

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana (Constitution) (Temporary Provisions) Orders in Council, 1953 and 1956).

Thursday, 10th November, 1960

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. Major I. O. Smith, O.B.E. (acting)

Attorney-General, Hon. A. M. I. Austin, Q.C.

ex officio

Financial Secretary, Hon. W. P. D'Andrade.

The Honourable **B. H. Benn**

—Member for *Essequibo River*
(Minister of Natural Resources)

Janet Jagan

—Member for *Western Essequibo*
(Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)

Ram Karran

—Member for *Demerara-Essequibo*
(Minister of Communications and Works)

„ **B. S. Rai**

—Member for *Central Demerara*
(Minister of Community Development and Education).

Mr. **R. B. Gajraj**

—Nominated Member

„ **W. O. R. Kendall**

—Member for *New Amsterdam*

R. C. Tello

—Nominated Member

F. Bowman

—Member for *Demerara River*

„ **L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.**

—Member for *Georgetown Central*

„ **S. Campbell**

—Member for *North Western District*

„ **A. L. Jackson**

—Member for *Georgetown North*

„ **E. B. Beharry**

—Member for *Eastern Demerara*

S. M. Saffee

—Member for *Western Berbice*

„ **Ajodha Singh**

—Member for *Berbice River*

„ **Jai Narine Singh**

—Member for *Georgetown South*

„ **R E. Davis**

—Nominated Member

„ **A. M. Fredericks**

—Nominated Member

H. J. M. Hubbard

—Nominated Member.

Mr. I. Crum Ewing—Clerk of the Legislature

Mr. E. V. Viapree—Assistant Clerk of the Legislature.

ABSENT :

The Honourable Dr. C. B. Jagan—Minister of Trade and Industry—on leave.

Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.—on leave.

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES

TIMBER CONCESSIONS TO CUBA

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 9th November, 1960, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEAVE TO MEMBER

Mr. Speaker: I would like to announce that the Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan) is on leave from the 10th to the 24th November, 1960, being out of the Colony on official business.

ORDER OF THE DAY

ORDER IN COUNCIL No. 89 OF 1960

DUTY FREE IMPORTS FOR OFFICIAL USE

The Financial Secretary (Mr. D'Andrade): Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Council in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 89 of 1960, which was made on the 29th day of September, 1960, and published in the Gazette on the 29th of October, 1960".

The Order in Council now before this Council for confirmation in accordance with Section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, is to extend to Her Majesty's Information Officer the concession of duty free imports for official use. A similar concession has been extended to Her Majesty's Armed Forces. The Trade Commissioner and the United States Information Officer enjoy the same concession as do the Consulates generally.

The Attorney-General (Mr. Austin): I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

Council resumed consideration of the following Motion which was moved by Mr. Bowman:

"Whereas the leader of the Majority Party of the Government, in a press interview on Friday, 10th June, stated that as a result of the recent visit of the Cuban delegation, Government was considering entering into a partnership with Cuba to exploit the timber resources of this Colony;

And whereas the majority of the inhabitants of this Colony are at present opposed to the idea in view of the present political situation in Cuba;

Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that Government should not enter into any negotiations with the present Cuban Government, Cuban Companies or individual Cubans for timber concessions in this Colony."

Mr. Speaker: There has been an Amendment to the Motion. It does not alter the preamble, but only the resolve clause. The Amendment to the resolve clause reads thus:

"That this Council recommends that before Government undertakes to enter into any final negotiations with the present Cuban Government or Cuban Companies for timber concessions in this Colony, the terms and conditions of such concessions should be set out in a White Paper."

The hon. Member for Demerara River was speaking yesterday, and he may continue now if he still desires to do so.

Mr. Bowman (replying): I intend to appeal to the Mover of the Amendment not to press for his Amendment, because to my mind he has failed to realize that if this Amendment is accepted we will be playing the exact game which the Government wants us to play. Perhaps he has failed to realize that the Government would welcome the idea of presenting this Council with a White Paper setting out the transactions of any negotiations with the Cubans. But does it make sense to expect the Government

to put before us its sinister intentions? That is going to be concealed in the dark recesses of their dark minds. The real intention will be hidden, so it does not make sense to ask the Members of this Government to give us a White Paper on this matter.

That is why I am appealing to the Mover of the Amendment not to press his Amendment. The majority of the people in British Guiana do not want the Cubans to come into this country. I have stated already that if the Cubans are given concessions here, guns and munitions will be brought in. My former political friends and colleagues would not tell us that if the Cubans are given concessions they would bring in guns and munitions, and teach our people how to use them. If that is what the Mover expects them to do, he might as well sit down. But that is exactly what they have in mind. That is why I am warning this Council over and over again that we should not allow this Government to have its own way regarding the question of giving concessions to the Cubans.

I am not opposed to having trade dealings with the Cubans, provided the dealings are being carried out for cash. We are accustomed to having our usual medium of exchange and that is cash. We are not accustomed to exchanging flour for tobacco; rice for timber and so on. We expect that when Cubans buy from us they will do so in cash.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, made a point yesterday that there was much hysteria in the arguments adduced by some of us. I think it is high time, because we know of the danger that lies ahead. Perhaps he knows it, too, but like everything else there is a certain affinity between himself and the P.P.P. or Majority Party in this Council. We cannot expect him to say anything else. He, like my hon. Friend, Mr. Hubbard, will have to toe the line. At one time Mr. Gajraj was one of the greatest

opponents of the P.P.P. in this Council, until an agreement was reached between them. There was a certain deal —

Mr. Speaker: This Council is not aware of it. I just want to know whether you are referring to something in *Hansard* or to something which took place outside of this Council?

Mr. Bowman: Being a former member of the P.P.P., and an executive member, I know what has transpired. I am saying that a deal was brought up and from that moment Mr. Gajraj changed his opinion.

Mr. Gajraj: Would the hon. Member state what the deal was?

Mr. Speaker: A Member can get up and express his view, but, surely, he must keep within the terms of the Standing Orders. I have had to call your attention to this several times. You can speak, but when you impute improper motives to any Member of the Council, it is a violation of Order 33, Rule (9). I do not want to call your attention to it again. You cannot flout an Order of the Council in that way. You can make your point; but you are accusing one Member of some deal or improper motive, which is against the Standing Orders of this Council; and we must all uphold the Standing Orders.

Mr. Gajraj: I therefore ask that the hon. Member withdraw the accusation otherwise he should prove it.

Mr. Bowman: I was just trying to say—

Mr. Speaker: You cannot impute improper motives to any Member; and it is going too far. Please obey the Rules of this Council. When you are outside it is another matter, but in this Council we must obey the Standing Orders.

Mr. Bowman: If we sit and allow the Government to bring off this deal we, perhaps the majority of the inhabitants of this country, are going to find out, to our great detriment, that we have made a great blunder; and at that time it will be too late.

Some members of the Government brought into the debate the transactions of the leaders of Ghana and India and said that India and Ghana have been trading with communist countries; but I want to make this point: the Leaders of Ghana and India — Dr. Nkrumah and Mr. Nehru — have never been accused of being communists. I also want to make a further point: if Mr. Nehru had any great love for communism, why did he take steps to get rid of the communists in the State of Kerala? I have never read where Mr. Nehru had extolled any of the communist Leaders; yet we have the Leader of this Government extolling a man who is gaoling and shooting people. Those who are Christians are supposed to do Christian things. If a man is a thief and he is extolled by another man, that man is also a thief or intends to become one [*Laughter.*] That is why I am surprised. If we give way to these people and they were allowed to give concessions to the Cubans, whatever they do we may have to do, if not today, tomorrow because we have given them the go ahead.

I would like to round off my reply with four more paragraphs of the Report of the Organization of American States which took place this year. This, perhaps, would more or less make Members see the necessity for disallowing this Government from giving any concessions to the Cubans. The paragraphs are:

"These attempts at direct assistance to revolutionary movements and armed expeditions in the Caribbean area ended in failure, though leaving their mark in seriously increased international tensions in the area. Following these setbacks and apparently bowing to the force of inter-American opinion expressed most

articulately at the Santiago Meeting of Foreign Ministers, the Government of Dr. Castro reaffirmed and then for a time appeared to follow, for outward appearances at least, a policy of not actively assisting the organization of revolutionary expedition. Cuba has turned, however, to an intensification of more subtle means of accomplishing its goal of spreading revolution to other countries in Latin America, — means which have caused Cuba to become more and more identified with and used by the international Communist movement.

2. *Support of Revolutionary Movements.*

The Revolutionary Government of Cuba, in close association with Communists and extremists in the countries of the Americas has been organizing, supporting, and encouraging a number of revolutionary leaders and movements of other countries designed to undermine and violently overthrow existing national governments. This assistance has been given impetus by the visits to these countries of Cuban officials and by the activities of Cuban "tourists". An example was the visit in December, 1959, through Central America of one of Dr. Castro's intelligence specialists, August Aldama Acosta, to organize revolutionary movements in these countries.

Included among the targets of Dr. Castro's Government is the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico where an objective is to make contact with and actively assist a handful of Puerto Rican radicals whose avowed policy is the overthrow of the Government of Puerto Rico by violent means and to bring about revolutionary changes contrary to the will of the people of Puerto Rico.

The assistance offered to indigenous revolutionary movements includes promises of arms for the revolutionary effort, propaganda materials, and, most importantly, training in Cuba in the techniques of guerrilla warfare. The handbook *La Guerra de Guerrillas* used in this training is one written by Dr. Ernesto Guevara, in which he strongly implies that guerrilla warfare would be used to overthrow in each country in Latin America the existing economic and social order and the duly established national institutions."

Those are the things which inspired me to move this Motion, apart from what was told to me by persons throughout

the country. From all that has been said, are we going to sit here, as peaceful Guianese, and allow Cubans to come here? My former colleagues are revolutionaries. I am repeating for the sake of emphasis, that the British Government recently promised us independence. We are moving next year towards internal self-government. What more do we want? Even if we stay five more years to achieve independence. [A Member: "What!"] What difference does it make? To come here and tell people now that we want independence and we are going to fight for it, is stupidity. That is why I am standing up against this Government giving any kind of concession. I do not know how certain Members are looking at this thing.

I have to appeal also — and this is the last I am going to make — to the official members of the Government. If we go back to the Bible we will see that when Jesus was before Pilate, the people said: "If you allow this man to go you are not Caesar's friend"; and if you allow the Cubans concessions, you will not be the friends of Guianese. I am beseeching you to think in terms of the future of your children; do not vote with these people. Their intention is bad; therefore, I am asking and expecting you either to abstain or cast your votes in favour of the Motion.

Mr. Speaker: I shall put the Amendment first. I shall read it so that Members may be aware of its content. It reads thus:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that before Government undertakes to enter into any final negotiations with the present Cuban Government or Cuban companies for timber concessions in this Colony, the terms and conditions of such concessions should be set out in a White Paper."

The Council divided and voted as follows:

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Davis	Mr. Bowman
Mr. Jackson	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Kendall, — 3.	Mr. Fredericks
	Mr. Tello
	Mr. Gajraj
	Mr. Jai Narine Singh
	Mr. Campbell
	Mr. Saffee
	Mr. Rai
	Mr. Ram Karran
	Mrs. Jagan
	Mr. Benn
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney-General
	The Chief Secretary.
	— 15.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the Amendment lost. I shall now put the original Motion.

The Council divided and voted as follows:

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>	<i>Did not vote</i>
Mr. Bowman	Mr. Hubbard	Mr. Davis
Mr. Fredericks	Mr. Gajraj	Mr. Jackson
Mr. Tello	Mr. Jai Narine Singh	Mr. Kendall.
Mr. Campbell.	— 4.	—3.
	Mr. Ajojda	
	Singh	
	Mr. Saffee	
	Mr. Rai	
	Mr. Ram	
	Karran	
	Mrs. Jagan	
	Mr. Benn	
	The Financial Secretary	
	The Attorney-General	
	The Chief Secretary.—12.	

[*Interruption*].

Mr. Speaker: Order please! We expect better from the Government side. It is expected that Government Members will set an example. This is a Legislative Council. This Motion is lost.

DIRECTOR OF AGRICULTURE ON R.M.B.

Mr. Speaker : The next item is a Motion in the name of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, which reads thus:

“Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that the Rice Marketing Ordinance, Chapter 249, be amended to provide for the Director of Agriculture to be a member of the B.G. Rice Marketing Board and also a member of the Executive Committee of that Board.”

Mr. Davis : This Motion is, I believe, non-controversial. I would refer the Council to Section 15 of the Rice Marketing Ordinance, Chapter 249, which gives some indication of the importance of the Director of Agriculture to the Rice Marketing Board. I think we are all agreed that rice plays a very important part in the economy of this country which is mainly agricultural. Section 15(1) of Chapter 249 reads:

“15.(1) The Board may from time to time, with the approval of the Director of Agriculture, fix grades of rice, and different grades may be fixed in respect of rice to be purchased from a manufacturer, in respect of rice to be sold for consumption in the Colony, and in respect of rice to be exported.”

The Director of Agriculture is the sole authority for the fixing of grades, and in truth and in fact the Board prepares its samples which have to be approved by the Director of Agriculture according to the various grades of rice. In Section 4 of Chapter 249, before it was amended by Ordinance 14 of 1960, it was provided:

“4.(1) The Board shall consist of sixteen members.

(2) Subject to the provisions of subsection (3) of this section the members of the Board shall be appointed by the Governor, and shall be —

(a) four persons who are officers in the public service;

(b) eight persons who are rice producers; and

(c) four other persons (not being officers in the public service or rice producers) of whom two shall be members of the Legislative Council.”

That was the constitution of the Board previous to the recent democratizing of the Board — I borrow that phrase from the Minister of Trade and Industry who used it two weeks ago in this Council. Those sixteen members of the Board, four of whom were officers in the Public Service, and four other persons, of whom two were Members of the Legislative Council, formed a nucleus of eight persons, and the Chairman of the Board was in the past one of that group. So that the Director of Agriculture, sitting in his right as an executive officer of the Board, usually got a certain amount of support from that group — which is actually a segment of the Board. The other segment was made up of eight rice producers of various categories.

In the draft Bill, No. 12 of 1960, Government initiated what it chose to refer to as the democratizing of the Board. That Bill was passed by the Legislative Council, and the constitution of the Rice Marketing Board was amended to provide for:

(a) two officers in the public service;
(b) twelve persons appointed as follows —

(i) eight rice producers nominated by the Council of the Association from among its members:

(ii) three rice producers who are manufacturers nominated by the Council of the Association;

(iii) one person nominated by the British Guiana Rice Development Company, Limited;

(c) two other persons experienced in marketing.”

These appointments are to be made by the Minister of Trade and Industry. There is a general democratizing of the Board, the administration and working of which has been put directly into the hands of 12 rice producers.

We go from there to the Executive Committee of the Board, but I would pause to say that at its first meeting the recently democratized Board elected its Chairman. They did likewise with the vice-Chairman. That was a departure from what took place previously when the Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board and the Vice-Chairman were appointed by the Governor, thus creating a further democratization of the Board. This Ordinance goes on to state — I refer to Clause 5 of Chapter 249:

“That the executive committee of the Board shall consist of six members of the Board who shall be the chairman; vice chairman, one member of the Board appointed by the Governor to be a member of the committee, and three other members of the Board appointed by the Board to be members of the committee.”

In the past the Director of Agriculture was the member on the Board who was appointed by the Governor to be a member of the committee. With this new process and the producers having the whip in their hands, the Director of Agriculture's name was submitted, and I think quite properly, for membership of the Executive Committee. Unfortunately, he did not find favour with the members of the Board and was not placed on the Executive Committee which, in my view, was a very retrograde step. It occurred to me that the Director of Agriculture should not be dependent on the good graces and the favours of the members of the Board. Hence, the thought was born in me that the Ordinance should be amended along the lines I have set out in my Motion on the Order Paper.

It is not my intention that the Executive Committee of the Board should be increased. If hon. Members of this

Council feel that, rather than provide for the Director of Agriculture to be a member, the number of the committee should still remain at six, it is a matter for them. As I see it, I think it will be in the best interest of all concerned if provision is made for the Director of Agriculture, apart from his office, to be a member of the Board and also a member of the Executive Committee by statute. It may be argued that this is making the Board not fully democratic. I would like to tell Members that of the six people who will be appointed to the Executive Committee, the Chairman, Vice Chairman, and three other members of that committee will be by the choice of the representatives of the Rice Producers' Association who are *ipso facto* representatives of the Rice Producers' Association. To me that maintains the flair of democracy which, I think, we are all so conscious of, and the state of affairs we are anxious to create.

In the past the office of Director of Agriculture has been held mostly by expatriates. At the moment we have one of the sons of British Guiana, in my humble opinion one of our brilliant sons, holding the office of Director of Agriculture. It seems to me to be our duty — I almost said our bounden duty — to protect Guianization in its broadest sense. That is why I feel confident that the introduction of this Motion will meet the approval of both sides of this Council, and I hope that it will enjoy the whole-hearted support of hon. Members. I formally move the Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper.

Mr. Fredericks: I would like to second the Motion so ably moved by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis. It seems obvious that there are real advantages to be gained from having the Director of Agriculture as a member of the Rice Marketing Board and the executive committee of the Board. The hon. Mover of the Motion has gone into

[MR. FREDERICKS]

the details of the constitution of the Board, and has pointed out that it will in no way affect the democratizing process to which he has referred. It will still enable the members of the Rice Producers' Association to have the majority vote in the Rice Marketing Board and in the Executive Committee.

I would like to associate myself with the remarks he has made regarding the Director of Agriculture. He is a very able and energetic officer and has considerable talents; he is keenly interested in the rice industry and eminently qualified to advise the industry at the level of the Rice Marketing Board and on the executive committee. I feel sure that his contribution will be invaluable in assisting the Board to overcome some of the difficulties it is encountering locally in connection with export problems.

Only a few weeks ago I heard of the close association between the Director of Agriculture and the Manager of the Rice Marketing Board in connection with the procurement of electronic equipment for grading and weighing rice. That augurs well, and it is an instance where the Director of Agriculture can contribute considerably in placing the rice industry on a firmer and more progressive basis. I have pleasure in seconding the Motion.

Mr. Gajraj : May I at the very outset state that I have nothing but the highest regard for the person who fills the office of Director of Agriculture. I agree fully that he is eminently qualified for the post. Indeed, after he had been appointed to this post it was in this Council that an expression was given of the view that an appointment such as his was long overdue, and we felt sure that, as a Guianese born in the country, bred here, and educated with the object in view of assisting in the development of this country, he was the right man in the right position, perhaps, coming at the proper time.

I would also like to say that I feel sure the hon. Mover of this Motion is actuated by none other than the best motives in bringing this Motion here. But I am afraid that, however much I admire the officer known as the Director of Agriculture, I cannot agree with the views that have been expressed to give weight to the request that the Director of Agriculture should, by legislation, be named a member of the Executive Committee of the Rice Marketing Board.

My hon. Friend the Mover of the Motion has been at pains to read to us the composition of the Board as we find it in Chapter 249 before the recent Amendments took place, and I am sure that he and other hon. Members of this Council will appreciate that the Board was so constituted. That was a good many years ago — when the idea of marketing rice jointly in the interest of the producers was in its infancy. It was in its experimental stage, and I am sure that it was the intention of the Government of the day, as was expressed by the then Financial Secretary, that in due course the imposition of persons however eminently qualified to membership of the Board in place of rice producers would gradually be altered, so that the words which were quoted not long ago in this Council about converting the Board into a co-operative carried some weight.

Now, if that was the intention when this Ordinance was first passed in the Council, then the argument that has been adduced regarding the composition at this stage and showing the importance of the one or any other official, loses its strength as time moves on in years.

Earlier this year, after considerable agitation on the part of members of the Rice Producers Association, an Amendment to the Ordinance was brought here whereby the strength of the rice producers on the Rice Marketing Board was

increased from the number eight to the number 12; and it was pointed out that it was thought desirable that since the rice producers had been gaining more and more knowledge and greater experience in what problems confronted them in the marketing of their rice, that they should now have a larger and, indeed, dominating say in the affairs of the Rice Marketing Board; so much so that in addition to having 12 members out of 16 being rice producers and 11 of them proposed for membership by the Rice Producers Association, they would have the right to choose from among their own number, a Chairman and Vice Chairman and the right to appoint their Executive Committee, apart from the Chairman and Vice Chairman.

The whole idea behind it was based upon the assumption that the rice producers of the country should be brought into more active control of the marketing of the industry, and the point was made then and accepted by this Council that the two public officers and the two persons experienced in marketing would be there to give advice to the elected and appointed representatives of the rice industry. No one could have imagined that either of the public officers or of the others who are experienced in marketing could, by themselves, carry their point of view in the Board. In effect, I think that although they hold the right to vote the same as any of the rice producers, nevertheless, their functions can only be to point out to the rice producers where they would be going wrong if their proposals are wrong or, on the other hand, give guidance and advice. So that when decisions are taken, the decisions would be largely those of the rice producers themselves; and in such circumstances it could never be said, again, by the producers that the Government or any external body has foisted upon them, persons who would make decisions contrary to the wishes of the representatives of the rice industry.

I think it was that whole idea that was referred to in this Council as the democratization of the Board.

I would like to point out to the Council that the functions of the Rice Marketing Board are different from the functions of its Executive Committee. I do agree that the Director of Agriculture would be very useful on the Rice Marketing Board because the Board, as a whole, is the body which takes decisions on policy, it is the Board which takes decisions on prices, it is the Board which takes decisions on quality of grades; whereas, in the Executive Committee, which normally meets once a week, the day to day problems within the confines of the lines of policy laid down by the Board are defined.

When the Director of Agriculture performs his duty as a member of the Board, he gives advice to the rice producers and policy decisions are taken by them. When those decisions are taken, then surely it does not need anyone with the technical skill and knowledge as the Director of Agriculture to assist in carrying out the day to day affairs which will confront members of the Executive Committee. Members of the Executive Committee, for example, cannot take a decision to fix prices for the quality of rice to be sold to any market. They may go into the question and make their recommendation to the Board, but it is the Board which has to make that final decision.

The hon. Member, in trying to explain to the Council the importance of the Director of Agriculture on the Executive Committee, did say that he had to approve of the grades of rice the Board specifies each year. It is true that the Director of Agriculture is required by Ordinance to put his stamp of approval on these grades, but it is the Rice Marketing Board that fixes the grades. The Director, as a member, would give his advice.

[MR. GAJRAJ]

I have known, during the time I have had the honour of serving on the Board, that there have been occasions when the ideas of the Board and the ideas of the Director were not *ad idem*, but because he was there and discussion took place, eventually the grades were fixed which pleased both the Board and the Director, and I see nothing wrong with that continuing. Indeed, as the Ordinance is, I see nothing wrong with the Director not even being a member of the Board but still having the right to approve grades of rice which the Board may wish to designate each year. We must bear in mind we are moving on relentlessly towards taking care of our own affairs, whether industrially or governmentally.

This year, we have made a very big step towards giving the rice producer a dominant say in the marketing side of his industry. He has a full say when it comes to purchasing his rice; and it was reasonable to assume that 10 or 15 years ago he would not have had the experience or knowledge of marketing his rice himself. But just like in other parts of the world where people have to produce their crops and sell them, we want to see the rice farmers reach the stage so that there would be no need for outside aid in the marketing of their entire crops. I can see in the framing of the original Rice Marketing Ordinance that it would be easy to make very small Amendments until we reach the stage whereby the basic principles in the Ordinance would not be violated, but that the farmers would have complete control of the industry.

Even if there was merit in the proposal of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, to make sure that the Director of Agriculture should find a place on the Executive Committee by law, I would like to tell him that in the

original Ordinance, Chapter 249, the Director of Agriculture is not named in any of the Sections which deal with the composition of the Board itself or the Executive Committee. He has been appointed in the past as one of the public officers. Again, he is appointed this year as one of the two public officers, but he is only named in this Ordinance in relation to his obligation to approve of grades of rice which the Board has to sell; so were we to go and introduce his name by legislation in the composition of the Board, would appear to be foisting upon the industry an appointee who was not named originally, and at the time when we have put the power into the hands of the producers. I would suggest it is a retrograde step in this whole process of giving power and authority to the members elected and appointed by the producers themselves.

I was glad to hear the hon. mover of the Motion say that the members of the Board apparently did not favour the proposal made at a full meeting of the Board, that one of the members on the Executive Committee should be the Director of Agriculture. I must say that I am not glad that the Director of Agriculture lost at the election, but what I do wish to point out to the Council is: if the producers or the representatives of the producers themselves had two opportunities, as I was informed, when vacancies occurred on the Executive Committee to vote in the Director of Agriculture, and decided to cast their votes for other candidates than the Director, then it would be telling them now, if we were to accept this Motion and transmit it into law, that within a matter of months this Legislature considers that the representatives of the industry on the Board had not acted properly; that we do not trust them to exercise their judgment in a proper manner. I would say it would be a wrong thing for us to do.

If the producer-members feel that the Director of Agriculture would be of use to them on the Board, I feel sure they themselves would vote for him there for, after all, they have the full responsibility of the marketing side of their industry now, and this Council should not foist upon them anyone, be he the most eminent public servant of all. Give them an opportunity of learning, perhaps, by their own mistakes. You will probably find that they have already realized that they had made a mistake by not electing the Director of Agriculture to the Executive Committee.

As I said, I can see the time ahead of us when these public officers and those experienced in marketing, would very easily be off the Rice Marketing Board leaving the matter so completely to the producers that they will be able to handle the marketing side of the industry themselves. But for the time being I think it is a very useful thing that there should be two public officers and two persons experienced in marketing. The mere fact that the producers numerically outnumber those four persons, their function being only advisory, they should try their utmost to see that decisions on policy are decisions which are in the interest of the industry. Because of these views I find myself unable to support the Motion.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn): Government does not support the Motion moved by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis. Government introduced early this year a Bill to democratize the Rice Marketing Board by making it possible for the persons who had been elected by the people to elect to the Executive Committee of the Board those whom they felt would be the best persons to be on that Committee. The Members of the Board have felt that while the advice of the Director of Agriculture is valuable, he is always more or less at the beck and call of the Board or its Executive Committee, to give any technical advice it wishes. Having given

greater power or put more democracy into the hands of rice producers, Government does not wish to take it away and foist upon them, as one hon. Member said, a person no matter how competent he is. In addition to that the Director of Agriculture is a member of the Board, and as a member he is in a position to give his advice to the Board and could always be called in by the Executive Committee of the Board to give any technical advice it wishes.

The Development Plan, with its accent on drainage and irrigation, land development and agriculture, puts a great deal more work on the shoulders of the Director of Agriculture. Hon. Members will remember that during one debate I pointed out how the Extension Service of the Department of Agriculture had been improved considerably, and how many more meetings, Field Days and Achievement Days had been held. Hon. Members will also remember how I pointed out the great amount of additional work being done by the Department of Agriculture. In addition to this the Department is now engaged in encouraging the production of new crops in keeping with our policy of diversification. Cocoa, citrus, coconuts—many of those crops demand very much attention from the officers of the Department, and moreso from the Director of Agriculture himself. Taking all these things into consideration the Government feels that it would be better not to amend the Ordinance, as the hon. Mover suggests, but to leave it open in order that the Director of Agriculture could give the necessary technical advice to the Board and its Executive Committee when it is required.

Mr. Davis (*replying*): I must express my regret — I use that word advisedly — that Government finds itself unable to accept the Motion. We have heard from the Minister of Natural Resources that the Director of Agriculture

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has so much to do with the Development Programme and other matters, but let me remind him and the Government that rice occupies a very commanding position in the economy of this country, and that the Director of Agriculture should serve on the Executive Committee of the Board would seem to me to be not only desirable but a necessary function, because the Government should be in a position to be completely advised on and in close touch with the working of the Rice Marketing Board and its policy.

Any sane approach to the question I am sure would suggest that, but if Government thinks that the Director of Agriculture should not be burdened with the increased duty of having to serve on the Rice Marketing Board, perhaps it would remove him entirely from his connection with the Board. Should anything go wrong when the Director of Agriculture's advice on the Executive Committee of the Board could be of some help, I hope Government will remember this day and the opportunity to correct what at the time of the recent amendment of the Ordinance was not apparent to Government.

With regard to the remarks made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, I was tickled by his suggestion that the Motion has no merit, because he spoke of the capabilities of the Director of Agriculture during the debate on the 26th May on the Second Reading of the Bill to amend the Rice Marketing Ordinance. Of course at that time he was making reference to the Director of Agriculture as a member of the Rice Marketing Board. He said then:

"The proposal to have two public officers on this Board is a good one. I do not know who these officers will be, but I hope — I throw this out as a suggestion — that one of them would be and should be the Director of Agriculture. I

say this not merely because of his post of Director of Agriculture, but we are very fortunate in having as incumbent to that office an individual who is a Guianese. He is a young man, comparatively speaking, and, like all Guianese should be, he is interested in this country and has the prosperity and progress of its people very much at heart." (*Official Report, 26th May, 1960, Col. 1068.*)

After reading that statement I felt confident that the hon. Nominated Member would have been most anxious to support me and what I consider to be a reasonable proposal, but I see that he has swung away from it with the Government. More I say not. The hon. Member says that in order to further democratize the Board this public officer on the Executive Committee should be removed, yet in almost the same breath he says that that officer and another should be members of the Rice Marketing Board. He goes further to suggest that the Manager of the Rice Development Company should also be a member of the Board. He supported that when the amending Bill was before the Council, and he also supported, as I did, the proposal that two persons experienced in marketing should also be members of the Board. But today he feels that the inclusion of the Director of Agriculture in the Executive Committee of the Board would hamper the process of democratization. Perhaps he did not give sufficient thought to the fact that two members, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, and three other members will be elected by the whole Board to the Executive Committee, thus maintaining to a very high degree the essence of democracy.

It is also significant that whenever the Director of Agriculture is not available to the Board; if he goes on leave or is away on official duties, no other person than his Deputy is appointed to serve on the Board. That gives me the feeling that by and large there is the principle

that the Director of Agriculture or his Deputy should be a member of the Board, and I think that that principle should be carried further to the Executive Committee.

Finally, let me say now — I did not want to say it, but I deem it advisable and in the best interest for me to say it now. I can only give this honourable Council my experience and my impressions of certain things as I see and know them, which I desire to share with hon. Members. The Board, as at present constituted, is the result of the recent elections in the rice producing areas of the Colony. The feeling is that the P.P.P. or the Government did not win the majority of seats at the elections. It is also felt that a section of the rice producers obtained seats in the Rice Producers' Association for a specific purpose. At our first meeting a thought occurred to me, and I wonder whether the real reason why the Director of Agriculture was not accepted as a member of the Executive Committee of the Board, is because it is felt that this officer has been, it is stated, closely connected with the present Government in carrying out Agricultural policy? [Interruption].

Mr. Speaker: Order! Will hon. Members allow me to put the Question. The Question is: "That this Council recommends that the Rice Marketing Ordinance, Chapter 249, be amended to provide for the Director of Agriculture to be a member of the B.G. Rice Marketing Board and also a member of the Executive Committee of that Board".

The Council divided and voted as follows:

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Fredericks	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Davis — 2.	Mr. Gajraj
	Mr. Jai Narine Singh
	Mr. Jackson
	Mr. Burnham
	Mr. Ajodha Singh
	Mr. Saffee
	Mr. Rai
	Mr. Ram Karran
	Mrs. Jagan
	Mr. Benn
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney-General
	The Chief Secretary
	— 14.

Did not vote

Mr. Bowman
Mr. Beharry
Mr. Tello
Mr. Campbell—4.

Mr. Speaker: The Motion is lost.

RADIO TIME TO RECOGNIZED POLITICAL PARTIES

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move the Motion standing in my name:

"Be it resolved: That Government make available radio time to recognized political parties."

In ancient times in the days of the Greek City State when political communities were small, it was possible to have all of the citizens, that is, those persons qualified to take part in the government of the State, in one place, and it was possible to have them take a direct part in the decisions of the Government. It was also possible to explain to them the issues involved and the reasons for decisions taken by those who had been clothed with executive authority.

Unfortunately or fortunately in the Twentieth Century with the increase of population and the expansion of the franchise, it is neither practicable nor possible for all those entitled to be enfranchised to be gathered together in one place so as to be able to take part in the decisions on the issues of the day. Democracy in these days operates in a sort of indirect fashion. Large numbers have been enfranchised and these persons who hold the franchise exercise that franchise in favour of one

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party or another, or one individual or another. An opportunity however, it is submitted, can still be given to those in whose hands lie the final power to know exactly what the issues are and to have the maximum amount of material at their disposal before arriving at a decision.

It is for that reason that I have tabled this Motion, for in addition to the necessity which there is for giving the maximum amount of material and information to the voters and electors, there is this further fact that in British Guiana today there are many more issues than existed earlier. As I see it, in the late forties and early fifties there was a comparatively simple issue—an issue between those who were prepared to uphold the colonial system, and those who were bent on destroying it.

In this period, however, it is not merely a question of the upholders of colonialism against the anti-colonialists, because, as I have remarked in another place, the colonial system or colonial rule in British Guiana is on its way out. If I may pause for a moment, I would observe that those who make a fuss about fighting colonialism now in British Guiana are in fact fighting a battle that is won. I cannot imagine in the present atmosphere of world opinion that the British Government will attempt to hold on to British Guiana as a Colony. If I understand the policy of the British Government, from my point of view, they are shedding the Colonies as fast as possible, although sometimes there is a mock fight here and there to keep some vital office or power. By and large the Colonial Empire is breaking up; whether or not the Commonwealth of Free Nations is in fact superseding is another matter.

The important point in British Guiana at this period is: what do the various political parties stand for? What is their prescription so to speak for

curing the ills of British Guiana and for making a success of an independent British Guiana? There may be certain traces of colonialism which will have to be swept out, but there are no major obstacles in the way. The voters and electors of British Guiana, therefore, should be given the widest possible opportunity of deciding between the various philosophies, tactics and strategies of the various parties in the country.

I submit, as I did remark when introducing another Motion somewhat similar in content, that the newspaper is not a sufficient vehicle. To leave it to the newspapers is to assume a higher interest in reading than may, in fact, exist. But even if the newspapers were avidly read, there is the fact that very frequently in a newspaper one gets not only inaccurate reporting, but also the particular reporter's point of view which he puts over by the way in which he slants his report.

The *Hansard* which is supposed to be a faithful record of what is said in this Council is also not sufficient. In the first place the *Hansard* is merely a record of what is said here. What the party stands for and what is the party's approach to the problems of British Guiana and the solutions which the party will put forward for the ailments of this country cannot be embodied in the *Hansard*, because those things are not fully expressed in the Legislative Council.

In the *Hansard* we merely get what is debated in the Council. Although some of us at times will—I would not say with your connivance, but with your tolerance—indulge in irrelevancies, those irrelevancies do not give the representatives of the various parties sufficient opportunity to give a full and fair picture of what the particular party or parties have been doing.

The other disadvantage from which the *Hansard* suffers, is that it is not a document that is in wide circulation. It is not easily obtainable by the public and, therefore, there may not be among the public a sufficient appreciation of what is said here, forgetting for a moment the limitations of what is said here, to which I have referred earlier.

The radio has gained great popularity in British Guiana as in other parts of the world. In fact, many of us know that the radio reaches some of the extremities of British Guiana where the post and telegraph services have not yet reached. We also know there are many people — most of us as a matter of fact, regardless of our station in life or our educational background — who have come to consider the radio not as a luxury, but a necessity, and the number of radios in British Guiana is large and the places in British Guiana to which radios have gone are, in many cases, very remote. I would think, therefore, and would strongly urge the point of view upon others, that the radio is the best vehicle for giving members of the public some idea of what one Party or another stands for, and therefore giving to the public some assistance in their formulation of loyalties and decisions with respect to the exercise of their franchise when the time or times come.

Those briefly, Mr. Speaker, are my arguments put forward in favour of radio time being allocated to recognized political parties. In this respect, it cannot be argued that it would mean additional expense to the Government. But even if it did mean additional expense to Government, it would be an expense well worth indulging in, because the education of people, academic and political, is such an important service that we should not approach it in a miserly fashion.

Fortunately, with the franchise under which the British Guiana United Broadcasting Company, Limited, carries

on, Government is allowed as much as one-and-a-half hours per day free time and the company is compelled, on notice in writing from the Chief Secretary, to allow the use of that Government time as the Chief Secretary directs or thinks fit; and that is why I brought this Motion here. If it finds favour with the Government, as I hope it does, it would merely be an administrative matter to make the necessary arrangements. And apart from the official government time, I have good reason to believe that the broadcasting company itself would not be averse from making available even more time if that becomes necessary, expedient or they are so advised.

For instance, over the past week, one of the radio stations operating under the franchise to which I have referred earlier — B.G.B.S. — has been re-broadcasting speeches made by certain political leaders who have been addressing the Trades Union Council of British Guiana. I would observe, I think these speeches were originally intended for the T.U.C., and the purpose, originally, was that they should assist the T.U.C., which apparently needs assistance, to arrive at decisions as to whether that organization should engage actively in politics or not and if it is to engage actively in politics which political party it would support or become affiliated to. Though that was the primary purpose of the talks or speeches, the fact is that these speeches have been re-broadcast by B.G.B.S., have been something that has been appreciated by many members of the public; and I have good reason to believe that the public would welcome the innovation on the radio station of having political parties broadcast from time to time.

I anticipate that a possible legalistic attitude would intrude into this discussion. I am aware that one of the clauses in the franchise refers to the fact that there should be no political broadcasts

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as such, but that particular clause is subordinate to the other clause which gives the Chief Secretary the right to stipulate that certain things should be broadcast; and furthermore, I would say that to take up such a stand or put forward such an argument would be most unrealistic in the present circumstances.

Every week we hear the Leader of the Majority Party ostensibly addressing a Press conference, but on close listening to what is said it is clear that the Leader of the Majority Party speaks not only as a Minister of the Government and Leader of the Majority Party, but also as Leader of the P.P.P., one of the political parties which we find in British Guiana. Not only do I say that there is nothing wrong with that, but I say that that should be further encouraged and the other parties should be given the opportunity of putting forward their point of view as is done in the United Kingdom over the BBC. And the necessity for this becomes all the more urgent with our impending election and the new status which British Guiana will shortly enjoy.

I, particularly, in my Motion, referred to the giving of radio time to recognized political parties because I feel that there must be some limit to the freedom of the radio so far as political groups or parties are concerned. Not every Tom, Dick or Harry who sets himself up as a political leader and leads a party of one, as one party was described by the Leader of the Majority Party at the Conference at Lancaster House in March, leads only himself with no electoral support and addresses a public meeting that runs into units and not tens, should be accorded recognition of being described as a political leader. I feel, if the Motion is adopted, that some criterion should be set by the groups or parties interested or by the administrative section of the Government.

Though it is usual, in arguing in another place, to anticipate some things in your opponent's defence that may be raised or the arguments that may be adduced against your case or proposition, I do not think that it is necessary nor is it advisable for me to adopt that attitude in putting forward this Motion. I should prefer to wait and see whether there is any opposition, what opposition there is and whether there is the necessity to reply strongly and at length. But I find it little difficult to imagine that there can be opposition to a Motion of this sort because if the Government opposes it, it means that the Government does not believe in the freedom of the radio, which is one of the freedoms we talk about; because the Government Party already has the advantage of putting forward its ideas over the radio ostensibly at Press Conferences. If the Government does not oppose it, I cannot, in my wildest imagination, think who else would oppose it. I accordingly move the Motion.

Mr. Kendall: I beg to second the Motion.

The Chief Secretary (Major Smith): So far, I do think there can be no argument about what the hon. mover of the Motion said with regard to the desirability of putting across to the people of the territory the aims and the objects and plans and policies of the various political parties. If I may have the temerity to suggest: there is one thing that the hon. Mover of the Motion forgot, and that is the impact of the voice and the personality of the speaker on the people who are listening.

As I said, there can be no argument, in my opinion, that it is a very good thing that recognized political parties should have access to the radio, but it is a settled policy that the time allotted to the Government under the agreement with the British Guiana United Broad-

casting Company, Limited should, on no account, be used for electioneering broadcasts or political broadcasts. On the other hand, as it has happened before and preliminary approaches to the company have shown that it can happen again, it can quite easily be arranged with the company, at no cost to Government or the political parties, for the recognized parties to broadcast on a set programme. Therefore, I wish to move an Amendment to the Motion which would be that the following words be inserted between the words "Government" and "make": "requests the British Guiana United Broadcasting Company, Limited to". The Motion would then read:

"That Government requests the British Guiana United Broadcasting Company, Limited to make available radio time to recognized political parties."

As I have said, initial approach has already been made, and the request has been favourably received. It will mean working out the details as to how this should be done, but there will be no cost to Government or to the political parties concerned.

Mr. Burnham: May I say that I am prepared to accept that Amendment as part of my Motion.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: It is unfortunate that we have in this country only one broadcasting station, for although it may be said that we have Radio Demerara and B.G.B.S., they are really one station, because when Radio Demerara goes off the air B.G.B.S. goes off too. I know that an application was made in April this year for permission to establish another broadcasting station, but except for a mere acknowledgment

of the application Government has said nothing about the application. If permission had been granted for another broadcasting station to be run on purely commercial lines there might not have been any necessity for this Motion, as there would have been a rival station willing to serve the public. I feel that if Government was sincere about this matter it would accelerate the granting of permission for the establishment of another radio station or a Government-controlled radio station.

I feel that the Motion is very opportune since our community is largely a listening community, much more than a reading community. Outside of Georgetown our people hardly read the newspapers, but there are over 70,000 radio receiving sets, and allowing five persons to each receiving set there would be 350,000 people listening — more than half of the population of the country. I think the hon. Mover of the Motion must be complimented.

Mr. Speaker: I do not know whether the seconder of the Motion has acquiesced in the Amendment.

Mr. Kendall: I have no objection to the Amendment, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Do you approve?
[Laughter].

Mr. Kendall: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I take it that no other Member desires to speak. I shall therefore put the Motion as amended:

"Be it resolved: That Government requests the British Guiana United Broadcasting Company to make available radio time to recognized political parties."

Motion carried unanimously.

**BOYCOTT OF TRADE WITH
SOUTH AFRICA**

Mr. Speaker: There is standing in the name of the hon. Member for Georgetown Central on the Order Paper the following Motion:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends to Government that all trade between British Guiana and the Union of South Africa be prohibited."

Mr. Burnham: I seek your indulgence, Sir, to ask that the debate on this Motion be postponed. My reason for doing so is that I was not aware of the fact that this Motion was coming up today until I arrived in this Chamber at about three o'clock. I may say that in the past, not because one found a Motion on the Order Paper one could anticipate its coming up at all, but in this case,

apart from the short notice, is the fact that I have to get certain up-to-date figures which I have not yet had an opportunity to get, and which I would have been able to get if I had a communication yesterday that the Motion was likely to come up. In the circumstances I beg to move that the debate on the Motion be postponed to another sitting.

Mr. Speaker: Is it agreed?

Members indicated assent.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Secretary: I move that Council adjourn until Wednesday next week.

Mr. Speaker: I declare Council adjourned until next Wednesday, 16th November, 1960, at two o'clock in the afternoon.