

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana  
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)  
Order in Council, 1953.)

WEDNESDAY, 24TH APRIL, 1957

The Council met at 2 p.m.

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## PRESENT

*His Honour the Speaker:*

Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford,  
O.B.E., Q.C.

*Ex-Officio Members:*

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

The Hon. the Attorney General,  
Mr. A. M. I. Austin.

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

*Nominated Members of*

*Executive Council:*

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

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

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

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

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj

The Hon. R. C. Tello

*Nominated Official:*

Mr. J. I. Ramphal

*Nominated Unofficials:*

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

Mr. C. A. Carter

Mr. E. F. Correia

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb

Mr. H. Rahaman

Miss Gertie H. Collins

Mrs. Esther E. Dey

Dr. H. A. Fraser

Mr. R. B. Jaijal

Mr. Sugrim Singh

*Clerk of the Legislature:*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing

*Assistant Clerk of the Legislature:*

Mr. E. V. Viapree

*Absent:*

Mr. T. Lee—on leave.

Mr. W. A. Phang—on leave,

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.

The Speaker read prayers.

## OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. M. S. Porcher (Chief Secretary, Acting), took the Oath of Allegiance and his seat.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Porcher, you are no stranger here. We are glad to greet you. Personally, I would like to see you always.

## MINUTES

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

## OTHER NOTICES

## BARTICA CROWN LANDS

**Mr. Correia:** I beg to give notice of the following motion, copy of which I now hand to the Clerk:

"Whereas about 75% of the lots in the Village of Bartica are Crown Lands under lease, on which rents are collected by the Lands and Mines Department; and

Whereas streets embracing such Crown Lands have been built and maintained by the Village; and

Whereas the lessees have developed and cultivated those lots over a number of years with permanent crops;

Be it resolved: That this Council respectfully recommends to Government that all Crown Lands in the Village of Bartica occupied under lease be handed over to the Bartica Village Authority for sale at a price to be fixed by Government; and that priority be given to the present lessees to acquire such lots on an easy payment scheme."

## ORDER OF THE DAY

## ACQUISITION OF LAND (LAND SETTLEMENT) BILL

Council resumed the debate on the motion for the second reading of the Bill instituted:

"An Ordinance to repeal and re-enact the Acquisition of Land (Land Settlement) Ordinance."

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member, Mr. Jailal, was speaking when we adjourned.

**Mr. Jailal:** Mr. Speaker, when the Council adjourned last Thursday, I was examining the conditions of land-

ed property along the coastal fringe and had reached, if I am right, the area on the banks of the Canje. I propose now to continue in the same strain to examine some of the lands along the East Bank of the Berbice River. As we proceed, leaving Providence, there are large areas of land along the bank of the Berbice River, some of which within recent times have fallen beneath the plough. I may remark, for general information, that there was one piece of land. Then that had taken some 36 years to be put into proper cultivation. That estate I am referring to is Pln. Rotterdam. As we leave Rotterdam we come upon abandoned sugar cultivation areas in the shape of Plns. Highbury, Friends and Mara. For a number of years those lands have been left abandoned. I am told that primarily that abandonment took place because of two things—the fall in the price of sugar which made it an uneconomical proposition to hold those estates and they had conceived the idea of a central sugar factory. The other primary reason was that Malaria in the district had rendered most of the labour physically unfit to carry on the very arduous task of planting canes on those estates. It will be remembered that Pln. Mara itself had a high incidence of Malaria. We have living examples of people who fear Mara for that simple reason. Those lands having been left abandoned, the people were left to their own designs, and for the most part they farmed a little, just enough to get something to eat and—pardon me for saying so—they became a great centre of the Bush Rum trade which left its trace to this day. There are some people who are for the most part unwilling to proceed with the form of work that agriculture extends to human beings.

I again reiterate that it is not merely the Government of British

Guiana that is to be blamed. I wish to blame also the Home Government for the policies in this respect. There was no help whatever—none—given to those people to keep those lands in condition so that they can be used. It is only within recent times and since the publication of this big economic development of British Guiana, that really a start was made, but in the meantime there was merely a handful of people who owned those lands and were trying through the years to establish some form of cultivation of those lands. Take Pln. Highbury. That was left to cattle some years ago. What do we find? People in and around New Amsterdam and people from the nearer reaches of the East Bank would send their cattle there and after two or three years when they look forward to an increase in cattle the tigers had taken them off. Apart from that, the cattle would die. Nothing was organized; everybody seemed frustrated, but some people gathered a little breath and went ahead trying to do what the Davsons were doing. They tried to establish a lime cultivation but failed completely. There were no facilities for irrigating the lands at the back.

Those lands have good drainage and that is very important. They can drain readily even by the existing drains, as the lands are very high and the river takes off the water rather readily. There was failure after failure because there was no organized form of trying to put the people on the land, or any organized form of advice as to what should be done. But with the coming into being of what we now recognize as the Development Programme, there was an impetus. The value of rice had increased from \$1.50 per bag of padi to nearly \$6.80, and the result natur-

ally was for the people to go back to the land. But, Sir, it has taken such an interminably long time and it was not a matter that concerned merely the clearing of the land. This Government cannot forget that the whole of that East Bank road was closed to the public for nearly five years. There was no real road traffic, everything had to go by river, and then there were no stellinges. There were no public services as in the past after Pln. Rotterdam closed down.

One can hardly expect development in an area, if there are no means of transport, where the able bridges are all falling down. I know personally—and I am sure several Members have seen — good citrus cultivation has been left to ruin because of those facilities that had been completely neglected. No wonder the people there resorted to finding jobs in other places, merely to carry on their living rather than to remain under such conditions.

When our present Credit Corporation came into being it took some time for it to be able to lay out a plan of action. But how many of the people who own lands along the East Bank, Berbice River, since this Corporation has been established, have applied to the various divisions in their county and got loans? What do we find? For some reason or the other only small sums are lent to build houses, but when it comes to land a man requiring \$30,000 or \$40,000 in order to do a job of work on four sections of land comprising 16,000 acres, that loan becomes too big and the Corporation cannot handle it. But I know personally of one man who was able to get that assistance. I cannot say if it was a fact that the money voted the Corporation was so

[Mr. Jailal]

limited that it had to be properly divided. If that is the reason, then I say we should have limited the Corporation's efforts to one section of the country in order that we could proceed with full scale development at that point. Then the money could be used in the same way in another section. Using it helter-skelter also had a mal-effect.

Take what was done at Mara. I think there is one good point as regards the effort there. Mara was left like a dungeon, a real desolation, and when I last saw Mara, which is about one month ago, there was a lot of work going on there, a lot of activities. The people had found a new hope, and I visualize with a proper policy for the disposal of those lands, Mara will be of true value to the people of the country, but if we are going to hang on to them without developing them and merely be landlords, then I feel there is going to be colossal failure—failure economically and failure in getting the people to catch, what I call, "the spirit of things." What the Government under pressure decided to do is the best thing that could ever have happened to that area. I know that the men concerned are working under severe pressure, but the point I wish to make: Is the present scheme going to be the answer?

Mara, as I see it, resumed activities as the result of the situation at Port Mourant, or it would have had to wait for the bigger scheme. My view is, the people of Port Mourant do not want to live at Mara. If we limit the tenancy of the lands at Mara to those people we have failed already, I feel we should take our selectees from wherever we can get the people to go and take those lands, because it is patent that the people in British Guiana are yet a nomadic people and are only prepared to live and work in

areas they are accustomed to. It is wrong for Government to believe—I say this without any hesitation—that they are ever going to make those people feel they should get any other lands than the vacant ones inside Port Mourant itself. I make that point, and I am sure that what I say is very reasonable and is based on the behaviour of the people themselves. Therefore, I fail to see how Mara in itself will provide in reality the ideal settlement, the ideal place, to which we should transport a set of landless people, who have lost their jobs, people who are at the present time not engaged in any work that would bring them a reasonable living. I cannot see how that is the answer and, therefore, I feel that even now our efforts to some degree have failed. I agree that is failure No. 1.

As we go along there are miles of land on both banks of the river that are unoccupied, especially so in the higher reaches. The case is not similar in the lower reaches of the river where the Dutch had settled and the residents are loggers and do nothing else. There is no organization to assist them. It is only in recent times a certain personality has made himself very prominent in the lives of the people of Lower Berbice. He has brought some vision to them, but they are not working their lands. Those lands are the ones which, I feel, Government should direct its attention to. Lands like those Government should direct its attention to. With this method we really are in a quandary as to who are the rightful owners. I feel, therefore, our first step is to find out whose lands they are before going into this measure. The one we retard is the one we should urge on.

Leaving the Berbice River, because I do not know it much beyond Mara itself, I would prefer to come

along to the lands against the Canje River on the northern side of the bridge.

When I was a boy, I roamed those Fort lands. I remember the days when the soldiery of the country practised at the ranges there. Today, by private effort, without any Government help—as a matter of fact with the hindrance of Government—people have taken those lands and put them under the plough. We find during the growing days of the crop there is a sea of green stretching from behind where the people live until the mouth of the Berbice River is reached. No Government help.

On the other side of the road a similar thing, but until this day there is no project whereby the people around Sheet Anchor and Palmyra are assured that they will get water for nearly 1,500 acres of rice field. Imagine that! That this country, in a section that is termed a granary, does not even think in terms of finding water to make sure that those crops would grow successfully. The patent excuse is that the Canje does not have enough water, but I say that we could have thought of shallow wells. A series of shallow wells would have been good enough. But these lands, many portions of which are Government-owned lands, were completely neglected 35 years ago.

Today the people themselves have to take the matter in hand and work these lands without any help from Government, and yet they are insecure. Government-held lands, but the people are insecure.

Look along the Corentyne and as you turn you find a similar condition. One would wish to say that that is marvellous cattle land. The question is: "Is it true?" We have always known it to be good cattle land, but I have

come back to find that farmers are very successful with rice on the same lands when the elements provide the opportunity. This Government which seeks to take away land has done nothing to help those people. All that it seems that Government cares to do for these lands extending around Albion. Front is to collect rates and taxes. And the people wish Government to know that. Look at the territory—six miles straight by approximately six miles wide. No provision whatsoever has been made. The people themselves have got to provide the means. Those lands may fall to the axe because it may be proved by some expert that whatever the people are doing is wrong — that another crop, possibly flax, would grow well there, and so it would be reasonable argument under this measure to feel that those lands can also be taken away.

Now, we leave those and we go on to an old sore—Gibraltar. Here is a shining example of what Government has done. Government has for years poured money into Gibraltar, in the front and in the back. And what do we get? Indolence and laziness. But today Government takes people from Gibraltar who have lands and puts them into Mara as tenants. Now, I would like Government to answer me. Why was that done? The people of Gibraltar are neglected.

On the other side, there is East Lothian—a flourishing estate—divided merely by a dam. I believe this is land to which Government has given all the necessary aid and it still remains a piece of fertile waste. We can go on endlessly. Between Gibraltar and Rose Hall there is a strip owned by sugar estates, which to my mind is well-cultivated because there is always enough cultivation to show that the people are gainfully using their land.

[Mr. Jailal]

We proceed along the Coast, and as we go to Rose Hall we find that it is only within recent times, after years of talking and planning and "expertism", that we finally have put the wrong thing. We have put a pump that I am sure — and I know that other Members know it—would be absolutely inadequate. It will do some portion of the work, but it will not do all and therefore our planners are falling down. Yet with all this we find these same planners with all that vastness of land around Rose Hall that they could work saying: "Let us take you 18 miles away from where your fathers were. We will make a fine scheme for you and shut you in there." But, I reserve that story for a later piece of what I have to say.

As we go along we come to John. The front lands are well used; the land behind in perfect cultivation. There is some good acreage in the back—I do not know if sugar holds them as freehold or leasehold land—and those are lands that people are clamouring for and we are not anxious to make any provision for them. We have not been anxious over the years to do anything for them. Why? Because we are going to fix a good scheme for them down the river.

We go along and we look at the lands, Bloomfield and Auchlyne, two depths of well-cultivated land with the population growing fast—a place where acres of land would mean something to the people but we have fooled around completely with Lots 1 and 2. We have completely "missed the boat." Why? Because we have no experts. In the days of my forefathers, we had lots of cattle on that land but times have changed. You have forced our cattle prices down with control. No longer do Whim and Bloomfield have the cattle that used to be there.

I hear Government people talking of 5,000 head of cattle. All lies; if not lies, an abysmal ignorance of what is happening. There is no cattle: You have led them all to Georgetown with invidious controls that have limited the output. Therefore these lands where cattle roamed have now got to go to rice. There is nothing else that you can do with the lands. Some people may wish to put them to a poor crop like coffee, but I hope I will be dead when they do that. Those lands are the ones that we should have been looking after but we are still diddling and dawdling. We haven't got the people to do the work. Sir, I wonder how continuously private enterprise can find people to do the work? But as big an organization as Government, and one that aims now to control all of the country, blames it on the fact that we don't have the personnel. When we take all these lands, are we going to have the personnel? Are we going to have the money to work them? We can examine the back lands all the way because it is useless talking about the front lands.

I read in the papers someone saying that we should grow more coconuts, but Government doesn't proceed to do that. We have all the beautiful sandy reef stretching from John until you reach Tarlogie, from Mahaica to Mahaicony, sand-fly infested. All we have to do is to shut it up by dam, clean it off a little, spend a minimum amount of money to do it, and in the 3 years that this Legislature has been installed we could have been growing coconut trees already. We don't worry about those wastes because we have other people's lands; we can direct attention to those lands and it is unnecessary to worry about these. It is quite easy for Government to spend a little money but there is no reason for doing that. It is quite



easy to come here and pass a Bill so that you can take away lands in some other place while Government has an opportunity of dealing with this. It is useless to examine each estate, which I can easily do. When we arrive at Block III on the Corentyne we find that Government has completed the scheme, at least up to handing over point. True enough, this scheme has brought some sunshine to the Corentyne because there are improved facilities for drainage and irrigation, but the scheme also has its limitations in the fact that when the people are charged with the full cost of pumping, having regard to what is grown on the land, I fail to see how there will not finally accrue a state of bankruptcy on the upper Corentyne. In other countries such works are done and the people are allowed some time, but in this country it seems that the order of the day is to impose right away the cost of pumping which is almost prohibitive.

Sir Gordon Lethem promised the people on the Corentyne (it was not in writing) that water would be brought to their homesteads, but they do not have the water. The experts have calculated the amount of work in the Canje creek and almost worked out the amount of water in the Berbice river, and have decided that water cannot be conveyed across the road to the lands on the other side which should be the green belt of the coast. Those lands are now dry waste because the farmers there cannot get water for which they are paying, because they pay rates on the assessed acreage. Those are some of the people who are supposed to be landless, but the fact is that Government is not providing them with facilities for production. Instead, Government is seeking to acquire more

land. In Barbados a man who has half a lot of land is a wonderful farmer. It is not so much the value of the soil but the facilities provided. The people on the Corentyne are people to whom we should hitch our stars, because they are the workers of this country. There is no laziness exemplified there. They are quite willing to work, but Government is not helping them.

I have sat on Committees at which people have asked if they could work a certain piece of land, but they were told that if they did it would interfere with the sea defence or some sluice run. Those are things which create problems. Then there was the wonderful cattle pasture which was to be established—many thousands of acres. Before the big empolder was made and before the land problem arose cattle roamed all over those lands, but control forced the people to turn their attention, quite rightly, to rice. For three years Government has been fiddling with the cattle industry, promising to provide a cattle pasture which is not yet established. Is it that Government is waiting to see what the Torani scheme will produce in order to decide whether it would be worthwhile to keep all those lands for non-existent cattle? Members of this Council know that the people have taken upon themselves to march on the land because it is vacant.

This landless position is one which has been built up by Government itself because Government holds large areas of land which are not beneficially occupied.

We go on until we reach the creek where Government has large blocks of land on which we could settle half of the population of the West Indies. I say that advisedly. We have been told that the Boerasirie scheme will be

[Mr. Jailal]  
 completed this year, but soil surveys have not been made. Government therefore does not know what will grow on the lands which are being prepared. Before the work was undertaken I am quite sure that a soil survey was made, but I believe that at least two or three soil surveys will be carried out in order to make absolutely certain that the farmers will be able to grow kallaloo!

On the East bank of the Essequibo river there is so much land that one is shocked to think that Government or the Member in charge of the Ministry does not know that there is so much Government land vacant, and Government is doing nothing about it. Instead, Government is taking the easy way out by seeking to acquire privately owned lands. What is Government going to do with all the land that will be made available when the various schemes have been completed, plus the lands which are at present lying idle? Is this Bill a measure which we should adopt in a country where there is plenty of land lying idle? It looks like a man who stands in the ocean and asks "Is there any water?" That is the position in British Guiana today. We are saying that there is no land, but it is an empty cry for which there is no basis.

I have had some serious thoughts within the last four days. Hon. Members know how ardent a federationist I am. They know how eagerly I debated the question of federation, but when the soil of British Guiana is involved I am very careful about what I give away. Having regard to the facts which I have tried to bring forward, and having made the point that we have not the population even for the land we have, and having shown that the Africans have long flown from

the land and have no reason to want to go back to it, because it holds no hope for them in the present circumstances, and having said that the Indians are also fleeing the land, I wonder what is the policy, what is the scheme behind land settlement? I personally thought that land settlement would have been something which would have offered the people an opportunity for orderly development. I am convinced that there are only two races of people who would go behind the fences, the Negroes and the Indians, and I am wondering whether it is not a diabolical plan to fence them in and deprive them of an opportunity to take their rightful places in the community which they deserve to fit in. Those are the burning questions that arise in my mind. Granted that we have wide spaces, is it not that the planners in this country are planning that when land settlement has failed British Guiana, or Guianese themselves have failed to take up the the gauntlet, that we would have already prepared beautiful settlements for the federal structure? Is it also true that British Guiana will have to pay for this wonderful development? Those are the questions that come before me. If I could be satisfied that it is not so, then the propounders of this scheme would probably have won me over half the way. But it will take a lot to convince me, because I seem to think that that is actually what will happen. Even if it were not planned that way it is going to be the result of what we are trying to put forward here.

The Bill in itself embraces lands for the most part held by very small proprietors. These are the ones against whom we must not be bitter because of the circumstances under which they procure and still own lands. Why would it be right for us to have allowed a man to accept a certain way of



life and suddenly tear it down? Isn't it a travesty? I begin to wonder if we have any right — if this were not something solvent that we are dealing with? I feel that this is a measure which we poor laymen are quite wrong about in the thought that it is something that can be dealt with at a solvent level where lands were given to a builder and then quite of a sudden the Interim Government decides that we are going to take away the land so that we can make sure there will be no civil measure coming from the next Government. The next Government is going to be an elected Government—a Government of the people, and the real and true voices of the people will be able to come up. Why have we neglected to see that? Are we that courageous? Courage can sometimes have stupidity in it. One can be bold without vision, and one can be quite courageous but absolutely foolish. I think in this case we are being very foolish when we have not been able to put forward our own scheme—schemes that we are desiring and which we shall not be able to fulfill. Then, in the last days—the dying days of this Government, we have brought forth a wonderful effort to out-Jagan Jagan.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member should have the greatest respect when referring to the names of politicians who are contemplating contesting political honours. I have followed very closely all you have said, and you know that I speak sincerely—that I have no interest in this or any other project—but I do wish that you would not refer to the name of a politician, whether critically or truthfully—whose name is very prominent in relation to the public. I feel that you can deal with the matter sincerely and legitimately, and from what you can see of the object of this legislation you would re-

frain from referring to the name of Jagan, or anybody else.

**Mr. Jailal:** Mr. Speaker, I accept your ruling and advice, but I do wish to say before coming entirely off the point that this kind of legislation cannot find its way in a democratic society where we have been brought up to talk freely. It savours of another ideology, one that preaches that all lands belong to the state. If that were the ultimate hope of this Government I would then like to take my papers and leave because then I would know that British Guiana is one place I would like to be far away from.

I trust that there is some faith left in those who have lent their imaginations to this iniquitous legislation. I wonder whether Government knows that to some degree the problem is not in British Guiana alone, if problem there be, that this problem is one of world-wide knowledge. All over the world Governments are seeking to adopt measures, they are seeking solutions, but they have not been able to come up as yet with the answers. I want to suggest to the Administration that there can be no quick solution and for the most part resolving them depends on a long term education rather than immediate action.

I think one of the things we should do is really commence to teach our farmers. We should teach them what to do on the small bits of land that they may have, if, and I hope on my knees, that this is what land settlement will mean to British Guiana — that people will be taught orderly and well how to farm. It is quite true that we have a lot of people who call themselves farmers who have no technical knowledge of farming — none whatsoever. People would be amazed

[Mr. Jallal]

if you told them that if you take two flowers and graft them that you can produce another type of flower.

If we had little things fixed, then we would go on from step to then we would go on from step to step. On page 208 of the World Bank Mission Report—I would be grateful if you will permit me to read the paragraph, Sir—

“A stronger policy on the disposition of neglected freehold land will be needed if agriculture is to continue to develop. In the irrigation and drainage works now under construction, considerable areas of such land are encompassed. The new agricultural land to be made available by these works will soon be exhausted, and all the abandoned freehold land will be needed. Such basic resources should not be kept out of economic use.”

I am going to read the second paragraph—

“The mission therefore urges a stronger use of the governmental right to resume possession of these lands, as a means of bringing them into production”.

It has said nothing about economic value. It goes on —

“Imposition of a land tax may be a useful step, for under appreciable tax pressure the owners will have to go in for exploitation or sell the lands”;

That is the sentence I am most interested in. I will read on a little further so that I can explain this International Bank Commission. This group of experts was not quite willing to set out a policy and say that this is the way we must do it. Just arbitrarily, it says here —

“Imposition of a land tax may be a useful step, for under appreciable tax pressure the owners will have to go in for exploitation or sell the lands.”

It goes on still —

“To encourage private exploitation, credit on suitable terms should be pro-

vided. On the other hand, the irrigation and drainage charges on land brought within the Boerasnie and Corentyne Schemes should be extended as soon as possible to this neglected area, and action should be taken to ensure that land owners pay their charges on time. Legislation may be needed to accomplish this.”

That has been my feeling. I felt that as a first step and I said so speaking here on a Budget, that I thought that one of the things that Government should do, and that is why I held my tongue in other places because it was useless saying it over and over again like a broken record. I said that the policy of Government should be that if people were not willing to work their lands, and having given them all the facilities, then the next step would be to tax them for not having used the land. That has not been examined in this Council or at any Committee on which I have sat, but it may have a lot of difficulties and so the Administration may have passed over such difficulties and taken the easier step.

That is completely wrong, and I again ask Government to consider what the Mission has said quite clearly in the first step and also the other step — agricultural credit. It is also forgotten that the Mission felt that private enterprise should always be in it.

I was quite alarmed—I hold no brief for anyone and I speak as a free man, free of any tie of any kind, financial, political or otherwise — when Government came out with a policy that was going to affect two groups in the main. It is going to effect in a great degree the sugar landlords and to a lesser degree in some way the East Indians who hold lands. I cannot understand how and why Government has taken this step at this

time. A few months ago we had the pleasure of having in our midst a man who could defend sugar, a man who could take up the cudgels of the proprietor in this Council, but we do not have a man to take the side of such a large industry as rice. Yet in negotiating for the acquisition of land that was not taken into consideration. Is it fair or reasonable to do that? Is it that sugar proprietors have been able to sit around another table to argue their case? If that were so, then the Bill in itself truly reflects the order of things.

This Bill divides the two groups of people. It is said that no sugar lands will be taken except the matter goes to a high level tribunal, but a high level tribunal is never meant for small proprietors like those in Leguan. You will never see the day when the case of such people will be taken to any tribunal of any kind. I would like to see a tribunal coming out of the United Kingdom that would be able to decide against sugar. It poses a complex question to me because there is no representation on the one side and there does not seem to be any representation on the other side. The result is we are completely fooled.

What I feel is that this Bill does not include any sugar or has any reference to them. What it does refer to are the lands of the other party, those people who have fought their way up, who Government never helped and who Government has exploited through the years. That to my mind is the design of this Bill. Apart from this, when we come down to cost and we commence to examine what we are actually doing, what do we find? Land in 1939 valued at approximately \$60 per acre, five times that is the value today if anybody wants to buy that land. Take land values in Georgetown. A half lot of land valued at \$5,000 you cannot get for

\$8,000 and \$10,000. Why not make laws for that as you are making laws for everything else. Not because it comes straight home to us. It is as much a part of the economy of this country as the case of Suddie or Crabwood Creek. We have completely ignored this. That is part of our economy this Bill seeks to direct, yet it is no concern of this Bill which seeks to put in Government's hand power to say land is valued at so much. If it had said what should be a reasonable selling price of the land, I might have sat down. But, no, it has not even given a thought to what eventually would happen to the people whom it seeks to expropriate, whose lands it seeks to take away.

In some cases how are we going to be able to so fix things up, as in the case of a man who bought a piece of land in 1956 for \$50,000 on a mortgage—paying \$10,000 down and obtaining a mortgage for \$40,000—and the date of his mortgage did not come within the prescribed time of the Ordinance? What is going to happen to the man who holds the mortgage? Is Government going to make good that mortgage? Is there any provision in this Bill for that? In my opinion this Bill seeks to devalue completely land which is a basic form of security in this country and throughout the Commonwealth. In the Federation debate I said that our hopes, speaking of the people of the West Indies, our aims and ambitions are the same as the people in those parts. All of us hope to own a little piece of land which we can call our own. It is the hope of almost every individual in this country. This Government is trying to remove that kind of security. If you go to the Bank and tell them that you have a piece of land and present your transport as security for a loan, it is gilt-edged security. When I use the

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word "Bank" I refer to those in any other place because those here are most reserved in granting loans especially to small farmers. Is it not a complete departure from a policy that this country knows is almost indigenous to it?

In the same breath, I wish to take up the matter of compensation. If you are going to study very closely what has gone on in British Guiana in the past 20 years, if we were to think about values, if we were to take dollars and cents at their real basis in these days, it would be found that in the early thirties a man and his family—a wife and possibly a child—earning 6/- a week and living in a thatched hut enjoyed a state of living just the same way he should today, but that same man is hardly able to earn much more on the sugar estate than \$3.00 per week. He has more attractions—the cinemas, the race course—and the cost of living has risen. Money value has risen nine times as much as then. You know and I know that Pln. Vreed-en-Hoop was sold for \$6,000. It is only with a Bill like this you can have it back for that sum. You cannot buy six house lots on New Road for \$6,000. Those are the things one has to examine when talking about value. What is the economic value? If such value there be, should it not be based on how much is the present value of things around.

Is it that they are going to say that excess land will in time produce 20 bags an acre and the rice land after taking everything away will get \$2 and \$3 an acre? Is it that they are going to say that is the basis of this economic value? I am no expert but I do know that if we were to expose good, well-developed and well-cultivated land for sale tomorrow in proxim-

ity to transport facilities and rice mills, in proximity, shall I say, to the lanes to Georgetown, I would venture to say that Government would sell every inch of it at \$600 an acre and in doing so it would have made no profit. Nine times the value—\$540 per acre. But it is not true that lands are sold for the most part at such prices. This is a false basis and that is why I criticize it so severely. An expert was brought and shut up in a room and given official love and not allowed to go out and ask his own questions and find his own answers and spend two years doing it like the anthropologists. Don't let him sit down and take a mass of records and a lot of ideas from people who may be absolutely wrong in their deductions.

Even though they are paying we must understand what is happening in the Islands of Leguan and Wakenaam particularly. There are some people who bought land—I have recounted the story over and over again here—I have said how certain people were long-seeing and they saw into the future; some of them were merely sugar estate drivers, others were people who had pittances for jobs in Government, fellows who were hardly above the state of messenger, fellows in the position of interpreters who could barely save \$1,000 so that they could show it to the people who were selling Plantations Zeelandia, Friendship, Henrietta. All those places were sold on a system of inequity, because the people who sold at that time were sure that on a fair value of \$10,000 for Plantation Zeelandia that the people who were undertaking to buy it would never pay and they felt that the \$2,000 or \$3,000 that were going to be deposited on that land were going to be confiscated in a very short time, but they had not measured with the

ability of these people who worked and liquidated the debt. Fortunately, also, when these people contracted to buy those lands padi had been at 72c. a bag. Why didn't Government buy the land in those days when they were going to ruin? I saw them in the Island of Wakenaam. Government had no intention of even looking at land and why this sudden turn? Is it a political arrangement? I feel that there is nothing else but deep underlying politics. In those days the people were left to abomination and desolation. People in Leguan and Wakenaam were beggars. They waited for something to eat; they turned to Water Street to await people who had some vision, who were willing to help. They carried the burden of responsibility on their shoulders to break those lands. Some of these people are men like those who own Rose Hall and Henrietta.

People forget too easily. I remember in 1932 when they could get labour for as low as 60c. a day in Maryville. I scorn to think of that. Men grovelled and sought back-door influence to get a job at 60c. a day. Those were the times and conditions under which people bought those lands — bought them, broke them and worked them. They had to pay that money during difficult times and these were the people who were suppressed. People around this table might wonder at my criticism but it is my experience. I was one of the chaps who told my people never to grow one grain of rice and subject themselves to the machinations of the Rice Marketing Board. The hon. Member knows full well—he was one of the arbitrators on the Rice Marketing Board. The Rice Marketing Board was not anything like it is today, working for the goodwill and benefit of the farmers of this country, men like the owners

of Plantation Johanna Cecilia, a place that once produced super rice in abundance — Taymouth Manor and Adventure. There was no reason to look at those places with craving eyes. All you did was go and sow rice and say: "This is for shipment." That inequity was perpetrated on the people when the Rice Marketing Board came into being because as I said it did not come into being for what it is doing now. It came into being to protect the West Indies. I am saying that this is being perpetrated and now to do a similar thing to the people of this country in order to protect the West Indies—that is what the Land Acquisition Bill means. You are trying to get land as cheaply as possible. You have hemmed the people in. They have failed through the years to get anything out of their labour. When the time for profits came when they could have got \$19 per bag as they did in 1941, what did the Government of British Guiana do? This fatherly Government said: "Sell your rice as cheaply as you can to the West Indies." It was a good thing but it worked the other way. It is only world conditions that have forced it to work the other way and now there has come into being something of value but at the very outset it was designed to crush the small producer in order to feed the West Indies. I say so without any hesitation. I leave for the West Indies within a few days and I shall not be afraid of what I have said within this Chamber.

There are a number of things connected and deep and underlying that we have to put out. It is necessary to look at all these things because when we have tampered with the lives of the 253,000 people here, when we have made the road wide open for such a policy — I want to have an answer to this: "What is going to be the position when this land is acquired or when a

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certain amount of land is acquired? How are we going to finance the work on those lands? Are we going to take Government's money, buy a piece of land that is supposed to be neglected, develop it with Government's money and then take Government's own chosen people and put them in there and wait on their own chosen time to pay back? Is it right to take away from one and give to the other freely, because it is envisaged that they are going to develop these lands and hand them out? Over all these years we have not lent one cent to the people from here to Mahaicony. I am pretty well aware of what goes on. I know of one farmer who has been lent money to develop his land — \$20,000. The Credit Corporation has been pleased to lend him this and for all the rest a loan of \$300, \$500, \$1,000 to build a house. That sum won't clear land. \$1,000 a week is what a tractor takes. That is what a dragline would want—\$1,500. It takes so many weeks to dig out a trench provided the weather is fair and apart from the great number you have, there are not enough still. Those people were flourishing at one time because they were able to rear cattle. It is going to take a long time to reconvert them to cattle because those lands which had cattle are no longer helped by the same people.

It is very patent that we cannot enforce something like this legislation on people whom we have encouraged by our own deeds and misdeeds to have faith in private enterprise. I remember hearing some years ago from the mouth of a former Governor in the Town Hall in New Amsterdam, that one of the things Government wanted the Indians to do was finally to get out from the sugar estates and grow rice on their own lands so as to develop it into a colonial crop. I

was a small boy then and that advice stuck in my mind. I feel that that Governor was a man with a philosophy of life, a man who looked into the future with a nobleness of purpose and a richness of fatherhood. But it does not seem that people of that type exist in these days. There was a Governor saying to the Indians: "Go out when your term of indenture is ended and own a piece of land." Indeed it was Government's policy, because I know it to be true that Government gave immigrants land in lieu of passages back to India, but Government does not seem to want to continue that policy. Lands were given to Indian immigrants by the Government at that time.

**Mr. Speaker:** It was part of their contract of indenture that they had to serve five years under indenture, on a sugar estate, and another five years as free labourers on an estate, after which in lieu of repatriation they had the option of accepting a piece of land. Land was not given to them.

**Mr. Jailal:** Thank you, Sir. I say there has been a change of heart since then; Government's policy has been changed. The system of giving land in lieu of back passages encouraged many Indian immigrants to remain in this Colony; many of them would have gone back even to starve and roam the streets of India and die of poverty and want but for the fact that they could enjoy freedom here and provide for their children an opportunity to build something with their own hands and earn a place in the sun for themselves. But, unfortunately, those things are to come to a close. We are led to believe that there is a "fence me in" policy being introduced, a policy that is going to build great reserves to confine those people and limit their opportunities, thus making vassals of



them. We have got away from that in our own way; we have got away from the European landlords and have become our own landlords. The people in the country own lands which the Government is now seeking to take away from them, a Government which has proved itself such a poor landlord. Is it not true that there are only ten settlers at Anna Regina? Has Government really accomplished any land settlement apart from the few people at Vergenoegen. What is Government's policy concerning those people? The people themselves are in a quandary; I know that because I have talked with them. If I could only find \$16 per week jobs for some of those settlers on those fancy schemes they would rush to take them. I am merely expressing the views of the people themselves.

I have had sufficient time to let the people know what is happening, and except for a few who have been led to believe that lands will be acquired by Government and passed on to them, the majority of the people ask one simple question: that if Government could take away Xs' 5,000 acres, could it not do the same with my five acres? The people of Leguan want land. There is a lot of land at Hog Island but a co-operative society has sought to obtain land there but cannot get any. Why doesn't the Government clean some of the land there? There is no soil expert who could tell me that the land in Leguan is any better than that in Wakenaam, Troolie Island or Hog Island. There may be just a little difference in the soil from estate to estate. Basically they are all islands built up out of the wash from the Esse-quiibo river, and they will produce the same crops but capital works would have to be undertaken to develop them.

I submit that this Bill is designed to take away lands at the end of Leguan. Government has failed to pro-

vide even sea defences for the private proprietors. Could a proprietor invest \$40,000 or \$50,000 to have his lands over-run by the sea every year? Tiger Island was once a flourishing estate on which was produced some of the best sheep in this country, and some of the best copra. The island is privately owned and the proprietor has suffered immensely because Government has prevented him from getting more than \$6 per acre in rent. His main works have failed, not for the lack of machinery; indeed machinery cannot go on the land. I have been there myself and seen that there are no dams left, and the trenches are silted up. There are draglines, tractors and several thousand dollars' worth of machinery lying idle on the land because Government has refused to provide sea defences on the ground that the island is owned by a private landlord. Although sea defence is a colonial responsibility throughout the coastal belt, because it is an island in the river it is considered river defence and not sea defence, but in the case of Wakenaam and Leguan work has been started which is not regarded as river defence. That is the way in which Government has balanced its budget for years — neglecting its responsibilities.

Government has acquired Garden of Eden and has all the machinery at its disposal, but all that has been accomplished there is the digging of three trenches. How much can reasonably be expected from a small man who bought land under circumstances which I have explained, with little money and a heavy mortgage.

Government saw fit to pass the Moneylenders Bill because that time it was a different kind of people lending money. We have a problem of draining and irrigating the land. Lend the people some money so that they can do their internal works. I cannot under-

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stand this measure in any of its phases. What about the question of leasing? Is it that Government is going to acquire the land and give the owner some money for it, or that Government is going to lease the land at some uneconomic price, having regard to the economic value of the land? Is it that when the land is taken and put in order the settlers would have so many years free and then Government would want them to pay a little rent of some kind?

**Mr. Speaker:** Have you read the definition of Land Settlement Scheme? You do not have to speculate. It is defined in the Bill as—

“Land Settlement Scheme includes any project intended to secure land for the establishment of farmers as an organised settlement or for distribution by sale; lease or otherwise to persons individually for agricultural purposes.”

**Mr. Jailal:** I am speculating because there are so many things Government has to do. I am wondering whether it would not be a loss to sell or lease one's land to Government. Has not a man the right to prepare a future for his children? Mr. X has a piece of land and spends his own money to develop it, but he has only been able to develop a few acres. Government comes in and says to him “You have not developed your land; I will give you so much money.” The man, if he is a farmer and his children are farmers, will have to go and seek a place elsewhere. Government has failed in its efforts to produce a solution. There is need for agricultural development, but this is not a means at all. I have clearly stated before what could be the means. I have blamed the Government for having done nothing to help to put the lands in condition, and I blame the Government also for not having secured a stabilized price and make it possible to develop farming on a sound econo-

mic basis. I have submitted that people have had to be callous because they have no agricultural credit, no credit facilities, and so they have had to turn to other things. Some folks who were unable to stand the pressure of time sold out, others took the gamble and in some cases they have won.

I have tried to prove that our people are really not prepared to go into Land Settlement, not until they know what is going to be the policy, not until they are assured that the land they work will be theirs. Until then the people will not be prepared to go into it. I have shown where, to my mind, there are burning questions as to what should be the true aims and objects of this exercise. I have made Members look at the other side of the picture. I believe that in course of time the people of the country will get nothing out of such legislation. I believe that the country will not benefit out of this piece of expert advice. I believe that this Bill is a squeezer and it is going to interfere severely with the social life of a goodly number of people. It is going to ruin the value we have placed on the democratic way of life. It seeks to trample on our selling system as set up throughout the British Commonwealth. It is seeking to take things judicial and have them dealt with by untrained personnel. I have asked that question and I hope someone will answer it. I feel that there is nothing to be accomplished out of this measure, and therefore I am going to ask Government seriously to consider withdrawing this measure before this Council. I have hopes that such consideration will be given it because —

**Sir Frank McDavid:** (interjecting)  
I will not.

**Mr. Jailal:** I do not expect the hon. Member to answer in the affirmative. I hope if even this measure is passed — I wish it to be clearly set out in *Hansard* what my recommendations are — because of a depleted section on the Floor, this Government will be well advised not to put it into operation but leave it to the new Government to do with it as it may. It would then be put to the acid test as to whether it is good legislation for the people. I feel that this is only another political dodge. How long will we continue to fool the people? How long are we going to be able to prevent an end to the prevailing trend of slavery? I do not know. Until British Guiana arrives at a stage where things are thought of in the best interests of the people who live here, until we can reach down into their hearts and feel their pulse and know what they are thinking, until such time we will never be able to assess the true values of any piece of legislation introduced.

When legislating we must think in terms of how the people feel about it. We must not bring things that aim at oppression. Public opinion is not divided. Public opinion is a very important thing in a measure like this. Much as I hate to say all these things, there are greater brains behind this and the things we are doing. Like a wizard I look into the future. We have established Land Settlements on the Essequibo Coast. We have completely annihilated all the privately-owned rice mills on that Coast, and have established fully the means by which we could keep a central mill in full operation. When we shall have done that — I throw this out — and it should be done on the Corentyne, we would smash those people who have put money into that business and for a long time have been carrying on without any help as the Credit Corporation

consistently refused to lend them money to improve their mills. The Credit Corporation was told not to lend because Government has another policy. When that is done I see the complete ruin of the small man in industry. I say that not from the point of view that I work there, but I see the complete ruin of the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Development Company taking hold of the rice industry in this country. That is not a wild statement but a warning I am giving not only this Government but the Government to come. I am warning them that the handwriting is on the wall, and that they must seek the advice of people who may not have had the specialists training and long and varied experience in political assemblies, but people who have had varying experience in the art of living and have had to carve a niche for themselves in a difficult upward climb.

I think that when we shall have passed this Bill, if pass we must, those of us who vote for it will rue the day and, like Shakespeare, I will sit here and find in what he said:

"O judgment! thou art fled to brutish  
beasts  
And men have lost their reason . . ."

**Mr. Speaker:** I would like to say, Mr. Jailal, that it may not have been realised, but you did not reiterate your arguments during the whole of your speech, or I would have stopped you.

**Dr. Fraser:** I do oppose this Bill which I consider a most disgraceful and abominable attempt by Government to interfere unjustifiably with the rights of private ownership of land, and to destroy those rights. In spite of the very brilliant address by the hon. Mover in introducing the Bill I am not convinced that there is any need for legislation of this type. There is no shortage of land in this country: there

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is a shortage of drained and irrigated land. The hon. Member himself gave us an account of all the drainage works that are in progress.

I would like to warn the Government that the introduction of this Bill is tending to cause dissatisfaction and unrest, and even disloyalty among the people by splitting them on this question of land, and I feel that it has given rise to the suspicion that it is the old policy of divide and rule, might is right, and the end justifies the means. I am somewhat perplexed as to what Government hopes to achieve by a Bill of this nature. Legislation of the kind proposed would simply not promote good feeling, and certainly would not increase agricultural productivity. There are other much simpler methods by which land can be put into more profitable production than the expensive method of compulsory acquisition. This Colony needs every cent it can possibly put its hand on to drain and irrigate land, and fancy legislation like this to waste money in acquiring land compulsorily when there is no money for the proper development of such land will not get this country very far.

British Guiana is basically an agricultural country. By expensive drainage and irrigation schemes it has to protect the land from the sea in front and the floods behind. The lack of knowledge among Government officials of land and land problems is astounding. Much of the disuse or misuse of land and the lack of agricultural development is directly attributed to lack of knowledge. Indeed it seems that the putting into operation of Government's so-called land and agricultural policy is causing a great deal of muddled thinking and a bureaucratic attitude of mind that will not bring about very much agricultural development. Had Government paid attention to the words of

the World Bank Mission's Report on the economic development of this Colony it would not have rushed into this Bill. With your permission, Sir, I will read the principal recommendations on page 52 of the Report where it says :

The mission recognizes that practical improvement of agriculture is not to be accomplished solely by the establishment of a few broad policies, but to a large extent by attention to the specific details upon which successful farming depends . . ."

The Mission in its pronouncement sounded an early note of warning which, if Government had heeded, it would never have introduced this Bill. On page 53 the Report goes on to state under B.—Land Settlement and Tenure:

"4. Legislation relating to ownership and tenure of unused backlands and riverain lands should be thoroughly reviewed; such reclaimable lands should be gradually brought into productive use, if necessary by appropriate legal measures."

Not by compulsory acquisition as proposed in the Bill before us today. This Acquisition of Land Bill is brought in the guise of land settlement, to take away land that is not properly utilized and put it into profitable production. I wonder what is the position on the Government estates on the West Coast, Demerara — Windsor Forest, La Jalousie, Hague, Vergenoegen—Anna Regina, in Essequibo, La Bonne Mere and Cane Grove, on the East Coast of Demerara. Those estates are in a deplorable condition, covered with bush. So much for Government's achievements as a landlord. With your permission, Sir, I will read from the Development Progress Report for 1956, at page 10.

"Essequibo Estates—Work in connection with the extension of rice cultivation, and the establishment of a dairy farm and new cattle pasture included the widening and deepening of about 5630 rods of drainage and irrigation trenches. 400 rods of Bush Lot Middle Walk Dam and 600

rods of drainage trench parapet at Henrietta and Richmond were cleared of trees and 100 acres of rice lands at North Anna Regina and Lima cleared and levelled for the extension of rice cultivation . . .”

“Improvement of drainage generally and in the residential areas at Anna Regina South, Lima, Cotton Field, and Reliance was effected by weeding, cleaning, widening and deepening trenches (5,334 rods). The layout and roads at Lima and Anna Regina South have been levelled and materials secured for metal-ling roads.”

This is wonderful upkeep of Government estates. The report goes on:

“Vergenoegen Land Settlement—Drainage was improved generally and a box koker put down to drain the communal grazing area at Barnwell West Crown Dam. 674 acres of this area were cleared and 67 acres planted with grass. The application of fertilizers gave satisfactory results. Fencing of the dairy farm is in progress. An irrigation trench which caused flooding was converted into a drainage trench. Roads were metalled.”

“Charity Amazon Scheme — Spoils from the deepening of trenches along the public road were used to build up streets prior to metalling. A distance of 314 rods was metalled and rolled. Work was undertaken on the preparation of the site for extension of the market shed. Drainage and Irrigation trenches (2,943 rods) at Devonshire Castle and Walton Hall were cleared, widened and deepened, and drains (120 rods) widened.”

“Onverwagt Land Settlement = 2988 acres of land were allotted to 260 farmers for rice cultivation. 2300 acres were cultivated for the autumn crop, but much of the crop was lost as a result of flooding in the area. Drainage and irrigation works continued. A new sluice was erected at No. 27 West Coast, Berbice, and a new box koker put down at No. 3 field for the purpose of irrigating rice fields in the area. The main bridge and existing pasture fences were repaired”.

I need not take up the time of the Council by reading any more, but I will say that in all the years Government has had these estates it has never been able to recover the annual running costs, much less the capital expenditure. A private individual has to find land, undertake work on the land and make a profit, but with all its resources Government has not been able to maintain its estates in proper condition and even clear the expenses. With your permission, Sir, I will read from the 1957 Estimates the details of expenditure on Government estates.

“Essequibo Estates, \$102,080.”

Let us look at the Revenue so as to bear out my point. The estimate of Expenditure for the Essequibo Estates (Anna Regina) was \$102,080. What is the Revenue? —\$63,000. The West Demerara Estates (Windsor Forest, La Jalousie and Hague)—Expenditure, \$38,000 and Revenue, \$21,750. Vergenoegen Land Settlement— Expenditure \$42,000; Revenue, \$32,000. Cane Grove —La Bonne Mere Land Settlement— Expenditure \$102,300; Revenue \$83,000. It is no use going on any more. The very fact that money is spent on Government Estates and they cannot even balance naturally admits how impossible it is to expect the private estate-owner who has to find the money to cultivate all his land with the little capital he can raise. His lands many amount to 30,000 acres. Government owns 25,000 acres of land and they are in a disgraceful condition despite all that has been spent in one year.

The hon. Mover in his address said that in the Boerasirie and Blocks I and II it is hoped to reclaim approximately 66,000 acres of cultivable land. It will be an increase of about 25 per cent. on the total cultivable land on the coastland, which amounts

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to 282,000 acres. With that increase of 66,000 acres plus 50,000 acres and a further 96,000 acres there is no shortage of land. The hon. Member went on to speak in the most glowing terms of the work done on the Torani Canal. That work has been in progress for 10 to 12 years, at what cost? It is hoped to get an increased quantity of water from this canal to irrigate the sugar estates on the Corentyne and also the Blocks I and II schemes and possibly an extra 27,000 acres in the Block III scheme. To my reckoning that brings the total acreage to 127,000 acres roughly. Is there, therefore a land shortage? It does not seem so, and yet Government rushes in with a Bill of this nature.

The hon. Mover went on to say that a resolution had been passed at a West Indian Conference held at Puerto Rico in 1955, and at which, he contended that resolution had been accepted by the Governments of the Caribbean area, and as late as September of last year this Government had accepted that resolution. With your permission, Sir, I will read the Resolution, which is reproduced on page 3 of the hon. Member's address—

"That Governments of the area accept that the use of land must be regarded not only as the business of the owner but also as the proper concern of the community as a whole; and to provide legislation to give practical effect to this concept. Where the interests of the landlords and/or tenants conflict with those of the community; the interests of the community should prevail."

I take it, it is the latter part of of this Resolution that Government has accepted as part of its land policy today, and seeks to implement by the introduction of this Bill to acquire land compulsorily for the benefit of

the community, compensation to be paid at the economic value and not at the market value. To a point "to the benefit of the community" is a very laudable object in truth. But there is no shortage of land, again I repeat. There is no justification for compulsorily acquiring land. Government has never attempted to give a proprietor one cent to develop his land, and now it seeks to take away the land that he has been trying to develop over the years. In my opinion—and I regret I have to say so—it seems like an attempt by Government to divert attention from its inability to provide drained lands for the people and to hold up private landowners as a scape-goat for Government's inability.

Let us go a little further back to the economic position of the Colony in the 1930's so as to give the background as to why the land has been so poorly developed according to Government standards, although the standard set by Government Estates is very deplorable. One will remember that in the early '30s there was a depression that affected not only this Colony but the whole world at large. Farm products in this Colony were given away. Milk was sold at 1½ cents to 2 cents per pint. Bacon was sold at 6 cents per lb. Padi fetched 72 cents per bag and coconuts \$3.50 to \$5 per 1,000. There was not enough money to pay for the maintenance of a farm, much less to find money to do anything else.

Even the sugar estates were hard hit, much less the poor farmers. It was only a year or two before the beginning of World War II that the price of farm products started to rise and continued to rise during the War. But what happened? Government im-



mediately put on Price Control for farm products. So also wages rose and the prices of other commodities rose. There was a little more money and the farmers tried to develop their lands but some of the Government Price Control had an ill effect. As we all know with more cows to milk production is increased but high mortality among the cows affected both milk and beef supply. So much for Government policy. So much for Government's help to farmers.

It was not until the Rice Arbitration which was held in 1951 and resulted in the price of rice being increased, otherwise, we would have today still been supplying the West Indies with cheap rice. It was that arbitration that fixed the price of rice that provided the incentive to the farmers in this Colony to begin to develop their land. At that time the poor farmer was still using the old primitive means of tillage—an ox and a wooden plough. In two or three years through the ability to buy tractors the rice cultivation has increased enormously and only limited by the inability to obtain drained lands which Government would not even attempt to provide. It is the price incentive of rice. There is no such thing as a shortage of land, but there is a shortage of drained land which Government will not provide. Government well knows that it is the high cost of drainage that kept down the development of agriculture in this country. It is well known that the second factor that retarded agricultural development is the great incidence of praedial larceny which is rampant throughout the coastland. A man plants his products and is lucky if he reaps 50 per cent. What help has Government given? Is Government going to plead

ignorance? Straying cattle destroy farmers' cultivation, but what has Government done about it except impounding strays and receiving part of the Pound fees. Nothing is done to help the farmers, financially, morally and otherwise, but Government is seeking to take away and from the people.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** We have heard this assertion repeated, that Government is seeking to take away land from the people. Why insist on something that is completely fallacious? The hon. Member knows that it is quite untrue and not by any means the object of this Bill.

**Dr. Fraser:** I am not convinced of what the hon. Member says. He may not be in the next Government, or the succeeding Government.

**Mr. Speaker:** We may have a system of dictatorship.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** I am sure the hon. Member will be there.

**Dr. Fraser:** The hon. Member in his opening speech on the Bill said that a meeting of 40 nations discussed land tenure at Wisconsin, in the United States in 1951, and that there was great divergence in land policies. He gave us two examples of the wide divergence. He said that in the U.S.A. the farmer is subsidized by the Government not to cultivate his land, and that the other extreme was in Great Britain where the farmer literally had his land taken away if he did not till it to proper agricultural standard.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** I beg your pardon. I said "arbitrarily."

**Dr. Fraser:** As regards land being taken away arbitrarily, with your permission, Sir, I will read some extracts from an article entitled:

"The Four H's of British Agricultural Policy" by A.N. Duckham, Agricultural Attaché, British Embassy, Washington, D.C., and Provincial Director, National Agricultural Advisory Service of England and Wales. The article appears in the "Agricultural Institute Review", published monthly by the Agricultural Institute of Canada, of which I have been a member for 21 years. My object in reading the article in part is to show how an enlightened agricultural policy is being pursued in other countries where there is no compulsory taking away of people's land. The writers says:

"An agricultural policy which is based solely on economic thinking is unlikely to get far."

He goes on to deal with Britain's economic problem. After the war, he says, Britain emerged with a battered economy. She lost \$12 billion of her physical and financial assets through enemy action—by destruction of her shipping, factories and homes—and she had to dispose of many of her overseas assets, particularly in the dollar area, to fight the war, and lost some of her overseas markets and foreign earnings from life insurance, banking, etc. Britain has only half an acre of arable land per head of her population. Before the war she fed less than a third of her population with the produce of her farms. Now she must produce more food at home to try to feed half of her 50 million people. That is the agricultural programme. He goes on to say that the people of Britain are covered by social security measure, the National Health Service, to which a farmer, like everybody else, contributed about \$1 per week, for which he and his family have the services of the doctor of his choice, maternity benefits, school lunch,

school milk and other benefits for the children and their mothers.

Secondly, the farmers enjoy security of tenure. Two-thirds of Britain's farmers are long-term tenants who pay a fixed cash rent, and the Agricultural Act of 1947 gives them complete security of tenure.

The third point is that the farmers have guaranteed markets for two-thirds of their produce. In some cases not only are their markets guaranteed but their produce subsidized by the Government.

The fourth point is "home rule". There are County Agricultural Executive Committees, with sub-Committees in each district, composed of farmers, landlords and tenants, with technical officers from the National Agricultural Advisory Service. So that the farmers in England receive every help through their County Executive Committees which are composed of farmers like themselves. These Committees go around and assist the farmers to improve their cultivation where they need help.

There is, however, one aspect of the policy which is not regarded very favourable but is accepted as an unpleasant necessity. It is the provision in the law that a tenant farmer who flouts the rules of good husbandry, or a landlord who fails to observe the rules of good estate management can, by process of law, be dispossessed—with, of course, proper financial compensation.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** I submit that what the hon. Member is quoting confirms what I said.

**Dr. Fraser:** The writer of the article goes on to say:

"We are a small country with only  $\frac{1}{2}$  acre of arable land per head of population compared to  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to 3 in the United States;

we have a century-old social tradition that frowns on a farmer or a landlord who does not do by the land as he would be done by it. Economically, we cannot afford the luxury of idle or ill-used acres. Socially, we have a traditional distrust of inefficient farmers or bad landlords. Thus, we are not prepared to see the ultimate freedom of 50 million people prejudiced by the ignorance, unwillingness or obtuseness of a few recalcitrant individuals.

For these reasons, a farmer or landlord who is not pulling his weight in the national interest, may, if advice and persuasion fail, in the last resort be dispossessed by a jury of his peers, viz., the County Committee, against whose decision there is, however, appeal to special Land Tribunals."

There the farmer is advised by farmers who form the County Committee—not by Government servants. He also has a right of appeal to a Land Tribunal. There is no right of appeal to anybody under the Bill before this Council. It merely says that the Governor may appoint a Committee. In England the farmer is helped with advice, and his land is not compulsorily acquired unless he does nothing, and he has the Land Tribunal to appeal to.

The hon. Member in his opening speech on the Bill said that Government accepted the World Bank Report, and

that this Council had concurred with that Report. In carrying out its responsibilities this Council should not now lack the courage to tell Government that it does not approve of its land policy which is wrong and unjustifiable, and should reject the Bill.

**Mr. Speaker:** This seems a convenient point to adjourn the Council.

**The Chief Secretary** I do not know how many Members wish to speak.

**Mr. Speaker:** I know that Mr. Luckhoo desires to speak, and I have had notice from Mr. Correia, Mr. Rahman and Miss Collins.

**The Chief Secretary:** Time is running out, Sir, I was wondering whether hon. Members would agree to extending our hours of sitting.

**Mr. Speaker:** I propose to endeavour to do that. I think you will find that Members will not reiterate their arguments—at least I am trying to avoid that. I propose to adjourn the Council until tomorrow at two o'clock in the hope that, if it becomes necessary, Members will be prepared to sit until a later hour. I hope Members will agree to that. I give notice of it. Council is adjourned until two o'clock tomorrow.