

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 10th February, 1960

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. D. M. Hedges

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

Financial Secretary, Hon. F. W. Essex, C.M.G.

} *ex officio*

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| The Honourable Dr. C. B. Jagan | —Member for Eastern Berbice (Minister of Trade and Industry). |
| „ „ 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). |
| 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 |
| „ A. L. Jackson | —Member for Georgetown North |
| „ 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 Hon. B. S. Rai—Minister for Community Development and Education — on leave.

Mr. L. F. S. Burnham—Member for Georgetown Central — on leave.

Mr. S. Campbell—Member for North Western District — on leave.

Mr. E. B. Beharry — Member for Eastern Demerara.

Mr A. G. Tasker, O.B.E. — Nominated Member.

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, 5th February, 1960, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member for the North West District, Mr. Campbell, is ill and has asked to be excused today. The Member for Georgetown Central, Mr. Burnham, has asked to be excused today. He returned only a few minutes ago from the diamond fields at Kurupung and has intimated that he would not be able to attend this afternoon. He further intimated to me that if the Motion standing in his name on the Order Paper can be deferred to a later date, he would not mind.

ORDER OF THE DAY

APPRECIATION OF DR. R. H. McCONNELL'S SERVICES

Mr. Speaker: The next item is the Motion standing in the name of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, in the following terms:

"Resolved, That this Council, having taken note of the valuable work done, voluntarily and without payment, by Dr. Rosemary H. McConnell, Honorary Fisheries Officer, in evaluating the results of the trawl survey carried out by the research vessel *Cape St. Mary* directs that its thanks and appreciation be conveyed to Dr. McConnell".

Mr. Hubbard: Mr. Speaker, I am asking this Council to say thanks in circumstances which are unusual. In circumstances which, in this commercial age, might almost be said to be unique. I am asking this Council to say thanks for services of a highly scientific quality rendered voluntarily and without charge by Dr. Rosemary McConnell, wife of the Director of Geological Surveys, while she has been serving as Honorary Fisher-

ies Officer. Dr. McConnell has served in this capacity for some time, but the work about which this Council has been made particularly aware is her work in evaluating the catches of fish made by the research vessel, the *Cape St. Mary*.

It is perhaps relatively easy for someone who is a scientist interested in a subject to go into a well-equipped laboratory, perhaps air conditioned, and do a job of work and find satisfaction in just the accomplishment of that work, but in these circumstances we have had a scientist doing highly uncongenial work in most uncomfortable circumstances. I am informed that the *Cape St. Mary* was a very devil to ride and well-seasoned sailors had become seasick while tossing about on her decks. Dr. McConnell took all that and more. She had the uncongenial task of taking the fish brought in by the trawl, opening them up and determining their feeding habits and classifying them according to specie. The species recorded numbered more than 100, and the total volume of fish landed in Georgetown from the survey was 278 tons.

She had to examine, very carefully, more than 100 species that came aboard in order to determine what their feeding habits were and the effect of one species on another in relation to their fishing grounds. I venture to think how some of my friends and relations might react if they were asked to go into the kitchen and prepare some of those fish for a meal, and that being so I am more than ever aware of how uncongenial Dr. McConnell's task was.

In addition to that, we have to bear in mind that the cost of the survey, in terms of money, was a little under \$304,000, which could not have been so well spent if we did not have the services of this scientist.

Now, it is true that Dr. McConnell's post of Honorary Fisheries Officer appears in the Estimates, and against it there was the magnificent annual sum of

\$1. But even so, in allowing herself to be put on the Estimates, the scientist has done us a good service because when she goes we will have to find it necessary to put someone in her place, whom we have to pay.

I said that this is a work of a highly scientific nature and, knowing that scientists are hard to come by and we find lesser contributions under large stipends and it is even impossible to recruit them, my own appreciation of what Dr. McConnell has done is arrived at against all the circumstances of a world in which scientists are difficult to recruit, and her work rendered to this country becomes all the more gracious. I, therefore, Mr. Speaker, have pleasure in moving:

"That this Council, having taken note of the valuable work done, voluntarily and without payment, by Dr. Rosemary H. McConnell, Honorary Fisheries Officer, in evaluating the results of the trawl survey carried out by the research vessel *Cape St. Mary*, directs that its thanks and appreciation be conveyed to Dr. McConnell."

Mr. Fredericks: It is with pleasure that I second the Motion moved by the hon. Nominated Member on my left. It was, indeed, very considerate of him and I commend it whole-heartedly to the Council. I feel it is meet that this Council should take due cognizance of the work done by those who have given of their services freely, unselfishly and unreservedly in the interest of this country.

Whether we are agreed or not as to the value of the *Cape St. Mary's* work, we must pay tribute to Dr. McConnell, not only for her work in connection with the analysis of the trawl survey, but also for her contribution to fishing development, both inland and marine, in this country.

As Members are aware, Dr. McConnell is eminently qualified in this respect, and I, personally, have been amazed at the extent of the physical inconvenience to which she has voluntarily

subjected herself in the interest of fishing generally, in this country. She has made five trips on the *Cape St. Mary* averaging about 35 days at sea, and this, I know, is an unenviable experience even to those of us who are accustomed, in a little way, to survival on a small fishing vessel.

The purpose of these trips was to obtain specimens, also first-hand information as to the stomach contents of the fish and to note the developments and other biological data concerning fish around the Guiana coast. In addition, Dr. McConnell has interested herself in all aspects of fishing in this country. She has gone down into the icy holds of trawlers. She has looked over cold storage installations after they had been completed. She has inspected boats and craft of all types wherever her qualifications and experience can be utilized.

In addition to her contribution to the scientific and commercial aspects of fisheries, I would like to pay tribute to her sterling personal attributes which have enabled her to contribute immensely, to inter-racial harmony and understanding in this land of so many peoples, and which can well be emulated not only by Guianese but by expatriates. I again beg to second the Motion.

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Hedges): There is one small observation that I should, perhaps, make on this Motion although I do not intend to move any amendment. The Motion reads that Dr. McConnell has been working without payment. There is a curious General Order which says that persons are not to be employed in Government departments without pay, and so Dr. McConnell has been on the princely salary of \$1 per annum since 1957. I do not know if she draws it by the month or by the year.

There is one other thing I would like to mention and that is to record that the Director of Agriculture has been extremely pleased with the work that Dr. McConnell has been doing. He has told me that her work was concerned with

[THE CHIEF SECRETARY]

basic biological research on fish and wild life of economic importance to the country and that she had identified and classified both fresh water and marine fish. The Director also said that the work she had undertaken has been most valuable and made a useful contribution to the scientific knowledge of the fishery resources of the country. As hon. Members know, Dr. McConnell was recently awarded the degree of Doctor of Science.

It gives me great pleasure in supporting this Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried unanimously.

REJECTION OF RICE COMMITTEE'S REPORT PROPOSED

Mr. Speaker: The next Motion is that which stands in the name of the hon. Member for Georgetown South.

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends to Government that the recommendations contained in the Rice Committee's Report which was tabled in the Legislative Council on the 22nd of December, 1958, concerning the closing down of single-stage huller-type mills be rejected."

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Mr. Speaker, I see that today there are five Motions which stand in my name. I regret to say that I am not physically in a position to go on. Actually, I came here because I felt I had a responsibility and a duty to be here; but I did telephone the Clerk earlier today to tell him that I was not in a position to go on with these Motions, and it is very unfortunate that some indication was not given much earlier. I do wish that Members will allow these Motions to stand down today, for another day. That is, of course, provided you and the Members wish it to be so, otherwise they cannot be debated.

Mr. Speaker: You are not in a position to move even one of them?

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Not even one. I want to suggest that when Motions are coming up that some consultation should be given through the Clerk so that the Member would be prepared. As the Government take time to consider when they are ready, I think that an equal privilege should also be extended to the private Members, though private Members should always be ready. Your Honour granted the indulgence to another Member.

Mr. Speaker: I think in his case the Order Paper went out after Friday, and he was away the whole week-end.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: If he had been informed he would have known his time-table beforehand. I think some such procedure may be adopted. The mover of a Motion may not be in a position to proceed, or may not be physically able to do so, as I am today.

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan): I do not think we can consider the hon. Member's suggestion that we should not proceed with his Motion today. Surely, when he gave notice of it, he must have known what he had in his mind.

Mr. Speaker: If I understand him aright I think his plea now is not that he is not able mentally to pursue his Motion, but that he is physically unable to proceed with it. That is the reason why I suggested that another Member might standby. I think he has put it on his physical condition.

Mrs. Jagan: But the hon. Member did put up the argument that he needed more time. I do not see how this Council can proceed with its business in this way. Some Members have had to rush here from an Executive Council meeting. We have hardly had time for lunch and we came here prepared for the debate. I do not think it is fair.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: As my Motion is on the Order Paper, if Mem-

bers feel that we should proceed according to the order, the Motion can be dropped. It is purely a matter for the Council. If a Member is not in a position to proceed with his Motion he is just not in a position to do so. I have explained the position quite clearly. Some things just cannot be done. I am not saying that Government is not right, or that it has not suffered inconvenience.

Mrs. Jagan: Do I understand that the hon. Member is so ill that he has to leave the Council? I cannot imagine that the hon. Member will not participate in the debate if he remains, and if he does participate I say it is unfair to Members.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I propose to ask the Speaker's leave to withdraw after I have made my statement. I came here especially to do my duty, otherwise I would not have been here.

The Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan): It would appear that the hon. Member's vocal cord is in good working order, and I would therefore suggest, Mr. Speaker, that you give him permission to sit while speaking.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: My vocal cords have never been out of order.

Mr. Speaker: Do you propose to remain?

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: After I have performed my duty I will ask permission to leave the Chamber.

OTHER PENDING BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: I do not know what is going to happen. There are Motions standing in the names of other Members. I see two Motions in the name of the hon. Member for Demerara River, a Motion in the name of the hon. Member for Western Berbice, and there is a Bill to be considered in Committee. If those items will occupy the afternoon then nobody will be hurt. I am entirely in the hands of Members; I am here until five

o'clock this afternoon. I am sorry the hon. Member is not going to be here because I would be inclined to begin with those Members who are ready to proceed, and see what happens. I take it that the Bill will also be taken this afternoon.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn): I do not see the hon. the Attorney-General here, but I believe I could proceed with the Bill.

Mrs. Jagan: While it is true that there are ten Motions on the Order Paper it is reasonable for any Member to gauge roughly the time it would take for each Motion. With regard to Motion No. 5, I have at home certain material from which I would like to quote, but I have not brought it with me because, having regard to the controversial nature of items 1 to 4, I did not reasonably think that we could possibly reach item 5 this afternoon. That also puts us at a disadvantage, because I could not anticipate that the hon. Member for Georgetown Central would not be here, and that the hon. Member for Georgetown South would be physically unable to proceed with his Motions.

Mr. Speaker: As far as the hon. Member for Georgetown Central is concerned, he left on Saturday for the interior and did not have an Order Paper up to that time. He returned to the City shortly before Council met and telephoned to say that he noticed that his Motion was on the Order Paper. In his case he was not aware that his Motion was on the Order Paper before he left Georgetown.

Mr. Jackson: I do not see how we can get down to Motion No. 5 and to the Bill this afternoon. I anticipated that the Motions would take up the whole afternoon. I came prepared to speak on the Motion by the hon. Member for Georgetown South, and at some length. I did not give any attention to the Bill, so I would not be able to speak on it today.

Mr. Speaker: In another place where I used to be, if there were 20 cases on the list my answer would be that you should be prepared for all. I appreciate what Members have said, but you must decide what you wish done. Somebody must give point to the matter in some Motion.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I will bring matters to a head by withdrawing Motion No. 2, and let it boil down to Motion No. 5. It presents no difficulty to me. I do not want to put Members on the spot — those who are prepared and those who are not prepared. As Your Honour said, even in this Council we must be prepared to go right through the Order Paper. I move that the Motions standing in my name on the Order Paper be deferred for two months because I propose to leave the Colony by the end of this week; I have certain urgent matters outside of British Guiana.

Mr. Gajraj: I beg to second the Motion.

Mr. Fredericks: I wish to associate myself with the remarks made by the hon. Member for Georgetown North. I am not prepared for the Committee stage of the Rice Producers' Association Bill. I therefore move that Council adjourn.

Mr. Jackson: I beg to second that Motion.

Dr. Jagan: I suggest that we move on to item No. 5 and ask the Mover to make his speech. We can hear his proposition, and if Members are not prepared to debate the Motion after that we could move an adjournment and return tomorrow to debate it.

Mr. Speaker: Before I put the Motion by the hon. Member for Georgetown South I hope I am correct in saying that the hon. Member for Demerara River is straining at the leash and is ready to move his Motion. Did I understand the Minister of Health to say that she is not ready; that she has a document at home?

Mrs. Jagan: I withdraw that, Sir. Other Members have the information which I can use.

Mr. Bowman: There are four other items on the Order Paper before my Motion and I did not anticipate that it would be reached in the time at our disposal this afternoon. I would not say that I am not prepared, but there is certain material to support my Motion which I have not brought with me. Those are the facts.

Mr. Speaker: Then there is no oil in your lamp.

Mr. Bowman: I have oil in my lamp.

Mr. Speaker: O ye virgins!

Mrs. Jagan: Sir, if all the Motions have failed, is it not reasonable that we should proceed with this Bill?

Dr. Jagan: Sir, I beg to suggest that we move on to the British Guiana Rice Producers Association (Amendment) Bill.

Mr. Speaker: I hope that the Member for Western Berbice would not think that we wanted to overlook his Motion. I do not know if he would like to move it today.

Mr. Saffee: No, Sir; I would like to ask for a postponement.

Mr. Speaker: Before I put the Motion for the adjournment, I want to say that it looks as though you wish to go right down to item 11, the consideration of the British Guiana Rice Producers Association (Amendment) Bill, in Committee. If the Motion is not approved, then we can go on to that Bill. We would have gone on with it on the last occasion if we had time.

Mr. Fredericks: I moved the Motion for the adjournment, and personally, I did not come here prepared to debate item 11.

Mr. Benn: Sir, I had mentioned in this Council that the B.G. Rice Producers Association (Amendment) Bill was fairly urgent and it had to be postponed on one or two occasions because of certain matters. I would like to know when Members feel able to proceed with this Bill, because it has to do with the B.G.R.P.A. elections, which are to proceed as early as possible.

Mr. Speaker: If my own recollection is correct, before Christmas I understood there were to be some elections which were urgent, and if this Bill be debated early it would assist in clearing up difficulties in connection with these elections. I gained that impression.

Mr. Jackson: If we had gone through with all the Motions on the Order Paper today it is logical that we would not have reached the B.G. Rice Producers Association (Amendment) Bill.

Mr. Benn: The quicker we get through this Bill, the more convenient it would be for the B.G. Rice Producers Association to make arrangements for the elections which it intends to hold. This

Bill has to be assented to and all that before the elections can go through.

Mr. Fredericks: I do not mind if the B.G. Rice Producers Association (Amendment) Bill gets priority tomorrow. I have some amendments to it which I have not brought along today.

Mr. Speaker: It seems to me that there is no alternative except to take the adjournment. If it is not accepted, then we will proceed with the Bill.

ADJOURNMENT

The Chief Secretary (Mr. Hedges): I beg to move that the Council do now adjourn until tomorrow at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: I wish to say that I do hope that Members will come prepared tomorrow. Government matters have precedence then. Council is now adjourned until tomorrow at two o'clock in the afternoon.