

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

THURSDAY, 24TH OCTOBER, 1946.

The Council met at 2 p.m. the Hon. E. G. Woolford, O.B.E. K.C., Deputy President, in the Chair.

PRESENT:

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

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

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

The Hon. the Colonial Treasurer, Mr. W. O. Fraser (acting).

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

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

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

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

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

The Hon. T. Lee (Essequibo River).

The Hon. V. Roth (Nominated).

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

The Hon. W. J. Raatgever (Nominated).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum (Nominated).

The Hon. H. Rahaman (Nominated).

The Hon. J. A. Veerasawmy (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 18th of October, 1946, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENT**THE PRESIDENT'S ABSENCE**

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: As hon. Members are aware, His Excellency is at present either out of town or is about to leave town on an official visit to Berbice.

NOTICE OF QUESTIONS**ACTIVITIES OF THE RICE MARKETING BOARD**

Mr. JACOB gave notice of the following questions:—

1. When last were the books, accounts, vouchers, and stocks of rice, bags, padi etc., at the rice mills at Pln. Anna Regina and Mahaicony checked by the Auditors of the Rice Marketing Board?
2. When last were the books, accounts, vouchers and stocks of every kind at the Rice Production Expansion Scheme at Mahaicony-Abary checked in detail by the Auditors of the Board?
3. When last were the books, account, vouchers and stocks of every kind at Georgetown, Anna Regina, and Mahaicony-Abary checked and verified by the Auditors of the Board?
4. Have the Auditors issued a report certifying that they have examined and checked ALL the books and accounts of the Rice Marketing Board, that they have verified the cash in hand at Anna Regina and Mahaicony, and whether they obtained all the information and explanations they required; if so, will Government cause this report to be published for the periods ended 30th September, 1945, 31st March, 1946, and 30th September, 1946, without further delay?
5. What is the reason for not publishing the statements of Income and Expenditure and Liabilities and Assets of the Board with a full and fair report of the Auditors for the three periods mentioned in question 4 after the statements had been certified by the Auditors?
6. Is it a fact that a Commission headed by Mr. Justice Jackson investigated the affairs of the Anna Regina rice mill recently, if so, will Government cause the report of the investigators to be

printed and circulated among the Members of the Legislative Council?

7. Will Government consider the advisability of requesting the Colonial Auditor to audit all the books and accounts of the rice Marketing Board and the Rice Expansion Scheme as from the 1st October, 1946?
8. Is it a fact that a large quantity of new rice bags were reported lost or missing recently from one of the Board's bonds in Georgetown; if so, what steps, if any, have been taken to recover the bags and to bring those responsible for the loss before the Courts?
9. Are any members of the Board employed by way of giving advice at the Mahaicony-Abary Rice Production Expansion Scheme; if so, give their names, date of employment, whether temporary or permanent, and remuneration?

ORDER OF THE DAY

WORKING CLASS HOUSING BILL, 1946

The Council resumed the debate on the following Bill intituled :—

“An Ordinance to make provision with respect to the housing of persons of the working class and for purposes connected therewith.”

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT : I think the hon. Member for Central Demerara (Mr. de Aguiar) would like to make some contribution to the debate, but I do not see him in his seat. For the benefit of those Members who are not quite accustomed to our procedure, I may say we are trying to follow this procedure : In the event of any Member wishing to make an amendment to the Bill which will be soon going into Committee stage, we want to adopt the practice of laying over the notices of amendments in writing instead of suddenly getting up and proposing amendments which, however, a Member is quite entitled to do. Strictly speaking, the Rules contemplate amendments being submitted in writing. The hon. the Attorney-General has to frame the necessary paragraphs and he would like to have notice of the proposed amendments. I have mentioned this for the benefit of Members who may wish to propose amendments in Committee.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : Mr. Deputy President, so far as the principles

underlying this Bill go, it seems clear that hon. Members are in agreement with the Bill. There are, of course, certain clauses of the Bill which would require consideration when it reaches the Committee stage. I gather that is the feeling of Members of Council. In view of the fact that the principles appear to be acceptable to this Council as a whole, since there has been no dissenting voice against the general terms of the Bill, I do not propose to make any further comment but to express my appreciation and the appreciation of Government of the ready way in which a matter of this nature has been received by this Council. I hope that steps will be taken after the legislation has been put on the Statute Book to implement those principles. I now beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Mr. JACOB : I think I understood you to say the last time we met, sir, that the Commissioner of Local Government will address this Council after Members have spoken. I do not see him here. If it is intended that he should not speak at all—

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I would like to say in reply that the President had warned Members that if the Commissioner of Local Government did not speak at the last meeting he might not be available at this meeting. I think I am correct in saying that the majority of Members felt that the Commissioner's comments would have been most useful after he had heard hon. Members. Directly I came into the Council today I asked Mr. Parkinson (Asst. Colonial Secretary) to try and get Mr. Laing. I do not know where Mr. Laing is. If Mr. Laing is available I would ask that he be allowed to speak, as his comments would be useful. But, I think Members were warned that it was possible he would not have been here today.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT : The Council will wait a few minutes in order to allow the Colonial Secretary to find out whether Mr. Laing can be present.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I understand now that Mr. Laing will be coming as soon as possible. Whilst we are waiting for Mr. Laing, would hon. Members look at the Interpretation clause of the

Bill? There, hon. Members will see that "persons of the working class" means—

- "(a) mechanics, artisans, labourers and other persons working for wages;
- (b) hawkers, costermongers;"

We usually refer in this Colony to hawkers as "hucksters". That may remain, but as regards "costermongers", I personally think a more appropriate designation might be found for them. It is not likely to have costermongers here. They do not exist anywhere else in the world except in London. They are referred to as a distinct class under the caption of workers

Mr. M. B. LAING (Commissioner of Local Government) arrived.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Mr. Laing, are there any remarks you would like to make? You may do so now.

Mr. LAING: Mr. Deputy President and Members, the hon. the Attorney-General has dealt in great detail with the principles of the Bill now before this Council for consideration and, therefore, I need not further dwell on those points. The hon. Member for Western Essequibo (Mr. C. V. Wight) has also dealt with the question of the Wortmanville Housing Scheme for which provision is made in this Bill, and the hon. Member for North Western District (Mr. Jacob) made some remarks and asked questions about the Rural Housing Scheme in the Essequibo District. I need not refer to the Wortmanville Housing question further because the hon. Member for Western Essequibo has adequately dealt with that; but I, sir, have some remarks to make about the Essequibo Rural Housing Scheme to which the hon. Member for North Western District referred.

The discussion that has taken place on the principles of the Bill has disclosed that the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce, the Members of the Legislative Council and the Mayor and Town Council of Georgetown are all agreed that improvement in urban housing is urgently required, and I think the whole population of this Colony shares with this Council and with Government the view that it is necessary to try and improve housing conditions as soon as possible. I think that this Council and those who have made a study of housing will also agree that if hous-

ing is to be carried out in a proper manner it must be carried out in accordance with a very carefully prepared plan. I know that some Members are anxious to start at once the building of houses here and there and the next place, but I do not think that would be wise because any planning for housing must remain in force for very many years, and we should certainly wish, as I feel we all do, to improve Georgetown and not have buildings erected in the City which are not constructed in accordance with the carefully prepared plan.

The first step in housing is to carry out a survey of living conditions and ascertain the structural conditions of the buildings in the areas which we desire to improve. The hon. Member for Western Essequibo has informed this Council that a survey has been carried out, and nobody will be surprised when I say that the results of that survey are somewhat grim. We all know that the population of Georgetown had increased in recent years by some 20,000. We are painfully aware of the fact that during the war years it was impossible to obtain adequate supplies of building materials and hardware and nails. With such a large increase in the population of a city of the size of Georgetown it is therefore reasonable to expect that there will be overcrowding. With the difficulty of obtaining building materials and hardware it is obvious that buildings will have deteriorated and that the survey should show that a large number of buildings are in a state of disrepair and some unfit for human habitation, whilst those in good order are, comparatively speaking, few. That is the position we are faced with in Georgetown at the present time.

The survey also disclosed that of the houses in the areas over which the survey was made, nine out of every ten are rented. Now it seems to me to be clear that it would be an impossible task for Government to attempt to rebuild all those houses in the overcrowded areas. As a high percentage of the buildings are privately owned, it is reasonable to suppose that when building materials and hardware become available the owners will desire to put their own buildings in order and to demolish and rebuild those which are at the present time unfit for human habitation. Our responsibility lies with those persons who will be dispos-

essed and those in the lowest income group who are not in a position to pay an economic rent and to provide themselves with reasonably good shelter. It will therefore be the duty of the sub-committee of the Main Development Committee at work at the present time to endeavour to provide funds for schemes the object of which is to improve the living conditions, and housing for those of our citizens who fall into the low income group and who are referred to in the Bill as working class families and defined in the early clauses of the Bill.

Now, the next step in planning for Georgetown would be to prepare an outline plan of the City. It is hoped that the Town Planning Officer, Mr. Gardner Medwin, will arrive in this Colony next month for the purpose of making this outline plan. Within the framework of that plan schemes for slum clearance and redevelopment will have to be carefully thought out and prepared by the Central Housing Authority, the constitution of which is provided for in the Bill. The schemes prepared by the Authority must be approved by the Governor in Council and must fit into the framework of the plan for Georgetown. The question of finance will be a matter for consideration by the Sub-Development Committee. The sub-committee called the Urban Housing Committee is already at work considering how best to finance this difficult problem of the improvement of housing conditions in the City. There is no doubt that our chief responsibility must lie with those people who will be dispossessed as the result of housing schemes, and those who cannot at the present time pay an economic rent. Perhaps the Committee may also be able to advise on a scheme by which an owner-occupier can be helped to provide himself with a suitable home.

The hon. Member for North Western District referred to the Rural Housing Scheme for Essequibo. That scheme which is administered by my Department under the direction of a Committee, is making progress, but slowly. The reason why progress has not been fast is, I wish to explain at once, not due to any lack of interest of the rural population in that scheme or in their desire to provide them-

selves with better homes and better living conditions. Difficulties have arisen, as they have arisen in this town, in obtaining materials and hardware. Difficulties too have arisen in connection with the obtaining of land, either by purchase or by lease, on which persons can build their houses. Government, of course, cannot possibly consider making advances and loans to persons to build houses who do not possess either freehold title or long leases with at least 21 years to run. The Bill now before the Council provides that where a scheme is submitted by the Central Authority in connection with rural housing and lands are not available on which to erect those houses, land may be acquired compulsorily, not at a speculative price but at a fair price. The Essequibo Scheme is progressing. We had hoped to build 225 houses. We have succeeded so far, I think, in building some 36 houses spread over that district, but many applications for homes have been approved and these will be erected as soon as materials are available.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Farnum, referred to the provision in the Bill by which Local Authorities in the country will be permitted to play their part in a housing plan. This is a matter of extreme importance to my Department, the members of the Local Government Board and the Chairmen of the Village and Country Authorities. Under this Bill the Local Authorities may be their own housing and planning authorities and will thereby be enabled to contribute their share in planning for better homes and better living conditions in the country, as we hope to plan for better homes and living conditions here in Georgetown.

The DEPUTY PRESIDENT: Thank you, Mr. Laing. Some Members have come in. Does any Member wish to contribute to the debate? That not being the case I will put the question.

Motion put and agreed to.

Bill read the second time.

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

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Clause 2—Interpretation.

Mr. ROTH: With regard to the definition of "Local Authority", I take it that this applies only to the Mayor and Town Council of Georgetown, and the Mayor and Town Council of New Amsterdam. Why should it be confined only to such other Authorities as the Governor in Council may declare? Why should it not apply automatically to all other local authorities?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It will be appreciated that as time goes on and this legislation is being implemented, whatever areas may be acquired or whatever steps it might be necessary to take, the Governor in Council would have a record of these areas and then there will come into play the declaration of any local authority and the publication in the *Gazette*. This is a matter for development and it does not exclude any particular area from being declared a local authority under this clause if and when the Governor in Council thinks fit.

Mr. ROTH: That is my point. Why throw more work on the Governor in Council?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Perhaps it is work which would be necessary in the circumstances. All local authorities might not be put to the same aliveness; let us put it that way. No local authority is excluded from being so declared for the purposes of this Bill.

The CHAIRMAN: If the hon. Member has in mind any local authority which he would like to see included in the Bill, perhaps we can make an amendment at once. Does he desire to do that?

Mr. LEE: The question as I see it, is whether some districts are not local authorities already, and whether the Governor in Council should not declare them so under this Bill also. What I feel should be done is that the Bill should provide for a Central Authority, and for application to be made if it is desired that any particular area should be declared a local authority.

The CHAIRMAN: Do you mean a country district?

Mr. LEE: Not necessarily; I mean a local authority like Wakenaam. By this clause as it stands, we are excluding any local authority that is not declared by the Governor in Council.

The CHAIRMAN: The Governor in Council may include any area for the purposes of this Bill, but not a local authority *per se*. The clause is designed to meet the case the hon. Member is referring to.

Mr. ROTH: Then, let us take the term "statutory undertaker". The second word seems to me to be a rather unfortunate choice. Why not make the term "statutory director"?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In other Ordinances—for instance the Electric Company Ordinance—the word "undertaker" is also used. It does not mean what the hon. Member has in mind. We are not referring to Le Repentir, for instance.

The CHAIRMAN: I think, myself, that it is an error to use that word if you do not have in mind that class of person. Perhaps people who are now carrying on the business of costermongers would like to be included in this Bill.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not think its inclusion can do any harm. In the Jamaica Ordinance that is in the definition section. This was taken from the English Act and, as far as I can recollect, the Wortmanville Ordinance contains the same words. That Ordinance would disappear if this Bill is passed. This is, however, not a point to which we are wedded.

The CHAIRMAN: That is always the point with our local legislation. We lift everything from the English Acts, sometimes without any applicability to this Colony.

Mr. GONSALVES: This clause says:

"...Persons of the working class" means

mechanics, artisans, labourers and other persons working for

(b) hawkers, costermongers;

(c) persons not working for wages but working at some trade or handicraft without employing persons other than members of their own family; . . ."

It seems to me that everyone who is worth his salt can very well be included in the Bill. I have heard it suggested, Mr. Chairman, that the word "hucksters" should be put in, and I will move that it be substituted for the word "hawkers".

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think there is the question of licence and such other things to be considered at the same time. We are talking of "costermongers" and although the term might not have any application to our local conditions, as I have pointed out, it is contained in local law on the same subject. If I remember rightly, it is in the Wortmanville Ordinance. The word "hucksters" might denote other things—licences and things of that sort.

Mr. LEE: The word "hucksters" carries the idea of licences, but those small traders who sell water coconuts and things like that do not pay any licence.

The CHAIRMAN: But they are hucksters. I have to warn hon. Members that if you are not careful and that if you do not make the definition so comprehensive that everybody should claim the benefit, somebody might discover that he is not a costermonger and does not come within the meaning of the Bill. I am not in a position to move an amendment, but if I was sitting anywhere else I would have moved that the word be struck out.

Mr. JACOB: I think the word "costermonger" is very well placed there, because we have some of these people in this Colony. As I understand it, they are people who sell goods in barrels and things like that.

The CHAIRMAN: It is only my personal opinion that the word should be deleted.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have got a copy of the Wortmanville Ordinance and it appears that the word "costermonger" was taken out of section 2.

Mr. GONSALVES: May I follow the good example then and move that it be deleted from this clause?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I have no objection to the word being deleted.

Mr. RAATGEVER: I see no reason why it should be taken out. I will ask for a division.

Question "that the sub-clause — 2 (b) stand as printed" put, the Committee dividing and voting as follows:—

For: Messrs. Veerasawmy, Rahman, Farnum, Raatgever, Thompson, Roth, Jacob, Peer Bacchus, the Colonial Treasurer and the Colonial Secretary—10.

Against: Messrs. Gonsalves, Critchlow and C. V. Wight—3.

Did not vote: Mr. Lee and the Attorney-General—2.

Amendment negatived.

Mr. GONSALVES: I am moving the insertion of the word "hucksters", since nobody has been able to explain the meaning of the word "costermonger". I move that the word "hucksters" be inserted immediately for the word "costermongers."

Mr. VEERASAWMY: I rise to support that.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: There is an Ordinance which defines "huckster", but I defy any Member of this Council to find the word "costermonger" in any local Ordinance.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Mr. FARNUM: As regards sub-clause 2 (c), I am thinking of the farmer and would ask that the word be included here.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I presume that if the farmer to whom the hon. Member has referred does not come in under "labourers and other persons working for wages" in sub-clause (a), he would come in under sub-clause (d). Therefore, the necessity for the amendment suggested does not arise.

Mr. FARNUM: I agree. Sub-clause (d) covers it.

Clause 2, as amended, passed.

Clause 3—Incorporation of the Central Housing and Planning Authority.

Mr. ROTH: With regard to sub-clause (4), will the hon. the Attorney-

General be good enough to explain why the words "without the licence of the Governor in Council" have been added?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : In cases where the land is over a certain acreage the permission of the Governor in Council has to be obtained, and as the Central Authority will be dealing with large areas of land it is desirable to remove that restriction.

Clause 3 passed.

Clause 4—Constitution of the Central Authority.

Mr. LEE : desire to move an amendment to sub-clauses 4 (2) and 4 (3). I shall deal with 4 (2) first. I desire to move that the whole sub-clause be redrafted and made to read as follows :—

"The Chairman shall be elected from the Members of the Legislative Council and such person shall hold office as Chairman and as member during the Governor's pleasure."

I am conceding that the Governor should have some control over the Chairman, but I feel that the Chairman should be elected from this Council and in that way he would be responsible to the Members of this Council who are in turn responsible to the public in such important matters.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : Surely, sir, if the hon. Member is so solicitous of the welfare of Members of this Council, saying that the Chairman should be selected from among the Elected Members, why give anybody an opportunity to control him? We should proceed to appoint a Chairman and, to free things up, the Governor should abdicate as it were. Why should the Governor come into it at all?

Mr. LEE : I was only trying to leave the appointment to this office in the Governor's hands. If my hon. friend disagrees, however, I will not press it.

Mr. VEERASAWMY : I recollect that on a previous occasion the hon. Member stated that any Nominated Member should be eligible for appointment to this office. I would like to know whether in

the election of a Chairman the Nominated Members would be permitted to vote?

The CHAIRMAN : They are Members of this Legislative Council.

Mr. LEE : In moving the next amendment I will deal with that.

Mr. JACOB : I think we are making progress backwards in this Country. Recently the Governor appointed three Advisory Committees, the members of which are Members of this Council and an Elected Member is the Chairman of each of those Committees. When the Transport Bill came before this Council I made the same remarks—that we are not going forward. I think Government has been given instructions in the recommendations of the Royal Commission that every Elected Member of this Council should be given an opportunity to have an insight into the administration of the Colony. I see from this Bill that the Governor may select anyone to be Chairman of the Central Authority, and that person might not be a Member of this Council. I think that is entirely wrong, and that is why I say we are making progress backwards.

I agree wholeheartedly that the Chairman should be a Member of this Council and that he should be elected by the Members of this Council. Then there would be some responsibility on his shoulders, as he would be responsible to this Council for his actions. Later on I will have something to say about Members of the Executive Council not having any responsibility to Members of this Council at all. They claim that they have a special prerogative when they are appointed Members of the Executive Council, and they do exactly what they think is best without consulting any Member of this Council. They think that it is a private matter. Rather than having Elected Members who are representatives of the people and are responsible to the whole Colony, we want to leave this matter in the hands of the Governor who might come here and under local conditions might take the advice of one or two people and cause us to continue in the position we have found ourselves all these years. I think, sir, we should adopt the forward step, and I support wholeheartedly the amendment by the hon. Member.

The CHAIRMAN: I would like to ask the hon. Member if he realizes what he says. I am not at all trying to criticize the value of his remarks but he did make the remark that this Government had instructions from the West India Royal Commission to do so and so. I do not think he could have meant that, but he did say so. With great respect to the hon. Member no Royal Commission instructs the Governor. What the Royal Commission did was to make certain recommendations to the Imperial Government.

Mr. JACOB: What was passing through my mind was that the Chairman of the Royal Commission, Lord Moyne, when Secretary of State for the Colonies issued those instructions

The CHAIRMAN: Recommendations! By instructions it means that the Royal Commission or any Commission can direct the Governor what to do.

Mr. JACOB: I agree that technically I am not correct in saying the Royal Commission gave instructions, but this is what I would like to emphasize. I think the Secretary of State for the Colonies always gives instructions to the Governor here and, as Lord Moyne was Chairman of the West India Royal Commission and became Secretary of State for the Colonies that is how I got it confused.

The CHAIRMAN: The Governor receives directions from the Colonial Office, but no Royal Commission can instruct the Governor.

Mr. JACOB: I got mixed up with Lord Moyne being Chairman of the Royal Commission.

Mr. RAHAMAN: I would say, let the clause remain as it is. The Governor will know the best brains to be Chairman of the Authority.

Mr. ROTH: I agree that the Chairman should be a Member of this Council, but this I do not agree with: that he should be elected by this Council. Therefore I move a second amendment that for the words "fit and proper person" you substitute the words "Member of the Legislative Council".

Mr. LEE: May I ask the hon. Member how long is that Member to hold office? Supposing he is chosen by the Governor to be Chairman, how long is he to hold office?

Mr. de AGUIAR: Read sub-clause 4 (1).

Mr. ROTH: The hon. Member will recollect that I only asked that the first line of the sub-clause be altered. All the other conditions will remain as they are. Therefore such an appointee will hold office during the Governor's pleasure.

Mr. LEE: From my experience of the procedure when it is in the hands of the Governor and the Executive Council—I do not like to say it but I have to say so in order to convince Members of this Council that our men on the Executive Council have failed us and that is because they are not responsible to Members of this Council for anything they may do—it does not give satisfaction. That is why I plead with Members of this Council that if a Member of this Council knows in his heart that he has to account for his actions to the Members of this Council he would not be anxious to be elected as the Chairman. Members must remember that this Bill will go down to perhaps two or three generations before the cost of the houses is paid off, and if the Chairman is not to be elected by Members of this Council but is responsible to the Governor for his nomination and his position as Chairman, then we would be in the same old rut. We cannot expect when the time arrives to call upon him to account for his actions at the General Elections. If he is a Nominated Member the position is worse yet, as we would not be able to ask him a word. If as a Member of this Council, whether Nominated or otherwise, he knows that this Council is the body responsible for his election he would think twice before doing anything that might be detrimental or otherwise to one or the other. I am asking hon. Members to view it in that light. We want Members who are responsible to the public. This is an indirect way of throwing the responsibility of Members of this Council on the public. That is why I say he should be elected and not chosen by the Governor.

The CHAIRMAN: You are speaking of the Chairman. If the hon. Member looks

at the next sub-clause he would see there are to be ten members. It says—

“(a) five fit and proper persons
Probably some Members of the Legislative Council and

“(b) five fit and proper persons who are not Officers in the public service.”

Do you think this Chairman is going to be allowed to do what he likes? What is the hon. Member's fear?

Mr. LEE: The Chairman has certain inherent powers under the Ordinance which enable him to do some things and then go to the Authority and ask for ratification — a power I do not want him to exercise at his will unless he has to account to the public.

Mr. GONSALVES: I think the hon. Member has lost sight of this fact: The Chairman is only one-eleventh of the Authority. He may propose a thing and the other ten members may be against him. How can it then be his responsibility? What I am thinking the hon. Member wants to emphasise is that the Bill should leave it beyond doubt that Members of the Legislative Council will be on the Authority. If my hon. Friend wants to emphasize the right of Members of the Legislative Council to be on that Authority within the clause he should stress it. It is quite within the province of the Governor to appoint a Member of the Legislative Council to be Chairman, and I take it that the Member of the Legislative Council whom he is going to select will be in his opinion and in the opinion of the other Elected Members a fit and proper person not only to be a member of the Authority but Chairman of the Authority. I suggest that if he has several amendments he should let us hear them so that we will be able to understand them before they are moved.

Mr. de AGUIAR: I do not know that I would wish to support the amendment moved by the hon. Member for Essequibo River, but I do think there is a general weakness in the clause as it is constructed. I think what is perhaps creating some confusion in the mind of the hon. Member who moved the amendment is the fact that whereas there seems to be some sort of control over appointments and revocation of appointments of members referred to in sub-

clause (3), there does not seem to be the same control and restriction as to the appointment and revocation of appointment of the Chairman, and I invite the Council's attention to the entire clause in order to understand properly what I am referring to. It seems to me that the intention behind the whole matter, as stated here, is that the Governor has in mind the appointment of a Government Officer as Chairman of this Authority. Well, sir, that may have a lot of merit in it and whilst it is true that if a Government Officer is appointed as Chairman, being a public servant Government will be able to call on him at any time to resign, yet it seems to me that provision ought to be made that the Governor at some future time should select someone other than a Government Officer to be Chairman of this Authority. That seems to me where the whole weakness of this clause lies. If you read subclauses (4) and (7) they all deal with members appointed under sub-clause (3) and not under subclauses (2) and (5) in which reference is made to the Chairman. I think if that part of it is put right, the hon. Member for Essequibo River may consider his amendment unnecessary.

Mr. RAATGEVER: Sir, I would like to move an amendment to sub-clause (2) and that is for the deletion of all the words after the word "Authority." I think in a matter of this nature, so important to the people of this Colony, we should have the best brains as Chairman of this Authority, and I am going to say that we have the best brains in the Legislative Council.

The CHAIRMAN: Does the hon. Member mind reducing his amendment into writing and handing it to the Clerk? I must see it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member for Essequibo River handed me his proposed amendment before the Council met, but on general grounds I think hon. Members will agree that the section of the clause as worded and the clause as it stands in principle should remain. It has to be borne in mind that we are dealing with a subject of great importance to the people of this Colony. Great issues will have to be decided — questions of slum clearance, housing, purchase of lands under the Com-

pulsory Powers Ordinance and various matters of that sort. If hon. Members refer to the other Bill which accompanies this Housing Bill — the Town and Country Planning Bill — it would be realized that both of these Bills run together and are interwoven. Reference to the Schedule of that Town and Country Planning Bill will show a number of things which will have to be dealt with by the Planning Authority. The Central Authority under the Housing Bill will be the Planning Authority charged with the powers and functions under this Town and Country Planning Bill. There will be the question of roads. As hon. Members will see from the Second Schedule provision is made for the reservation of land for the construction of roads and the improvement of existing roads. Then Part II of that Schedule deals with the regulating and controlling of buildings and other structures — their size, height, spacing and building line, the location, the extent of yards, gardens and curtilage of buildings, the design, colour and materials of buildings and fences, etc. Then there is the question of limiting the number of buildings of a specified class which may be constructed, erected or made on, in or under any area, and providing for the removal, demolition or alteration of buildings or works, which are inconsistent with or obstruct the operation of the scheme, and providing for sanitary conditions. Then follow provisions for community planning in Part III, amenities in Part IV, public services in Part V, transport and communications in Part VI, and miscellaneous in Part VII.

I just mention that so as to point out to hon. Members and to emphasize the fact that the Chairman along with the other members of the Authority will have a great lot of work to do. This section in terms of this clause is similar to what obtains in Trinidad. The hon. Member for North Western District said that we are moving backwards. I do not know whether one can say that Trinidad is moving backwards. It is also in terms of the Jamaica law passed in 1939. They move very quickly, and the appointments are made by the Governor in both places.

Mr. JACOB : May I rise to a point of correction? In Jamaica the Governor

appoints these people with the present Constitution there?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It is in the Town Clearance Ordinance, the one we have, and I have no knowledge that it has been changed.

Mr. JACOB: The Constitution of Jamaica has been completely changed!

The CHAIRMAN: But not their Ordinances!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The point is, though the Constitution may change that will have nothing to do with it. This provision has not been altered. Apparently it has been working satisfactorily, so far as I am aware.

Mr. JACOB: Not in Trinidad!

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: They were erecting some very admirable buildings there at the beginning of this year. The point I wish to emphasize to Members is this: Provision is made in this clause for a Chairman to be appointed by the Governor and to hold office during the Governor's pleasure. In other words, the appointment can be revoked at any time by the Governor, but so far as the other members are concerned the Governor shall appoint five fit and proper persons who may be members of the Public Service. I pause here to remind hon. Members of what I have just read in connection with the Town and Country Planning and that is, you will require a considerable amount of technical advice in relation to the several matters which will come up for the consideration of the Planning Authority. I do not follow the hon. Nominated Member. He made a remark a moment ago which I do not intend to follow, but I do say that this technical advice, if the scheme or the various schemes is or are to be a success, will be absolutely necessary. That technical advice whether it is on forestry or a question of survey, or whether it is a question of agriculture, will have to come, I suggest, from members of the Public Service. I think hon. Members will accept that. That being so, provision is made whereby five fit and proper persons can be appointed by the Governor having regard to the circumstances to which I have referred.

The other five, distinctly, shall not be officers of the Public Service. That leaves it completely open to the Governor to draw those other five from Members of the Legislative Council, if they are fit and are in a position to assist the scheme or schemes which we wish to see advanced. That is the position. The hon. Member emphasized one aspect of the situation — that for the purpose of the Legislative Council having control and a knowledge of what goes on there should be Members of the Legislative Council on that Authority. But it must not be assumed that any Governor will not have regard to that aspect of the matter. To tie him down to six Members, which the hon. Member suggests by way of amendment, is unwise. Fundamentally we all desire that these schemes should be a success, that the legislation should be put on the Statute Book and that steps be taken to implement what we wish and what is desired and set out in this Bill. Therefore, if that is so, I suggest we should be guided by that consideration. I regret that I, personally, do not think it is advisable to have six Members of the Legislative Council on the Authority.

Mr. LEE : I think the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Gonsalves) was right in saying that I should outline my amendment to the whole clause in order that hon. Members could consider whether I am right or wrong. In outlining that we have to consider the clause as such. "The Central Authority shall consist of eleven members"; that is to say, giving the Chairman a vote and a casting vote. Let us assume that the eleven members have to be chosen for the Central Authority. According to the hon. the Attorney-General, it is desired that technical men should be on that Central Authority. Who are the technical men in the employ of this Government that can be appointed by the Governor for the purpose of these schemes? These schemes do not deal with agriculture but will deal first of all with finance. I think that for financial matters the Governor should appoint the Colonial Treasurer as a member of that Authority. After finance the Authority must consider the question of sites. Whom will the Governor ask for expert advice in regard to sites for

the carrying out of the schemes? I concede the point that the Governor should place on that Authority the Director of Medical Services. Then you come to the question of construction. Whom will the Governor appoint on that Authority but one expert in public works, a person who is responsible for public works and can give expert advice on the plans submitted to the Authority and on the constructions as being fit and proper buildings for people to live in? I presume the Governor will nominate the Director of Public Works to be a member of the Authority. Next there is Local Government on account of the Local Authorities who will make applications to improve their localities. Whether the Governor appoints the Colonial Secretary or the Commissioner of Local Government, I concede that. Those are the four experts in the Government Service who, I say, should be on the Authority.

Why should we have the Director of Agriculture on the Authority? Is this an agricultural scheme or a housing and a town and country planning scheme? What is to prevent the Governor from directing the Central Authority to call in any expert at all? The Bill does not and, therefore, if Government has four of its principal Officers on the Authority what more does it want? Then Government wants to take over the planning and to run it. We have at the present moment three counties in which these schemes will be carried out. Is it not the right of Government to permit this Council to elect from its Members persons to represent those three counties on the Central Authority? You will be spending millions of pounds (sterling) on these schemes. Is it not fair then that the Elected Members of this Council should be chosen to represent each county on that Central Authority—Elected Members who will be responsible to the public for what is done by this Authority to remove slum areas?

It is not at all illogical that we should choose three members—one from Essequibo, one from Demerara and one from Berbice District. There are two Municipalities which this scheme is going to affect and is it not proper for us as British subjects to say that each Municipality should have a

representative because the Committee is going to spend some of their funds? Do I ask too much for this Council when I say that it should elect such representatives from among its Members in order to give true, correct and careful representation of the people in the Central Authority? Therefore, in the amendment I ask that Government should appoint:

- (a) four fit and proper persons, and
- (b) the other six members shall be elected from the Elected Members of the Legislature, and shall hold office for five years or during such time as they shall remain Members of the Legislature."

The life of this Council is one of five years and is it not fair that if a Member is elected to the Central Authority he should be given a chance during that period to show to the members of his constituency what he can do? Are we giving the people a voice in the Central Authority so that they could play a part in this great social reform, or are we going to leave it in the hands of the Governor to elect whom he likes? I do not think the latter would be right and in accordance with democratic principles.

As regards the election of a Chairman, is it thought that Members of this Council would nominate someone to be Chairman merely because he is their friend? Is it not fair that the Chairman should be a Member of this Council? Why shouldn't we be given the right to see that the hon. Member for Western Essequibo who is a fit and proper person for the office is appointed? I hold no brief for him, but during the period that he has served on the Essequibo Housing Committee he has done remarkably well for the Essequibo district. Why should the Chairman be left to hold office "during the Governor's pleasure?"

The CHAIRMAN: I do not wish to interrupt the hon. Member, but it has to be appreciated that the person who would be appointed Chairman of this Central Authority would have a considerable amount of work to do. He is going to have to do a large amount of travelling; he would have to travel all over the country and would have to be res-

possible to some extent for the supervision of the work and I doubt whether a Member of this Council would undertake work of that kind. I can only conceive that the Chairman—although I have no knowledge—would be a Government Official or some specially appointed Officer, except we say that an Elected Member should perform those duties for reward.

Mr. LEE: Do you think, sir, that when the time comes for the appointment of a Chairman any Member of this Council—Nominated or otherwise—who is interested in the people would not be approached? Would a man not be deserving of appointment if he has already carried through similar schemes for the benefit of the people in this Colony? The general elections are not very far off and I speak on behalf of the Trades Union Council when I say that Government is going to be asked to approach Members of this Council—whether Nominated or otherwise—with regard to being appointed members of the Central Authority. This Bill is one that affects the whole Colony and I am thinking of persons who would be responsible to the electorate and who could be approached. That is why I say that if a Member of this Council is interested in such a scheme he would be in a position to see if things are being properly done and should he be appointed Chairman of the Central Authority, even if he is a Member of the Executive Council. That is why I have put the words "during the Governor's pleasure" in my amendment. If a Member of this Council is appointed Chairman, he would be able to come back and say "I do not like the way in which things are being done, and therefore I have resigned", and if the other members of the Authority have any "guts" they would resign also. That is where I want Government to realize that this scheme must be in the hands of the electorate and nobody else. I do not know if I have made myself clear, but I want the Members of this Council and the Government to realize that this scheme is for the benefit of everybody.

I have put my amendment in this way for the simple reason that I can resign from the Central Authority, if necessary, and if I have any "guts" I can also resign from this Council and fight the issue in my constituency. If I fight the issue and come

back the other Members of the Council would agree with me and would have to think twice before they do otherwise, because they would have to account to their electorates at the end of their five years. That is why I am trying to put the responsibility on the Elected Members for the appointment of the Chairman of the Central Authority.

Mr. JACOB : I think I must congratulate my hon. friend on the very excellent speech he has made in this matter. It is time this Government should know that it has done nothing, and I make this criticism without special reference to anybody. We have always suggested that some responsibility must be placed on the people and their representatives in this Council when these matters are being dealt with. I do not want to speak about it, but I think the Jamaica Bill was thrown away completely.

The CHAIRMAN : I think it was repealed.

Mr. JACOB : And this thing should be thrown away. I want something more practical. We have had a sort of scheme in Georgetown and most of the people have not been satisfied with it.

The CHAIRMAN : I must tell the hon. Member that the question before the Council is whether the Chairman of the Central Authority should be a person appointed by the Governor in Council or by the Members of this Council.

Mr. JACOB : I am going back to refer to a similar matter. I think the Municipality of Georgetown has failed completely to do anything for the people, and I do not think anybody in Georgetown should have anything to do with this Bill. It is a scandalous waste of money; you are going to house ten families together in a small area and nothing could be more scandalous than that.

The CHAIRMAN : May I ask the hon. Member a question? You know—and the hon. Member for Essequibo River also knows—that if an Elected Member is appointed Chairman of the Central Authority proper results might be expected?

Mr. JACOB : Yes; that is so, and I think the Member who has been responsible for all the failure up to the present would do us a much greater disservice. If the people would place responsibility in future on the Members of this Council is another matter. I just want to put safeguards in this Bill to let the people realize who are their friends. It is no secret that the housing proposition in Georgetown is a very, very paying business. I do not think I can congratulate the Commissioner of Local Government, very excellent Officer as he is, on how he handles the question of the slums. I do not know the reason why.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I think the hon. Member might know that one of the reasons is the length of the speeches in this Council by the hon. Member.

Mr. JACOB : I do not object to the Commissioner of Local Government, busy as he is, being on this Committee. What is the reason, however, for appointing people in this way? This Government ought to be told very clearly that I deprecate this attitude very strongly. Why don't the Government say "we want an Official to be Chairman"? The Deputy President cannot tell this Council anything, and the hon. the Attorney-General cannot say anything. I think the hon. the Colonial Secretary who will administer this Government very shortly should be able to say something. Why can't we be told why Government want an Official to be the Chairman of this Central Authority?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I do not know that I am in a position to say anything.

Mr. JACOB : It is time that we hear something. It is a scandalous waste of time for us to be speaking so very long on this matter. I am supporting very wholeheartedly the amendment moved by my hon. friend.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : There seems to be a definite opinion between the hon. Member for North Western District and the Member for Essequibo River that perhaps some Government Officer—per-

haps myself—would be appointed Chairman of the Central Authority. I may be wrong, but I think the duty of this Council is to pass this legislation and leave the responsibility on Government to act on it. I do think hon. Members would be making it more difficult and would be tying the hands of Government by placing the responsibility on Members of this Council—whether Nominated or Elected. I ask hon. Members to get on with this Bill, because we can do nothing until it is passed, and to leave the responsibility on Government to carry it out. The hon. Member for North Western District, from the very outset, criticized Government today with regard to the appointment of the Chairman and members of the Central Authority. I have had no discussion with the Commissioner of Local Government, but I shall consult him and I imagine that it is the intention to put the Chairmanship in the hands of an Official, for the reason that it is nearly a whole-time job. It is a technical job.

Another point is that the hon. Member for Essequeibo River has left out a very important member of the Authority when he mentions :

- “(a) four fit and proper persons and
- (b) the other six members shall be elected from the Elected members of the Legislature. . . .”

I think hon. Members of this Council should know that it is the intention of Government to appoint an Officer for the work of Town Planning. When this legislation is through we want to appoint the Architect and Town Planner, and he may be the Chairman. That, however, may be a point for consideration later. I do not believe in trying to inveigle Members of this Council, and I want to tell you that, subject to what my advisers say, if you pass this clause I think the Chairman would be a Government Officer. You have asked for the information and I have given it to you. The next thing is that you have asked for the advice of the Attorney-General, and I want to say that I have no objection to this clause being amended to ensure that the persons appointed to the Committee would include certain Members of the Legislative Council. But, I would ask hon. Members of this

Council not to be too suspicious, although you may have your own conclusions. The hon. Member for North Western District always puts his own interpretation on anything to be done by Government. I have no doubt hon. Members will agree with me that the duty of this Council is to pass this legislation and then it would be the duty of the Government to see that it is carried out. I honestly do not think you will get speedy action by Government and a speedy start of this scheme by tying the hands of Government in this clause. I really think that the Chairman of this scheme should be a Government Official—and a whole-time Officer at that—because, believe me, there is going to be a lot of work.

Mr. GONSALVES : I agree with the Colonial Secretary that we should try and get on with this Bill, and in order to expedite matters I will refrain from making any remarks that might prevent it from going beyond the second reading. I will just content myself by dealing with the clauses as I see them when they come along. We have heard quite a lot about housing and so on, and quite a lot about slums—*ad nauseam*—but I agree with the Colonial Secretary that when this Bill is through it would be Government's responsibility to see that the proposals are carried out and to find the machinery for doing the work. I agree also that there should be some safeguard in the Ordinance as regards representation on the Authority. I know that a great deal of this work would have to be done in Georgetown—there is slum clearance to be done not only here, but also in New Amsterdam and other districts if I accept the reports of the newspapers within recent months. I have got an amendment here which I have made for the benefit of the hon. Member for Essequeibo River and other Members who think proper protection should be given in this clause. I am going to move that sub-clauses 4 (2) and (3) be deleted altogether and, as regards 4 (1), I am going to move that the words “eleven members” be deleted and that the following be substituted :—

- “(a) Four Members of the Legislative Council to be appointed by the Governor.
- (b) The Mayor of Georgetown
- (c) The Mayor of New Amsterdam

- (d) Five other fit and proper persons to be appointed by the Governor.

Then, as regards sub-clause (2). I am going to move that it be made to read as follows :—

“(2) The Governor shall appoint a member of the Central Authority to be Chairman.”

In so far as the Legislative Council is concerned, I have suggested four Members so as to keep the number of members on the Authority at eleven, but if it is desired to have 12 members we can do so.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : Personally, I think the suggestion of the hon. Member is a good one, but I would not like to commit Government until I have had an opportunity to consult the Commissioner of Local Government. Would the hon. Member agree to leave over this clause until I have had that opportunity? We can go on with the other clauses and come back to this later.

Mr. GONSALVES : Very well, sir. There are one or two other amendments which will be necessary. In the printed sub-clause (4), I suggest that the words “appointed under sub-section (3) of this section” be deleted, and that the words “including the Chairman” be substituted therefor. Then, as regards sub-clause (6), I would move that the words “under sub-section (3)” be deleted. As regards sub-clause (7), I would move the deletion of the words “sub-section (3)” in the first line; the deletion of paragraph (a); and the deletion of the following words in paragraph (h)—“having been an officer in the public service, by writing addressed to the Colonial Secretary”. As regards sub-clause (8), I suggest that the words “subject to the provisions of paragraph (b) of sub-section (3) of this section,” be deleted. In sub-clause (8) from the word “subject” in the third line to the word “section” in the fourth line should be deleted. I just mention that so that the hon. the Attorney-General in dealing with the amendments would see what should be done.

The CHAIRMAN : Have you got it in writing? Then give it to the Clerk who will have copies made so that each Member can get it tomorrow.

Mr. GONSALVES : With the consent of Members, sir, will you allow that to be taken?

The CHAIRMAN : We have notice of it and probably it will be available for Members to read it before we meet again.

Mr. LEE : I feel that this Colony will not progress under the present system of Government. As stated by the hon. the Colonial Secretary, all responsibilities are now thrown into the hands of the Governor. If I knew that the sons of British Guiana were not responsible men capable of carrying out certain things I would have consented, but knowing the policy of Government in giving responsibility to Advisory Committees—and there is no doubt that Government is satisfied—I would like Government to answer whether it is not satisfied with the Advisory Committees, the Chairmen of which are Elected Members of this Legislative Council. They are not experts in Sea Defences, Public Works and Agriculture, yet they direct, assist and are responsible in this Council for anything that occurs in those Departments. Has that not shown that we have responsible men in this Council? Why then should Government want an official to be Chairman of this Authority?

The CHAIRMAN : I would ask the hon. Member not to debate this particular clause further. He will have an opportunity to do so tomorrow when he has all the amendments.

Mr. JACOB : May I suggest another verbal amendment? I think the number in sub-clause (3) is large enough and I am inclined to support it, but I think the number of Members of this Council should be increased.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The difference between the Legislative Council Advisory Committee and the Central Authority is just this : One is an advisory committee and the other is an executive body.

Mr. GONSALVES : My amendment still leaves it open to the Governor to appoint an Elected Member as Chairman.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : I suggest that if the hon. Member would be

good enough he could help the Clerk as to the actual amendment. The Clerk will have it typed and circulated to Members.

Clause deferred.

Clause 5—Appointment and remuneration of Secretary, Officers and servants.

The CHAIRMAN : I am directing the Committee's attention to clause 5.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I move the deletion of the word "of" at the end of the first line of sub-clause (4).

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause passed as amended.

Clause 8—Meetings and procedure thereat.

Mr. JACOB : As regards sub-clause (3) I beg to move that the last word in the fifth line of sub-clause (3) "twenty-one" be changed to "ten". If I may read it from a convenient point —

"... the Secretary shall forthwith summon an extraordinary meeting of the Central Authority to be held for the purpose on a day not later than twenty-one days after the date upon which he received the requisition. . . ."

I think I explained while speaking on the second reading that 21 days is far too long. Ten days would be a better and more convenient time. I do not think it is necessary to say very much on that.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : Ten days appears to be all right, but there is the suggested amendment by the hon. Member for Georgetown South that the Mayors of Georgetown and New Amsterdam should be on the Authority, and in that case adequate time would be required for the attendance of the Mayor of New Amsterdam.

The CHAIRMAN : There does not seem to be any objection, and the sub-clause will be amended accordingly.

Sub-clause (3) passed as amended.

Mr. JACOB : In sub-clause (6) the penultimate line reads ".....The Chairman

or other member presiding at the meeting shall have an original and a casting vote." In an Authority consisting of eleven members it should not be necessary to have a casting vote. Modern practice now is to have no double votes.

The CHAIRMAN : There may be a tie. You are presupposing that all the members will be always in attendance.

Mr. JACOB : You have the President of this Council. He has only a casting vote. There is no difficulty in that, and it has gone on for some time. You will have a Government Officer on this Authority as the Chairman. He should listen and follow the advice of the majority of members. He should not vote on one side and then use his casting vote in the event of a tie. The principle is wrong. I am speaking on it from the point of view of principle.

Mr. LEE : If there is a tie on a certain matter when all the members are not present and the Chairman has no casting vote, he can have the matter placed on the agenda for the next meeting and ask all the members to attend so as to have a decision on it.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : What about those who were not there on the first occasion and who do not turn up at the next meeting?

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : If you have Members of the Legislative Council on the Central Authority you will not have many houses put up.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The hon. Member has said what I intended to say.

Mr. JACOB : Because you appoint Members who do not attend meetings. One hon. Member said he was told before he came to the Council that he need not attend all the meetings.

The CHAIRMAN : I do not think the hon. Member has the support of other Members.

Proposed amendment dropped.

Clause 11—General Powers of the Central Authority.

Mr. JACOB : I have made certain comments on this clause and emphasized certain things in Georgetown. The hon. Member for Georgetown Central opposed and said this and that could not have been done. I merely rise to stress that something be done in Georgetown at two particular places—the Thomas Lands and the old Water Works site. I do not know if Members of Council who are members of the Municipality of Georgetown have anything to say against that. I was told you cannot build on Thomas Lands. It might not be possible to build at the moment.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : Can we not save time ? When the hon. Member is appointed on the Central Authority he can raise all those points.

Mr. JACOB : I am not hoping to be appointed. It is well that these things be stated so that Government will have some knowledge of them.

The CHAIRMAN : When the Bill is before the Council you cannot ask that the Central Authority be compelled to do this or that. The hon. Member's remarks will, no doubt, be noticed by those who took some part in the preparation of the Bill itself. You cannot move an amendment.

Mr. JACOB : I quite appreciate that, but I just want to emphasise the point so that this Authority will have it in the debate. One suggestion made was that the Thomas Lands should be built on, and another suggestion was that the Thomas Lands should not be built on. If it is found inadvisable to build from Camp Street going East, it would not be inadvisable to build from Vlissingen Road coming West. I think that at least 100 cottages can be built there of some design within six months. If you can thereby house 500 families it would relieve the congestion in Georgetown to a great extent. The Mayor of Georgetown knows everything about what I am saying.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : If everybody was like the Mayor of Georgetown we would get on much quicker.

Mr. JACOB : The hon. Member said when he was Mayor that these Thomas Lands

came under the supervision of the Town Council and some policy was initiated during his regime.

Mr. GONSALVES : I think I am right in saying that I was Mayor of Georgetown then, but I do not wish to say what happened then. My recollection is that one of the reasons why the Thomas Lands were not built on was the Town Council decided it should be a reserved area and placed a reserved price on each lot. My recollection is that it was fixed at £1,000. Roads were made out, the survey was made by Mr. Seymour, streets were named and so on. There was an auction sale by one hon. Member who, though he was Mayor at the time was the auctioneer. There were purchases by three or four persons, but the matter got no further. That is the position.

Mr. JACOB : The general power of the Authority is to acquire land. If the Town Council has a reserved price of £1,000 per lot something ought to be done. There is some question of placing the Public Hospital there.

The CHAIRMAN : In more recent times it was being reserved for that.

Mr. GONSALVES : As regards paragraph (j) I would like to know whether it is generally understood that "single men" and "single women" include "widowers" and "widows".

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: People living single lives.

Mr. GONSALVES : The hon. the Attorney-General has said "persons who lead a single life." There is some difficulty in that.

The CHAIRMAN : You are not an expert on Social Science ?

Mr. GONSALVES : A little bit, not much !

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : The provision is in respect of the erection of hostels.

Mr. GONSALVES : As long as you are satisfied, I am

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : It is perfectly satisfactory.

Clause 12—Power of Central Authority to make arrangements with Housing Association or Local Authority.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : There is a printing error in sub-clause (2), the figure "(2)" instead of the letter "(c)"

Error corrected.

Mr. LEE : May I make a remark which I feel should be noted ? I notice this Bill does not provide, except for rural housing, for a tenant-owner in the urban area, whereby a person who is a tenant can acquire land and house.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : Clause 13 does.

Mr. LEE : That is in respect of an employer of labour.

The CHAIRMAN : Or any person of the working class. A tenant must belong to some class.

Mr. LEE : The Central Authority will be erecting houses for the purpose of renting them. There is nothing in the Bill which provides that a tenant can acquire the land and house which he occupies.

The CHAIRMAN : A person of the working class can, and he is also a tenant. Any person in that category can apply.

Mr. LEE : Let us assume for the sake of argument that a labourer wants to build a house on a lot but has no money whatever. He applies to the Central Authority who will have to consider whether they can declare that area.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : Perhaps I did not read the clause, and perhaps I did not digest it. But if the hon. Member look at clause 13 and ponder over it and try to analyse it he would see that sub-clause (2) (a) reads :

"the houses to be purchased, constructed, altered or repaired;"

Where are we going to make the purchase and from whom, whether the house is built by the Housing Authority or not ? If we construe that, what does it mean by "tenant-owner who desires to purchase" ?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : It says so in another part of the Bill.

Mr. LEE : If we are going to erect houses like those of the Wortmanville Housing Scheme, can the hon. Member for Western Essequibo say whether a tenant there can acquire a flat ? It is not possible. I am thinking of a tenant-owner, where a tenant desires to acquire the house and land he occupies. There is no provision in respect of that. The employer of labour can apply to convert an area and in that area he can build houses and the tenants can be permitted to acquire those houses, but there is nothing in this Bill where it can be done in the urban area.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : I do not quite follow the hon. Member. If the hon. Member reads the clause through—would the hon. Member forget for the moment the employer of labour and just read it as any person of the working class—he would see that it is clear that if I, as a tenant-occupier, want to repair or to purchase the house I can go to the Central Authority, satisfy them and get an advance. The hon. Member has quoted one particular case—a tenant occupying one of the Wortmanville flats. That is a particular aspect of it. That does not preclude anyone in the Wortmanville flats from going for an advance in respect of a house somewhere else with the idea of removing there.

Mr. JACOB : That is all right to a point, but I think the hon. Member for Western Essequibo was pressing the point that they were building flats in other parts of the world. If we continue to do that in Georgetown what would happen then ?

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL : There will always be found a considerable number who have no desire to own their own houses.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT : It is impossible to teach some people, and I do not intend to go on trying to do so. The hon. Member has taken no care and very little time in trying to absorb something in relation to housing. I do not think he has even read a book on the question of economic rental and the question of uneconomic rental. Do we really consider that all the tenants who are going to live in houses, uneconomic houses—where they cannot afford to pay rent to make them economic—are going to

try to purchase a flat? There are going to be dozens and dozens of people in Georgetown who are not going to be able to purchase a flat. They are not able to pay an economic rent. Is the hon. Member going to say that everyone should have a living wage? The hon. Members knows—he was told—that the average rental of a \$3 per month tenement house has gone up to \$7, \$8 and \$10. If we are going to have that type of houses then the tenants are not going to be in a position to purchase flats. The idea is that a man who has a piece of land and wants to put up a house can get a loan from the Central Authority for that purpose.

Mr. JACOB: I think I am justified in enlightening the hon. Member by saying that I stated at the meeting of the Rural Housing Committee what is my idea of it.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: To a point of correction! I just want to ask the hon. Member to say what he thinks is the principle of it. I do not know how he can enlighten me on any comment of his, as it does not carry any weight with me.

Mr. JACOB: I think there should be some provision here, especially from what the hon. Member for Essequibo River said. It is not too clear that any working-man can. Any person who wants to own a house at a certain place ought to be given an opportunity to buy that house. I do not know if the description here—

Mr. VEERASAWMY: May I assist the hon. Member by referring him to sub-clause (5)? It gives every safeguard and guarantee that the working class man can at any time purchase his own house provided he gives satisfaction to the Authority.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: If the hon. Member for North Western District looks through the Bill he would see, as the hon. the Attorney-General said, that that is covered. It is impossible to convince some people that what is stated there is really meant.

The CHAIRMAN: There is no place in the world where a man occupying a flat is able to acquire the particular flat which he occupies.

Mr. JACOB: This Bill applies to working class people. What about a widow or an infirm person who may have some means and wants to help herself or him-

self? There is no provision here for that type of person.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I do not quite follow what the hon. Member means by that point—in referring to a widow or an invalid person. The definition of a person of the working class is fairly wide. It refers to persons in specific employment and then (d) says:

“persons whose income in any case does not exceed an average of fifteen dollars a week or of such other sum as the Central Authority may in their discretion decide;”.

There is a specific sum which is fairly liberal, and in addition you have discretion placed in the Central Authority for the purpose of enlarging the amount or otherwise. I think the hon. Member's point is covered in so far as a widow or an invalid is concerned. It is a question of the person's earning capacity, and that is covered in this general definition.

Mr. GONSALVES: I think the trouble is, the hon. Member reads it as working man instead of as working class. He overlooks that there is a definition which covers it.

The CHAIRMAN: This clause contains 27 sub-clauses.

Clause 14 — Powers of Central Authority as to ruinous or dilapidated buildings.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In sub-clause (7) (b) the word “or” in the fifth line should be changed to “of” and I move that the amendment be made.

Agreed to.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I might sound a note of warning here and that is, some of these provisions empower the Central Authority to take action and in certain cases action of a penal nature might detract from the powers of the local authority concerned. There is a provision in the Town Council Ordinance whereby the local authority—that is, the Mayor and Town Council of Georgetown—also has this power and, naturally, if this Bill is passed they would be the over-riding power. It seems to be the desire of certain Members of this Council to place in the Central Authority more power than that possessed by the Town Council and, therefore, the Authority might clash

with members of the Town Council. I sound a note of warning and trust that any hon. Member who might attempt to amend clause 14 would consider the position in that light. I know that certain hon. Members have attempted to get on the Town Council and have failed, but I do not know if they intend to try again. However, they might get on the Central Authority and then try to get at the Town Council. There may be small-minded men who are not above these things, but I have not heard anybody say such an attempt has been made. No attempt has been made in this Council, but there has been adverse criticism. The views of certain Members in this Council could be summed up in four words — jealousy, envy, hatred, and perhaps, too much self-interest. If I should add anything to these I would say add “crass ignorance”.

Mr. LEE: This calls for a reply and, therefore, I cannot sit down. If the hon. Member realizes that the modern tendency is to make tenant-owners, he would think twice before he attempts to build that type of house for employees.

The CHAIRMAN: There would be power in the Central Authority to order the demolition of a building.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I think the Commissioner of Local Government and the Attorney-General would have to make an explanation as to whether this Central Authority would be able to over-ride the Town Council Ordinance.

The CHAIRMAN: We will leave that alone; the attention of the Attorney-General has been called to it.

Clause 14 passed.

Clause 19 — Local Authority affected by scheme to be notified.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I would just like to point out that in this clause the Central Authority gives intimation of what would be done.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I appreciate that, but at the same time the over-riding power in the Central Authority is there also.

Clause 19 passed.

Clause 24—Owner of land and buildings may be permitted to carry out slum clearance scheme or re-development scheme.

Mr. LEE: I would like it to be noted that when anything is being done for the rural areas, the Central Authority which would have Members of this Council on it should provide sufficient land not only for the purpose of houses, but also for kitchen gardens and cow byres.

Clause 24 passed.

Clause 30—Assessment of compensation in case of compulsory acquisition.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: It will be recollected that in the course of the second reading of this Bill I pointed out that certain amendments would be submitted and, in fact, I did submit those amendments — relating to this clause and dealing with the question of compensation. The amendments were circulated to hon. Members on the last occasion, and I will now move that with regard to clause 30 (2) (a) the words “at the time when the valuation is made” should be deleted.

Amendment put and agreed to.

Mr. VEERASAWMY: In this printed copy of the amendments, the words to be deleted are “at the time when the valuation is made of the site.” It appears that this is wrongly printed.

The ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I appreciate the point. The words “of the site” will not be deleted.

Mr. C. V. WIGHT: I do not know why Government wants to have this amendment made, because I understand that we are to bring this matter up to date—to 1939. I speak subject to correction, but the English Act is dated 1939–40. I do not think it is equitable or reasonable that a man should be bound by the 1939 Ordinance if we are going to pass this Bill in 1946. I think we should make the date 1945 or 1946. It cannot be said that anybody knew it would happen and that any speculation went on as a result.

The CHAIRMAN: If there is no objection on the part of hon. Members, I would like to adjourn now, until tomorrow.

Council resumed.

The PRESIDENT: I adjourn Council until 2 p.m., tomorrow.