

THE DEBATES

OF THE
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OF BRITISH GUIANA.
OFFICIAL REPORT

OF
PROCEEDINGS AT ITS FIRST SESSION, 1928-1929.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY, 28TH NOVEMBER, 1928.

The Legislative Council of British Guiana, created by the British Guiana (Constitution) Order-in-Council, 1928, in substitution for the existing Legislature of the Court of Policy and Combined Court, the functions and privileges of which bodies ceased and determined on and by proclamation by the Governor in Executive Council dated and published in the "Gazette" on the 18th July, 1928, assembled in the Council Chamber, Guiana Public Buildings, on Wednesday, 28th November, 1928. The Council, which was inaugurated with ceremonies befitting the occasion, was constituted as follows :—

PRESENT :

- The President, His Excellency The Governor, Brigadier-General Sir GORDON GUGGISBERG, K.C.M.G., D.S.O.
- The Honourable The Colonial Secretary, Mr. C. DOUGLAS-JONES, C.M.G.
- " The Attorney-General, Mr. HECTOR JOSEPHS, K.C., B.A., LL.M. (Cantab.), LL.B. (Lond.).
- " A. P. G. AUSTIN, (Nominated Unofficial Member)
- " T. T. SMELLIE " "
- " F. DIAS " "
- " T. MILLARD, Colonial Treasurer.
- Major " W. BAIN GRAY, M.A., Ph.D. (Edin.), B. Litt. (Oxon.), Director of Education.
- The Honourable R. E. BRASSINGTON, (Elected Unofficial Senior Member for North West Essequibo).
- R. V. EVAN WONG, B.Sc. (Elected Unofficial Senior Member for South East Essequibo).
- Colonel W. E. H. BRADBURN, Inspector General of Police.
- Major " J. C. CRAIG, D.S.O., Director of Public Works.
- The Honourable B. R. WOOD, M.A., Dip. For. (Cantab.), Conservator of Forests.
- " S. H. BAYLEY, Managing Director, Colonial Transport Department
- " J. MULLIN, A.I.M.M., F.S.I., Commissioner of Lands and Mines (Temporary).

- The Honourable W. G. BOASE, M.R.C.S. (Eng.), L.R.C.P. (Lond.), Acting Surgeon-General, (*Temporary*).
- „ N. CANNON, (Elected Unofficial Senior Member for Georgetown).
- H. C. HUMPHRYS, (Elected Unofficial Member for East Demerara).
- A. V. CRANE, LL.B. (Lond.), (Elected Unofficial Member for West Demerara).
- „ F. A. LUCKHOOD, (Elected Unofficial Senior Member for Berbice).
- „ PERCY C. WIGHT, (Elected Unofficial Junior Member for Georgetown).
- „ J. ELEAZAR, (Elected Unofficial Junior Member for New Amsterdam).
- „ J. GONSALVES, (Elected Unofficial Member for Georgetown).
- „ E. F. FREDERICKS, LL.B., (Elected Unofficial Junior Member for South-East Essequibo).
- „ A. E. SEERAM, (Elected Unofficial Member for Demerara).
- S. McD. DE FREITAS, M.A., (Elected Unofficial Junior Member for North-West Essequibo).
- „ J. SMITH, (Nominated Unofficial Member).
- „ S. H. SEYMOUR, A.M.I. Mech. E., (Nominated Unofficial Member).

His Lordship the Bishop of Guiana (Rt. Rev. Oswald H. Parry, M.A.) read the following prayers:—

O Lord, our Heavenly Father, High and Mighty, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the only Ruler of princes, who dost from Thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth: most heartily we beseech Thee with Thy favour to behold our Most Gracious Sovereign Lord, King George; and so replenish him with the Grace of Thy Holy Spirit, that he may always incline to Thy will and walk in Thy ways: endue him plentifully with heavenly gifts; grant him in health and wealth long to live; strengthen him that he may vanquish and overcome all his enemies; and finally, after this life he may attain everlasting joy and felicity: through Jesus Christ Our Lord. Amen.

O God, the Father of Lights, and Fountain of Justice, send down Thy Holy Spirit upon those here in the Council for the first time assembled: that with a due sense of the great responsibility laid upon them they may wisely and faithfully deliberate on all matters brought before them, for the welfare of Thy people, and the glory of Thy Holy Name. Through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer was then said by the entire gathering.

His Honour the Chief Justice (Sir ANTHONY DE FREITAS, O.B.E., M.A.), administered the Oath of Allegiance to the President, who in turn administered the Oath to the members present in order of precedence.

THE PRESIDENT'S SPEECH.

The PRESIDENT addressed the Council as follows:—

Honourable Members of the Legislative Council:

I am extremely fortunate on this occasion in being the bearer to you, and through you to the people of this country, of a message from our King. This is not a message given by His Majesty through the Secretary of State, but it is one told to me personally when I had the honour of being received by His Majesty on the occasion of my appointment. The King personally desired me to tell you that he has vivid remembrances of his visit to British Guiana forty-four years ago. He was then a midshipman on H.M.S. "Canada." His Majesty asked me to tell you that since then he often had the people of British Guiana in his thoughts and he has sent them his warmest wishes for success, happiness and prosperity.

I have another message to give you to-day from Mr. Amery, the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Mr. Amery asks that this despatch should be read to you:—

Downing Street,
8th August, 1928.

Sir,—With the issue of the Proclamations of July the 18th one chapter of the history of British Guiana has been brought to a close. I recognise and respect the regret that must inevitably be felt for the passing away of the two Courts round which the political life of the Colony has revolved for over a century. It is with corresponding pleasure and appreciation that I have learned of the statesmanlike speech delivered at the end of the last meeting of the Court of Policy by the Member for West Demerara on behalf of the Elected Members.

2. The constitutional changes have left untouched the essential facts of the situation. The new Legislature possesses certain features in common with the old. The most urgent of the subjects which will engage its attention is still the financial position. I need not dwell on the imperative necessity of taking prompt and effective measures to balance next year's budget, and of accompanying them by a thorough revision of the existing system of taxation.

3. The loan which will shortly be issued on the London Market under the Colonial Stock Acts raises questions which will require early and careful consideration. Apart from expenditure to which the Colony is already committed there are various works and undertakings which cannot be defrayed from ordinary revenue but might be defrayed from loan funds. Provided that satisfactory provision can be made for meeting the consequent addition to the burden of debt charges. I shall be prepared to consider any proposals which you may have to make for loan expenditure on the important programme of road construction recommended by Mr. Leggate. And in view of the strong desire expressed by the agricultural community I agree to the inclusion in the loan of a sum sufficient to provide the initial capital required for the establishment of an Agricultural Bank.

4. The establishment, also, of a permanent and well-equipped Geological Department is necessary to the development of a country of proved but largely latent mineral resources. The experience of other Colonies has so conclusively demonstrated the practical value of such a Department that it is a source of great satisfaction to me to be able to inform you that the Colonial Research Committee have offered to strengthen the existing geological survey by a highly qualified Geologist whose salary they will pay for a period of three years on the understanding that the Colony will undertake to provide him with two assistants and in the hope that at the end of that time the financial situation will

permit of the establishment of the survey on a permanent basis.

5. The recent communication from the Governor of Jamaica on the possibility of settling Jamaicans in British Guiana opens up a new and hopeful prospect and has my warm welcome and support. The matter is primarily one for negotiation between the two Colonies, but if any advice is required as to the details of a joint scheme of assisted settlement, the Oversea Settlement Office will be glad to place at the disposal of the two Governments the experience which they have acquired in connection with the preparation and operation of schemes of migration and settlement from this country.

6. Though it would be idle to suggest that the present is free from difficulties, the future offers little ground for depression and none at all for despair. The liabilities which the Colony has assumed are not beyond its actual and far below its potential capacity. It is a message of good hope as well as of good will that I desire you to convey from me to the first meeting of the Legislative Council of British Guiana.—I have, etc.,

(Sgd.) L. S. AMERY.

The Governor.

Sir C. H. Rodwell, K.C.M.G.

Honourable members, Mr. Amery in his despatch very pointedly reminds us "that the constitutional changes have left untouched the essential facts of the situation." In other words, he reminds us that although we have a new Constitution we still have the same old problems to solve. I have only been in this country for three weeks. I therefore cannot pretend to have a complete grasp of all the details of these problems. I have learnt enough, however, to be certain of two things. Firstly, that none of our problems are unsolvable provided we have good-will, co-operation, hard work and, most important of all, a sincere desire to solve those problems, not for the good of any particular community or area, but for the good of the country as a whole. Secondly, I have learnt another very plain fact—a very hard fact—and that is that our problems are not going to be solved in three weeks, nor yet in three months, and some of them certainly not in three years.

Now, I don't propose to deal with them in detail to-day. A more fitting opportunity will occur later in the Session. I propose in ten or twelve days' time, when this Council meets to consider the Estimates for 1929, to inform honourable members of the policies adopted by this Government in different directions. I propose to make it a habit every year in future to inform this Council of the progress made in carrying out these policies. There is no use in writing a policy down and leaving it as a bit of eye-wash. We have got to have practical proof that we have a policy and that it is being carried out. My annual address to you will therefore be of the nature of an account of Government's stewardship of this Colony in the interests of its people.

To-day I am going to limit myself to outlining the immediate work before this Council and before Government. We will begin the Session by considering carefully the Orders and Rules to govern our own procedure and conduct in debate in this Council. These will be introduced by the Honourable Colonial Secretary, to whom I am greatly indebted for the very careful way in which he has drawn up these Orders and for the deep thought which he has given to drafting them. Now it cannot be expected that all the points that we raise in these Standing Orders are going to prove non-controversial. I have never yet met any Rules and Orders in this world that satisfied everyone. I can only ask honourable members to consider them with an open mind, to discuss them dispassionately and to remember what we are trying to aim at.

To my mind, our main objects of these Rules and Orders are, firstly, to secure the maximum efficiency in the conduct of the Council's business and the minimum of delay consistent with allowing reasonable and sufficient time for debate. The second object is the maintenance of the dignity of this Council. With regard to the first object it is obvious that we cannot get ahead with public business and make

it really efficient unless we have very clear rules of procedure. These Standing Rules and Orders, I have no doubt, will take honourable members, accustomed to other Rules, some time to get into, but we can but try to get into them as quickly as possible, and if I have to call members to a point of order I feel sure it will merely be because we have not quite grasped the new Rules we are going to consider later on in the day.

With regard to delays in conducting the Council owing to too prolonged debates, I should like to ask honourable members to bear in mind that every member of this Council is presumably a busy man who is either engaged in important public or private business—even the Head of a Government Department is a busy man—and every hour that they are here away from their business means an hour lost in some public or private service. I particularly ask honourable members to bear this in mind when discussing the Rules governing the length of time which it is proposed to allot to individual speeches in this Chamber.

As to the dignity of this Council I do not think I need say very much about that. I feel perfectly sure that every honourable member here is just as resolved as I am that this new Legislative Council of British Guiana shall not take second place to any other in the Empire with regard to the dignity and courtesy with which it conducts its business and its debate. Finally, as regards the Standing Orders I should like to point out that time alone will reveal what the weak points are and the Council will be able to consider and amend any of those weak points.

The next item of work before this Council is some arrears in connexion with legislation, some of which is long overdue, and with completing certain current financial business connected with the current year's expenditure.

Having thus cleared the decks, so to speak, of the debris of 1928, there will be two or three days' adjournment and the

Council will then proceed to prepare for the year 1929 by examining the budget for that year. Now, gentlemen, here Mr. Amery gives us an exceedingly broad hint when he mentions "the imperative necessity" of balancing that budget. Read in conjunction with the next paragraph of his despatch, where he refers us to possible loans, he gives us a further hint that if we help ourselves in this way he is prepared to help us in certain other directions. I shall have more to say on this subject before the budget is introduced.

For the moment I will limit myself to pointing out the extreme difficulty of the task. Like many other tasks before us, the balancing of the budget is something like a vicious circle. Thanks to the accumulated annual deficits in the past few years, Government has only been able to carry on its work by borrowing and borrowing very heavily—from the Crown Agents. Now, this may have been a convenience at the time—probably it was—but things have got to such a state that it may prove impossible for us to balance our budget for 1929 without that very loan which is dependent on the balancing of the budget. It is a pretty vicious circle. I said "it may prove impossible." Of course, it is quite an easy thing to balance a budget in several ways. The first is to estimate your probable revenue as being enough to balance the expenditure which you want to carry out; and then if you like to put up taxation with a view to increasing that revenue.

Neither of those expedients commends itself to this Government. It is due to past over-estimation of revenue that we are in our present unsatisfactory position; and as for past increases of taxation, which have been designed to give surplus balances, they have only defeated their own ends by raising taxation to such a height as to severely handicap that trade on which our revenue depends in such a manner that we had no benefit from the increased taxation and the people have felt the influence of that taxation adversely. They have gained nothing by it.

It would also be possible to balance our budget by cutting down expenditure so ruthlessly—and it would be required to be ruthless in this case—but we would have to abandon certain necessary public services or cut them down to such a minimum that they would almost cease to exist. That would be a penny wise and a pound foolish policy, which this Government does not mean to adopt. On the other hand, although we are not going to adopt it, the position is so serious that we have got to cut down departmental and other expenditure on public services to such an extent that the wheels will go far more slowly. I think hon. members should face that fact. We are up against it. We have got a Government staff and a Government system of administration that is adapted for a population of something like 1,000,000 people, and in the past 300,000 people have been asked to pay the expenses of that administration. So much for the budget of 1929.

We have more than that to consider, however. We have the task of restoring Government's financial position. I am not very good at business, but I feel that there are a good many businesses that would have gone bankrupt if they had found themselves in the same position that this Government does to-day. How are we going to restore that financial position? In the first place, we can never restore it unless we take the steps necessary to secure the balance, not only of this year's budget, but all the budgets of future years. Now, that means nothing more nor less than the complete reorganisation of all public services. On their present basis, we will never be able to balance our future budgets. It follows, therefore, that 1929 must be a year of investigation and re-organisation of all public services. It must be a year in which these services are, where possible, placed in economical working order. I say "where possible," because it is only too evident that Government has been so committed that, if the interests of the people are to be considered, it will take several years to place one or two of our public services on a sound economic basis. I will mention one or two

of those services when I give you my annual address later on.

During 1929 I propose to make an exhaustive personal investigation into the organisation and work of each Government Department. I am seriously disturbed at the size of some of them in relation to the population of the country. It is no use, however, throwing blame on any one, certainly not on Heads of Departments, because in one way this is inevitable owing to the small population of the country. A certain number of officials are required to carry out public services, no matter how small within reason is the population, but there is always a chance that here and there somebody has slipped in because somebody has been asleep and the Department has grown unduly large. Investigation will show whether that is so or not. I should like to remind hon. members, however, that it is all very well to clamour for the reduction of establishments. We can reduce them half way, or if we like we can reduce them by 25 per cent. of their present number. But, are we going to effect economy by that reduction? It is not so very easy to effect *economy by reductions* of that sort when the pensionable list has been allowed to grow to such a length as it has done in this country.

I hope from what I have said I have made it quite clear to honourable members that our immediate task is to balance the budget for 1929 and then to devote the whole of the next year to re-organisation of the public services. I hope I have said enough to convince you of the seriousness of the position.

While recognising the gravity of the situation myself, I feel, as Mr. Amery says, that the position, although difficult, is not hopeless. Provided that we grapple determinedly with the re-organisation of the public services, I feel convinced that we have in the Heads of Departments men on whose loyalty in carrying out this difficult task of retrenchment we can fully depend, and men whose abilities are

worthy of the increased responsibility they will be called upon to bear under the new organisation. And, finally,—if I may pay him a personal compliment.—I am convinced that in Mr. Millard we have a Treasurer who, by the remarkable grasp which he has obtained of our financial difficulties in the brief period during which he has been here, is fully capable of re-establishing our lost financial position if he gets the support that should be given to him. (Applause).

Now, in giving the programme of work for 1929 I omitted one very important item, viz., that of Colonisation. I did not include it in the programme because it can proceed concurrently with and entirely independent of any of the works I have mentioned. That is very fortunate, gentlemen, because upon the increase of our population and the increase of our agricultural production the whole future of this country depends. It is no good pinning our faith on minerals for the development of British Guiana, though that will come in very useful. It is no use pinning our faith on the forests from a commercial standpoint, though they will come in very useful and necessary. The preservation of our forests is necessary for the future preservation of agriculture, but the actual money-making business in this Colony, where Government has got to get its money in order to carry out all these reforms and supply the people with all the services they want—that revenue has got to come from the trade which is dependent upon our agricultural production. I hope honourable members will agree with me on that point. Anyway, I should like them to remember very carefully that these are my views and these are the views which emanate the policy which will govern colonisation, agriculture and a system of education which is the right thing for the people of an agricultural country. Why can we carry on with this? Simply because we are the lucky possessors of a little fund which has been tucked away in one of the pigeon holes—I won't say in the Secretariat or the Treasury, but it has been tucked

away where we could not get at it. We have a Colonisation Fund, gentlemen, and therefore we can proceed without delay with those investigations, preparations and experiments which are required before we can turn on the tap that is going to ensure a free and steady flow of the right sort of immigrants into British Guiana. Later on I am going to inform honourable members more in detail of the steps which Government is going to take.

For the moment I need only mention that I have specially selected four men and have placed in their hands this highly important work. I am not going to form a separate Colonisation Department—not yet. Later on I hope we shall require one because we shall only require one when we are certain we can get that flow of immigrants I spoke about. For the moment I have selected Professor Dash as the Chief Colonisation Officer and thrown the full responsibility on him for carrying out certain principles laid down by Government. I have selected as his deputy Mr. H. T. M. King of the North-West District, a seasoned and tried officer of this Government and a servant of the people. And I have selected two Heads of Departments most concerned with, and alive to the value of, this question of Colonisation, viz., Mr. B. R. Wood and Mr. J. Mullin. I believe, honourable members, in these four gentlemen we have a team who are going to push through the Colonisation Scheme and that no one is more capable of pushing through such a scheme. (Applause).

The work of investigation will begin in February both in the North-West District and in the alluvial belt. Sufficient progress should be made to enable the first experimental land settlements of local families of proved agricultural experience and good character to be settled in these two areas on such conditions as will not pauperise them or destroy their self-respect and will enable them to become the owners of the land on which they are working on easy but fixed conditions.

We shall then be ready for turning on that tap of immigration, of which I spoke, early in 1931. Finally, on this subject I want to assure this Council that the system of Colonisation which we shall adopt is not going to lead to any increased taxation. Rather, when it begins to take effect it will by increasing the number of people in this country and increasing the annual revenue of the Government from legitimate sources, and tend to reduce the present rates of taxation. So much for Colonisation.

There will be certain other items of work that will proceed in 1929 such as the artesian wells, the sewerage system and the sea defences and land drainage systems. All these have been started in the past few years. I regard them as highly important contributions to the public health. If you have got a small population, you want to keep as many of them alive as possible. If you are going to introduce immigrants you want to introduce them to a flourishing country and not to a grave-yard.

In some directions I have mentioned a great deal more remains to be done, but in others I confess that I am not yet satisfied that the work to which we have committed ourselves is going to prove permanently beneficial. I am not satisfied that it is not going to inconvenience us financially and very severely in other directions, but that will be a matter for close investigation during the coming year. I will ask honourable members not to be unduly alarmed by these forbodings. I propose to convey my fears and hopes most freely to you and to receive, I hope, your assurances on the subject.

In concluding my remarks this morning I want to sound a note of warning. I see, and I have heard, that under the new Constitution very much is expected of Government. Well, I agree whole-heartedly. For the first time in very many years in this country Government is in a position to govern. It is therefore only natural that much should be expected of it. As to that, as Head of Government, I

can assure you of two things. The first is that I and my officers will not spare ourselves in our task of restoring the Government's finance and putting the public services in a state of efficiency and economy and to increase the population, agricultural production and trade in this country. Secondly, Government wishes to give the unofficial members of this Council every opportunity of co-operating with and advising us on the necessities of the country. Of course, in the last resort, when opinions differ, some one body must have the final say.

Now for the note of warning. Much is expected, and as I have said rightly is expected, of Government. But there is one thing that cannot be expected. That is, that the flooded swamp of financial distress in which we find ourselves to-day can be drained in a brief space of time, that the "sea defence" to keep out the waves of bankruptcy can be erected in a few months. The utmost we can do at the moment is to put our fist in the hole in the dykes through which these waves of bankruptcy are breaking to prepare the plans and materials for draining away the flood waters of financial distress. Neither in the Government, nor, as far as I am aware, in this Council is there a man who can produce a magician's wand from his pockets and waving it in the air cause the dykes and drains that we want to drop from the skies. I do not want to cast any aspersions on members of the Council, but I think I am right in saying that magicians' wands are rather scarce in these days. On the other hand, we have men both in the Government and on this Council whose abilities and in whose personal devotion to this country we can trust to carry out the real hard, slogging work ahead of us. It is those men that I earnestly ask for the fullest possible co-operation with Government. In saying this I am well aware that co-operation with Government is not usually a popular thing: it generally calls for no small measure of self-sacrifice and the sacrifice of personal popularity.

I say this because I feel—I do not know whether I am right—that part of the task of co-operation is the explanation of Government's real aims by elected members to the people who elect them. Governments are always suspect, whatever country they may be governing, and in no place no more readily than in the tropics, and I am yet to learn that British Guiana is any exception to the general rule. The task of explanation will be no easy one, for, as far as I can see at present, to use a military expression, we shall have to mark time in most directions for some considerable period, and in other directions we shall have to step deliberately back before we can start re-organising certain public services in such a manner that the people will get real benefit from them and not be pauperised and spoilt for the real work they have before them.

I don't suppose the people of this country are going to understand the Government's stepping back. All they will get will be garbled accounts and false rumours brought to them by the ill-informed or those political agitators who are anxious to serve their own ends. It is here on this point of explanation that the elected members can do invaluable work. In addition to representing in this Council the views of their constituents—not always an easy matter, I admit—I believe that in a situation such as this where you cannot turn the Government out by an election, hon. members have the moral obligation of trying to educate the people as to what the Government is doing for them. I am making a determined effort, as hon. members will see, to incorporate all the elected members in the Government. I do not expect to succeed for a moment, but I do believe that the elected members will put their shoulders to the wheel and help us through this difficult period into which the finances and general work of the country have fallen.

Gentlemen, in concluding my first address to you, I wish you most heartily all success in the discharge of your duties towards the people of this coun-

try. And I pray that Almighty God will guide and support you in the work that you are called on to do for this country and your fellow men. (Applause).

The firing of a salute of seventeen guns from Fort William Frederick by the B.G. Militia Artillery Company announced the opening of the Council.

REPLY TO THE SPEECH.

Mr. AUSTIN (Senior Unofficial Member): Your Excellency,—I have the honour on behalf of the members of this Council to thank you for the very able and comprehensive address which you have been pleased to give us. As your arrival here, sir, has coincided with the inauguration of the first meeting of the Legislative Council under the new Constitution, I think it is fitting if I wish you on behalf of the members of the Council a very harmonious and successful administration. There can be no doubt whatsoever, Your Excellency, that your assumption of office has been welcomed by every section of the community—not that they expect miracles by you, but they regard you, sir, as a man of action, and feel that you are going to use your energies to assist us in solving the very many problems before us. This is not the time for me to touch upon the various points you have raised in your Address, and it simply remains, therefore, for me to thank you on behalf of honourable members for your Address, and to ask that in accordance with custom you will have it printed and circulated among the members of the Council.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Council do now adjourn until 2.30 o'clock this afternoon" (*Colonial Secretary*).

The Council adjourned and resumed accordingly.

NOTICE OF MOTION:

SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATE.

That the Council at its meeting tomorrow resolve itself into a Committee of the whole Council to consider the Supplementary Estimate (Second) for the year 1928. (*Colonial Secretary*).

ORDER OF THE DAY.

STANDING RULES AND ORDERS.

THE COLONIAL SECRETARY (Mr. Douglas-Jones): Hon. members, sir, are aware that under the British Guiana (Constitution) Order-in-Council provision has been made that until the Governor has made the new Standing Rules and Orders for this Council, with the consent of the Council, the Standing Rules and Orders of the old Court of Policy shall remain in force and effect. Therefore, sir, it will be necessary for me to move the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders to enable this Council to go into Committee this afternoon to consider the enclosure, Governor's Message, No. 1—New Standing Rules and Orders. I now formally move the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders to enable this Council to consider the draft Standing Rules and Orders of the Legislative Council.

The **ATTORNEY GENERAL** seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: By order of Your Excellency, I now present to the Council His Excellency the Governor's Message No. 1 covering draft Standing Rules and Orders for this Council. Before moving the resolution to go into Committee I should just like to draw attention to one or two points in connection with these new Standing Rules and Orders.

Rule 2 (b) fixes the days and hours on which the Council shall sit. The effect

of this is that at the hours upon which it is stated that the Council shall adjourn the Council will automatically adjourn at those hours. I understand, sir, it is your wish that, if possible, at least an hour and a half shall be made available as a break in the day. That would necessitate an amendment to rule 2 (b) which can be considered when we come to it in Committee.

2 (c)—Arrangements will be made for a copy of the Order of the Day to be laid at the place of each member. In Legislatures of this sort it is usual that the minutes of the preceding meeting are read by the Clerk at the commencement of the proceedings of each day, and it is hoped that our printing facilities will enable that to be done.

The next rule to which I wish to draw attention is Rule 11 (1). The effect of this rule is that one clear day's notice has to be given of any motion or question to be moved or asked.

Rule 12—This provides for what is usually known as "Private Members' Day." On every Wednesday all motions by Unofficial Members will take precedence over all Government business in "Orders of the Day."

Rule 17 provides that where there are a number of amendments to a question such amendments shall be taken first, and when an amendment has been agreed upon all previous ones fall to the ground. The President shall then put the motion as amended or, if no amendments are adopted, the original motion as moved.

Rule 21 (a)—I draw attention to this because in the old Combined Court on one or two occasions there was some doubt as to whether the mover of an amendment had the right to reply, although it was distinctly stated in the old Rules and Orders that he had not.

Rule 23—This is of common form and makes it clear that when the Council is in Committee no motion or amendment need be seconded.

Rule 24—When in Committee I shall move the insertion of the words: "of inordinate length" after the words in the second line "read extracts," the object being to leave to the discretion of the President the length of an extract of a written or printed document which any member may read, and to prevent any member from unnecessarily occupying the time of the Council by reading any lengthy extracts which, although they may have some bearing on the subject, are at the same time unnecessary.

Rule 25—This introduces what is commonly known as "the closure," the object being to curtail unnecessarily long debates, when in the opinion of the President a matter has been sufficiently discussed.

Rule 26—In this rule the President is given power to fix a certain number of hours during which the debate on any question may last. It will operate in this way: a member wishing to give notice of motion has to do so one day before the day he intends to move it. This would give the President time to decide how much time he considers it desirable to allow for discussion. It is possible that one or two members may occupy the whole time, but that is a matter entirely in the hands of the members, once the President has fixed the time allowed for the debate.

Rule 27—This is a somewhat unusual provision—(Hon. Members: "Hear, hear!") It has been adopted in other Colonies, the object being, of course, to save the time of the Council and prevent members from deliberately and intentionally wasting time. Hon. members, who are conversant with the many complaints made of the time wasted in the old Combined Court in this connection, will admit the desirability of a rule of this sort.

Rule 31—I desire, sir, to draw attention to this rule. Not that I have any desire to cast any reflection on members of the old Combined Court, but one of the great difficulties experienced by the President of that Court in the past was that of keeping mem-

bers strictly to observations on the subject under consideration. Although in the past considerable latitude was permitted, I submit it is in the interest of economy of time and for efficiency in the work of the Council that this rule should be strictly observed.

Rule 37 (b)—This provides that a Bill shall not be read a second time until seven days after it has been published and every member will receive a copy of the Bill on the date of publication.

Rule 44 needs some explanation. When a Consolidation Bill has been read a second time it shall be referred to a Committee on Consolidation Bills. This Committee goes through the Bill and reports what clauses or part of clauses are new matters. Then the Council goes into Committee and deals with the report. The reason for this is that the object of the Consolidation Bill is to reproduce existing legislation in complete form and only such new matter as is necessary is introduced. Controversy will thus be avoided and the passage of the Bill accelerated.

Rule 53 is the usual clause inserted in the Standing Rules and Orders of Colonial Legislatures providing that in all cases not provided for in the new Constitution or in the Rules and Orders, the practice of the House of Commons of Great Britain shall be applicable.

As I have stated, sir, under the new Constitution the Standing Rules and Orders of the Court of Policy are of effect until this Council makes new ones. It is therefore necessary to repeal the Standing Rules and Orders of the Court of Policy—the Standing Rules and Orders of the Combined Court ceased to have force when that august body disappeared. I now move, sir, that the Council resolve itself into Committee to consider the enclosure of His Excellency's Message No. 1—Draft Rules and Orders.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Rule 2 (b)—Meetings.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the hour 2 p.m. be altered to 2.30 p.m. and the hour 4 p.m. be altered to 4.30 p.m."—(*Colonial Secretary*).

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: It might be more convenient if hon. members, especially those representing the public, meet earlier and then adjourn from 12.30 p.m. to 2 p.m. The alternative suggestion is that the Council should meet at 11 a.m., and adjourn at 1 p.m. and then sit from 2.30 p.m. to 4.30 p.m. Perhaps hon. members will indicate which they prefer.

Mr. CANNON: From past experience, Your Excellency, I think I shall leave the time out altogether, and leave the Council to decide that from day to day.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I beg to move that the clause be deleted altogether. Hitherto it has been the custom to leave it to the President or Governor to decide the days and hours on which the Council shall meet. I see no reason why it should be put down now in the Rules and that there should be a limit, except certain members like to leave the Council at a usual hour—4 to 4.30—whereas members who have come from the Counties outside of Demerara will be wasting so much time in town. I see no reason why Your Excellency yourself at every session should not state when the Council shall adjourn and when it shall resume its duties. That has been done in the past and has caused no inconvenience at all and I see no reason why the days or the hours shall be limited at all.

The Attorney General (Mr. HECTOR JOSEPHS): Perhaps I may contribute to this debate. I have had experience of other Legislatures like this and I should like to point out to hon. members that there is nothing novel about this rule. What is novel is our own practice in the Court of Policy and Combined Court. Hon. members will find that most Colonial Legislatures—I think I may safely say all of them—have rules which provide for

the automatic meeting of Council and the adjournment each day. The result is that members are able to make their arrangements accordingly. There is nothing haphazard about it. It is not that we are introducing a novelty on this occasion, but it is that we are endeavouring to get away from some of the things of the past and to take hold of some of the good things for future administration and future guidance. That is really the position. Of course, the past has its charms and the older we get—myself included, I am not referring to any member individually—the more attracted are we to the things we are accustomed to in the days of our youths and in the past.

We have to exercise a rather judicial mind in regard to what we do, and I venture to think that hon. members will find it much more convenient if they have fixed hours of meeting automatically and fixed hours for adjourning automatically. If, for instance, an important bit of business is being transacted. Supposing the hour of adjournment is 4.30 and it is found at 4.15 that it would be very expedient that that work should be completed that afternoon. What is done is, the Standing Rules and Orders are suspended in order to enable the debate to continue to a certain hour or until concluded. These matters are easily remedied, I think, on occasions of emergency. It is far more satisfactory to know each day the Council is going to sit on specific days on which it would meet automatically and adjourn automatically. We are only falling into line with what is being done elsewhere. The old trouble was that we never knew where we were. Now, let us go ahead and know where we are.

Question put: "That the hour 2 p.m. be altered to 2.30 p.m. and the hour 4 p.m. be altered to 4.30 p.m."

Agreed to.

Rule 5 (b)—Reporters.

Mr. FREDERICKS: I respectfully submit that the punishment is rather

extreme. It seems that an offending newspaper may be made to correct what it has done wrong or to make some sort of apology rather than to put an indefinite time and keep that paper from reporting the proceedings of the Council. That newspaper may be read by a large section of the community. In this Colony everybody does not read all three newspapers. What is the fairness of keeping a man from getting a report of the proceedings of the Council by keeping his reporter out? I put that aspect to Your Excellency for consideration.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not know whether the hon. member has noticed that the words are "may direct" and the severe punishment in a way to be inflicted is to direct that no representative of that newspaper may be permitted to attend. It does not follow that the Council would do so. The Council may decide on having a warning issued to the newspaper. The words are "may direct" and not "will direct."

Mr. FREDERICKS: Thank you, Mr. President.

Rule 15—President may disallow any question.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Rule 15 be deleted from amongst the Rules and Orders."—(*Mr. Eleazar*).

Mr. ELEAZAR: Your Excellency, you have asked us for co-operation, and the whole Colony is at one with you to co-operate, but we have to look ahead and Your Excellency may not always occupy the Chair. Circumstances may warrant Your Excellency being out of the Chair at the moment. Who will determine whether the question is relevant or not? The question may be relevant, but it may not be considered so by the party occupying the Chair. I have known, in my own time, that questions have been considered. The Chair had not the power of preventing those questions being put, but from the replies given those questions had made it very uncomfortable for some one. If such a rule as this one was in the

books then that rule would have been applied while in truth and in fact the questions were very necessary for the purposes which they were intended to serve.

I am therefore asking Your Excellency to delete Rule 15 for the reason which I have assigned, because the possibility is that the person who is asking the question may have some reason for doing so and he alone is the person to judge. As in the past no member of the Legislature has had the effrontery to propound a question which was an abuse of Parliamentary Rules, I see no reason why it should be imagined that in the future that would not be the case. Therefore the rule is unnecessary, and I ask Your Excellency to agree to have this rule deleted.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I shall like to point out to the hon. member that the President is the sole judge of order in this Council just as the Speaker is in the House of Commons, and even if this rule did not exist if the President is of the opinion that a question is not a proper one or not admissible he can disallow it, and that right is attached to anyone who happens to be presiding in the Chair at the time. I do not wish to alarm the hon. member. I had the honour, temporarily for a few minutes, of presiding over a meeting and disallowing a question, but I was not treated as some unpopular referees at football matches are treated.

The importance of the rule is that in all Parliamentary assemblies a provision of this nature is useful. It is not, sir, that a member would wilfully put forward something that is not proper or admissible, but it might very well be that a degree of influence might be brought to bear upon him in his capacity as a delegate for his constituency whereby he is forced not only against his better judgment but as a delegate to put forward something, and it helps him when he has done his duty to the people who required him to put it forward if the

President of the Legislature says that it is inadmissible. It may be that in the past the necessity has not arisen but we have to look to the future. There may be a member who may be controlled by some extraneous influence just as I suggested and we have to provide against this, and it is well-known that in the existence of this rule hon. members will find it very useful for their protection. It is a statement in regard to this particular point of the inherent power of the President of a Legislative Council or the Chairman of a Board of Directors as in that of any officer who by law or by regulation presides over any deliberative assembly.

Question not pursued, and Rule agreed to.

Rule 24.—Speeches not to be read.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the words "of moderate length" be inserted after the word 'extracts' —(*Colonial Secretary*).

Mr. CRANE: May I ask that the Hon. Attorney General supply this House with a definition clause of the word, "moderate"?

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: The answer is simply "The President is the judge of moderation of all words."

Mr. CRANE: Like the Chancellor's foot!

Question put, and agreed to.

Rule 25.—Closure.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Rule 25 be deleted."—(*Mr. Eleazar*).

Mr. ELEAZAR: In this rule I am sure that somebody has been at pains, no doubt, to see how this Council will conduct itself in what is known in other countries as "the tyranny of the majority" or how well or how skilled Your Excellency may be at angling in troubled waters, because, sir, if at any time what is known as "the tyranny of the majority" has been fully exemplified it is in this rule. A

motion is moved and is seconded. A member gets up, where the majority is a nominated majority at that, and says "I move that the question be put now." That question is put and the minority is not heard. A 'majority' is considered tyrannical when it decides without hearing the minority. A majority is further considered tyrannical when that majority seeks to restrain a man from discussing his own acts. To insert a rule such as this in the book when there is a Government majority savours of a determination to restrain proper and moderate discussion and criticism of the actions of that majority.

Your Excellency, a motion put by a member is simply a precis of perhaps what may have given rise to that motion or what may have been passing in his mind. How on earth can a majority, because it has the power, decide beforehand without hearing that minority? Very often a majority is known to bow to a respectable minority, but how is that majority to accede to the wishes of the minority if that minority is not heard. By this rule the attempt is deliberate to prevent the minority from being heard, and, sir, wherever pressure is brought to bear upon members especially by the majority, that is an abuse of the powers of that majority. That will certainly give the majority the power to do just what it pleases. Nothing can prevent a majority which is inclined to act that way from doing what it likes, but after all it is not legal. If this rule is passed it would be perfectly legal but it will be tyrannous for all that. It will be having a giant's strength and using it like a giant.

I am asking Your Excellency not to permit a rule of this kind to disgrace the rule book of this Legislative Council. I cannot conceive of any reason why any person who has had to do with members of this Council—the majority of them at least—in the past should get it into his head to frame such a rule. I am told to look to the future, but if I take a glance into the

past and see no justification for it, then let us continue on in the future. If there is no justification in the past no argument about looking to the future will justify the inclusion of this rule amongst the rules of this House. This House has been, as one member said,—I think it was the Hon. Colonial Secretary,—running for one hundred years. If during that period it had not been thought necessary to give the majority that power—then it was an elected majority, and nobody would dream of suggesting that an elected majority should have the power to close down the official minority—why now that the minority happens to be an elected one should it be thought necessary to insert a rule to close down that minority without a hearing? I hold that it is wrong and I ask that it be deleted from the Rules.

Mr. FREDERICKS: Though I am not asking that it should be deleted I will suggest that the word "may" be substituted for the word "must." This is an iron rule. No Victorian scenes which brought the "closure" into British Parliamentary life is here to-day and I do not see why all this rush to have the "closure" brought in. The "closure" was not a thing brought into British Parliamentary life in the ordinary course of events, but it resulted from extraordinary circumstances—peculiar circumstances gave it birth. Conditions are not in British Guiana what they were in the Victorian period when this Parliamentary procedure came into being. I do say this: let us put the issue in the hands of the President with the word 'may' than to have the word 'must.' I think it will read softer. There is no immediate hurry for the 'closure.' From my experience in this Chamber nothing goes on here to necessitate it. It is worse than the 'kangaroo' or the 'guillotine' to write the word 'must.' The 'kangaroo' and the 'guillotine' had scenes in Parliament which brought it in, but no such things exist here to-day. I rather see a more moderate rule. One makes rules for proper guidance, and by rules we shall exist, but let it be in a more equitable sense.

I object to the words 'must be put' and submit the word 'may' to this honourable body.

The COLONIAL SECRETARY : The hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Eleazar) in his usual subtle manner sees something Machiavelian in this rule. There is nothing Machiavelian about it. He regards it as just an attempt on the part of the majority to restrain the minority. That is nothing of the sort. If the hon. member would read the rule he will find it is distinctly stated that the motion shall not be put unless it appears to the President that the motion is an abuse of the Rules of the House or an infringement of the rights of the minority. No President ever allows this motion to be put or the 'closure' to be moved unless he is perfectly satisfied that the minority have been sufficiently heard. The fears of the hon. member are entirely unfounded. As I have said, there is no suggestion that this power should be used to prevent the minority from being heard. That is, I gather, the only objection that is being raised. The idea of this rule is to curtail unnecessarily long debate and it would be most useful when considering estimates of expenditure to prevent any particular item being debated longer than is necessary or desirable. The objection, sir, as I have said, by the hon. member is not sound. There is no infringement of the rights of the minority suggested in this rule.

With regard to the remarks made by the hon. junior Member for South-East Essequibo (Mr. Fredericks) suggesting that the word "must" may be altered into "may," the position is this: Once the President has decided that this motion shall be moved, it must be moved forthwith, and until the President has so decided there is no question of "may" about it. When the President has arrived at that decision then the motion must be put. It is entirely in the hands of the President when this motion is put.

The CHAIRMAN : In case the hon. Member for New Amsterdam is not quite satisfied with that, I just like to say that it does not seem to me possible. I cannot conceive of any President existing in these modern days who would deliberately apply the 'closure' in order to keep the minority from being heard. I cannot imagine it. It may be but it sounds to me like a relic of very ancient days. I should also like to point out that all Rules and Standing Orders—and some of the rules—are not written for the ordinary man. In all Rules and Standing Orders one has got to allow for somebody who is going to deliberately and persistently over-step the limits in one direction or another. That is why a rule of this sort is brought in. I do not fancy that the Legislative Council includes any member of that description, but as the hon. member remarked himself "We never can tell what may happen in the future."

Question negatived, and Rule agreed to.

Rule 27.—Limitation of Speech.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That Rule, 27 be deleted."—(Mr. Crane.)

Mr. CRANE : Your Excellency, this is really the objectionable clause in these Rules. No one would seriously object to Rule 25 or Rule 26 or Rule 31, as these rules provide the ordinary methods of dealing with obstruction in all Parliamentary assemblies, but I have never been able to find—and I have searched for some in history—in the rules of those assemblies which we have been in the habit of following in this country any such attempt to limit the speech of any member to thirty or any number of minutes—possibly except in some other part of the world. This rule, sir, comes with bad or even worse grace at this time, because Government in the reconstruction of the Constitution has been given the reserve power. Government has been given a permanent majority.

I say, sir, that the fullest opportunity for our representation of grievances ought to be afforded us now un-

der this new Constitution. If you limit the powers of a body, which may redress their wrongs, not by debate but by action, you attempt to curb their right of debate. In the first instance, all that members can do at the present time in respect to any measure brought forward is to show the ways in which it ought to be reformed. If the opportunity for showing the reform is taken away, then I can only see measures being rushed through this House and we not being in a position to tell Your Excellency how the particular measure would be taken outside and its possible effect on the people of this country.

The closure is reasonable. It has been in force for nearly half a century. Everyone knows that the obstruction by the Parnell group in Parliament made it necessary. The guillotine was also a necessary measure. We have no such obstruction in this country. It may be useful when time is the essence of the contract, but I do not see the use of it except as a provocative measure—a measure which may bring Your Excellency out of sympathy with a member who feels that he has a good point to put, but here is this arbitrary rule which limits him to thirty minutes. No artistic speech can be compressed within the scope of thirty minutes. The man who does that is the man who simply jumbles along. There may be an occasion when a well-thought speech may occupy well under a half-hour. It is all well to say move the suspension of the Standing Orders on occasions of that kind. The inclusion of the rule is provocative, the inclusion is objectionable.

Your Excellency, if a member is irrelevant, if he is tediously repeating his argument, you may deal with him under Rule 31. If you cannot deal with him under Rule 31—I like to reason and I am going to challenge the author of this rule to reason with me—he is not irrelevant or tedious, then I respectfully submit he is offering reasonable argument to this Council which ought to be heard and which ought to assist it in its deliberations.

It is absolutely necessary to deal with a member under Rule 31. Why prevent a member who is not introducing a Bill from debating on it? I know I shall be told that it is not applicable to members in charge of Bills but there are very few private Bills or motions in this Colony. Why should intermediate members who might add very much to the debate be restricted to thirty minutes? Everyone of us here, particularly those of us who are taught to speak for money, do not come here to talk because we like to speak. It is because we are compelled to, not on account of the obtuseness of the last Governor, but the last Governor made it necessary to speak.

We hope so far as this Government is concerned, without any arbitrary rule, we ourselves will, if it is necessary to make our speeches within thirty minutes, not attempt to exceed it. We want the opportunity to sing that solo, which Your Excellency told us you would like us to sing, in order to be better able to join in the chorus which you would raise. Mr. Baldwin with his Cabinet and a fixed majority can go into the House and flout it by carrying any measure he wants, but he does not do that. In England government is discussion. You hear the Opposition, even though you are in the majority, and you do not seek to tell them they must not speak longer than thirty minutes.

I hope, sir, that you will be able, so far as this particular rule goes, to bring your personal influence to bear upon its execution. It would do a good deal to lull the suspicion—a suspicion which has been forced upon the elected members of this House by the attempt to insert this rule here. Having got the right to govern, which the Government now claims it has and never had before, although we differ upon that, then let the Government govern, but let the Government hear the representatives of the people who are not now in a position to carry any measure they consider for the benefit of the community. Rule 31 gives all the power that is necessary to curb a member who is likely to be

unduly long in his speech or irrelevant or tedious. The 'closure' is there, the 'guillotine' is there. I ask, sir, that Your Excellency bring your personal influence to bear in this matter. It is this particular rule on which we feel very strongly and I may say, sir, if this rule is put into operation it will bring members of this House into conflict with each other. It is likely that a rule of this kind—I do not like to prophesy—will not only bring members into conflict with each other but will cause very angry feeling when it is actually operative. It is of no use to the House, so do not provoke members by it.

Mr. DIAS: May I address a few remarks in answer to the honourable member who last spoke? Speaking for myself—and I am not under Government control with respect to the observations I am addressing to this House—I welcome the introduction of this clause into these rules, if for no other reason—I may be selfish—than that it would help me to say what I have got to say in less time than I would have otherwise done. I cannot conceive of any Legislature of this kind with men—and I include the honourable member who has just resumed his seat—busy with their own affairs, who can honestly say that any matter which may arise in this House cannot properly be represented in thirty minutes. It is difficult to conceive of any particular speech which does not properly place before the House the views of a member in that particular time. If we were to calculate with thirty members around this table each given thirty minutes to speak on a particular subject, we would have a debate lasting fifteen hours. I quite imagine that in that period of time you should have every phase of the subject so well debated that nothing will be left unsaid.

The honourable member knows, and the entire House knows, that I have had considerable experience of the debates in the old Combined Court and Court of Policy. Although there was no rule in either House limiting the speeches of members, the Electives themselves, it was

no secret, hoped that at some time or other such a rule would be introduced. I know of my own personal knowledge one elected member occupying two and a half days in addressing the Legislature, so much so that he was the only one present on the last day, the others having deserted him to look after their own affairs. That has happened on more than one occasion. This step is undoubtedly in the right direction in order to enable one to put in more concise form any representation one desires to put to the House, and so bring about in an expeditious way the despatch of the business. I do hope the entire House will support the retention of the proposed rule which is bound to produce better work in the Legislature in future and certainly reflect much credit on members in the discharge of their duties.

Mr. CANNON: Your Excellency, when you have been here long enough, sir, you will realise that I waste the least time in speaking in this House than any other member. I cannot, sir, from my seat, however, support this rule. As it is suggested, I think, sir, that it is far nicer and it would come with better grace if it does not form part of these Rules. I quite agree with the last speaker, and I happened to have been in Court when that particular member spoke for nearly two-and-a-half days, but he is not a member of the Legislature to-day. I do not think any one here would attempt to go through that ordeal as that particular gentleman did. I appeal to Your Excellency that it would do quite a lot of good if you direct that this rule be deleted. If in time you see the necessity for it, then it is up to you to again introduce it and have it form part of the rules of this House, but as it stands, sir, I cannot support it. I shall have to ask for a division, if I stand alone with the mover of the amendment, to record my vote against it.

Mr. GONSALVES: When I first read these Rules I thought that the introduction of the rule limiting the time for a speech might serve its purpose having regard to my short experiences

in the old Court. There had been no doubt that some members, perhaps in their earnestness of purpose, took an unnecessarily long time over certain matters. But on reading the rules to-day and seeing that by Rule 25 no question may be put unless Your Excellency in your discretion thinks the matter may be presented, I hardly think now that there is any real necessity for the whole of Rule 27.

It seems to me, sir, if I understand Rule 25—unless the Hon. Attorney General can give me some other interpretation—that in a debate any member of this House who gets up to make the debate so long as thereby to prevent other members from speaking on the motion can bring a penalty on the other members by allowing Your Excellency to put the motion to the vote. If that is done one or any elected member will have made the other elected members suffer as a result, and I am sure the other elected members will keep an eye on that member and he will not be allowed to keep the House engaged for any length of time with his speeches in future.

I think that with the exception of Rule 25, Rule 27 if not deleted altogether might be so drafted that any debate may extend over a period of five days. The rule provides for a period of three days, unless Your Excellency thinks it should go on longer, and I think members of this House will be satisfied if two days longer are provided for by this rule. The other two sub-rules (2) and (3) would in that case go out. I make this suggestion to honourable members of this House with a view that some compromise might be effected with Government. First delete Rule 27 in so far as the House thinks it is necessary to limit the period of a debate to a number of days, and so prevent any member, such as the one in the past, speaking for two days and a half, thus preventing other members from speaking.

Mr. FREDERICKS: I, too, want to add my quota against Rule 27. I do so because Rule 26 exists. Rule 26 gives

power to apportion the time any question may take and having apportioned the time it becomes the duty of the Electives to submit themselves to the limit of that time. If, then, there is an apportionment of time for the discussion of any question, I do not see the reason or the necessity for this un-British provision of limiting the time of individual members. When I saw the innovation I was struck and it gave rise to a suspicion in my mind. Why all this precaution? I came here this morning and took the oath to serve my Sovereign the King. Why bring in something that has never been introduced in any British country?

Mr. WOOD (Conservator of Forests): Question!

Mr. FREDERICKS: If in a British Assembly, perhaps some of those Assemblies, though British, have certain characteristics not truly British. What I am saying is this—I pride myself in knowing a little bit of history—this is not a provision that a real British mind would be pleased or proud about. “A fair field and no favour.” Let us play cricket. Here we have got a Governor who has come with the best intentions and wants co-operation. Why then have things with some suspicion? We have a public not enlightened though somewhat educated, and when you begin to have rules of this kind it gives rise to suspicion. There is ample and sufficient provision in the other rules and I hope Your Excellency will meet the Electives in this matter.

I think a brother Elective suggested a compromise; I agree with him. Let there be a compromise. This is the one rule, I think, if put to the vote, every elected member here would vote against. We do not like it. We are not taking Government to task nor are we condemning Government, but we are simply saying that as we are beginning a new era let us begin as friends and not as antagonists. If there is to be a rule of this kind I have no hesitation in pronouncing it as unnecessary and unwarranted. I hope that Government

with its majority and reservation of power would show that leniency as to let everything be fair and unbridled and the deletion of this rule would symbolise it to the public in general. (Applause from the gallery).

The CHAIRMAN: If I hear any demonstration by any members of the public attending this Council, the room will be cleared forthwith.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I should like to call attention to this. The House has agreed on Rule 26. I want to point out that Rule 27 is the necessary complement of Rule 26, and for this reason: the object of it is to preserve the right of individual members. It will not have the effect that my hon. and learned friend who last spoke imagines. It is not un-British; it is enlarging the liberty of the members of the House. I ought to put it this way, it is against the restraint of the liberty of speech of the members of this House.

Let us look at Rule 26. The President may fix the total time to be occupied in a debate. Now, I am a moderately old member—I should say rather of the old Legislature—and I will not, sir, in truth or otherwise, accuse any member of that Legislature of having been given to long speeches. But supposing, for argument sake, by any chance there was to enter this House some member like unto the one who was referred to, we should realise at once that the liberty of other members had gone if the President fixes the total time for the debate. If that member got up and proceeded to propound his views to the House, if he spoke so long as that, what would happen is that he would consume the total time. Where would the right of individual members come in?

If we look to the Rules as we ought to we would realise that Rule 27 is the natural complement of Rule 26. It is an important thing to try and get through our work as quickly as we may reasonably do, having due regard to the importance of it and the time which we ought to devote to it. After all we are

not here only to speak; we are here to work, to think concisely and precisely. That being so, apart from the educative tendency of the rule, if hon. members instead of meandering into long sentences, difficult to follow, give their views in short and crisp sentences and in few words everything would be better. Looking at it from that point it would be found that this regulation would really be helpful where an hon. member is afraid of the majority oppressing the minority. If this rule does not exist we shall find ourselves in the position of the majority of the House being oppressed by one member and not being able to escape from it. That is the advantage of it; all the other members should not suffer as the result of one.

If it happens on some particular occasion that a member wishes to deliver some momentous speech, something of high import, there is no doubt about it that there is always power to suspend the Standing Rules. This House would do that when there is something momentous so as to get the benefit of the advice of any member on such an occasion. Therefore the object of the rule is merely to moderate what I may call an occasional exuberance not based upon substance. The general powers we have got in these Orders and Rules and the power of suspension; the good work which the House as a rule would do and which individual members would be able to accomplish by their speeches would not be in the slightest affected. This House is always generous to its colleagues and would never abstain, when the occasion arises, from giving a hearing to what ought to be heard on proper grounds.

Mr. CRANE: On a point of explanation, may I enquire whether the hon. gentleman who has just taken his seat intends to inform this House—

The CHAIRMAN: The correct way of speaking is not "hon. gentleman," but "hon. Attorney General."

Mr. CRANE: I am very sorry, was only following the Parliamentary procedure. I just want to know if the

hon. Attorney General is informing this House that such a rule is a natural complement to what is known in the House of Commons as a "Closure by Compartment," which is Rule 26.

The ATTORNEY GENERAL: I have already given my views.

The CHAIRMAN: I do not think we need split legal saws on that subject. The hon. Attorney General says that Rule 27 is the natural corollary of Rule 26. There is no question of the House of Commons.

Mr. SEERAM: I am going to support the deletion of this rule on the strength of Rule 31, which I hope will be passed unanimously. I think these two rules should be taken together in considering these rules, and I am sure every hon. member here will agree that Rule 31 should be one of the clauses in these rules. That rule has not been reached as yet, but it provides that if any member indulges in irrelevant or tedious speeches the President may direct that member to discontinue his speech. Take, for example, a member has been speaking for fifteen minutes. If at the end of that time the President decides that he is indulging in irrelevant or tedious repetition, the President is vested with authority to call upon that member to discontinue his speech.

Your Excellency, in my humble opinion I think there is ample authority, ample power, vested in the President to call upon any member who becomes tedious to discontinue his speech. Like the other hon. members who have spoken in favour of the deletion of this rule, I think it is an attempt to curb the right of speech of the members of this House, and, Your Excellency, there is a greater need to-day under the new Constitution for elected members to be vested with a greater right to speak and to criticise motions, questions, or even items on the Estimate which are introduced, because it is the only instrument that is left in their hands that they should effectively wield in order to criticise or persuade Govern-

ment to think with them. We all cannot think alike but there is that ardent desire to do all that lies in our power to facilitate the policy and procedure of Government in all matters. We are very anxious—and I for one give Your Excellency that assurance—in every way possible and imaginable to facilitate matters on the part of Government. With that assurance from me and other elected members I ask Your Excellency to delete this rule. I do so on the further assurance that Rule 31 will be supported by me and I am sure that hon. members who have spoken will do likewise.

Mr. HUMPHRYS: I support the retention of Rule 27 because I am in agreement with the hon. Attorney General that it follows naturally from Rule 26, and that having been passed I certainly think it should stand. If a motion comes up and Your Excellency fixes the time which it should occupy and that time happens to be a couple of hours, I can quite imagine that several members, who would like to speak, would not be heard at all, if the motion is to occupy a fixed time. It is therefore necessary if Rule 26 is allowed to stand that Rule 27 must also stand. It follows quite naturally Rule 26. I know I am in the minority in so far as the elected members are concerned and that they will vote against it, but I am afraid that in course of time they will all agree that the rule is a good one and that I am right.

I wish to cast aspersion on no member here but we all do know that in the past Court a great deal of time was wasted in debate that could have been more usefully occupied. Rule 27 works a hardship on no one. There must be very few matters that cannot be expressed on by any member within a space of a half-hour, but if he must have a longer time then he can ask for a suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders. I do not think the rule is an objectionable one. I do not think in this instance the Government meant anything objectionable by it. I feel it should stand.

Mr. ELEAZAR: I differ from what the hon. member has just said, and I need but to read a short passage from a report here of the remarks of Your Excellency's immediate predecessor who said at a discussion on a most momentous question engaging the attention of this House: "I am afraid I cannot admit that this debate has been unduly long or wearisome. I shall attempt to sum up the speeches which have been made. Certainly a high level of debate has been maintained, and although there has been much in the speeches that I do not quite agree with, I cannot complain of the manner in which the views of the respective speakers have been delivered." That was when the House was discussing the constitutional question. It was also stated in the report that under the new Constitution recommended the elected members would still have the fullest power of discussing items of the Annual Estimates. I cannot conceive what is meant by "the fullest power" if speeches are to be limited to fifteen or thirty minutes. As a matter of fact, to be candid, when this meed of praise was accorded the members of the Court your humble and obedient servant was not present. (Laughter). I happened to have been ill; perhaps if I had been present they would not have had this bit of praise.

There has been no complaint as to the length of the speeches. There is the majority, there is the power of Government to have its way; there is Your Excellency's power to limit the time to be engaged in speeches, and there is further the attempt to limit the individual speeches to half-an-hour in some instances and to fifteen minutes and less in others. Is not that an attempt to curb free speech? Is freedom of speech not part of the rights of the British public? Are we not part of the British Empire? Does it not savour of oppression? It is the settled and fixed intention of every inhabitant of this Colony, of every well-wisher, that we should co-operate with Your Excellency in trying to give this Colony a move on. I cannot con-

ceive that persons should have a rule placed here in order to see how well some people can angle in troubled waters.

When we come to the Committee of Ways and Means what do we find? We find all the motions are Government motions. The Government members are in the majority, and need I say we, the elected members, will be limited to a few minutes and then the "closure" put on. Your Excellency, like the hon. member who has spoken before me, I am willing to join in the solo whether it is a vocal or instrumental one, and I am also willing to join in the chorus but with one condition, and that is, that the poor overtaxed population of this Colony would have a small voice in calling the tune. They would not have that if the Government has the power to put the 'closure' on elected members' speech.

It seems to me that what was passing through the mind of the maker of the rule is: now that the Government has the power of a giant it is going to use it as a giant. In the face of the fact that every elected member, with the exception of the honourable Member for East Demerara (Mr. Humphrys), is against this rule, we like to come frankly to Government and tell Government what we feel and how we feel about certain measures, and if in spite of that we see Government is against us, then there is no hope for us but to fall in and join in the chorus. Why antagonise us? Why hold the sword of Damocles over our heads in such a manner? The learned Attorney General is the greatest sinner of lengthy speeches, and he tells you to look to the future. The hon. senior Member for Georgetown, who is a man of few words, has given his views against it, and I ask Your Excellency to accede to the majority of the Electives and delete this very objectionable rule from the Rules of the House.

The CHAIRMAN: I have listened with a great deal of interest to the views of the various members who are not in favour of Rule 27, but I must

confess that I am not the least impressed by any of the arguments used. These arguments contradict themselves. One and all of the honourable members said they can say all they want to say speaking for thirty minutes, yet they all consider that thirty minutes are not long enough to put your case. You cannot have it both ways. Personally, I should like to see this rule left in with a proviso to the effect that if in the opinion of the President a speech should last longer than thirty minutes it should go on. I think, however, that is introducing too many provisos. As I have said before, I am not at all impressed with the strength of the arguments used, nor am I in the least impressed by the fact that such a small rule as this, if we left it in, would result in the elected members combining together to defeat the Government at every turn. I do not think they would, frankly, on such a small point. But, as one hon. member suggested, why put it in now? If we find it necessary we can put it in later. I do not mind saying I thought of that when first I read the Rules, but I did not suggest it to the hon. Colonial Secretary because I did not like hanging up a threat in the roof like a sword that one can cut through and let it drop on the Council.

So, gentlemen, I am quite prepared, and Government is quite prepared, to omit this Rule 27 for the time being and wait and see what the result will be. (Hear, hear). I therefore trust that all hon. members, elected or otherwise, will do their best to keep their speeches as short as possible, to add to the efficiency and speed to get through the debates.

Question, "That Rule 27 be deleted" put, and agreed to.

Rule 39—Record of Proceedings.

Mr. CRANE: Is it intended, as stated in the last line, "No report of the Council shall be required"?

The CHAIRMAN: Where the word "of" is should read "to."

Question, "That the word "of" in the last line of Rule 39 be amended to read "to," put and agreed to.

Rule 53.—Practice of the House of Commons.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the words "and procedure" be inserted between the words "the practice" and "of the Commons House."—(Mr. Crane.)

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Council shall now resume"—(The Colonial Secretary).

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the Standing Rules and Orders which have been considered by the whole Council be adopted as amended."—(The Colonial Secretary).

The ATTORNEY GENERAL seconded.

Mr. GONSALVES: May I enquire whether the hon. Attorney General proposes to have these Rules confirmed as just gone through without any amendment to Rule 26?

The COLONIAL SECRETARY: I did not understand that any amendment was being suggested to Rule 26.

Mr. GONSALVES: You have struck out Rule 27, and having done so an amendment is necessary to Rule 26 which has the words "save as is provided in the proviso to Order 27."

The PRESIDENT: I am much obliged to the hon. member for drawing attention to it.

Motion made, and Question proposed, "That the words "save as is provided in the proviso to Order 27" in Rule 26 be deleted."—(The Colonial Secretary).

Question put and agreed to.

Question, "That the Standing Rules and Orders as amended be passed" put and agreed to.

The Council adjourned until tomorrow at 11 a.m.