

MINUTES of the Proceedings of the Fourth Legislative
Council of the Colony of British Guiana at its
Fourth Session, 1951, held at the Public Buildings,
Georgetown, Demerara, on

THURSDAY, 1ST NOVEMBER, 1951,

AT 2 P.M.

PRESENT: |

The President,	His Excellency the Governor, Sir Charles Campbell Woolley, K.C.M.G., O.B.E., M.C.
The Honourable	the Colonial Secretary, Mr. J. Gutch, O.B.E.
" "	the Acting Attorney General, Mr. A. C. Brazao
" "	the Acting Financial Secretary and Treasurer, Mr. W. O. Fraser
" "	C.V. Wight, C.B.E. (Western Essequibo)
" "	Dr. J.B. Singh, O.B.E. (Demerara-Essequibo)
" "	V. Roth, O.B.E. (Nominated)
" "	C.P. Ferreira (Berbice River)
" "	T.T. Thompson (Nominated)
" "	G.A.C. Farnum, O.B.E. (Nominated)
" "	J.P. Coghlan (Demerara River)
" "	D.P. Debidin (Eastern Demerara)
" "	J. Fernandes (Georgetown Central)
" "	Dr. G.M. Gonsalves (Eastern Berbice)
" "	W.O.R. Kendall (New Amsterdam)
" "	A.T. Peters (Western Berbice)
" "	W.A. Phang (North Western District)
" "	G.H. Smellie (Nominated)
" "	J. Carter (Georgetown South)
" "	L.A. Luchoo (Nominated).

The Clerk read prayers.

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on Friday, the 26th of October, 1951, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

PRESENTATION OF REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS

The Financial Secretary and Treasurer laid on the table the Supplementary Estimate for the quarter ended 30th June, 1951.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

The Financial Secretary and Treasurer gave notice of the following motion:-

That, this Council approves the Supplementary Estimate for the quarter ended 30th June, 1951, which has been laid on the table.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICES

Mr. Debidin gave notice of the following motions:-

- (a) WHEREAS the residents of the abandoned sugar estate of Plantation Cane Grove have been kept in a state of suspense and uncertainty as to their future position with respect to the Land Settlement Scheme proposed for Plantation Cane Grove;

AND WHEREAS the proprietors of Plantation Cane Grove have sold the lands comprised in the said Plantation Cane Grove, cum annexis, to the Government of British Guiana for the token price of \$100 undoubtedly intending that the said residents of the abandoned sugar estate should directly benefit by the establishment of a suitable land settlement, that is, by settling the said residents on the said lands;

AND WHEREAS for this purpose it is the strong desire of the said residents that the said lands be laid out and allotted so that every family would have the opportunity of purchasing its appropriate share in the allotment at a cost equal to the respective share of the cost of laying out the said land plus the value of the said land, namely \$100;

AND WHEREAS there is so much concern and dissatisfaction over the set up of the Cane Grove-La Bonne Mere Land Settlement Scheme, particularly over -

- (a) the personnel of the Committee of the said Scheme;
- (b) the housing;
- (c) the precarious and trying conditions under which the people are now living;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council recommend to the Government the appointment of a Select Committee from the Legislature to -

- (a) enquire into and report on the conditions prevailing at Plantation Cane Grove; and
- (b) consider and report on the feasibility of re-organising the present proposed Land Settlement Scheme of Cane Grove and La Bonne Mere, so as to allot and settle the residents of the abandoned sugar Plantation of Cane Grove upon the lands of the said Plantation Cane Grove, cum annexis, on the basis of a sale, and grant a freehold title of proportionate shares or portions of the said lands to each family of the said abandoned estate.

(b) WHEREAS for a long time now rice farmers in the Colony have been receiving for their rice about half the price of what they should really have been receiving, whereas on the other hand they have been paying world market prices for goods and other articles consumed by them;

AND WHEREAS as a result of the findings of the Rice Arbitration Board held in September, 1951, in this Colony British Guiana is to receive prices of \$19.65, \$18.5 and \$17.85 respectively for the three grades of rice exported to the West Indian Colonies;

AND WHEREAS a substantial portion of this increase, if not all, should be passed on to the producers;

AND WHEREAS if this is done it will just make up for the underpayment to producers for their rice in the past, for the present very sharp rise and still rising cost of living, and generally would give rice farmers the necessary encouragement and impetus to increase their rice cultivation, and further develop the industry;

BE IT RESOLVED that this Honourable Council urgently recommend to the Government the grant of a price of not less than \$6.50 per bag of paddy to rice producer throughout the Colony, with the fixing of the local purchase price of the various grades of rice commensurately;

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this price be made operative from the 1st day of October, 1951.

Mr. Lee gave notice of the following motion:-

WHEREAS the farmers in Wakenaam and nearby Islands have been unable to obtain adequate prices for their ground provisions commensurate with the ever increasing cost of living and production costs for an appreciable time now;

AND WHEREAS the last increases granted have not been able to offset even the then existing living and production costs;

AND WHEREAS the plight of the unfortunate farmers has since worsened considerably as a result of the very recent heavy increases on freight rates by the Transport and Harbours Department;

AND WHEREAS it is well known that whilst at certain times prices obtainable on the spot are accepted by farmers in order to cut their losses in cases of glut, etc., yet, at other times, the farmers must, by necessity, transport their produce to other markets on the sugar estates and Georgetown in order to be able to obtain sales at prices remunerative or even otherwise instead of allowing same to rot on their hands;

AND WHEREAS in the circumstances, it is desirable to obtain adequate increases in the existing prices to offset the abovementioned costs and additional charges if farmers are to be allowed to meet production costs and to eke out a living;

BE IT RESOLVED that Government make substantial increases in the prices of ground provisions at the earliest opportunity in order to assist farmers materially in this respect for the same reasons Government found it advisable to increase prices on all other commodities.

✓ Mr. Fernandes gave notice of the following motions:-

(a) BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommend to Government the award of the lapsed 1950 Girls' Guiana Scholarship to the 1951 runner up.

(b) BE IT RESOLVED that this Council recommend to Government -

(a) the inclusion of employees of the Transport and Harbours Department in the Government scheme for advances to purchase homes;

(b) make an additional amount available from Loan Funds for this purpose.

DEATH OF THE HONOURABLE FRANCIS DIAS, O.B.E.

Before proceeding to the Order of the Day, leave was granted Mr. Wight to refer to the passing of the Honourable Francis Dias, O.B.E., who from 1928 to 1947 was a Member of the Legislative Council. Mr. Wight then moved and Mr. Roth seconded the following motion which was unanimously adopted:-

That, this Council records with profound regret the death of the Honourable Francis Dias, O.B.E.

His Excellency in paying tribute to the memory of the late member stated that, as requested by Members, an expression of the Council's sympathy would be conveyed to his relatives.

ORDER OF THE DAY

CUSTOMS DUTIES (AMENDMENT No. 3) BILL, 1951

Council resolved into Committee and resumed consideration of a BILL intitled AN ORDINANCE FURTHER TO AMEND THE CUSTOMS DUTIES ORDINANCE, 1935.

Committee

Clause 4 - was amended by substituting the following for the first column of the Table -

"17B. Lamps and lanterns (other than electric lamps and lanterns) for illumination, including their parts and accessories".

New Clause 5 - The following new Clause 5 was inserted -

Amendment of the Third Schedule to the Principal Ordinance No. 25 of 1944. 5 The Third Schedule to the Principal Ordinance as substituted by the Customs Duties (Amendment No. 2) (Consolidation of Schedules) Ordinance, 1944, is hereby further amended by the insertion in item 9 after the words "all other materials" of the following -

"(except printing paper otherwise than as previously specified in this item)".

Clause 5 - as printed was re-numbered as Clause 6 and amended as follows:-

Paragraph (b) the word "and" at the end of the paragraph was deleted.

Paragraph (c) - a semi-colon followed by the word "and" was substituted for the full stop at the end of the paragraph.

Paragraph (d) - the following new paragraph (d) was inserted -

"(d) by the substitution for sub-item (8) of item 5 of the following sub-item -

"(8) ingredients for use in the manufacture of candles, soap, edible oils and margarine;".

Title and Enacting Clause - passed as printed.

Council resumed.

On a motion by the Attorney General seconded by Mr. Wight the Bill was a third time and passed as amended in Committee.

CONSTABULARY (AMENDMENT No. 2) BILL 1951

On motions by the Attorney General seconded by Mr. Wight the BILL intituled AN ORDINANCE FURTHER TO AMEND THE CONSTABULARY ORDINANCE to provide for a change in the designation of the post of Adjutant to that of Staff Officer by means of an Order in Council under the Official Designations Ordinance, 1938 (No.11), was read the second time and thereafter taken through its remaining stages and passed as printed.

ANTIBIOTICS BILL, 1951

The Attorney General moved the second reading of the BILL intituled AN ORDINANCE TO REGULATE THE IMPORTATION, STORAGE, DISTRIBUTION, SALE AND USE OF ANTIBIOTICS which was seconded by Mr. Wight.

Dr. Singh, Mr. Fernande , Mr. Debidin and Mr. Carter spoke to the motion

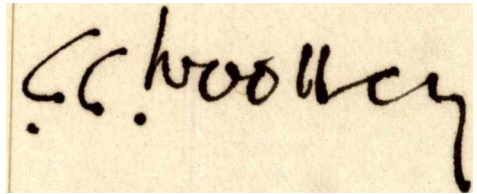
At this stage, further consideration was deferred.

ADJOURNMENT

At 3.15 p.m. Council was adjourned to afford Members an opportunity of attending the funeral of the late Honourable Francis Dias, C.B.E.

Council was then adjourned to 2 p.m. the following day.

Confirmed,

A rectangular piece of aged, yellowish paper with a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style and reads "C.C. Woolley".

President.

COUNCIL CHAMBER,
Public Buildings,
British Guiana.
2nd November, 1951.