing boats necessary, and to make licences necessary for fishermen—people who catch fish habitually for commercial purposes. There is absolutely nothing in the Bill which is going to control the size or weight of fish. There is power vested in the Governor in Council, subject to the approval of this Legislature, to do that sort of thing.

In moving the second reading of the Bill I have been trying to emphasize that I can see no reason whatever in this Colony in the foreseeable future, to make Regulations limiting the size of fish to be caught. This is comprehensive legislation and must contain all these powers. Do not let the people of the country believe that we are trying to do things of that sort, because all the argument I have heard inside and outside of this Council has been completely emotional.

I am asking Members to approve the second reading of the Bill, and if there are any points in the clauses that need elucidation or amendment, I would be only too willing, with the assistance of the hon. the Attorney General, to consider them. I am impressed with the point that "waters", the expression used in the Bill, is all-embracing, and may extend to private ponds. I have also been impressed by the point made by Mr. Jallal that certain kinds of fishing at certain times, need not be controlled by licence. Those are points which, in the Committee stage, I will try to meet. I hope Members will explain the objects of the Bill to any member of the public who may have some fear still remaining in his mind, and try to remove that fear.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will now put the question "That the Bill be read a second time."

