

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

FRIDAY, 19TH MARCH, 1954.

The Council met at 2 p.m. His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C., in the Chair.

PRESENT :

His Honour the Speaker, Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C.

Ex-Officio Members:—

The Hon. the Chief Secretary, Mr. John Gutch, C.M.G., O.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney-General, Mr. F. W. Holder, Q.C.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary, Mr. W. O. Fraser, O.B.E.

Nominated Members of Executive Council:—

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

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall.

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E.

The Hon. G. H. Smellie.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj.

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

Deputy Speaker:—

Mr. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E.

Nominated Officials:—

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

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

Nominated Unofficials:—

Mr. T. Lee.

Mr. W. A. Phang.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo.

Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E.

Mr. C. A. Carter.

Mr. E. F. Correia.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb.

Mr. H. Rahaman.

Miss Gertie H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dey.

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

Lt. Col. E. J. Haywood, M.B.E., T.D.

Mr. R. B. Jailal.

Mr. Sugrim Singh.

Clerk of the Legislature—Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—Mr. I. R. King.

Absent:—

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

The Speaker read prayers.

The minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 18th March,

1954, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

UNOFFICIAL NOTICE

CONDITIONS AT PUBLIC HOSPITAL, GEORGETOWN

Mr. Luckhoo gave notice of the following motion:—

“Whereas conditions presently obtaining at the Public Hospital, Georgetown, are in a very deplorable state:

Be it resolved that this Honourable Council recommends—

- (1) That a qualified medical officer be immediately placed in charge of the Blood Bank;
- (2) That plans for the new Surgical Block for which a sum of money was voted be implemented forthwith;
- (3) That a Select Committee be appointed to enquire into the present conditions and workings of the hospital and to make recommendations thereon.”

ORDER OF THE DAY

CONDITIONS AT PUBLIC HOSPITAL, GEORGETOWN

Mr. Luckhoo: Before the Order of the Day is proceeded with, I crave leave to make mention of a matter which, I think, is of great public importance. This morning, together with four other Members of this Legislative Council, I visited the Public Hospital Georgetown and there — to make a unanimous statement—we observed the great urgency for immediate investigation of present conditions. I have today given notice of a motion relating thereto. I do not intend to go into the details at this stage, but I feel it my duty to draw Government’s attention to the conditions which are presently existing at the Public Hospital, Georgetown.

The Chief Secretary : In the absence of the Member for Health I should like to say first of all that I understand there was a motion put down previously in regard to the Public Hospital and the need for an investigation—at least the intention of doing so was expressed—and I am also quite certain that the Member for Health told hon. Members of this Council that he was prepared to recommend that an enquiry be made into the running of the Public Hospital and the other Hospital Services, and I know that he has the matter under consideration. I gather that certain hon. Members visited the Hospital this morning. I know the advantage of a surprise visit, but I am quite sure that the Director of Medical Services or, at least, the Hospital Administrator, who was apparently not informed, would have been very pleased to go around with them and, perhaps, would have been able to explain to them the arrangements and the reasons for some of the deficiencies.

Mr. Speaker: I do not know whether the hon. Mr. Luckhoo would agree to have an interview with the Head of the Department. The hon. Member can think the matter over.

Mr. Luckhoo : I would be very happy to interview the Hospital Administrator, but the evidence of my own eyes stands prominently before me. What I saw was deplorable.

Mr. Speaker : In order to avoid any idea of discourtesy to the hon. Member in charge of conditions like that, and who is now absent from the Colony, if the matter is so urgent, I would suggest that the hon. Member see the Hospital Administrator who may be able to get some improvement done.

Mr. Luckhoo : Thank you, Your Honour.

Mr. Ramphal : I just want to assure the Council that I have certain knowledge that the hon. Member charged with Health has this matter very actively under consideration, and, I think, it has gone beyond that stage. If the hon. Member would wait until that Member returns I am sure he would be satisfied with what is being done.

Mr. Speaker : We all hope so.

BILLS—FIRST READING

The following Bills were read a first time:

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the supply of water to certain rural areas and for purposes connected therewith";

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the provisional registration as Medical Practitioners of certain persons who have passed the qualifying examinations in Medicine and Surgery.—**The Chief Secretary.**

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Customs (Consolidation) Ordinance, 1952";

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance further to amend the Tax Ordinance, 1939."—**The Financial Secretary.**

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

The Council resumed the debate on the following motion by the hon. Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines (Sir Frank McDavid) :—

"Be it resolved:

That, with reference to the Report on the Economic Development of British Guiana by the Mission organised by the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, this Council approves in principle of the expanded and accelerated

development programme for the years 1954 and 1955 presented to Council on 11th February, 1954, and of the financial arrangements for its implementation.

Be it further resolved that this Council further approves of the continuation of expenditure on all works in progress previously approved by the Legislature and of the incurring of expenditure on new projects pending the preparation and submission of detailed estimates for the approval of the Council."

Mr. Speaker: Yesterday afternoon the Council had under consideration the motion moved by the hon. Member for Agriculture (Sir Frank McDavid). Reference has been made in the Minutes to the stage at which we had reached. I understand from the hon. Member for Agriculture that he would like to make a statement, and I would be glad if he would do so now.

Sir Frank McDavid : I am grateful for the indulgence permitting me to make a short statement, having regard to the important discussion which took place after I had completed my address in moving the motion. I merely want to explain that the first part of this motion on the Order Paper is of very great importance indeed. That importance lies in the fact that the development proposal, of which it is the subject, is the foundation, the very basis, on which His Excellency the Governor was able to secure the assurance of finance from H.M. Government. I explained, and hon. Members know, that that assurance relates to a substantial increase in the allocation to this Colony under the Colonial Development and Welfare Act amounting to \$15 million. There was also an assurance by H.M. Government of facilities for raising money in London. As I have said, Sir, these assurances have been given on the basis of this Draft Development Programme as agreed, and consequently, it is vital that this Council should be invited to, and should, indeed, give its approval in principle

[Sir Frank McDavid]

to the Programme so as to endorse — indeed, to make germane — the assurance which was given. Without such an approval then, of course, this assurance might very well be questioned and might fall to the ground. That is why I have said that it is entirely vital that we should signify our approval, in principle, of this first part of the motion. I also intimated yesterday that the Programme is, to some extent, tied up with the raising of the balance of the loan under the 1951 Ordinance. This Programme, is a variation of the original Ten-Year Development Plan, so that when the motion is approved by the Council it will provide the Crown Agents with the requisite authority for such variation in relation to the raising of loans under the 1951 Loan Ordinance.

Persons who wish to invest money in the loan would be able to look to it as a formal approved programme showing how the proceeds of the loan would be applied. That is a requirement under the Loan Ordinance, and that is one of the reasons for the first clause of this motion. Some discussion has turned on the second clause. As I have explained, the object of this second clause is to get this Council's approval "of the continuation of expenditure on all works in progress previously approved by the Legislature and of the incurring of expenditure on new projects pending the preparation and submission of detailed estimates for the approval of the Council." The main reason for that is to provide an indication to the Government of the desirability of expeditiously proceeding with the initiation of certain schemes.

I should have said that the approval of the Development Programme itself is not an approval of expenditure. It is

merely an approval in principle. Approval of expenditure is, according to our Constitution, the function of this Council and is subject to the rules of debate. Hon. Members who have experience of our procedure have suggested that the second clause may be, to some extent, an infringement of the rules and privileges of the Council. That is not entirely correct, but this Council is entirely within its rights in insisting that items of expenditure should come before it in the form of detailed estimates for consideration and approval. For that reason, I intimated that I propose, with the approval of my seconder, to withdraw the second paragraph of the motion. I do so more resolutely now, because the Financial Secretary has indicated his intention to prepare the Development estimates in detail and submit them to this Council. If he is unable to do so immediately, he would come forward as quickly as possible with those items which are ready.

I understand that a meeting of the Finance Committee will be held on the fourth Thursday of this month and that some of these items might come up for consideration then. Therefore, I think Members can rest assured that estimates of the works would come forward firstly, in detail before the Finance Committee and, secondly, before this Council. I had hoped that it would have been possible for us to conclude our consideration of this motion but, in the circumstances, I think it is only right to do as I have said—to withdraw the second paragraph of the motion, which I do now, with the approval of my seconder.

Mr. Raatgever : I appreciate the action of the hon. Member in withdrawing a part of this motion which was moved yesterday. I was very glad to hear from him that he has no intention

of interfering with the rights of the Legislative Council in deciding what expenditure should be made from the Colony's purse strings. He said yesterday that His Excellency has a right to decide what money should be spent, without reference to this Council, but I am very grateful to hear him say today that that is not so.

Sir Frank McDavid: Sir I am sorry but I did not say so.

Mr. Raatgever: The hon. Member did say that. Other Members heard the statement.

Mr. Speaker: His Excellency has the power, but I am sure he would recognize the Constitutional rights of members and submit any such question to the Council for their consideration. The Governor would not think of approving expenditure of that sort without allowing the Members of this Council to have their say in the matter.

Sir Frank McDavid: I intended to rise to a point of order. I think the time has come for us to get on with the debate. I hope hon. Members will agree with me.

Mr. Raatgever: I rose to speak on the Development Programme, but I had to make the remarks I made in view of what the hon. Member (Sir Frank McDavid) said yesterday. Before I proceed with my comments on the Development Programme, I should like, as a past Member of the Third and Fourth Legislative Councils, to associate myself with the remarks made by hon. Members yesterday, with respect to the progress this Colony has made within the last 20 years, and particularly between 1947 and 1952, as regards improvement in economic conditions and in the standard of living of our people. I would like to add to what the

hon. Member (Sir Frank McDavid) has said for the records and, with your permission, Sir, I will read from the Annual Report of British Guiana for the year 1952. On page 3, under "General Economic Conditions," the report states:

"During the five years 1947-1952, nearly \$50 million foreign capital was invested in British Guiana. Apart from the grants received from Her Majesty's Government and loans raised in London, amounts totalling more than \$20 million were put into the sugar industry, \$11 million of fresh capital into the bauxite industry and \$5½ million into other mining concerns. Apart from this \$7 million were invested by the Colonial Development Corporation in forestry development and gold mining. The full effect of this \$50 million investment remains to be seen but in 1952, there were already signs of benefit to the Colony."

I think it is important that it should be added to the records of this Council that this Colony has spent \$22,840,000 of Her Majesty's Government's money—\$12 million as a free grant from Her Majesty's Government, and \$10 million as a loan to be repaid by the inhabitants of this Colony. Therefore, we have had an investment of \$72 million odd, and that has resulted in an increase of exports from \$35 million in 1947 to \$82 million in 1952; while imports rose from \$42 million to \$82 million over the same period. That, Sir, if I may say so, gives the lie to any statement that this Colony has not progressed, and that Members of the Third and Fourth Legislative Councils did absolutely nothing to increase its prosperity.

I propose, now, to deal with the Development Programme. I cannot, unfortunately, deal with it in detail, because we have no details before us, but I propose to speak generally on various points. First of all, I would like to reply to the remarks made by my Friend, the hon. Mover of the motion,

[Mr. Raatgever]

yesterday. He said, I think, that time is against us. He was accusing Members of this Council of delaying this Programme.

Sir Frank McDavid: I did not say "Time is against us"; I said that "Time is not on our side." I was not accusing any Member of the Council at all; I was emphasizing the need for speed. In other words, I was trying to urge that early action by everybody was necessary.

Mr. Raatgever : I am thinking that the hon. Member should correct the remark; it appeared in all the newspapers this morning and I am sure Hansard would have it. I would like to thank the hon. Member and all hon. Members who feel like him—that we must make haste slowly if this \$44 million is not to be poured "down the drain". In support of what I am saying, I am going to read from the report of the World Bank Mission which was laid close to the Budget Statement. The hon. the Financial Secretary regards it as being so very important that he included it in his Statement. It says here (on page 13) :

"Although the Colony has progressed in the past seven years, the problem of continuing and accelerating the development of the Colony's resources is not one which admits of quick or easy solution."

Therefore, Sir, we must make haste slowly if we are to get the maximum benefit from this money that we are going to spend. I should like to refer also to the part (page 14) of this report where the opinion is expressed that "in planning the country's long-term development, special attention must be paid to the possibilities of diversification." I feel that the time has come when we have got to diversify our economy. We have been depending

too long on sugar; we have been putting all our eggs in one basket, but now the tendency is to change that. It seems to me that we have to change our views, although it is admitted that we must have sugar. We have to think of finding other crops to take the place of rice and sugar if anything happens to them.

Before I go further, I would like to read from the Memorandum submitted to Government by Col. Spencer, and dated October 21, 1947. On page 3 it states:

"The National Income of the Colony, however, is not dependent on physical output alone; it is also a function of the prices at which the National output is sold, and these, as has been found by bitter experience in an economy such as ours, are largely determined by the price which we obtain in external markets for our exports of sugar, bauxite, rice, timber, gold and diamonds. All of these (except in recent years for the Official price of gold) are subject to considerable fluctuations, and although the general level of export prices has risen very considerably during the war years, the prices of imported goods have risen too so that a large part of the apparent improvement in National Income has been lost in inflation. Nevertheless, the general rise in the level of prices has had the advantage of reducing the real burden of debt and other fixed charges which the Colony Treasury has to meet, but — and this is what matters here—by a similar token any serious reduction in the prices obtainable for our exports would similarly tend to be reflected in internal deflation and lead to difficulties in the Colony finances and export industries. It cannot be emphasized too strongly, therefore, that the maintenance not merely of workers' living standards, but of public and social services (to say nothing of the improvements therein which are aimed at in the plan) must depend upon the Colony receiving an adequate income both in real and money terms for its main export products. If, as is undoubtedly true, increased physical production must in the long run be the main source of improvement in our real standards of living, fair and remunerative

prices for the export staples mentioned above are no less necessary, particularly in the immediate future, if the recurrent expenditure involved in maintaining public services is to be met, and the plans now proposed are to be successfully carried out . . . ”

Now, Sir, we have this coming from the man who, last year, was responsible for the Ten-Year Development plan. That Ten-Year Development Programme was put together by Unofficial Members of the Third Legislative Council and implemented by Members of the Fourth Legislative Council, and I was very pleased to see in the World Bank Report, and again reproduced in the Budget Statement of the Financial Secretary for 1954, that all the development schemes approved by the previous administration have been endorsed and embodied in the Mission's recommended programme. That says in effect, we do not necessarily have to be experts to decide what is necessary for the economic improvement of the Colony.

Members of the Legislature—14 elected and 7 nominated—were divided into Committees; you, Sir, were a member, and so were Mr. Farnum, Mr. Lee and myself, and we put together a programme, part of which has been successfully carried out, and which has resulted in improved living standards for the people of this Colony. I venture to say, from my knowledge of the West Indian Colonies as a past member of, and British Guiana's first representative on the Regional Economic Committee, that in the period 1947 to 1952 the rise in the standard of living was not greater in those Colonies than in British Guiana. So we have nothing to be ashamed of; and it is my intention to show that it is not necessary to depend only upon two main products for revenue. As is well known and Colonel Spencer recorded, prices of products fluctuate, and if we

have no other methods of raising revenue and making ourselves more self-supporting, I am afraid this Colony is going to be in a bad position.

I think it is proposed in the Development Programme to drain and irrigate areas of land. As I said I have no details as to what will be done with the land after it has been drained and irrigated, but I think the intention was, previously, to go in for more extensive cultivation of sugar and rice. I do not know if it is still intended to do that, but I am advising strongly against it. I think the hon. Member in moving his motion yesterday said that sugar has reached the limit of its capacity in production. I wish to say so myself. I have had the honour of representing this Colony and the West Indies at sugar conferences outside this colony, one being held in Canada and the others in the U.K. One of these conferences was responsible for these Colonies getting a long term agreement for seven years. This agreement has been the salvation of this Colony, because in the absence of it, and if the price of sugar fluctuated within the next few years, the sugar industry would have been in a state of flux. The people of the United Kingdom are thus subsidising the people of this Colony by giving them a guaranteed price for most of the sugar produced. If they did not do that we would have had to face the open market.

So far as Rice is concerned, we have no such agreement in force. I know my friend the mover of the motion has a long standing interest in rice. And so have I. I think I can claim to have a longer association with rice. I have had connection with a firm that exported rice 30 years ago—long before the Rice Marketing Organisation came into effect. In those days you had to

[Mr. Raatgever].

get people with spades to mix rice; samples were put in bottles and sent abroad, and invariably after you sold a shipment you would get a claim for a rebate — the rice was not up to standard. I am not an expert, but I know something of rice. Within recent years, the Government of this Colony has been encouraging the growth of the rice industry. That is quite all right because of the shortage of rice, but the time has come when we must prevent over-expansion.

The expansion of the rice industry has had a very bad effect on the cattle industry: cattle have been driven away from the third depths of the various estates; the Corentyne was the area of a flourishing cattle industry and today the situation there is very unsatisfactory. Land has to be utilised also for dairy cattle, as well as beef cattle. This Colony imports \$3 million worth of dairy products such as condensed milk, powdered milk, etc. I see no reason why that money cannot remain in British Guiana. Some of the lands which are going to be developed under the Bonasika Scheme and on the Corentyne should be used for cattle rearing, and the riverain lands for dairy cattle and poultry and eggs. I say that because I feel in all these things we can have great development. The cattle industry can give us not only dairy products but leather.

The establishment of a tannery was something that was suggested in the Fourth Legislative Council when we were putting down an Abattoir at Lethem. I have here a memorandum, which took me a week to find, dealing with this subject. Nothing has been done about the establishment of a tannery and I was very glad to hear yesterday that the mover of the motion intended to appoint a Committee to go into it. But

I do not see the necessity for another Committee. There is the report of the Committee which was accepted and which recommended that a tannery be put down the same time with the abattoir. It is better to use the hides ourselves because when we export them we get little or nothing for them; and we can use the leather locally. I remember over 38 years ago wearing shoes made locally. Every time I wanted a pair I just ordered them. We import something like \$½ million worth of shoes. The shoes I have referred to, worn long ago were equal to any of the shoes worn now and if we were to make them here, we would be offering employment to many people, while the money would remain here.

I think the reason for bringing forward this programme is to give the people a greater stake in the country. Each inhabitant who is born here, has a stake in the country by virtue of his birth. You can only give him a greater stake by providing him with his own house, by giving him land to cultivate, by giving him minor industries to carry on. As I have said, we cannot blindly accept this Programme — speaking for myself — that is to put before Members of the Legislative Council, for we might have to vary and change it in the interest of the people and the economy of this Colony.

Perhaps before I proceed further I should make some appropriate remarks on rice. The hon. Member said yesterday I intended to make some comments on rice and pointed out that the population of the world is increasing and said that in his opinion there is no likelihood that the demand for rice will decrease. Well, from the facts I have, I beg to differ. The price will also decline. I feel for the next five years or so we will continue to feel the effect of the increased production

recommended by the Third Legislative Council and initiated by the Fourth Legislative Council.

I have here extracts from the report of the special Rice meeting held at Bangkok from the 5th to the 16th of January, 1953. The report was sent to the British Guiana Rice Marketing Board, of which I have been a member for the last six years, and the Manager has circulated extracts. Paragraph 2 of the extract states:

"When the Korean war comes to an end and when the internal disturbance in other rice producing countries has been completely overcome, a sharp increase in rice production and trade in these countries is a certainty and a considerable improvement in world's rice situation will result."

Now, hon. Members listen to this in particular:

"An important factor which also has to be taken into consideration is the increased production and imports of other grains such as wheat, maize, barley, sorghum and millet as a substitute for rice. Asia imported in post-war years yearly quantities of grains other than rice ranging from 5 million tons to 8 million tons, compared with an annual import of 850,000 tons in pre-war years. It seems probable that the replacement of considerable quantities of rice by other grains in many countries in Asia will prove to be a permanent feature."

I repeat: "5 million to 8 million tons" of grain "compared with an annual import of 850,000 tons in pre-war years." And it seems probable that this replacement by grain will be a permanent feature.

As a member of the delegation which left these shores to discuss the question of a long-term agreement and increased quota for sugar with H.M.G. it was understood that we were to press for the removal of rationing of the product in the United Kingdom because,

it was felt, with such a removal the demand for sugar would double itself. We pressed the Labour Government and the Conservative Government and, as you know, rationing of sugar has been removed in England. We have in this Council a representative of the sugar industry who can tell us whether the consumption of sugar in the U.K. has increased or not. My information is that it has increased slightly. There was in the Colony last month the Export Manager of the largest firm of confectioners in the United Kingdom, who said that the increase in consumption of sugar there was negligible.

The consumption of sugar in the U.K. has not increased because children who were born there between 1940 and the present time when sugar and confectionery were rationed, do not want any more now that rationing has ceased. They have grown accustomed to the small quantities they were allowed during those years. We have an example at home here where people are using more flour today than rice. I make that statement authoritatively. I have the report of the Rice Marketing Board for the period 1st October, 1952, to 30th September, 1953, which was recently laid on the table in this Council. Referring to the figures as regards domestic consumption, paragraph 23 of the report states:

"As will be seen from the Table below, there was a slight increase in the quantity of rice sold locally by the Board but there was a corresponding reduction in the quantity of rice retained by producers for their own use, with the result that the total local consumption remained constant."

Producers are allowed to retain a portion of their rice for domestic consumption, but some find it more in their interest to sell that rice to the Board. On the other hand the consumption of flour in this Colony has increased con-

[Mr. Raatgever]

siderably. I have been a member of the Commodity Control Board since its inception in 1940, and I know that in pre-war years this Colony imported between 20,000 and 25,000 bags of flour. During the war years the imports rose to between 30,000 and 35,000 bags, then to 40,000 and 50,000 bags; and recently we have been licensing imports from 55,000 up to 60,000 bags of flour.

Rice is the staple food of our East Indian population, but they are using less rice today. I say that the consumption of rice in this Colony has not increased although the population has increased. On the other hand the consumption of flour, an imported and heavily subsidised article, has increased to double what it was. That money is going out of the country in hard currency to pay for that flour. It should be retained in British Guiana. I do not think I need say any more on that point because I think I have proved my case convincingly by facts and figures.

I have had the privilege of meeting men like Mr. Bustamante, the Prime Minister of Jamaica, and Heads of Departments in that Island at various conferences, and Mr. Grantley Adams, the Prime Minister of Barbados, who is a thorough gentleman. I have also met Mr. Albert Gomes, of Trinidad, and other West Indian leaders, with whom I worked very satisfactorily, and we became very good friends. Jamaica did not join in the contract with the West Indies for the supply of rice from this Colony, because at that time we could not supply Jamaica with much rice. As a result Jamaica has been trying to make itself self-sufficient in rice. I have here a copy of *The Advocate*, of Jamaica, dated January 9, 1954, an agricultural journal which is sent to me from

Jamaica free of charge. I do not know who sends it, but I have been getting it for some years free of charge, and by air mail.

Sir Frank McDavid: It is a very well conducted journal.

Mr. Raatgever: It is, and I am grateful because it gives me some information to pass on here. With your permission, Sir, I propose to read an extract from the report of an interview with Mr. G. G. R. Sharp, Chairman of the Agricultural Development Corporation in Jamaica. Dealing with rice he said:

"The second important development, I think, and I say so with a certain amount of reserve because the ADC has had a lot to do with it, is the expansion of the rice industry. Not only has the rice industry been changed horizontally but it has been changed vertically. Anyone flying over Jamaica today, as compared to a year ago, cannot help but notice the new rice fields laid out under modern methods recommended by the experienced Rice Officer, Mr. W. J. Wyche, who was brought here under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture. Large self-propelled Rice Combines, costing thousands of pounds each, creeping through the rice fields are something completely new to Jamaica's agriculture, and the towering rice dryers and mills being erected in St. Elizabeth, Clarendon and St. Catherine, are a sign of the vertical progress of the industry.

"Jamaica has not yet gone half-way in being self-supporting, but with the impetus being given to all classes of farmers, it is hoped, and I do believe, that 1954 will see this progress maintained and expanded. There is every justification for this expansion.

"With the fall in price of sugar, I consider that expansion of cane should only proceed with the greatest caution. In areas more suitable to the production of other crops, such as rice, and especially those areas where transport plays an important part, I think that farmers would be wise to consider switching over from cane to rice or other crops."

The next quotation is from *The Advocate* of February 20, 1954, in which there is an article headed 'ADC Shows 30,000 Tons Rice Per Year Possible Here.' It says:

"It has now been estimated that if Jamaica undertakes a programme of investigations and experiments to develop the best methods of cultivation and the propagation of strains which will be suitable for use here, local rice production can hit the figure of 30,000 tons per annum, in three years. Optimism is based on what the Agricultural Development Corporation has been able to accomplish in a short time.

"Financial assistance is to be sought from London in keeping with a statement made by the Secretary of State, to set the rice industry on a sound footing here. At the present time there are approximately 10,000 acres of land under cultivation in rice, yielding about 5,000 tons of clean rice a year. The island's potential consumption of rice is about 25,000 tons a year, and the difference between the local production and the total annual consumption of some 20,000 tons is imported.

"The ADC both undertakes production of rice and assists farmers with credit for rice growing. The Department of Agriculture is responsible for education work amongst farmers. With the activities of the ADC, and assuming that an experimental programme is undertaken, it should be possible to reach the target of 30,000 tons annually, already mentioned, in three years without further assistance to the industry than loans for purchase of machinery, and subsidies for the acquisition of minor equipment."

Finally, in *The Advocate* of March 6, 1954, it is stated:

"It was officially explained this week that Jamaica's decision to seek financial assistance from the United Kingdom Government for expansion of the rice industry will in no way affect grants to the Island for other purposes from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund. Jamaica has made its bid for aid on advice from the Secretary of State for the Colonies.

"The position is that the U.K. Government is setting aside a special £3 mil-

lion, so that investigations can be undertaken in any Colonial territory which considers that it has a potential in rice production. If the £3 million is exhausted, the British Parliament, according to the Secretary of State, will be asked to vote more funds. It has been made clear to the Government of Jamaica and other Colonial territories, that the rice grants will in no way affect the usual assistance from C.D. & W."

In the State Council on the 29th of June, 1953, I said:

"Although sugar production figures give great cause for satisfaction, the increase in rice production and the benefits which have accrued to producers are even more gratifying. Whereas in 1939 there were 60,810 acres under rice cultivation with an approximate value of crop in terms of milled rice of \$1,736,000, at the end of the war in 1945 the acreage had increased to 79,214 acres with an approximate crop value of \$4,284,000.

"In order to get a true picture of the expansion of the rice industry the latest figures for 1952 must be taken into account. The acreage planted in the autumn of 1952 totalled 133,301—an increase of 119 per cent. over 1939—and the approximate value of the crop in terms of milled rice was \$11,718,000, representing an increase of 575 per cent. over 1939. Again the higher price obtained reflects very favourably, for the average value per bag of rice rose from \$3.00 in 1939 to \$13.82 in 1953. It is gratifying to note that a certain part of the financial returns from our increased rice production has been steered into capital improvement.

"The Rice Marketing Board has made available to rice producers, machinery and equipment on easy hire purchase terms, from machinery imported from abroad on the Board's account, in addition to guaranteeing purchases of machinery from local firms by other rice producers, and also making available on hire its own tractors for clearing lands from allowing for the acknowledged drop in the value of money. These figures illustrate more clearly than any words can the monetary benefits which producers of the country received in recent years as a result of the efforts of the previous Administration to improve the lot of the working man so far as it lay in their power."

[Mr. Raatgever]

Again, last year the Board increased the price of rice, and production increased by 11,000 odd tons. I have not the figures for 1953 so I have given those for 1952 which were given to me by the Manager of the Board.

The rice industry is expanding and, as you see, I have played a small part in that expansion. I was one of the Members of the Third and Fourth Legislative Councils and have been a member of the Rice Marketing Board since 1948. The Rice Marketing Board was established to assist the rice producers, to give them a helping hand, and it has done everything to build up the industry. Since then the Rice Producers' Association of which the hon. Member, Mr. Jallal, is the Secretary has also provided machinery to assist the rice producers to expand the industry. What we need is not to take in any more land for rice production. The land that it is proposed to take in would take at least five years before it can be brought into full cultivation.

Take Blocks I and II of the Corentyne Scheme, it is over five years and they have not been brought into full cultivation. I think we are now only getting 75 per cent. of the full production. It is going to take longer than five years to bring the land into production. My advice is to increase the yield from the existing cultivation and reduce the cost of production, because we will have to face competition in the near future. There is no question about that, and we can only face competition in the sugar and rice industries by reducing the cost of production, and that is by increasing the yield per acre of sugar and per acre of rice. Unless and until we can do that, I am afraid, the rice and sugar industries of this Colony would be in a bad way.

I forgot to say when quoting from the Bangkok Report that it is proposed by India, Burma, etc. to have 8 million more tons of rice available in 1956-7. What can we do against that? Before the war rice was dumped from Burma into the West Indies. It was brought as ballast in the ships and this Colony could not compete with it. The rice producers know that, but, perhaps they would like to forget it. I cannot forget it because I lost a lot of money in rice due to the competition with Burma. The same thing is going to happen again, and Barbados, Trinidad and the other islands of the West Indies are not going to buy rice from British Guiana if they can get rice cheaper from the East. What was my reason for trying to get a Customs Union of the West Indian Islands and this Colony? It was so that our products would get free entry into their markets and theirs into our market. I am not afraid of their flooding our market. But they want Federation first before that is accepted.

I do not want to decry the value of the rice industry or to be a "Jonah", as I know something about it and I have the facts. I want to point out that we must not over-expand the industry, but rather must concentrate on improving the yield and reducing the cost of production. The type of padi we have today is unsuitable for mechanical cultivation. Most of it falls to the ground. We have got to get different types of padi for sowing—one kind for the Mahaicony-Abary, another strain for the Corentyne and another strain for Essequibo. Those are things the Agricultural Department would have to produce. They have not done anything in the past in respect of that except the pure grain padi from Anna Regina. We have to improve the yield and reduce the cost of production before we think of extending the production. With an

increased yield we can take care of the drop in price which is bound to come. It may be five or ten years from now, but it may be sooner than we anticipate. We have got to be prepared to meet competition, if not, a peasant industry which the East Indians of this Colony have built up would be hard hit and about 30,000 of them—I quote the figures for 1951—would be without this additional means of subsistence. That is my warning given in good faith. I am advising against expanding the industry too much.

The lands we propose to take in will not be ready for rice for at least five years. Let us try to provide among other things pastures for cattle. We can export cattle and become self-supporting in dairy products to the tune of \$3 million. Then we have the pig industry. We had a flourishing pig industry some years ago, when the Demerara Meat Company made bacon and hams locally very good indeed. That has all gone. We have lost it simply because not enough attention was paid by the Department of Agriculture to it. Then we have poultry and eggs. I have been attending Import Conferences from 1944 to 1952 and I know that Barbados and Trinidad and Jamaica import a lot of meat, a lot of poultry and eggs. They used to import them from hard currency Canada but in recent years—the last two or three years—they have been getting them from New Zealand and Australia. It cost them a lot of money, and those things we can produce in this Colony. When I was President of the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce—I think it was in 1946—I wrote the Director of Agriculture and the then Chief Secretary suggesting that the Department advise its officers to go around the villages and encourage the people to start a poultry industry and to teach them how it was to be done, so

that this Colony would not only be self supporting in poultry and eggs but also be able to export. But nothing was done. We have dairy cattle, beef cattle, pigs, poultry and eggs.

Then there is cocoa. When I was a child there was no cocoa imported into British Guiana. Cocoa beans were grown locally and used locally. The people used to make what is called “chocolate sticks” which when boiled gave a drink full of butter fat at the top, full of nutriment. My mother and many mothers locally made and used those “chocolate sticks” but today that is all gone. The imported cocoa has the butter fat taken out to make chocolate confectionery. We do not get the nourishment out of it that we got out of our own cocoa. All along the banks of the Demerara River there were cocoa trees. That is something we must consider. We must clear all the riverain lands and give them to the people to cultivate, so that they would have a bigger stake in their own country. They would know they own something and would not have time to listen to people telling them about Communism or giving them bad advice. They would have a stake in the country and would not have time to listen to those things.

Then there is citrus fruit. In the North West District there are trees abandoned. Thousands of tins of grapefruit juice and orange juice are imported from Trinidad. That should not be necessary. We can supply our own needs in that respect, perhaps, for one half of the year at the present time if canneries are established in this Colony. In Trinidad anyone can go and buy grapefruit juice or orange juice by the pint freshly squeezed. I have bought it many a time, passing through there. I have forgotten the price. The hon. Member, Mr. Farnum, was the Deputy Chairman of the Com-

[Mr. Raatgever]
mittee and I can state that whenever produce was brought down to the City from the N.W.D. some of it had to be thrown away as it was always rotten. That is the kind of thing that makes people get disheartened and stop producing. There is much land in the East Bank river district that can be utilized for citrus cultivation, and there is also land that can be used for coffee production.

Today, we are importing coffee at something like 4/6 per lb., but the price was very much cheaper when we were producing it here. The answer to all these questions is that we should diversify our agriculture. The Department of Agriculture should advise the people what to do. On one occasion, after a severe flood on the East Coast, we got a large number of coffee trees from the Dutch Government and they were given away to the people, but they were not properly advised as to what they should do. The result is that today we are importing coffee at something like 4/6 per lb. I remember that Sir Charles Woolley once advised a meeting of the Village Chairmen's Conference to get the people in the villages to set aside a day in each year, and get each person to plant a coconut tree on that day. If that had been done, we would have had a very large number of growing trees today and in the next two or three years the Colony would have had more than its requisite supply of coconuts. Instead of that, however, we are importing margarine and lard from the little island of Barbados which does not produce a single coconut. On the other hand, we are prohibited from importing margarine from the United Kingdom where we can get it much cheaper than what we are paying for it now.

I should like to make it clear that I did not sign the report of the Oils

and Fats Committee, and that the Director of Agriculture was British Guiana's representative on that Committee. I am sure that we can produce margarine and lard ourselves, at a cheaper cost than we can get it from even the United Kingdom. We have only to get around to the people and teach them how to produce these things. We have got to get them to diversify the agriculture of the country, and that is our only salvation. We are not going to get people abroad to invest money in British Guiana unless we have a stable Government here, and God only knows when we are going to get one. This is an *interim* Government, but I am speaking about a democratic Government—a Government of the people. My hon. Friend (Sir Frank McDavid) in the course of a speech in the late State Council, said that it was necessary to get \$20 million invested annually from outside and inside the Colony in order to maintain the existing standard of living and to take care of the natural increase in population. We are not going to get one cent invested from outside, however, unless and until we put our house in order, and the standard of living, instead of improving, is going to go backwards. That is the fault of the Government the people put in here last year—the P.P.P.

There are just one or two other items which I think I should comment on. I shall reserve by comments until we get details relating to the projects included in this Development Plan, and then I shall go exhaustively into it. I am now dealing with item 45—Stone Quarries and Steel Barges—\$800,000. I happen to know all that took place in this Colony when Government attempted to run a stone quarry some years ago. This Colony lost thousands of dollars, if not hundreds of thousands of dollars at that time, and yet it is proposed to throw away \$800,000 of the British

Taxpayers' money—because that is where this money is coming from — on stone quarries and steel barges now. We are borrowing \$16 million and we have received an extra amount of \$15 million; and the balance will come out of Reserve Fund. What the hon. Member for Agriculture, Mines and Forests (Sir Frank McDavid) said just now, means that this money is going to be thrown "down the drain", and I cannot agree to the expenditure as proposed. I do not know who advised Government to include the item.

As regards the East Bank Road (for which \$650,000 has been voted for 1954), I notice that no provision whatever has been made for river defences. I know something about the East Bank roads. During the last four years I have been going out of the City as a member of the Atkinson Board of Control, and very often we have had to travel through water in order to get over some portion of the East Bank roads. This flooding is all due to the absence of proper river defences in the area.

Mr. Speaker: It is also caused by erosion, due to bauxite vessels going up the river.

Mr. Raatgever: I know that. I have already said that it would be inadvisable to reconstruct that road until we get proper river defences. That is the first thing that should be done. These defences must be built alongside the river before we rebuild the road. I mention this for the information of some of the officers responsible, because I am going to oppose the balance of money being spent on the road until that is done, as it will be money wasted. I advocated the building of this road many years ago but the representative of Eastern Berbice in the Council, Dr. Gonsalves "stole a march" with the Corentyne road and the East Bank road did not get priority.

These are some of the things to which I wanted to draw attention in the Programme. I cannot deal with any other because I have not got the details. I have spoken generally and I hope all my remarks will be carefully considered and will be of some use to other Members who do not know what happened in the past.

Finally, I would like to say that I appreciate all His Excellency the Governor, Sir Alfred Savage is doing to help the economy of this country. I pledge myself to assist him wholeheartedly in all matters that I consider are for the good of the Colony and its people. I will support any development programme that is aimed at benefiting the economy of the Colony, improving the standard of living of its people and giving them a greater stake in their own country: this wonderful land of ours, this El Dorado of Raleigh's dreams which, I feel, if we put our hearts and souls in it and work together wholeheartedly, will become a land of plenty and a land for our children to be proud of.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I rise to support this motion, and I wish to congratulate the hon. mover for the exhaustive and lucid manner in which he covered it. It was so patent at several stages of his speech, where, possessed as he was with information and facts over a long period, he still spoke with restraint and refrained from going into details which I am sure he was competent and qualified to place before this Council.

As regards the mover's speech, the first thing that struck me was — and I may not be using his exact words

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

— the people of this country are suffering from misconception.

Sir Frank McDavid: Self-deception.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: Self-deception — we look only at the pessimistic side of things. I have seen it, and I find that even responsible people, without justification or foundation, take up that attitude and say things like, "Money has come and money has gone; this will go down the drain in the same way." I have observed that at a place like the London University where many students from all parts of the world gather, that is the attitude of the Guianese. One will find that a Trinidadian or a Jamaican is always optimistic about his colony and says, "We are going to do so and so". But a Guianese will say, "We have no sea defence. That is wrong, this is wrong". I must recall this attitude when we talk of the development of British Guiana as compared with other West Indian colonies.

This Colony is not a "small island". There is, we must remember, a lot of talk about being a part of a continent, and I must apologise if I must repeat, "This is not a small island!" This is a big country, and in this very Chamber we have often heard the words "continental destiny" relating to it, and other statements like, "British Guiana is as big as Great Britain" and what not. If this country is a bit slow or backward in coming forward, there is some reason for it. We must strive to solve our problems ourselves. It is true we need experienced men from time to time to guide us on technical and other matters which require expert attention, but

basically we must move to handle our problems ourselves. If a group of disgruntled or dissatisfied people has to wait for someone from a foreign country or otherwise to intervene, in my view, *ipso facto* it has failed to solve its problems. I say this: that we have to accept our failures: we have to go wrong sometimes; we are a young country. Capital was made of the fact in the recent debate in Parliament on the Constitutional issue that we were still a young country. We have to make our mistakes until we reach what is called political maturity.

On this point I wish to refer to the educational aspect of the Development Programme. I see a comparatively large sum set aside for Education. I do not like to refer to myself but I have had nearly 10 years' experience as a teacher, and I can say that the Colony's educational system is not properly planned. What we have been doing is that we started, as it were, with an old pair of trousers, and as we heard of improvements in progressive countries we put a patch here and a patch there, so that our educational system represents an old trousers with patches all over it. We have in many ways copied the Mother Country, in our laws and in many other things. In England primary education ceases at the age of 12 years—in a country where the standard of literacy is high and the people are far advanced. In this country primary education continues to the age of 14 or 16 years. At the age of 12 years a child in England is directed to choose one of two roads—whether it should go to a University for degrees, or to a technical institution to qualify in engineering, civil, mechanical or electrical. In this Colony the educational system seems to be aimed at University degrees and examinations for educational certificates.

It must have struck anyone who has visited the United Kingdom and moved among colonial students, that while students from other colonial territories were pursuing studies in engineering, journalism and other subjects, those from British Guiana, except those who were recently awarded British Council scholarships, were studying law or medicine in most cases. Our educational system should be reorganised and streamlined to keep abreast of the needs of the country. It should be made a feeder to the Colony's services. We should not always be compelled to import people with technical knowledge on contract. I observed that in his evidence before the Constitutional Commission recently the Director of Education referred to the establishment of a technical school. If we are to spend the money allocated to education wisely, we should not only aim at turning out University graduates who, with their laudable ideas and book knowledge, often fail to find lucrative jobs. Young people of that type soon become frustrated and find everything wrong in this country. It has been my experience that such people are the most vociferous about the failures in this country, and their arguments are usually without foundation.

I have heard quite a lot said about diversification of agriculture. The previous speaker made the point that we should go slow, or words to that effect.

Mr. Raatgever: I say "make haste slowly", because the problems of this country cannot be solved very easily.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I am very grateful to the hon. Member for the correction, but in referring to the rice industry he suggested that we should not worry to expand it. I wish to say

that I respectfully disagree with him. It is because we are unable to supply countries like Jamaica that they have had to resort to the planting of hill rice. We want to capture the West Indian markets and we must increase our production in order to be able to meet their demands for rice. I am sorry I am trespassing on the domain of my friend on my right (Mr. Jailal), but I understand the production of hill rice in Jamaica is very expensive, and if we were in a position to supply their demands I think the people of Jamaica would find it to their advantage to buy rice from us. In Jamaica there is a potential remunerative market for our rice, and if our rice industry was put into full gear we could be of assistance to the vast population of Jamaica, with beneficial results reflected in our own economy.

Sugar seems to be the target of everybody. Every man in the street who voices whatever political views he may have, points his gun at sugar. You hear phrases like "sugar barons" and "exploiters of the workers". In diversifying our agriculture we must never forget that sugar is still the backbone of this country, and it is time that that fact be made public. We have had a very interesting speech from the hon. Member, Mr. Macnie, and it would be well for those people who so often refer to exploitation, extortion, suppression and other sins of the "sugar barons" to realise that it is on record that during the last 10 years sugar has only made a profit of 3 or 3½ per cent. Any ordinary moneylender in this Colony makes far more profit than that. I am not referring to the registered moneylenders whose interest on loans goes up to 300 per cent. I was recently engaged in a case in the Supreme Court in which a person obtained a loan of \$300 from a moneylender, paid \$275, leaving a

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

balance of \$25 which over a period of 11 months grew to the sum of \$1,015, for which judgment was obtained! I am not sufficiently good at mathematics to be able to say what was the rate of interest charged.

My point is, why quibble about an industry which is providing us with our bread and butter? I say this without fear of political reaction. Do not misrepresent the sugar industry. The argument is that sugar is exploiting the country and keeping other industries down. Any moneylender lending \$25 to a labourer on a sugar estate gets nothing less than 20 per cent. interest. Yet those same labourers quibble over the profits made by a sugar company which provides so many of them with employment. Have other industries by all means, but you must not forget that sugar is still the main source absorbing the labouring classes in this Colony. I say all this because it is the general slogan, "Pull the estate chimneys down," and I have heard responsible persons also with their distorted reasoning say it would be to the good of the country to pull all the estates' chimneys down. Let us do that and what would happen next? It is so patent. There would be confusion and chaos throughout this Colony.

The hon. Member who spoke before me made the point that we have to pay back this money. I do not wish to misrepresent him, but he gave me the impression that he was a bit perturbed as to how we are going to pay back this money, and we have to think while we are thinking of this programme, as to how we are going to pay back this money. I lay the charge of inconsistency at the feet of

the hon. Member, because earlier in his speech he said there was a time when money came into this country. He gave the figures, and I must congratulate him on his mass of figures from which I have gathered a lot. I think it is in the opening part of his speech he said that as the result of the expenditure of money in this direction imports went up to \$82 million and exports to \$80 or \$82 million. I shall use his own argument to answer that question. We are going to spend that vast sum of money in this country for development, and we are entitled to take a risk, for as a result of these investments the country would progress; there would be economic development in every sphere and we would be able to meet this \$15 million which has been referred to.

Mr. Raatgever: To a point of correction! The hon. Member did not understand what I said and so has deliberately misinterpreted what I said. I said absolutely nothing of the kind. Apparently the hon. Member cannot understand. This \$16 million that we are borrowing is spending money. What I spoke about is money invested by private interests in new industries and in expanding existing industries. This money that is being spent is only spending money not investing in any industry and not bringing any return, the only return being the maintenance charges. We have got to repay the interest on this capital of \$16 million.

Sir Frank McDavid: The hon. Member can rewrite the World Bank Mission's Report in his own way.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: If I did not understand the previous speaker I must confess that he is a little difficult to understand, and so I can be excused. I had a recollection that the hon. Member, Mr. Lee, across the table corrected

his figures to \$21 or \$23 million. But be that as it may, I say—

Mr. Raatgever: Mr. Lee did not correct my figures. These figures were given by His Excellency the Governor. It is down here that we are borrowing \$16 million. Mr. Lee did not correct me; he did not know what he was talking about. Apparently hon. Members were not listening to His Excellency when he told them that.

Sir Frank McDavid: The two hon. Members are at cross purposes. Mr. Speaker would you allow me to assist in the argument? Money spent on Government projects is just as much an investment as investing in a private concern. In its Report the World Bank Mission laid as much stress on the one as on the other and said that private investments must go on. I am inclined to tell the hon. Member that he is correct that the investment of funds in these projects is increasing the national income as much as the investment in private industries.

Mr. Sugrim Singh. Whatever we have to pay back, I am saying that as the result of this countrywide improvement which will necessarily follow—I am taking an optimistic view of this development programme — we will be able to pay back that money. I come now to a very debatable point. In this Colony we have a development programme. We have already started to get going. It will necessarily call for co-operation in every respect. I do not express any fear as a result of what we have heard about non-co-operation. But, Sir, I think we should take heed and fortify ourselves so that, as we start on the road to development, we would be armed to face any eventuality. I do not wish to exaggerate, but it is my view that a

great many people in this country are prepared to go all out to put stumbling-blocks in the way of the progress of this Development Plan, because, should this plan succeed it would bring about, as it undoubtedly would, better conditions in this Colony—better housing, better roads, better facilities — and the reason for complaint and the foundation of those people's arguments would disappear. In other words, where there is satisfaction, contentment and harmony, such people cannot thrive.

I do not know — I may appear ridiculous — but I want to say that even in England it was observed that it was necessary that in certain Departments of Government where trusted persons are possessed of confidential information, such as concerning this whole scheme, there should be full co-operation. I might be asked, what can they do? I do not wish to go into details, but I say this: There are many ways in which they can impede our work. I hope later on to table a motion in this Council asking for that security and protection, for I feel that anyone receiving the taxpayers' money in this Colony, who is well placed and is having all facilities, if he chooses, to seek every opportunity to destroy the work of this country, is a weak link in the chain and must be removed. Right now we have the argument being used in the street "Don't you see if there was not all this toss up where would you get \$44 million, had there not been all this toss up and all this argument, fight and struggle and constitutional upheaval. Therefore you should thank these people who are martyrs for having brought you whatever there is." That argument reminds me of the argument which is so often heard: One takes a moonlight stroll in Water Street and as he passes by Bookers' Universal

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

Stores he looks at the buildings which have been put up in that area after the Georgetown Fire and says "Oh, the Georgetown Fire has given us lovely buildings, therefore let us burn down the whole City and get better buildings."

I do say that we have in this Development Programme to go carefully. The hon. Mover has referred to it and has raised several points in his speech. I say this: There is a certain section of the community sitting as a jury to see where Government is going to lose money down the drain. They are asking why so many experts are coming to the country and are saying that all the money will go to the experts. We have to be careful as we go ahead with this programme. If there is any degree of guile about it, I have no doubt that with the caution with which the Government is proceeding in this matter, this programme — to borrow the words of my good and esteemed friend who has spoken before me—would make this Colony in effect the El Dorado of Raleigh's dream.

Mrs. Dey: Within the last few minutes I was asking myself as to whether I should speak now or not, but I feel that on behalf of my fellow Guianese I should say something as I am interested in housing, education and social services. I prefer, however, to wait until the hon. the Financial Secretary presents his details on the programme before I speak on any of them. I desire to associate myself with all that has been said this afternoon concerning the hon. Mover of the motion. I am not at all astonished at the lucid manner in which the motion was presented to us. I happen to know just where the hon. Mover began to think in disguise and I am proud of what he is doing, and I venture to prophesy that he will

always continue to be lucid in whatever he says in this Council, whether I am in this Council or not.

I heartily agree that British Guiana is not suffering from stagnation. I think my memory can go back as far as half a century ago, when I was a child, and when I look back from what I see now, I can say that my country has progressed considerably. I agree, however, that there is always room for improvement and for the expenditure of more money, as the more we can improve the better it would be for all. I am particularly interested in education and housing, and most of all, in health and social welfare, but I prefer to wait until the hon. the Financial Secretary has given us his details. Until then, I shall not attempt to speak on any of these items, because they are too important for me to try and rush through them this afternoon.

Most of all, Sir, I have risen to support this motion as it has been presented to the Council, and having as its object the economic development of British Guiana. This Council has approved of a Development Programme relating to the years 1954 and 1955, and I see no reason why we should not approve of a motion such as this in order to accelerate the development of this country. One speaker has said — and I heartily agree with him — that this is not a stable Government. Certainly it is not, but how are we going to bring about a stable Government, if we who have been brought in to clean the Augean Stables do not take up the broom and get to work at once. I think it is our duty to support the hon. Mover of the motion and to get the motion passed. We must not expect to get things done by cutting a ribbon or pressing a button, but we must enter

the workshop and also see that no saboteur gets into it to interfere with the works. We have had the Development plan presented to us, and I am quite sure that each and every one has studied it. Let us, therefore, pass the motion, get on with the work and satisfy the people in British Guiana that we mean business, thereby nailing the lie that is being spread around, to the effect that there is no \$44 million available for development. We can only nail it by passing this motion and getting on with the work.

Mr. Speaker: Does any other Member wish to speak on the first resolution?

Mr. Macnie: I rise to support the motion in its present form; that is, as amended and further amended

Mr. Speaker: May I explain at once. I do not like to interrupt the hon. Member, but in view of his expressed intention as regards the first resolution, I was anticipating some objection, perhaps, to the second resolution, and I thought that the motion should read (at the beginning)—“Be it Resolved”—and then go on to say—“Be it Further Resolved”—. I think that is how the motion should be worded and I intend to put it in that way. If it is the wish of the Council, therefore, the second Resolution could be withdrawn. The usual thing is to signify approval by saying “Aye”, and if there is no further discussion it would be declared carried. That is why I was forced to interrupt the hon. Member. It is important not to say that you approve of the second resolution, because it would not be put to the vote. If the hon. Member insists on speaking, however, it would be put to the vote. Is it the wish of the Council that the second resolution should be withdrawn?

Question (for withdrawal of second resolution) put, and agreed to.

Second resolution withdrawn.

Mr. Speaker: The second resolution is, therefore, not now before the Council.

Mr. Macnie: I had come prepared to move the deletion of the second resolution, but that is no longer necessary. I support the motion heartily, and in doing so I wish to congratulate the hon. Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines on his most capable address to the Council, and especially on his strong admonition to those people who have seen fit, both here and out of this Council, to do their utmost to create the impression that we in this country have been in a state of stagnation for years and years. I support the hon. Mover in his condemnation of that type of person, as strongly as I possibly can, and I hope that every other Member of this Council will also do so. People who choose to create that sort of impression, Sir, certainly do not have the interest of the country at heart. Those of them who belong to this country are the worst type of Guianese and they have chosen to do so for their own purpose by deliberate untruths and distortions.

Indeed, Sir, I think that later we will be asked to record our appreciation of this remarkable work. I would suggest that it is likely that this valuable work will form the blueprint for progress in the future years of this Colony. But, let it be remembered, Sir, as the hon. Mover of the motion has said,—and I think the hon. Mr. Raatgever has made the same point—that the Development Programme before this Council today is not something which has been produced overnight, or even within the last year or two. Hon.

[Mr. Macnie]

Members know that with the exception of two schemes, all the others in the Plan as supported by the International Bank Mission, are merely an extension or implementation of the Plan as formulated before 1953. Therefore, any idea that the development on which we are about to embark has been produced overnight because of certain things that may have happened in 1953, is particularly false and unfounded. I think it is necessary to say so because some people in this country are saying—and those of us who have our ears to the ground have heard it—that all of this is being brought forward in a hurry because of the regrettable occurrences in the history of this Colony during last year. Any such statement, however, is entirely false and unfounded, and cannot be said to have a fragment of truth in it. The sooner all the people in this country realize that this is merely a continuation of certain schemes, the better it would be for all of us.

I do not propose—and I think it would be most improper — to refer to details of the Development Programme. Personally, I look forward with keenness to an early opportunity in having those details presented to us in the form in which we are accustomed, in Finance Committee. I am certain that that would be done, and I would ask that when we are presented with those details in Finance Committee all the heads and sub-heads of the Government Departments concerned be requested to be present, so that we would be able to have a heart-to-heart discussion of the various schemes and get a clear impression of what would be done. I am sure that all the Members of this Council will be able to make contributions to the discussion of some, if not all, of the schemes.

The International Bank Mission has emphasized the need for land settlement, as well as the need for careful preparation for schemes for land settlement, and I hope we will have the proposals before us soon, and that they will be a means of meeting, if not entirely satisfying, the urgent demand for it in the hope of fuller and more productive employment for a very large number of people in this country who are at present under-employed; not unemployed—under-employed. I am convinced that the first need for those people who are under-employed and who have no land, or those who have very little land, is to be provided with land, provided of course, they are sound agriculturists. Land settlement is not for the townee or the ordinary unemployed who wants a job, it is for the person who desires to own and cultivate land, and I am convinced that by giving people who are not fully employed better housing and leaving it at that, one would be incurring double expenditure, because one would still have to remove them to another area where employment can be found. I share entirely the view expressed by Mr. Brown, and previous Members of the Legislature, that to a very large degree the agricultural occupation of the people in land settlement ought to be very carefully and properly controlled.

I do not wish to say anything else at this stage except that the mover very properly paid tribute yesterday to certain individuals who have given outstanding service to this country, and I am sure this Council endorses fully everything the hon. mover said in this regard. I hope the hon. Member will forgive me for suggesting that his name should not be omitted from the tributes, which will form an important record in years to come; therefore I wish to couple the hon. Member's name along

with the others. The hon. Member is a distinguished Guianese who for years have filled one of the highest posts in this colony: Colonial Treasurer, then Financial Secretary and Treasurer, finally Financial Secretary. During my service with the Government I had the opportunity of being associated with him and I have happy recollections of it. Quite apart from that, I feel it is largely because of the outstanding ability of the hon. Member, Sir Frank Mc David that the finances and development of this country have proceeded along sound lines during the past years and especially those when he was in charge of the financing of the colony. He has done outstanding work which is not often remembered, in pursuing his hobby—rice. He first took up that hobby at the beginning of the last war in 1939 and I think there can be no question that it is due to his foresight and good management and advice that we have today a sound marketing organisation in the rice industry, and also increased production within the industry, and I feel that should also be referred to.

Mr. Speaker: There are 20 minutes left, and hon. Members might make good use of it.

Mr. Jailal: I have begun to wonder whether we are speaking on the development programme as a whole or whether we are speaking on the motion moved by the hon. the Member for Agriculture, for it would seem we have gone off and done both. So, I am somewhat at a loss whether I would be permitted to speak on the programme as a whole. I feel however that since I may not be here, I should do so at once.

I wish to associate myself with other Members who paid tribute to past governments and people who have done so

much work in the past, but I am wondering if this is the time for sharing out gifts. We are grateful to those who guided the destinies of this country, but I have not heard a word about the people who laid down their lives for this country: people who have come from across the seas and put their life blood in the soil here. I am wondering if a mite of praise, even though posthumous might not be given to them, along with the planners, the advisers and the people who do outstanding work—like Dr. Giglioli and Government officers. But I think this is not the time for praise: what we should look at is the new era. We have done much in the past, but there is so much more left undone and to be done in the future, so we can have speedier development—the present programme calls for speed—and I feel if everybody with one concert will go ahead and put themselves into high gear, we shall have the task completed within two years.

I was somewhat taken aback at the method of presentation of this item. The people outside are looking forward to somebody or this Council telling them how soon the money is coming into the field. They want to know, how the money is to be allocated; what are the functions of the Development Committees? I had hoped I would have heard explanations along those lines, but I am sorry none was forthcoming, as I am one of those who have to carry some information to the people. I hope that in the very near future such information will be forthcoming. I refer particularly to this because farmers especially are anxious about what is going to happen about these loans to open up more lands. We are anxious to hear about that.

I want to pay particular attention to rice. I heard one hon. Member say that the rice industry should be further

[Mr. Jailal] developed, but another Member suggested that there should be no further expansion of the rice industry, but that more attention should be paid to the development of other industries. It is a controversial question, but I maintain that rice should be the forerunner of other agricultural pursuits in this country, and its progress should not be impeded by the planting of cocoa or coffee, or by the rearing of cattle. When lands have been cleared we can decide which is the more economical crop to embark upon. Let us embark upon the programme of clearing the lands first, and when that is completed we can decide what to do with those lands. I am sure that when the lands are cleared and it is decided that it would be better economy to rear cattle on them, the people would go in for cattle rearing, but while rice cultivation is good economy they are not going to turn their attention to cattle rearing.

The experts were right when they said that British Guiana was a land of grasses. If the hon. Member had suggested that we should plant coffee on the hills and cocoa in the valleys, and put our cattle further back I would agree with him, but I cannot agree with him that we should convert our swamps and savannahs into cocoa farms. I agree, however, that we should diversify our agricultural pursuits; we should cultivate as many crops as possible, but we cannot force people into planting crops. When a farmer can plant 5 or 10 acres of rice and get returns within six months it is not possible for the same farmer to go up the Demerara River and plant coffee or cocoa and get returns within the same period. The only other cultivation he could resort to is sugar cane, but the sugar industry has reached saturation point and cannot

absorb more labour. I feel that sugar and rice together can provide the people with sufficient earnings to enable them to go in for other cultivation.

I do not agree with the suggestion that other countries have more rice than they need, and that our rice industry is threatened by over-expansion. For the information of hon. Members I would ask your permission, Sir, to quote for the information of this Council the report of the Seventh meeting of the Consultative Committee on Rice, which is dated 15th December, 1953. It says:

"The Seventh Meeting of the Consultative Committee on Rice, which concluded at Phoenix Park today, was attended by representatives of 19 Governments and of the Food and Agricultural Organisation and E.C.A.F.E. Dr. W. M. Clyde, C.M.G., Rice Adviser to the Foreign Office, presided.

The Commissioner-General, Mr. Malcolm MacDonald, P.C., who opened the meeting on Monday, emphasised that throughout South-East Asia much ground was still being gained against the Communists.

On the economic front, however, South-East Asia had suffered from the fall in the prices of tin, rubber and other primary commodities, and if unemployment, poverty and discontent grew as a result, there would be a danger of these successes being reversed.

In these circumstances the price of rice was of paramount importance, since a reduction made now would go a long way towards maintaining stability. A reduction did not seem impossible now that the quantity of rice available, when compared with demands from deficit countries, seemed likely to be greater than it had been in the last few years. A reduction in price would benefit both importing and exporting countries. It was clear that the peoples of South-East Asia would eat more rice if it were cheaper.

Rice represented the most vital problem in South-East Asia today—a problem

as important as the highest political and military questions. That was why these meetings of the Consultative Committee on Rice were of such great significance.

"The meeting concluded that on the basis of foreseeable demands at existing prices exporting countries would have considerably larger quantities of rice for sale in 1954, and many of the importing countries would have better local crops than they had ever had since the war. This was due partly to weather conditions and partly to schemes to increase the areas under cultivation and the yields from those areas. Japan, however, which had experienced floods, typhoons and other adverse conditions, was an exception. The harvest in Japan had been poor and the deficiency would have to be met from outside sources and by the use of rice substitutes.

These conclusions established that the need for close co-operation between importing and exporting countries continued. Such co-operation was of the greatest importance if the flow of rice was to be maintained and increased. There was a large potential market—much more rice would be consumed if earnings rose or if rice cost less."

This is a later report than the one quoted by the hon. Mr. Raatgever. I do not feel that there will be any recession in world prices of rice, and in my humble opinion there is no need to be fearful of further investment in rice cultivation. On the contrary I think we have to embark on a programme of rice expansion so as to be able to feed our growing population, and I rather fear that in the near future we may not have any rice to export after we have met the needs of our growing population. Hon. Members will remember that in past years only a handful of aliens in this Colony ate rice, but at present everybody eats rice. I will tell the Council something that may sound strange. Some people from Belladrum

called at my office recently and asked me to make sure that a shipment of rice reached their district which was previously known as an area for ground provisions, where the people ate very small quantities of rice, but today they are eating rice three times a day.

Looking through the programme I observe an item for stone quarries and steel barges, which suggests that Government intends to embark on stone quarrying. I remember as a boy that Government lost thousands of dollars in stone quarrying. Recently I have been visiting stone quarries to help primary producers to get stone, and I am satisfied that the industry can be built up by private enterprise with a little bit of help. They need a few pieces of modern machinery, and with some assistance Government could get good service from the existing companies. Stone quarrying is merely a question of labour; it needs no more technical people than there are in the Colony, and I feel it should be left to private enterprise to supply the stone required by Government. Private concerns have borne the brunt, and I think it would be utterly unfair at this time for Government to come in and put up a stone quarry, saying in effect that it had no further use for the private operators. Instead Government should assist them to acquire the necessary machinery and develop their business so that the Public Works Department could obtain its supplies of stone from them.

Mr. Speaker : It is now 5 o'clock, and if the hon. Member is not likely to conclude his remarks in a few minutes I think this is a convenient point to adjourn the debate until Wednesday next at 2 o'clock.