

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.*Wednesday, 23rd August, 1933.*

The Council met pursuant to adjournment, His Excellency the Governor, SIR EDWARD DENHAM, K.C.M.G., K.B.E., President, in the Chair.

PRESENT.

The Hon. the Colonial Secretary, Mr. T. Millard, C.M.G. (Acting).

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. Hector Josephs, K.C., B.A., (Cantab.), LL.B. (Lond.).

The Hon. T. T. Smellie, O.B.E. (Nominated Unofficial Member).

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

Major the Hon. W. Bain Gray, M.A., Ph.D. (Edin.), B. Litt. (Oxon.), Director of Education.

The Hon. J. S. Dash, B.S.A., Director of Agriculture.

The Hon. R. E. Brassington (Western Essequibo).

The Hon. E. F. Fredericks, LL.B. (Essequibo River).

Major the Hon. J. C. Craig, D.S.O., M.E.I.C., Director of Public Works.

The Hon. J. A. Henderson, M.B., Ch.B., B.Sc. (P.H.) (Edin.), D.T.M. & H. (Edin.), Surgeon-General.

The Hon. F. Birkitt, Postmaster General.

The Hon. E. F. McDavid, M.B.E. Colonial Treasurer (Acting).

The Hon. P. W. King, Official Receiver.

The Hon. H. P. Christiani, Commissioner of Lands and Mines (Acting).

The Hon. N. Cannon (Georgetown North).

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

The Hon. A. E. Seeram (Eastern Demerara).

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

The Hon. Jung Bahadur Singh (Demerara-Essequibo).

The Hon. Peer Bacchus (Western Berbice).

The Hon. W. S. Jones (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. H. G. Seaford (Nominated Unofficial Member).

The Hon. E. M. Walcott (Nominated Unofficial Member).

MINUTES.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 22nd August, as printed and circulated, were confirmed.

PAPERS LAID.

The following documents were laid on the table:—

Report of the Directors of the Widows and Orphans' Fund, 1932. (*The Colonial Secretary*).

Report of the Lands and Mines Department for the year 1932. (*Mr. H. P. Christiani*).

UNOFFICIAL NOTICE.**THE RICE INDUSTRY.**

Mr. DE AGUIAR gave notice of the following questions:—

1. How many rice mills are in operation?
 - (a) In Demerara—(i) East Coast, (ii) West Coast, (iii) Elsewhere.
 - (b) In Berbice—(i) East Coast, (ii) West Coast, (iii) Elsewhere.
 - (c) In Essequibo—(i) Leguan and Wakeham, (ii) Arabian Coast, (iii) Elsewhere.
2. How many acres of land are under rice cultivation in each of the abovementioned areas?
 - (a) By tenants from lands rented from landowners with rice mills.
 - (b) By tenants from lands rented from landowners without rice mills.
 - (c) By tenants from lands rented from Government.
 - (d) By landowners.
3. How many tons of padi were reaped during 1932? State the return for each area as set out in Question 1.
4. What is the expected return of rice from crops in 1932? State quantity in tons.
5. What is the percentage of rice exported in 1932 from crops reaped in 1931?

ORDER OF THE DAY.

EXPORTATION OF RICE.

The Council resumed consideration of the motion moved by the Attorney-General:—

That the Council do resolve itself into Committee of the whole Council to discuss the Report of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council appointed to report and advise on the position of the rice industry in regard to the exportation of rice.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I regret that I cannot see my way to support the recommendations of the Rice Committee. I think the proposals put forward are impracticable, but if even they were not impracticable I do not think we have the machinery to carry out the recommendations. What the rice industry wants is financial aid to the growers. Without that aid to the growers I do not see what improvement can be effected in the present condition of the people most concerned. I entirely agree with the remarks made by Mr. Walcott. He has an intimate knowledge of the industry in all its phases, he is a practical man on the question, and his advice is in my opinion very valuable. The question of an Agricultural Loan Bank was raised. Had we had a loan bank we would not have been called upon to-day to consider the recommendations of this Select Committee. In the Combined Court I moved a motion for the establishment of an Agricultural Loan Bank. That motion was carried unanimously by the vote not only of the Elected Members but of the Official Members. A Committee was appointed and much valuable evidence was collected and submitted to Government. Nothing came of it and I brought up the question again and it has also been brought up several times in this Council. I urge that the remedy of rice control is bound up with the financial question and that the best way of attaining it is by the establishment of a Loan Bank. Trinidad and Barbados have a Loan Bank. Why is it that we are lagging behind? I know that Your Excellency has the establishment of such a Bank at heart and I quite believe that if it were left to you we would have it. The Colonial Office will probably give it to us when the rice industry disappears. One of the main features in the recommendations of the Committee is the pooling of rice. Mr. Walcott in commenting on that

recommendation said it would mean chaos and very soon after the ruin of the industry. I am absolutely in agreement with that opinion. If you want to kill the rice industry have this pool.

My firm is one of the largest exporters of rice and it is a subject I have given quite a lot of thought to. If these recommendations go through in their entirety it is the rich men—those who have money to burn—who will benefit and not the producers whom Government and Members of this Council want to help. The question of the Marketing Board was very fully discussed and the evils of the rebate system were thoroughly gone into. While I was against the establishment of the Marketing Board, I am pleased to be able to say that the Board has done a certain amount of good in the very desirable direction of grading rice. Before the creation of the Board a lot of rice of inferior quality was leaving the Colony and Demerara rice was earning a bad name. That practice has been pretty well stamped out. But while the Marketing Board has done a great deal of good in seeing that good quality rice is exported, I am not in favour of control of business by legislation. I am not in favour of the continuance of the Marketing Board except in regard to the grading of rice. The present methods of classification of rice should be stringently carried on. I do not see how the operations of the Marketing Board can be tightened up by any further legislation; at the same time I much prefer to see the Board continue for another year and the proposal outlined in the Committee's Report dropped. While in some respects this proposal on paper and in theory looks quite feasible, I am afraid that if it is brought into operation there will be terrible confusion and chaos and eventually ruin of the industry.

There is one feature of this Report that was mentioned yesterday I wish to refer to—the absence of the name of any member of the Select Committee except the Chairman's. Whilst I know that the learned Attorney-General does not make statements to this House which he cannot justify, and while it may be the correct Parliamentary procedure not to append the names of members of the Committee but only that of the Chairman to a report of this sort, I certainly think that it would be unwise to carry that

practice to any great extent in future. It would have been very interesting to see the signatures of all the members of the Committee who were in the majority and the different views of those who were in the minority. If what I have heard is correct, there was a great divergence of views at the meetings of the Committee. The Rice Association, I understand, is unanimously against the report. Government has been doing all in its power to improve conditions for the benefit of the growers, who are not only the backbone but the life of the industry, and I do not think Government would be wise to put aside the views of Members of this Council who are best qualified to give an opinion. The views put forward by Mr. Walcott and Mr. Seaford are those of sound, practical men who know what they are talking about. I am not saying that the speeches which were made in favour of the recommendations are not sincere. The Attorney-General has made out a very good case with very difficult and poor materials. I cannot see into his heart but I believe he was far from satisfied himself that this is a wise move and one which will give to the rice industry increased prosperity and everything that flows from such prosperity.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr. Hector Josephs): I thank the hon. Member for his very nice compliment but I have given no grounds for the views which he ventures to entertain (Laughter).

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I still say that in his heart the Attorney-General is not too enamoured of this proposal. I plead with Your Excellency that this is an occasion when the Officials should be allowed to exercise a free vote on this important question.

Mr. JONES: I have had a very limited experience of the rice industry as I have been only one year in commerce. During that time I have endeavoured to make myself acquainted with the industry as a whole from the point of view of the growers, millers and exporters, and from what I have learnt and been advised I am satisfied that the recommendations of the Committee are impracticable. The details have been traversed by Mr. Walcott and I do not propose to go over them again. I may say that I am in entire

agreement with all he has said. Mr. Walcott has had a most exhaustive experience of the industry and any views he expresses we must pay some attention to. The only point on which I can express an opinion is the recommendation in paragraph 10 (xv). The Select Committee appear to want Government to guarantee advances by the bankers. In my opinion that is a wrong move. Why take it out of the hands of private financiers? The merchants are still inclined to go on making advances and I do not think Government should undertake the liability. If this report is not adopted my view is that the Rice Marketing Board should continue, if possible, with wider powers. If that is not possible the Board should carry on as at present. It is true that we shall still have the transgressors giving secret rebates, but I have no doubt that those transgressors will find their way into the hands of the Official Receiver. That result will be only a matter of time. The report should be strangled at birth and I suggest that we bury it and not allow it to survive. The only flowers and letters of sympathy Government will get will be from members of the Committee who are agreeable to it.

Mr. WIGHT: I claim to have no knowledge of the rice industry. The hon. Member who has just spoken has only had one year in Water Street but to my knowledge he is familiar with the subject. My difficulty is to ascertain the real result of throwing out the Committee's recommendations. I think that in throwing the report out we will be placing ourselves in a rather awkward position. I came here with an open mind to listen to the arguments and it has been with some amount of pleasure I heard Mr. Walcott marshal his facts. I think every Member of the Council will agree that it is a very difficult problem. Some Members attempted to ridicule Mr. Walcott's remarks with regard to the Police as exaggerated, but they have not succeeded in altering the views he placed before the Council. I am prepared to pay Mr. Walcott the compliment of saying that there is no one in the Colony equal to him when it comes to dealing with rice and the rice industry. He can take the credit of being with Mr. Humphrys one of the founders of the industry, and his arguments yesterday took me from the course I proposed to adopt of voting for the report. I am entirely

against the report this morning. I do not tolerate Government's interference in the rice industry. This is the third occasion on which the industry has engaged Government's attention. The first occasion was when the leading merchants got together and got Government to build a factory on the premises now occupied by the power station of the Demerara Electric Company. That factory, one of the best, was sold to Messrs. Wieting & Richter not many years after. Other firms, notably Messrs. Garnett & Co., Messrs. Curtis, Campbell & Co., and Messrs. Booker Bros., McConnell & Co., also embarked in the business, and the losses were stupendous. For us now to ask Government's assistance is beyond my understanding. The only cure, in my opinion, is to bring in legislation to restrict the rate of interest charged by money-lenders on loans to rice growers. The second occasion of Government's interference was when restrictions were placed on exports by Sir Wilfred Collect. Permits were obtained by people who were never interested in rice at all, and it is within my personal knowledge that the Governor's Private Secretary was the biggest speculator in these permits. He was associated with an East Indian now dead—

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is out of order in making a statement of that kind with regard to someone who is not able to defend himself.

Mr. WIGHT: I am one of those individuals, sir, who believe in saying what they have to say. If it is untrue I am liable to face a libel action, and I am quite prepared to do so, but as it is your wish that I should not bring that question into this discussion I shall not pursue it. We all know that the permit system ended in a fiasco. To-day we are discussing a similar subject. The question of rebates is a very difficult one. A penalty not exceeding \$250 or three months' imprisonment, and on a subsequent conviction \$500 or six months' imprisonment, for a false statement in a registration form, is not going to deter evil-minded persons from deceiving the rice pool. It is not the small men who commit these dishonourable acts but some of the bigger ones, and I was impressed with Mr. Walcott's statement when he condemned the bigger man.

Mr. WALCOTT: I think the hon. Member misunderstood me. I did not

suggest at any time that the big merchants were the most responsible people. I did not suggest anyone of any class but only deprecated the practice.

Mr. WIGHT: We differ on that point, but I understood the hon. Member to say that the bigger merchant got the benefit of almost everything, and I thought he got the credit of being the biggest rice merchant in the Colony.

Mr. WALCOTT: I think the hon. Member refers to the fact that I said that if I had been asked to frame regulations for the export of rice I could not have done better than frame them as put forward in the report.

Mr. WIGHT: I will leave the subject there. What I want to impress on Your Excellency particularly is the fact that rebates will never cease in a community of mixed races. In my own business I am familiar with the fact that people in the Brokers' line have actually sold 6 per cent. bonds at 80 per cent. A man who happened to be the purchaser of a bond telephoned to me, got a quotation, then walked into my office and got a cheque for \$100. It is the same kind of rebate. Rebates cannot be stopped; it is impossible. I think Government will be well advised to leave the matter in the hands of the men in the street. With regard to the proposed Authority there will be difficulty in selecting the men to compose it, and I have my doubts as to whether any responsible member of any firm in the street will accept a position on that Authority. As a matter of fact it would not pay them for the time occupied, and there are really only two or three persons who can be appointed. I am for the protection of the small man—the grower of the padi—and in regard to the sale of padi advertised by Government it will be the big man after it. This rice question is a very dangerous thing to be handled by laymen and it should therefore be put in the hands of people who are quite familiar with every aspect of it. I have heard and am thoroughly satisfied that Mr. Seaford has done remarkable work as Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board without having any previous knowledge of the rice business. I think the Board might be given another lease of life for twelve months longer with wider powers. The main thing is the

financing of the small man, and if Government can see its way to advance to the grower a certain sum of money at a nominal rate of interest, I think that would put the industry on a very sound basis.

Professor DASH (Director of Agriculture): I find myself in a very difficult position in regard to this matter. I was a member of the Select Committee and took part in its deliberations, but I am opposed to the report and to the scheme as put before this Council. On the other hand, as Director of Agriculture, I am naturally very anxious to support any scheme which I feel would be beneficial to the industry as a whole. I think, too, that must be the view of Government, and I know that Government is anxious to support any scheme which has the approval of everyone connected with the industry, whether he be grower, miller or exporter. I appreciate the Attorney-General's position as he naturally had to report the findings of the majority of the Committee. I think we all agree that he has done that very ably and I should like to testify to his ability and industry on the Committee. I have said that I am not in favour of this scheme. On the other hand, I should be the last person to condemn a scheme which I thought was going to benefit the industry, but I am bound to advise great caution in accepting a scheme which is going to disrupt the ordinary channels of trade unless no other solution is possible. I do not share the view that no other solution is possible. We have had four members of the legal profession on this Committee, but I still think that all solutions have not been sufficiently examined. The present scheme, it seems to me, falls down when we come to consider the details of its operation. We are told that it would stop rebates. I agree that rebates should be stopped. On the other hand sometimes rebates are useful things; they are useful against India, but I agree that on the whole they are not good for the industry. I had hoped that by now the trade itself would have been able to devise some means to put an end to these practices instead of expecting legislation which is bound to be irritating and irksome to the industry as a whole. In Barbados they have the Molasses Association and in Trinidad the Importers' Association, who have come together in an effort to stop

that evil practice growing, and it is regrettable that we in this Colony have not been able to find some solution along those lines. The scheme brings no relief to the grower who is dependent on the miller. Many millers have agents in Georgetown and having squeezed the grower they are able to give rebates. Independent growers, on the other hand, have told the Committee quite frankly that they have nothing against the merchants, the people financing the industry, or those engaged in the merchandising of rice. While, therefore, the proposed Bill does not help the grower, the Rice Factories Bill does, yet some Members are supporting this Bill and opposing the Bill which is for the benefit of the growers.

THE PRESIDENT: I remind the hon. Member that he is speaking on the motion before the House and not dealing with the Rice Factories Bill.

Professor DASH: Thank you, sir. Let us turn for a moment to a brief consideration of this scheme. The scheme has a co-operative flavour but it certainly is not a co-operative scheme. It also has a flavour of pool but it is not a true pool. It is a sort of hybrid, and we know that hybrids give an enormous amount of trouble in their operations. It seems to me that we may succeed in covering up a small nest of rebaters but open up a large nest of other troubles of which we know nothing. It is true that co-operative marketing is at present in the air and everyone is thinking along co-operative lines. That is a good thing. Nevertheless, we should be very careful in adopting anything resembling co-operation if results are going to be doubtful or not likely to be greater than under existing systems. I would support a padi pool if it were ever put forward because I believe that if our export trade is to expand, especially in Canada, we shall have to come down to exporting padi or cargo rice in large quantities. In that case a pool would fit in admirably. There is no evidence in this report to show that the scheme would cost less than the present methods in the industry. Business men and business organisation, which will supplant the existing organisation, will be necessary for merchandising the crop. The work is done at present on a bare margin of profit. Nor is it indicated how

far Government is going to be involved financially in this matter. There is also nothing to show that better prices will be obtained by those who ship under this scheme; the evidence before the Committee did not indicate this. The impression is that the results are likely to be out of proportion to the machinery necessary to run it. Further, you cannot create this machinery to supplant existing types of organisation and expect if anything goes wrong to pick up the threads where you left off. Any scheme must have the complete confidence of the industry and others interested in rice.

The strongest argument against the scheme is contained in the report itself. In paragraph 10 (xxii) (a) the Committee recommend "that this scheme be put into and remain in operation until 31st December, 1934, before the expiration of which period the situation shall be reconsidered in the light of experience gained." The Committee have stated there quite frankly that they have no confidence in the scheme and that it should be given a trial. We must have confidence in anything that is going to supplant the present methods of marketing. In other words this scheme is a gamble. Can we gamble with the rice industry, the export trade of which is worth a million and a half dollars, or can we gamble with the markets we have striven so hard to find? We cannot do that, and I submit we cannot accept the report on that paragraph alone. Certain penalties are provided for infringement, which may result in loss of sales and loss of markets, but no penalties can rectify that. The scheme, too, provides for no proper control of stocks. You may have rice delivered which may not be acceptable or correct in regard to grade, and there may be some trouble in sorting that factor out. Those are features not provided for in this scheme. Any Authority must have absolute control of all stocks and not be left to the mercy of those registering whose position in respect of stocks may shift momentarily. It is said that many will not register. We are making provision for them to register and must believe that they will register. I agree that the present system of financing will be jeopardised if the Committee's proposal is adopted. We know that at present a large number of the larger exporters carry considerable stocks in anticipation of forward contracts,

and that is an important feature of the market here. We have to develop that end of it if we are going to succeed in holding the markets we have won. Are we going to tell these people, how, when and where to buy rice? I think not. It is bound in the end to lead to excessive speculation. I admit that there is a great deal to be said for the need of financing the industry, especially the grower; and I think that point requires considerable study. At present there is a labyrinth of complications, beginning from the man on the land down to the time the rice is landed in Trinidad or Barbados. That has to be sorted out. We already have a number of Loan Banks which may be more used by rice growers, but I do not want to pursue that point except to say that steps ought to be pursued along definite and systematic lines.

Under this scheme you have a pool for everybody. The best pool would be a pool of producers alone such as there is in Jamaica and perhaps in St. Vincent. I do not know that producers on the whole are dissatisfied with the system of merchandising, and the problems of the industry as I see them to-day lay more largely at the milling end, which I do not intend to elaborate. I think the present proposals will tend to create many more difficulties than we at present have. If we exported a matter of 20,000 bags of rice, so that we can track down every bag, there may be something in the scheme, but when we approach an export trade of half a million (500,000) bags I cannot see how it can work as satisfactory as we expect in an industry of this kind. It is pleasing to hear that the industry is in favour definitely of the Marketing Board's operations in preference to this scheme. The Board certainly has done a great deal for the industry in the export markets. It has cleaned up the trade and given a little more confidence than we had before, and it has certainly stabilised prices in relation to grades. I do not claim that the grading system is perfect but I claim that we have made substantial improvement in grading, and any errors have been largely due to some exporters not taking the trouble to co-operate with the Department and get everything out of the grading regulations which are entirely for their benefit. There are clear indications that something more can be done by the Marketing Board

in relation to the rice trade itself. I do not think we have given the Board a sufficiently lengthy trial in respect of the handling of the problems of the export trade. I believe that considerable good can yet be done by the Board if it is strengthened and helped by those for whom it largely exists. I appreciate the tributes which have been paid to the efforts which have been made to put the industry on a proper basis, but I cannot recommend the adoption of a scheme which will disturb the ordinary channels of business in the way proposed. Anything we are going to do must have the complete confidence of the industry and the complete confidence of those engaged in it. It must have the approval of the growers, millers and merchants alike. The scheme has not got that approval and I cannot recommend its acceptance.

Mr. DIAS: I should like to join the opposition to the acceptance of this report because after giving it a little consideration I have come to the conclusion that it will not answer the purpose which the Committee had in mind. Before going further I should also like to join those Members who have paid tribute to the Committee for the arduous duties they had to perform and for the excellent efforts they have made in presenting the report with a recommendation which, in their opinion, would assist the industry better than it is being assisted to-day. I differ with much regret with the Committee because I appreciate the hard work they did and the great interest they took in their attempt to solve what appears to be a very difficult problem indeed. It is said that the Rice Marketing Board might be looked upon as one evil, and the opposers of this report say it is another evil. If that is so one might ask himself: Which of the two evils it would be better to keep to? I suggest that the Rice Marketing Board is the better of the two, having regard to the fact that the flaw in the Ordinance is known and it only remains for some remedy to be applied. One flaw opens the door to exporters granting rebates to buyers by selling at a lower price than that fixed by the Marketing Board and in that way giving an advantage over the honest dealer. That is the only flaw I have heard. That being so, is it beyond the reach of human beings to find a remedy? I cannot con-

ceive that the ability of the community has fallen so low that it cannot discover means to remedy that flaw. If the scheme proposed appeared sound in all respects and holes were not there to be picked, you may well substitute something perfect for something imperfect, but I can, I venture to think, pick holes in this report which itself seems to anticipate difficulties not at present foreseen.

My idea is that it would be very much better if the Marketing Board were to continue and the flaw connected with its existence remedied, because I gathered that if that is done the Board will serve its purpose. One of the difficulties I see in connection with this report is the enormous expenditure that is involved in the operations of the Authority. Some Members of this Council estimate that it would cost between £6,000 and £7,000 a year. That may or may not be, but it will cost considerably more than the expenses of the Marketing Board. Where is that money to come from? That expenditure is bound to fall on the industry itself, and every penny that falls on the cost of the product must increase the export price. The competition of which we hear so much to-day between India and this Colony would then become more difficult if we saddle the industry with the expenses of carrying out the duties of the Authority. It seems to me that the whole report teems with difficulties and that it would be better for the industry if the Marketing Board is allowed to continue with special powers than to introduce measures which in less than a year might be found far more difficult and irksome. I have heard from several persons that the Marketing Board is doing very good work and the only difficulty is the dishonest practice of certain people who resort to subterfuge to dispose of their rice. It seems to me that it will not be to the interest of the industry as a whole if the recommendations of the Committee are adopted.

THE PRESIDENT: We have had a full and exhaustive debate on this very important question. One hon. Member has asked: How is it that this Report of the Select Committee comes before the Council, in what form does it come, how is it to be approached, and how is it to be dealt with? Another hon. Member has asked whether Government would be pre-

pared to allow a free vote with regard to this motion. Another has suggested that the Council should accept the motion as it represented the combined wisdom and ability of the Committee who drew up the report. It would perhaps be advisable therefore that I should say something with regard to the reasons why this report is brought before the Council. The reason is that a Bill was introduced for the provision of a Rice Marketing Board which was to exist until the 30th June last. The life of that Board has been extended until the 31st August, but it was only extended because the rice industry and the people of the country in general were anxious to know whether the Board was the best measure possible, or whether there was some better way of dealing with the difficulties that had been experienced. It is obvious that Government and this Council are the responsible authorities for determining whether the machinery in action is the best, or whether it can be improved upon or whether other machinery can be found. The procedure followed was therefore to appoint a Select Committee of this Council on which some of the best brains of the Council were placed—not only rice brains but also legal brains, men whose advice we wanted and could appreciate and would therefore be valuable to the Council. They did not all agree, as you have heard in the course of the debate, but a report has been furnished which has been laid before the Council and has been the subject of discussion for a day and a half.

I think we must all agree, as has been pointed out by many speakers, that the report is an able effort. It is quite possible that those who favour the report are in advance of their time—it sometimes happen—and have put up something to which this Colony may eventually come and which the Colony may eventually believe to be the best possible machinery in regard to the rice industry. There is no question with regard to the industry but there is a good deal of question with regard to rice, and with regard to rice opinions differ, but there has been one general opinion expressed throughout this debate which I was glad to hear. That opinion is that the Rice Marketing Board has proved its usefulness, and that opinion has been expressed by all speakers. We have got that at any rate as the solid result

from this debate; we might not have had it by any other means. A number of people in the country are ready to criticise and argue that anything that goes wrong with the rice industry is due to the Marketing Board, but we have here the unanimous opinion that the Board has been useful and that by the introduction of the Ordinance the industry has been advantaged. We also have it that that usefulness has been impaired by the action of persons who have been giving rebates. A good many views have been expressed with regard to rebates, but the point is that the industry has suffered through rebates and the Board has not been able to deal drastically with the offenders. Anyone who is giving rebates is offending against the spirit of the law, which was definitely intended to prevent such rebates. We are being asked not merely to protect the industry—we have heard a lot about protection to-day—but to protect the industry against itself. That is not a very easy thing to do. The only way to protect the industry against itself is by raising standards and making people realise that honesty is the best policy. Nothing gave me greater pleasure in this debate than to hear from hon. Members that those who granted rebates had lost, and I must also admit some slight feeling of satisfaction that some of our Trinidad friends have suffered in consequence. We heard a great deal from Trinidad of how small people have gone over there and injured trade and I am not sorry that some of those who dealt with people who gave rebates have had to pay more for their rice. The honest dealer is more likely to be successful in the future than perhaps he has been in the past.

I agree that we have to take some further action in this matter. We have before us the representations of the Rice Growers' Association in which they make certain recommendations which they believe will strengthen the Rice Marketing Board. Government must give full consideration to those recommendations, and we have an opportunity of doing so because we have to introduce in this session of the Council a Bill to extend the life of the Rice Marketing Board. I think Government should certainly do that in view of this debate, because the opinion has been expressed here generally that the Board has been useful, and at any rate the

opinion even of those who support the report is that it is the next best thing. I am assuming thereby that the Report of the Select Committee will not be accepted. There is no question of open voting in a matter of this kind. The responsibility rests with Government. In this case a peculiar responsibility rests with Government because Government is not trying to impose legislation on this Council. It is not a Government measure. What Government is trying to do is something outside its ordinary policy. I entirely agree with those Members who say that there should be as little control as possible, but at the same time it has been recognised that the amount of interference so far exercised by Government in the establishment of the Rice Marketing Board has been to the advantage of the community. Once that is acknowledged Government cannot simply say "We wash our hands of the whole thing" but has to accept certain responsibility. But the responsibility this report proposes to put upon Government is more than Government can accept. I would merely refer to the suggestion that the exportation of rice be under the control of an Authority constituted of five persons nominated by the Governor, one of whom shall be appointed Chairman by the Governor.

As President of this Assembly I sympathise with the Governor because the Governor, who has to choose five persons who are to be nominated by reason of their experience in exporting rice, or as some desire who are not so experienced, is likely to find considerable difficulty in doing so when he is advised by the larger exporters—people connected with the industry at any rate—that there is a difference of opinion amongst exporters, it is not very easy to select persons under such conditions. The export rice trade is to the advantage of everybody in the country and we have to get the whole industry behind us. The report goes on to say "The Authority to be assisted by such a Committee or Committees as it may think fit to appoint so as to obtain advice from all interests involved in the rice industry." That is a very sensible suggestion. Where is the Authority to look for that advice—amongst the members of the Select Committee or in the Colony generally? It must obviously look to the Colony—the growers, the

millers, landed proprietors and so on. I have before me the resolution which says that the Rice Association of British Guiana recommends that Government should oppose the recommendations contained in the report and consider legislation for increasing the powers of the Marketing Board. The answer to that lies in the policy Government adopts in regard to the whole of this rice question. I will quote from the last remarks I made when the Rice (Export Trade) Bill was first introduced into the Council. I said then "The point I wish to emphasise is that this is a temporary measure, and I hope that nothing that may be done by this Council with regard to this Bill will delay in any way the establishment of a Rice Growers' Association." It has been our object all through not to have a Rice Marketing Board for ever but a Rice Growers' Association which will control its own industry. The Sugar Producers' Association stand for that industry and they know how to put things forward and to speak for themselves. I am not suggesting that they do not speak for others too.

What we want is a Rice Growers' Association. I am entirely in sympathy with what hon. Members said about helping the grower. The grower is the person who counts most in the Colony but the grower also must help himself, and the way he can help himself is in seeing that he has a Growers' Association which will speak for him. Representations should come from the industry itself and the growers should recognise that through a Rice Growers' Association they have a channel by which they can approach Government. We want a Rice Growers' Association. Are we going to help a Rice Growers' Association by agreeing to a report of this kind with which the advisers of that Association are not in favour? Are we going to help the industry by accepting recommendations of this kind because they are clever undoubtedly and represent a clever scheme and because they are a suggested alternative which, as the last speaker has said, may not be perfect? Are we going to accept recommendations with all those disadvantages and all those objections? Government certainly would do nothing of the kind. On the present occasion Government is interfering with an industry for the

good of that industry. I am sure the Attorney-General will agree with me that whatever the merits of the report it cannot be put through unless we are perfectly certain that every branch of the rice industry—farmer, miller, land-owner and merchant—believe they are getting something which is going to save the industry and make it a good deal better than it is now. I do not think they do, therefore I suggest to the hon. Attorney-General to withdraw the motion. I do not know whether he wishes to press it to a division, but with regard to Government and Government Members, Government cannot face the responsibility of accepting a scheme of this kind. The cost would be considerable, the advantages at present are problematical, and it has not been shown to the satisfaction of Government that it represents the settled, final and conclusive view of the rice industry. I therefore propose that after we have dealt with this question we should then consider the re-introduction of the Ordinance with regard to the Rice Marketing Board. Government will give full consideration to the suggestions made for strengthening the Board in order to deal with rebaters, and if it is found practicable to embody some of those suggestions in the new Bill that will be done and the Bill put before the Council at the next meeting.

Mr. SEERAM: I crave Your Excellency's indulgence to say it must not be overlooked that this Bill is of great political significance.

THE PRESIDENT: I call the hon. Member to order; he has already spoken and his point is not one of explanation.

Mr. SEERAM: Yes, sir.

THE PRESIDENT: On what point?

Mr. SEERAM: On the point Your Excellency made suggesting to the mover of the motion not to press it to a division. I am asking, in view of the political significance of the Bill, that the House should have a proper record of all who are in favour of it and who are not.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Sir, in view of the attitude which has been taken by Government in connection with this matter, based, as has been pointed out by you, on

the fact that the best augury of success for the new scheme would be the full co-operation of all the persons who are engaged in the industry and also on the fact that that co-operation has not been secured—we have that on the statements of the Rice Association and on the opposition which the motion for the acceptance of the report has received—in view of those circumstances, with the seconder's consent, I think the motion should not be pressed to a division. The position would then be that the Council would have had before it the considered opinion of the majority of the Select Committee. There has been the fullest possible discussion on it, and there has been undoubtedly very strong opposition to the acceptance of it at the present time. That being so it is clear that the Council will not for the reasons given, having regard to the views of the majority of the industry, accept the report. I think the members of the Committee feel that they have done their best. The Council has given its full consideration to the work the Committee have done and realised the spirit in which they did it, and the circumstances will be met by the motion not being pressed to a division, to which I invite agreement of the seconder.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I regret that I am unable to agree that the motion should not be put to the division. I have not heard whether it is the intention of Government to continue the Marketing Board for six months or a year, when the matter might again be reviewed in view of all that has transpired in this Council within the last two days.

THE PRESIDENT: Government will introduce the Rice Marketing Ordinance on Tuesday next week.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Yes, sir, but you do not indicate the intention. When the Marketing Board was introduced a definite period was fixed for the life of that Board. I have heard no pronouncement as to whether the continuance of the Bill would be for a particular period.

THE PRESIDENT: Government could not possibly be a party to introducing a Bill for the continuance of the Rice Marketing Board except for a period. It has only been accepted as a temporary measure sub-

ject to the confirmation of the Rice Growers' Association.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I would much prefer if a pronouncement were made as to the period because, although it has been said that the Board has done very good work, I am satisfied that the question of secret rebates will never be overcome. I make that statement in spite of all that has been said and in spite of any widening of the powers that may be introduced in the Bill.

THE PRESIDENT: The hon. Member is now out of order. The question is whether there should be a division or not.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In the circumstances, as the seconder has not acceded to my request, the only thing I can do is to ask that the motion be put.

The Council divided on the motion and voted:—

Ayes—Messrs. Peer Bacchus, De Aguiar, Seeram, Fredericks and the Attorney-General—5.

Noes—Messrs. Walcott, Seaford, Jones, Dr. Singh, Wight, Cannon, Christiani, King, McDavid, Birkitt, Dr. Henderson, Major Craig, Brassington, Professor Dash, Major Bain Gray, Dias, Smellie and the Colonial Secretary—18.

THE OPTICIANS BILL.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and resumed consideration of "A Bill to make provision for the registration of Opticians, to regulate the practice of sight-testing and for purposes incidental thereto."

Clause 5—Persons entitled to be registered.

Dr. HENDERSON (Surgeon General): The central point in connection with the modification of this clause was the reduction of the fee. I propose to reduce the registration fee from \$24 to \$5, and I advise this reduction in the interest of Opticians who will be required to be examined under sub-clause (c) of this clause. The hon. Member for Berbice River suggested that the examination fees might be paid by Government. I accepted that suggestion on the misunderstanding

that by some means of appropriation Government could pay the fees of the examiners, but after collaboration with the Colonial Secretary and the Attorney-General I found that could not be done. I think hon. Members will agree that the examiners—two Medical Officers and one Optician—should be paid proper fees for this service. Each examination would take a considerable time and in so far as medical practitioners are concerned not all of them practice optometry. We shall therefore require on each occasion to secure as examiners medical officers who profess this branch of medicine. For this reason when we come to clause 6 I propose that sub-clause (3) should stand as originally proposed. I beg to move that the word "five" be substituted for the word "twenty-four."

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Mr. FREDERICKS: I want to suggest that sub-clause (b) be amended to provide for a Schedule to the Ordinance setting out the schools that will be acceptable. Such a practice obtains in other Colonies. Apart from that I do not think which diplomas will be allowed and which will not be allowed should be left open. I move the insertion of the words "as set out in Schedule A. of this Ordinance."

Dr. HENDERSON: I have no objection to the amendment. As a matter of fact if the Bill becomes law the Medical Board will have to prepare a list of Universities and Colleges which will be recognised.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I see great difficulties in a Schedule to the Ordinance. If you put in a Schedule you can only change that Schedule by statute from time to time. The position will be met, as it is met in other cases, by the Medical Board publishing from time to time in the "Gazette" and any newspaper those institutions whose diplomas it recognises. It may be necessary to remove or to add an institution to that list, and by that means persons who are interested would be fully informed. I do not think we can do better than follow that precedent.

Mr. FREDERICKS: My only reason for asking for a Schedule is that there are

people interested in this Bill who think they should have a Schedule because they cannot trust to the things that happen at different times.

Mr. SEERAM: I support the amendment on the ground that the wording of the Bill makes it possible for the Governor in Council to make necessary changes. I want to suggest a proviso but it is quite possible to insert a Schedule of institutions, British or foreign, whose diplomas will be recognised by the Medical Board.

Dr. HENDERSON: In Jamaica although a Schedule was not set out in the Act there was power to the Governor in Council.

THE CHAIRMAN: Perhaps it can be met by the insertion of the words "with the approval of the Governor in Council and published in the *Gazette*."

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: In that case I move that the words "Governor in Council and published in the *Gazette*" be substituted for the word "Board" in the fourth line.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Mr. SEERAM: I suggest that sub-clause (b) be further amended by the insertion of the following proviso:—

Provided however that where any person who holds a diploma, licence or certificate from a University, College or Institution of a foreign country not recognised by the Board, the Board shall permit such person to be registered after passing an examination in the manner hereinafter specified.

THE CHAIRMAN: That is introducing an entirely new principle into the clause.

Clause 6—Examination by Board of applicants under section 5 (c).

Dr. HENDERSON: I beg to move that sub-clause (3) be re-inserted and amended by the insertion of the words "for each candidate examined" after the word "paid" in the first line.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I move that the fee for the examiners be reduced from \$5 to \$1. It was agreed on the last occasion that this clause should be deleted. An attempt is being made now to provide for the payment of \$5 to an examiner for each

candidate examined. When I spoke on sub-clause (2) I pointed out what might arise at some future time and I anticipate again that this clause will only provide examination fees for members of the medical profession.

The Committee adjourned for the luncheon interval.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: Resuming my argument in support of the amendment to reduce the fee to be paid to each examiner from \$5 to \$1, I desire to point out that this clause particularly deals with the persons who will come under clause 5 (c). I submit it would be a great hardship to call upon those persons who have been practising sight testing for several years to sit an examination and to pay a fee of \$5 to each examiner, in addition to \$5 for registration. I do not think it was the intention to create any hardship on those people. I agree with the principle that they should be examined, but I do not think they should be called upon to pay such a high fee for the examination. There is also no provision as to candidates who may come forward afterwards.

Dr. HENDERSON: The fees for registration and examination have been reduced from \$39 to \$20. The Medical Board went very carefully into the question of examination fees and I think there are few persons who will not admit that \$5 for an examination of this sort is reasonable. With regard to the suggestion that this clause will only provide examination fees for members of the medical profession, it has been definitely settled that at the earliest possible moment the examiners shall consist of two Medical Officers and an Optician. I got into touch by letter with the hon. Member for Berbice River, who first raised this question, and I heard from him that he was in agreement with and accepted the proposed amendments. The question of future examinations I think is made clear by clause 5. Persons who have been domiciled in the Colony for not less than five years, and also for not less than five years have been practising as Opticians, may appear for examination shortly after this Bill is passed or three or six months hence. Other persons who have not been domiciled in the Colony or have not been in practice for five years come under the categories of (a) and (b) of clause 5.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I may point out that the concession is not as great as it seems to be.

The Committee divided on the amendment of the hon. Member for Central Demerara and voted:—

Ayes—Messrs. Peer, Barchus and De Aguiar—2.

Noes—Messrs. Seaford, Seeram, Wight, Christiani, King, McDavid, Birkitt, Dr. Henderson, Major Craig, Brassington, Professor Dash, Major Bain Gray, Dia, Smellie, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—16.

Did not vote—Mr. Fredericks—1.

Clause as amended by the Surgeon-General agreed to.

Sub-clause (4) was amended by the deletion of the words "of twenty-four dollars" in the last line.

The Council resumed.

Notice was given that at the next meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read the third time (*Dr. Henderson*).

SEA DEFENCE (LOAN) BILL.

Major CRAIG (Director of Public Works): In moving the second reading of "A Bill to make provision for the raising of a loan for the construction of sea defences under the Sea Defence Ordinance, 1933," I may state that the introduction of legislation to authorise the raising of the loan is necessary in pursuance of Resolution No. XIV. of the 26th June approving of the raising of a short-term loan in London for the purpose of making such immediate advances as may be required by the Sea Defence Board in terms of section 17 (2) of the Sea Defence Ordinance, 1933. The Ordinance provides for the raising of the necessary moneys to defray the cost of maintenance and new works up to a certain extent, the extent being the amount voted by this Council of a sum not exceeding \$50,000 and an equal sum to be raised by assessment on the estates. That assessment is not to exceed a rate of 50 cents per acre of the lands within the empoldered area as described in the

Schedule attached to the Ordinance. The cost of the works recommended by the Consulting Engineer, Mr. Case, as being urgent and to be carried out as early as possible exceeds the amount granted by this Council and the sum that will be raised by assessment, and it is for that excess that this Bill is now being submitted to the Council. It is proposed that the loan shall be for a term of ten years. The clauses in the Bill deal with the arrangements necessary for the payment of interest, provision of sinking fund, investment of moneys for sinking fund, and revenue to make good deficiency of sinking fund, and are self-explanatory. With those remarks I move the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. Birkitt seconded.

Question put, and agreed to,

Bill read the second time.

The Council resolved itself into Committee and considered the Bill clause by clause without discussion.

The Council resumed.

Notice was given that at the next meeting of the Council it would be moved that the Bill be read the third time (*Major Craig*).

RICE FACTORIES BILL.

The Council resumed discussion on the second reading of "A Bill to make provision for the regulation and control of rice factories and the manufacture of rice."

Mr. E. G. WOOLFORD joined the Council at this stage.

Professor DASH: The Attorney-General dealt with all the points that had been raised by hon. Members and it only remains therefore for me to move at this juncture the second reading of the Bill.

Mr. SEERAM: There are many phases of this Bill that are of vital importance. During the debate on the Report of the Select Committee it was very gratifying to me to find that the rice-growers have so many friends in this House, and the House will now have an opportunity of removing some of those factors which go

to make the fate of these rice-growers a very unfortunate one. There are many questions other than finance that affect the rice industry. The question of insecurity of tenure is an important one, but this Bill does not deal with it and I shall not labour it. There are two other important points we can deal with. The first is the weight of padi taken by rice millers. Clause 11 of the Bill deals with that question and the quantity of padi is given as 143 lbs. I intend to support that. The other point that affects the growers and also the cost of production is the question of the milling fees. I intend in Committee to suggest that the milling fees be fixed and hope that the Members of the Select Committee will bring to bear on this question the knowledge they gained from the evidence adduced before them. We were told that on the Corentyne Coast millers were paid from 24 to 32 cents for milling a bag of rice, but the growers did the handling necessary in the preparation of the padi and the production of the rice. From that I have come to the conclusion that 60 cents would be a reasonable charge per bag of rice in order to give the miller at least 10 cents per bag profit for milling. Your Excellency referred to the Rice Growers' Association. I want to assure you, sir, that it will take perhaps ten years to establish an Association that will work in the best interest of the rice growers. The Association at the present time is in its infancy and it is dominated by the rice millers. The interests of the millers clash with those of the growers and I appeal to the friends of the growers in this House to consider the interests of the growers. While I am supporting the registration of mills I do not think an annual licence is necessary. There are mills that need to be controlled in the interest of the industry, and before new mills are constructed they should comply with certain requirements, but it is not necessary that the millers should be called upon to pay an annual licence.

Mr. SEAFORD: A meeting of the Rice Association was held on Friday and I was asked to submit a resolution to this Council in connection with the Bill. Unfortunately, I did not know that the Bill was coming up for discussion to-day and I have not the resolution with me, but the Colonial Secretary has a copy and perhaps he will be good enough to let me know what

it is. The Association has asked me to oppose the Bill unless Government is prepared to bring in legislation to fix the minimum price of rice for local consumption.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Millard): I am afraid I cannot assist the hon. Member as I have not yet seen the document he refers to. I must tell the hon. Member that Government cannot give the undertaking that has been suggested through him by the Rice Growers' Association when the present Bill deals with the regulation of rice mills. The matter which he is representing on behalf of the Association is one which requires a good deal of investigation. It is anticipated by Government that there will be many matters coming from the Association which will require and will receive investigation, but the request voiced by the hon. Member could not be met in connection with the Bill now before the Council.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I am against any further control of the rice industry. I think the control by the Marketing Board is quite sufficient. Until Government is in a position to finance the rice industry no further control is necessary. I am quite prepared to give a further lease of life to the Marketing Board but I am not prepared to go further than that. I say "Hands off the rice industry" as far as any further legislation is concerned. In a very short time the Department of Agriculture will be coming forward and saying its staff is insufficient to inspect rice factories and keep them going. This Bill is a creature of the Department of Agriculture. Let that Department put its own house in order. A rice mill has been erected at Anna Regina that cannot manufacture into rice the padi that is grown there. Is that the Authority that is going to step into a rice factory—

Professor DASH: To a point of correction. There is no provision in the Bill for the Director of Agriculture carrying out its provisions.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: There is provision that "the Director of Agriculture or the Commissioner or a Government Medical Officer of Health, or any person authorised in writing by any of them may at all reasonable times enter a rice factory and inspect the factory or any padi or rice

therein or any books kept under this Ordinance." Why single out the unfortunate rice miller and march into his factory at any time of the day? I should like to see the Director of Agriculture or the Commissioner march into Hampton Court factory and tell me I was not manufacturing sugar in a cleanly and sanitary manner. This is going a step too far; we are running legislation mad. I am going to ask a question. How many Ordinances have been added to the statute book within the last year? I would not go any further because they might take as long to answer the question as they took to answer the questions with regard to the experts. Leave the rice industry alone, unless Government is prepared to finance it and give us an Agricultural Loan Bank. You want to impose restrictions on the rice-growers that are not imposed on the sugar manufacturers. This legislation by the Agricultural Department is becoming too irksome and I will oppose it. I would like to hear something of how it is that the Department has not been able to mill padi grown on the land settlement. It is a serious indictment, yet those are to be our masters.

Mr. FREDERICKS: There was weighty evidence this morning that legislation is interfering with the rice industry. It seems to me that the best thing now is that the industry should be left to itself. We cannot dissociate this Bill from the rice industry and since we can do nothing to put the industry in a position above complaint we must leave it alone. I look upon the output of rice as the summit of agricultural production and the Department as the fit place to find the means calculated to carry on the industry in the best way. We were told this morning that the Department is nothing better than the Marketing Board, but the Marketing Board is not perfection. From all I have heard and seen it is no good our trying to pass legislation for the registration of rice factories. I am not against registration of factories for the purpose of furnishing Government with information, but we should leave the factories otherwise alone and let the people go along in the way they have been doing.

Mr. CANNON: On the previous occasion I rose to make an appeal to Government that this measure be brought up six

months hence. In view of what happened yesterday and to-day I think there is every reason for Government agreeing to that suggestion. I wish to add that I congratulate Government on the reply to my hon. friend, Mr. Seaford, that it does not intend to fix the price of rice for local consumption, and to express my heartfelt thanks on behalf of the people of Georgetown at any rate.

THE PRESIDENT: I understood the Colonial Secretary to say that Government had no intention of agreeing to that proposal at the present time.

Mr. CANNON: I accept that, sir.

The Council divided on the question that the Bill be now read the second time and voted:—

Ayes—Messrs. Jones, DeAguiar, Seeram, Christiani, King, McDavid, Birkitt, Dr. Henderson, Major Craig, Professor Dash, Major Bain Gray, Dias, Smellie, the Attorney-General and the Colonial Secretary—15.

Noes—Messrs. Seaford, Peer Bacchus, Wight, Cannon, Woolford, Fredericks and Brassington—7

Did not vote—Mr. Walcott—1.

Bill read the second time.

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

Clause 2—Interpretation.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS—I move that the definition of Padi be amended to mean "dry and clean winnowed padi."

Mr. SEERAM: I am afraid we cannot accept that amendment. What shall we call the other product that ceases to be clean and winnowed? I think the definition given in the Bill is adequate.

Mr. PEER BACCHUS: I withdraw the amendment.

Clause 3—Certificate of authority as to fitness of rice factory.

Mr. WALCOTT: I entirely agree with the licensing of rice mills but at a meeting

of the Rice Association there seemed to be a good deal of doubt in the minds of millers as regards the advisability of having to get permission from the Authority. First of all, they were not sure what "Authority" means, but I presume it means the body at present responsible for handling sanitation in country districts. The suggestion was made by the millers that if they had to apply to the Medical Officer of Health and he had to send the Sanitary Officer to inspect the premises it would take a long time, and it would also leave open to some doubt whether the Sanitary Officers would take advantage of their position and perhaps hold them up. I am quite sure there is no such intention on the part of the draughtsman of the Bill, but I must say that in connection with applications for permission to erect factories and hullers the Authority responsible is extremely slow in responding to the applications. I know of several instances of people being seriously inconvenienced through failure to act promptly. I should much prefer to see the District Commissioner made entirely responsible for the issuing of the licence after he is satisfied through the Sanitary Authorities with the building and that the building is fit to be used as a rice factory. I therefore move that the clause be amended to read:—

Any person who desires to operate a rice factory shall apply to the Commissioner for a licence under section five, and the Commissioner shall forthwith issue such licence on being satisfied with the conditions regarding public health and sanitation of the premises.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: Is this clause to be applicable to factories to be erected, or is it to be retrospective?

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: With respect to the points that have been raised, the Commissioner is not an authority of public health and sanitation. That Authority at the present time is the Local Government Board. The proper method therefore of dealing with the situation is that the Authority who is responsible for public health and sanitation should certify to the Commissioner whether the factory fulfils the necessary qualifications of being fit with reference to public health and sanitation to be used as a rice factory. In this Bill there is no question about the erection of a factory but merely the operation of a factory. Permis-

sion to erect a factory or other building has to be obtained from the Authority defined in the Bill, and then the person who wants a licence for the factory gets a certificate as to the fitness of the premises from the point of view of public health and sanitation. If the factory is one in existence other considerations apply. What I would suggest as a means of overcoming the difficulty raised by the Nominated Member is that instead of his amendment matters can be facilitated and the delay feared avoided by inserting the word "forthwith" between the words "shall" and "consider" in sub-clause (2). With regard to factories already in existence (*vide* clause 8), nothing will be done to stop operation and the licence will be issued without these requirements. That licence will last until the 31st December this year. Thereafter the same considerations very properly apply as in other cases, viz., if the owner of a factory wishes his licence to continue he has to produce a certificate that the building is in order, and if it is not in order he has to take steps to put it in order.

Mr. WALCOTT: If Government will give a guarantee that the Department responsible will be made to attend to these applications in ample time for the licence to be issued I am prepared to accept the suggestion of the Attorney-General, but knowing conditions as they actually are I see the necessity to put the matter in the hands of the District Commissioner and make him responsible to see that the inspections are made and the permissions granted. I understood when the District Commissioners were appointed that they would have control of everything. I know of many cases in the country of people being served with summonses by the Villages and Local Authorities of which the Commissioner knows nothing whatsoever. If the Commissioner is going to be responsible for the district, as he is supposed to be, he should see that the Sanitary Officers carry out their work in a reasonable time, which they are not doing now.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY: To a point of correction. The operation of a rice factory requires the authority of the Local Government Board and the Board necessarily requires a certificate of the Sanitary Officers with respect to public

health and sanitation. The Local Government Board is composed of individuals and the authority they are required to give can be given by circulation of the papers, but I should like to assure the hon. Member, as a recent temporary Chairman of the Board, that applications of this character have been dealt with with remarkable expedition. The intention is to have a new Public Health Ordinance and a new Local Government Ordinance and under the Local Government Ordinance it is proposed to use the services of the District Commissioners on the spot as widely and with as great authority as possible. I could not allow the hon. Member to repeat his statement regarding delay of obtaining authority when it is not quite clear what the authority in question is.

Mr. WALCOTT: The Authority in question is the Local Government Board. I was a member of that Board for some time and I knew then, and still know, how unwieldy it is. I resigned from membership because I wasted time and I wrote in and told the Colonial Secretary that. I therefore feel all the stronger as long as we have to be dependent not on a Government Officer but on dual authority. What you want is to get things done and to get them done with expedition, and unless we make up our minds to scrap some of these old time institutions we will never get any further.

Mr. SEAFORD: Without going into the activities of the Local Government Board I am going to ask that the District Commissioners be authorised to grant licences and it be not referred to the Sanitary Authorities. I have had no personal experience of Sanitary Authorities but I know that rice millers and growers view them with great suspicion. I will not give their reasons now because I am not sure whether they are libellous or not, but for the reasons they gave me I am going to support what Mr. Walcott has said.

Mr. FREDERICKS: As an unofficial member of the Local Government Board I want to say that if there is any delay when it comes to the question of sanitation and the fitness of premises it is due to the Public Health people. Those are the only people who have to deal with that question, and when they have passed it on I have never known of a case where the

Board has kept back an application of its own will. Do we intend to put a section in this Ordinance which will scrap the existing law in more than one instance?

THE CHAIRMAN: I suggest to the hon. Member that he has served his purpose by calling attention to the question of time and if he gets the word "forthwith" put in it would meet his point. I do not think any more time will be saved by putting the duty on the Commissioner because he will refer it to the Board. With the assurance that the matter will be looked into that might suffice.

Mr. WALCOTT: I am satisfied, sir.

Question that sub-clause (2) be amended by the insertion of the word "forthwith" between the words "shall" and "consider" put, and agreed to.

Clause 4 (1)—Rice not to be manufactured without a licence.

Mr. SEERAM: I suggest that this clause be amended to read that a person shall not manufacture rice "for sale" unless he is the holder of a licence. Some persons manufacture rice by pounding it in a mortar.

Professor DASH: I assure the hon. Member that a great deal of pains has been taken over the preparation of this Bill. The definition "Manufacture of rice" has a specific meaning and the whole Bill will be disfigured if the words suggested are put in.

Mr. FREDERICKS: A large number of people in the country use the process referred to by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara, which is known as "dinkey," and the words suggested will cause no disfigurement.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The definition is quite clear. The definition "Manufacture of rice" means the employment or use of any process in connection with the converting of padi into rice for the market.

Mr. FREDERICKS: Excuse me. I overlooked the words "for the market" (Laughter).

Clause 6 (2)—Appeal to the Governor-in-Council from refusal to issue licence.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I suggest that the period for appeal be one month instead of twenty-one days.

Amendment agreed to.

Clause 7—Form of and fee for licence.

Mr. SEERAM: I am suggesting that the words "and shall expire on the thirty-first of December in every year" in sub-clause (1) and "provided that where a licence is issued after the first of July the fee shall be one dollar" in sub-clause (2) be deleted.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The object of the licence is for the regulation of the manufacture of rice and one of the conditions is that the place where it is to be manufactured is to be fit with respect to public health and sanitation for use as a factory. What the hon. Member is asking for is that a licence once granted shall be perpetual. I do not know of any other form of licence having an effect in that manner. The object of this licence is that the Commissioner can always keep a check on the fitness of the premises for the purpose.

Mr. SEERAM: I suggest another amendment to sub-clause (2) that the licence of two dollars be reduced to one dollar, which would then necessitate the deletion of the proviso.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 8—Licence in respect of existing factory.

Mr. SEERAM: Owners have expended large sums in erecting some mills and I think we ought to give them sufficient time to comply with the requirements for the purpose of obtaining a licence. Some of them would not be able to do what is required within a few months, particularly on account of the low price of rice at present, and I suggest that they be given one year to put their mills in order.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The object of 30 days is merely to get the certificate from the Commissioner so that

by the end of December all factories in existence will be licensed. The question of fitness and sanitary condition does not arise until the 31st December, therefore the owner of a mill will have four months from the commencement of the Ordinance to put his mill in a fit sanitary condition.

Mr. SEERAM: I am asking the Council to give him a period of one year, within which he will have the right not to apply for a licence. Some of these mills will not be able to comply with the requirements.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The hon. Member is pleading on behalf of rice factories which he himself admits are unfit on account of public health conditions. These mills should never have been in operation and a period of four months is quite enough for them to get into sanitary condition. The hon. Member is asking that those mills should have a year to continue manufacturing rice under those conditions, which is ridiculous as it would make a very bad impression if it became known in the Colonies where we are endeavouring to open a market for our rice.

Mr. CANNON: Will the hon. Member tell us how many of the mills would be affected?

Mr. SEERAM: About 75 mills might be affected.

Mr. BRASSINGTON: I take exception to the statement of the hon. Member. It is a very damaging statement to make as 75 represents about 50 per cent. of the factories in the Colony.

Mr. CANNON: It strikes me that provision will have to be made for them on the dole system.

Question put, and negatived.

Clause 9—Transfer of licence.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: This clause says "the Commissioner shall, if the proposed transferee is in his opinion a person to whom a licence may be issued under section five of this Ordinance, endorse on the licence his consent to the transfer." If a man complies with the requirements of this Ordinance the Commissioner must endorse the licence and it should not be in his opinion.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I ask the hon. Member to read clause 5 (2).

Mr. DE AGUIAR: There is a lot of petty strife going on in the districts and the Commissioner should not be put in that position.

Mr. SEERAM: I suggest that the words "in his opinion" be deleted.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: If the discretion is to be as in clause 5 (2) it should be placed here.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: Clause 5 deals with two conditions. Sub-clause (1) deals with the premises and sub-clause (2) deals with the individual himself. Sub-clause (2) gives the Commissioner a discretion to refuse to issue a licence. The only question that arises in respect of clause 5 (1) is the transfer of a licence, and in the same way as the Commissioner has power to refuse an applicant a licence under clause 5 (2) he may do so under clause 9 (1). The power is discretionary and an applicant is protected by a right of appeal.

Clause 11 (1) (c): Holder of licence to keep books and issue receipts.

Mr. SEERAM: I suggest the insertion, after the word "padi" in line four, of the words "and such fees shall not exceed the sum of sixty cents per bag of rice of 180 lbs."

Mr. SEAFORD: I move the deletion of the clause. This clause was not a proposal of the Director of Agriculture but of those of us who contemplated the fixing of the price of rice for local consumption. If there is to be no provision for local sales there is no necessity for the clause.

Mr. DE AGUIAR: I am sorry I cannot agree with the amendment. The only way Government can acquire information regarding the rice industry is to compel millers to keep proper books. For that purpose this clause is essential and I strongly support it.

Mr. FREDERICKS: If there is anything that is going to help the lowest man in the rice business it is this clause. Magistrates have considerable trouble in dealing with cases because there is nothing

to go upon in cases of padi delivered to mills. Millers will not keep books and, since we are interfering, this is effectual legislation.

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: I think the reasons given for the retention of the clause are so strong that the Nominated Member with characteristic wisdom will withdraw the amendment.

Mr. SEAFORD: I withdraw my amendment in deference to the views of those who know something about rice, sir. (Laughter).

THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL: The suggestion of the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara raises the question whether this Council should fix fees for milling. I quite understand the solicitude of the hon. Member that fees should be fixed at a fair amount in the interest of everybody concerned, but the question is of a very wide range and it would be a dangerous thing for the Council without full information of conditions in the Colony as a whole or in particular districts to venture to fix fees. It seems to me that before we can do that we must have full information in respect of every district. From my knowledge of the matter the fees will vary at the same mill according to what is done by the miller and they will also vary in different districts owing to different circumstances and conditions. I think on a little reflection the hon. Member will realise that the Council could not wisely undertake such a leap in the dark to fix fees by statute which it would be hard for people to get away from. If after investigation there would be no fear of any injustice being done it may then be done, but there will have to be elasticity in regard to the fees because conditions might change from year to year.

Mr. SEERAM: I am suggesting a maximum amount providing it would be reasonable. If 60 cents appear to be low it may be raised to 64 or 68 cents. The fees paid for milling padi constitute one of the most important grievances of the rice growers. I am informed that 60 cents is a reasonable sum and will enable any miller to make a profit.

The Council resumed and adjourned until the following day at 11 o'clock.