

22nd May, 1965.

House of Assembly

9.10 -9.20 a.m.

9.10 a.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

BILL - SECOND READING

RICE MARKETING (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Assembly resumed debate on the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to amend the Rice Marketing Ordinance and to make a consequential amendment to the British Guiana Rice Producers' Association Ordinance."

Dr. Jagan: Last evening when I spoke, I asked whether the Government was taking the country backward or forward, and sought to find out precisely what was the purpose of this Bill. I spoke very briefly about the history of the Rice Marketing Board, showing how in the very early period this Board was a wholly nominated creature of the Colonial Government. Subsequently, about ten years ago it was made into a half-way house but still with control in the hands of vested interests and big business under the Colonial regime, with a composition of eight members for the producers and eight non-producers with the Chairman appointed by the Colonial Government.

It was only after the People's Progressive Party came into the Government, and faithful to its pledges to make the Board into a producer-controlled organization, that amendments were brought forward, passed in this Chamber, made into law, and vested nearly two-thirds control into the hands of the producers. This is in keeping with trends throughout the world, modern trends that those who produce must have something to do with the control of distribution and marketing.

It seems that instead of going forward the Government wants to take us backward. Instead of retaining control in the hands of the producers, who incidentally, under the present arrangement are guided by expert opinion, such as the Director of Agriculture, a representative from the Ministry of Trade and Industry - in the past this was the Permanent Secretary - and a representative from the Milling Company, we find now that the producers' representatives

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would be reduced to a minority and the Government would be able to pack this Board with seven out of eleven members, seven of its henchmen. This is not democracy. This is neither in keeping with their pronounced intentions nor is it in keeping with trends throughout the world. Let them speak to people in the F.A.O. and the United Nations and they will tell them, if agricultural progress is to be made and this is vital in all under-developed countries, there must be democratization of the whole structure from top to bottom.

Let us deal now with the so-called reasons for this Bill. We are told that the Rice Marketing Board is in a bad way, that there is mismanagement and so forth; But what are the facts? The Board has increased its assets from a sum of approximately \$ $\frac{3}{4}$ million in 1950 to \$5 million in 1965. These are there to be seen by anyone.

We hear so much about the Board being so badly managed, and how Mr. Bayley was the best man in the country, but the figures show otherwise. They show that, prior to the People's Progressive Party winning the democratic elections for the Rice Producers' Association, for three straight years there were losses during the regime of this so-called wonderful manager in the person of Mr. Peter Bayley. I should like to give the exact figures:

1958 - 1959	\$128,894
1959 - 1960	\$112,476
1960 - 1961	\$ 96,017

The losses for those three years totalled \$337,387.

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But let us see what happened during the so-called inefficient regime when the P.P.P. had control. In 1961-62 there was a profit of \$419,639; 1962-63, \$311,352; 1963-64, \$458,179, making a total profit of \$1,189,170. Those are facts which, to summarize, show that in the so-called era of efficiency and good management, when one of the blue-eyed boys, Peter Bayley, was paid the highest salary, nearly \$1,500 including perks - more than even the man with the brains, McDavid - there was a loss during that period of nearly one-third of a million dollars. But in the period 1961-64 the figures show a profit of nearly \$1½ million.

This is how the gullible are misinformed. This is how they use their newspapers and other agencies to delude the people of this country. This is why they dare not allow time for this Bill to be debated properly, so that the people may know the facts. One hon. Member asked where was the profit? Not only have the assets of the Board been increased - as I said, those are tangible and can be seen - but there are numerous other benefits which have been given to the rice farmers and producers - a subsidy on rice bags, a subsidy for the control of pests, a subsidy to help the farmers to improve the variety of padi produced, and a subsidy to improve the technical education of the people who are engaged in this industry. All this has been done, and the amounts which have been allocated for this work have increased quite considerably. I will not tire the House by giving all the facts about how much these benefits were, but it is because of this record that the rice farmers have returned at successive elections practically 100 per cent of P.P.P. supporters when they offered themselves for those democratic elections.

Let us look at another side of the picture - this so-called poor management, inefficient Board and bad Government. There has been increased production. From 1957 to 1964 production has jumped

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from 59,000 to 149,000 tons of rice. This did not come about by magic. In Latin America the population is increasing by 2 per cent a year, and agricultural production is increasing by 1 per cent. Why is it? [Interruption.] I will not worry about ignorant interruptions. Those are facts; refute them if you can. Those are F.A.O. figures. Why is it? It is because of the archaic structure which has been imposed upon the poor producers. This is why even the Canadian and American Governments are telling landlords and big businessmen to reform themselves, to bring about land reform.

Let us come to our own position. Some Members are plainly foolish and do not want to see beyond their own horizon. Why is it that rice production was in the doldrums before? We could not even meet the requirements of the West Indies, and in one year we were thinking of importing rice to maintain our commitments. That was in the period of efficient Government and efficient management of the Rice Marketing Board, before the P.P.P. came on the scene! Why? There are several contributing factors as regards production - the question of land, the question of drainage and irrigation, the question of prices. What was the position in our country until the P.P.P. came on the scene? "Drainage and Irrigation ..." This is not the P.P.P. speaking. Listen to it. "Practically all well drained land is under sugar ..." --

Mr. d'Aguiar: To a point of order! According to the Rules of the House, if a Member wishes to make a quotation he must state the source of the quotation, the author and the page.

Dr. Jagan: This is a pamphlet which I wrote several years ago. [Laughter.] This is not for the information of the ignorant. It is merely a quotation that is referred to in this pamphlet. Since they want to know the source, the name of the pamphlet is Bitter Sugar, and the page is 8. It says:

"... practically all well drained land is in sugar ... The areas devoted to rice and pasture are badly drained and abound in large swampy areas, where almost amphibious cattle, sheep and pigs eke out an unusual existence."

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This is not Cheddi Jagan speaking. This is an extract from the Report of the Royal Commission of 1945. Let them put it in their pipes and smoke it. We know that there was no drainage and irrigation in this country. We know also that lands were bottled up in a few hands and that in this country of 83,000 square miles with a small population we had land hunger.

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There was land hunger; the people could not get land because the sugar planters controlled nearly half of the lands on which they were producing nothing, ^{and} kept them idle because they were paying a nominal rental of five to twenty cents per acre.

Mr. d'Aguiar: "What are they paying for Black Bush Polder? Not a cent."

Only last week ~~xxxx~~ we were debating a Measure to pay one individual \$4,000 per month. Is this a token reward for what was done? Because this is one of the individuals who was instrumental in writing into our Constitution that the "During-Her-Majesty's-Pleasure" (DHMP) leases were tantamount to absolute grants. This is why this puppet Government has to give the pay-off now because the colonial masters have said: "We must pay off this boy." Interruption. I did not bring him here to pay him \$4,000 per month. Of course, only this Government can change the Constitution, their masters will allow them.

It was only since the P.P.P. Government came on the scene that land, bottled up, has been released for the first time. The P.P.P. has given more land in its seven years of Government than was given out in the last 150 years of colonial rule. Let them doubt this. I am not talking -- Interruption.

Mr. Speaker: Now, now, let us have some order.

Dr. Jagan: I am not referring to the give-away to the sugar planters, the 2,400 square miles of land which were given to the Rupununi Development Company in the Interior. The policy of the P.P.P. Government was to open up the land in this country.

Mr. d'Aguiar: "You had seven years; why didn't you do it?"

Mr. Speaker: I will ask the Clerk to read Standing Order 34.

The Clerk read the following:

/"INTERRUPTIONS ...

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No Member shall interrupt another Member except -

- (a) by rising to a point of order, when the Member speaking shall resume his seat and the Member interrupting shall simply direct attention to the point which he desires to bring to notice and submit it to the Speaker or Chairman for decision; or
- (b) to elucidate some matter raised by that Member in the course of his speech, provided that the Member speaking is willing to give way and resumes his seat and that the Member wishing to interrupt is called by the Chair."

Mr. Speaker: There has been a consistent barrage of interruptions. This interferes with the speaker and I am not going to permit it. I can understand if an hon. Member makes a repartee or some such thing but to keep up a consistent chatter interferes with the speaker. Please let us have some propriety in these proceedings.

Dr. Jagan: I was referring to these big acreages. Someone referred to the 500 acres given or allotted. The policy of the P.P.P. Government was to open up the land of this country to the tillers - to the people who were prepared to produce. The policy was to limit holdings because of the density of population. The limited areas, formulated as long ago as in the period of the interim Government, were 15 acres to Black Bush Polder for rice, and 2½ acres for provision and house lot holdings. As regards the Interior, in inaccessible areas it was proposed that we should give larger holdings up to a maximum of 500 acres.

Mr. Jordan: "What about the Amerindian reserve?" I will come to that in a moment, and I hope the hon. Members will do something about it.

Who has the support of the Amerindians? Mr. Feberdy, an Amerindian Welfare Officer, had recommended that the 2,400 square miles of the Rupumuni Development Company should be bought by the Government and handed over to the Amerindians to be run as a co-operative. I should like to see what the Government is going to do about it. Mr. Jordan: "Why didn't you do it? You had

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seven years." I will come to that. We have to drain and irrigate the lands of this country. Only yesterday I received a letter from a farmer in the Pomeroon district asking me to do something about it. He said that if something were not done immediately, all the crops were likely to be lost. Mr. Correia: "Why didn't you do that when you were in the Government?" This is because there is not yet, as the hon. Member next to me said, proper and adequate water control. Up to today 60% of the areas under production, apart from the sugar estates, are still without proper and adequate water control.

Let us deal with another limiting factor. Not only were there drainage and irrigation limitations and land limitations, but also the factor of price. During the war years, when there was a fully nominated Rice Marketing Board, everyone knew that the rice which was produced was given away. I understand that the hon. Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Deoroo Mahraj) was, at one time during the war years, President of the R.P.A. and he admitted that British Guiana was forced to sell its rice for \$5 per bag when the world price at that time was nearly \$42 per bag. Mr. Kendall: "What years?" The war years and the immediate post-war years when our rice was being sold. Even if this figure is out of line - it came from one of their Ministers who was a one-time President of the R.P.A. - the fact is that it was, overall, at least half of the world's price.

Why was this done? There are two reasons: To keep the rebellious and restive West Indians quiet during the war years; they were rioting in 1938 and just prior to the war years as a result of the after-effects of the depression. We all know that food could not come to these parts during the war. Prices were rising and, with the control which was exercised by the colonial Government, sugar and big businesses, the rice price was kept low to feed the West Indians and keep them quiet also.

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There was another reason, and that was that the sugar planters here were experiencing difficulties in getting a cheap and abundant supply of labour for their plantations. I quote from a Report of the King Committee --

The Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar): On a point of order, the hon. Member should state the publication.

Dr. Jagan: I am coming to that. The publication from which I am quoting is called Bitter Sugar and the quotation is taken from the Report headed by the King Committee, appointed to inquire into "Certain Questions in Connection with Piece Work on Sugar Estates" (Legislative Council Paper 14/2 of 1944.)

"that piece workers engaged on sugar estates on an average of 2.3 days per week in the case of male resident labourers, and 1.45 days per week in the case of female resident labourers. That the actual number of days worked by non-residents is not known, but that male non-residents worked roughly 3 days per week the reason why available work is not fully taken up is because resident workers find it more profitable to work on their own rice fields and farms, and some non-residents have left working on the fields on the estates for more profitable occupations."

Mr. Speaker: Your time is up.

The Minister of Health and Housing (Mr. Bissember): I beg to move that the hon. Member be given an extra 15 minutes to continue.

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. Jagan: The same story was told by the Report of the Labour Department in 1948. I am again quoting from Bitter Sugar.

"except for female resident and non-resident time workers employed in the West Demerara Estates Ltd., and female young persons employed on the East Coast and West Coast Estates Ltd., the average number of days worked per week during 1948 was higher on the estates on the East Bank Demerara than on the estates in the other districts of the Colony. This may be due to the greater dependence on earnings on the East Bank owing to the absence of rice and farm lands in this area."

It is as clear as day. Production was limited in those days and people were living in grass houses all over this country,

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while a few people were fattening themselves. Sugar wanted a cheap and abundant supply of labour, so they resorted to seeing that the farmers were left without water control, without proper irrigation, and without land, and at controlled manipulated prices. This is the history. Do we want to go back to this?

I have referred already to the limitations on production elsewhere, in Latin America, and I can refer to other areas, but I do not want to tire this House with the facts. We are going back precisely to the same position where ^{we} were. This Government is now attempting to take us back to the days of nominated committee which ran the Board, where control was taken away from the hands of the producers. We do not want to go back to that situation.

The past Government gave, as I mentioned, a great deal of land to the farmers. I remember protesting in this very Chamber, to the fact, that while it was necessary to give more lands to the farmers, sugar planters were taking away lands which they had leased to farmers, and which were ~~idle~~ idle. It was from 1943 to 1947 that they took away two thousand acres of land which were given out to plant rice, and one thousand which were given out to plant ground provisions. That was because they wanted a cheap and abundant supply of labour. Has this thesis changed? Who can tell us that the sugar planters and the big gods associated in this country do not want the same conditions to prevail? The capitalist system is based on a reservoir of surplus cheap labour. That is how they operate.

I refer to this point because I keep hearing the hon. Premier interrupting, when Members on this side were speaking, saying, "Please tell us how this is going to ruin the industry." Well I will tell you now how it is going to ruin the industry. If production is going to be curtailed, by whatever means, in the interest of the imperialist companies operating here, and in the interest of people like the Minister of Finance who want to share 45, 50, and 60 per cent dividends, then we must be worried because the rice industry does not affect only those who till the soil, it affects /the../

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the general economy of this country in two ways. Firstly, every person who is put on the farm provides secondary employment for four or five other persons in industry, transport and trade. Secondly, the income, small as it is, accruing to this sector of our national production remains here. It does not go abroad. But this is not the only fact. The fact is that because it remains here it has what is called a multiplier effect. It changes hands all the time and thus, a lot of money is in circulation. But curtail the production, threaten the industry, and see what the backwash effects will be. I know that the members of this Government have a bug in their brain about the fact that Indians are in the majority of this rice industry, but they must not be shortsighted. The danger of curtailment of production will affect the whole economy, and it will affect the lives of five times the forty-five thousand who are engaged in this industry directly.

The hon. Members should have told us by what means they are going to make the Board more efficient. What are they going to do with the fifty tons surplus rice there? What are they going to do about the surplus which will come in the future? We were told at one time that they would subsidize the rice industry, and that they would give the farmers the same prices they were getting. Before the elections, the hon. Premier told them, "Don't worry we will trade with Cuba" but after his boss over there [pointing to Mr. d'Aguiar] told him that there will be no Cuban trade, he told the farmers "Don't worry, we will maintain the prices." But maintain the prices for how long? Dear Lord how long?

[Dr. Jagan contd.]

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Is it going to be a subsidy or a loan? From what we can see it is not going to be a subsidy, because they must have calculated after they opened their big mouths ("mouth open story jump our") that to find the money is another story. Indeed, when they looked at the balance sheet they found out. That is why we find today that the hon. Minister of Economic Affairs (Mr. Thomas) says one thing and the Premier says another. The Premier says one thing and the Minister of Finance says another. [An hon. Member: "Collision."]

Collision is right. What will they do? What is the alternative facing them if they do not subsidize? What will they have to do? One, drop prices; two, even if they maintain them for this year, they will have to drop prices to the farmers for the coming year, and/or increase the grades of rice so that they will be getting the same price for the higher quality which they have to sell to the Board; three, increase the selling price of rice to the consumers. Those are the avenues open to them; those are the three alternatives open to them. Which are they going to adopt? Obviously they cannot increase the price to the consumers because they promised to reduce the price to four cents per piat when they got into the Government. They have also to look at the cost of living. So that is out so far as I can see.

Let them tell us; they are in the Government. We have shown what we have done. We have changed the "mud house"; we have changed whole structure in this country. You go around and see. That is why the people have continually voted for us. Those are facts. But they do not tell us what they will do. They only talk about inefficiency vaguely. How will they do the job better? Let them convince the rice farmers. They do not want to do that, and that is why they are rushing this Bill through. They are now caught in the dilemma of falling prices in the world market. But this is not a factor only pertaining to rice. [Mr. d'Aguiar: "That is the first sensible thing you have said."]

It is a factor which also pertains

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to sugar. Why don't they tell us. They have quoted the Dumont Report. Why don't they tell us the overall picture presented by Mr. Dumont? The Premier: "Why didn't you publish the Report?" Dumont said that this country must plan away from sugar and rice because of the bleak future which is likely to be faced by falling prices in those two industries. Blame the P.P.P., but everyone knows that you cannot change overnight the structure of the economy. They criticize the rice producers, the Rice Marketing Board and the P.P.P. because of the future that faces them - not because of what the P.P.P. did, but because of world trends. They do not want to listen to world trends, but because of these factors they want to change - at least so they say - the constitution of the Rice Marketing Board. But why don't they go and tell the sugar producers: "The sugar industry faces a difficult future and the time has come when we must change the set-up". The Premier: "That is what we are doing."

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Chandisingh: I move that the hon. Member be allowed a further 15 minutes to continue his speech.

Mr. Lall seconded.

Agreed to.

Dr. Jagan: I could make another two-hour speech on this. We have heard a lot of talk about decolonizing of sugar. This is a fraud to be perpetrated by buying a few shares and fooling the people. Mussolini and Hitler also sought to incorporate so-called nationalist, socialist States. They bought some shares in the big capitalist concerns. But all they did was to run them more efficiently for the capitalists.

I will come to the question of the rice and sugar industries. Let us make a general comparison. Both industries are facing the same future, a bleak future. We were told by the experts whom the Members of the Government are quoting, that we must plan away from sugar and rice. What has the Government done about intervention in

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the sugar industry while it is putting a heavy hand on the rice industry? Nothing. They say, "We will buy a few shares, but the management will still be left in the hands of the capitalist class."

[Mr. d'Aguiar: "Sugar has not asked us to lend them \$4 million. If they did we would want to take care of the money."] Government should do us the favour of telling us how they will extricate themselves from their dilemma. There is no doubt that the Rice Marketing Board was faced with a serious dilemma - what to do with its surplus of rice? On the one hand it was getting the world's best price from Cuba, a price which was the prop which kept up the West Indies price. To conference after conference our delegations went, but the West Indies were always demanding a drop in the price of our rice. But the Cuban price kept them in line, because it was a little higher.

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While this was being done, while the past Government and the Board did not get the support of the Opposition to keep pressing the West Indians to give us more, what were they saying? Listen to the United Force:

"In this time of serious world rice shortages, Guiana is free to sell its rice at bargain prices. America and Brazil, the only large-scale rice exporters near B.G., are getting \$10 a bag more than we are."

This is the propaganda with which they were fooling the people here!

They had one of their henchmen, Bashir Khan, spend a three-month holiday in South America when he was Chairman of the Board. He came back and lied. The Permanent Secretary to the Ministry of Trade and Industry was there; he can verify that Bashir Khan lied when he said that he had a contract with Columbia to sell rice at a price 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ % higher than the Cuban price. These are the facts: If the Board had immediately sold its surplus at the prevailing world price wherever it got markets - whether in Europe, in India, or God knows where - it would have meant this: that there would have been the likelihood of the Cuban's price and the West Indies' price falling. Also the likelihood that the people would have been terribly fed up with those who were managing the affairs of the Board because of the false propaganda which was being spread by those who were not concerned with the rice industry, or the people of this country who merely wanted to get into the seat of Government by telling falsehoods. The correct thing to have been done was to work on the contract which we had got.

The hon. Minister keeps referring to this five-year contract. It is true that the Cuban Government had intimated to the representative of the Board who went there -- Mr. Kendall: "Who was the representative?" -- that he was interested in signing a contract. Let the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry

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Trade and Industry say that it is not true that part and parcel of this contract was to be the question of a bilateral trade agreement. When we were ready to negotiate, what were the people told in this country? Blood money! We had to insult the people, who were supposed to be doing us a favour, by getting them to deposit money in the Bank before the rice left the Board.

Mr. Kendall: "That is natural." Everyone knows that business today is generally on credit, sometimes of ninety days, especially in these days of what you call "buyers" market.

When cement was brought into this country, what did we hear? The cement is not good. Mr. d'Aguiar: "You used it." The hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar) said that he had been to Cuba. Let him tell us of some of the biggest monuments in the world which are there in Cuba built from Cuban cement! This is propaganda! This is falsehood! They did everything possible - taking orders from their American bosses - to break this contract. They were not thinking of the rice industry, they were thinking of by what means they can bring down the Government wherever it was having some control, whether in the Board or wherever it was, regardless of the consequences. This was their approach.

Cubans are human beings like everybody else. How can you tell them about blood money? I am always being advised that I must not curse the Americans; that I am stupid. This is what I am told over here. But look at them, what is their record? During the Election campaign while the Premier's party was saying that they will keep the Cuban market open so as to get the votes of the rice farmers, they were circulating an extract from Life magazine of Juanita Castro's speech attacking Fidel Castro, while the other stooge party -- The Premier: "And you circulate what my sister says about me?" [Laughter.] -- was carrying daily newspaper advertisements attacking the Cuban Government.

Bilateral trade agreement is part and parcel of life. The mighty United States, which is so rich, which has been exercising

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pressure on its allies who are not so rich, now finds itself sending missions to Eastern Europe - it is even thinking about communist China now to see what trade possibilities there are! The poor people of the United Kingdom in the Western Bloc have said: "To hell with them. We have to make our living, and so we will sell buses to Cuba." So says England. France says: "We recognize China, and we are going to sell to them."

Let us face facts. The Cuban Government is not going to crack up as they are all hoping -- The Premier: "Nor this Government." -- but it is experiencing difficulties. This is due to a fact of life, the fact of a blockade which is imposing tremendous hardships on a poor country. Therefore, the country finds itself not only with an ordinary blockade, but a trade blockade - a shortage of dollars. Therefore, the country is willing to explore the possibilities of bilateral trade - what can be sold to this country for what it can buy. But what are we told? The first pronouncement of the Minister is that this Government is not interested in bilateral trade. This Government is for free enterprise. This Government did not use the word, but that is what ~~the~~ masters said in America.

I remember when I went to Canada I asked the Canadians: "What would you buy from us? We would like to know so we can plan. Do you want more rice, more timber, more what?" They said: "We do not believe in bilateral trade." This was the philosophy of this Government until its masters in America told it: "Boys you cannot speak this way." After certain members of the Government went to Puerto Rico, the tune changed.

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Now we hear of bilateral trade agreement and that bilateral trade is absolutely necessary. Where are we going? This is not policy, this is drift. The Cuban market is a lucrative market, in spite of what the hon. Minister of Finance says about the draining of Matanzas. Draining of Matanzas does not necessarily mean rice. Cuba wants to become self-sufficient. They are importing beans from Mexico and they also want to grow their rice, but they have found out from experience, that, even though in the context of the world capitalist jungle it is necessary to diversify and not put your economy in one basket, in a one-crop economy, it is not ipso facto necessary to go in for rice. When they looked into the economies of rice planting, they found out that it would be more profitable to grow sugar rather than rice. They found out that having their eggs in one basket of sugar, previously posed a serious problem in the capitalist jungle, but no so today.

We all know that specialization is taking place in all socialist countries, and we will eventually have to do this in the Caribbean if we are going to get anywhere. I merely make this point to disprove the fallacious intervention based on illogicality, that what the Minister said is not true. The Cubans were importing about seventy to eighty per cent of their foodstuffs from the United States of America. Therefore, if they are draining their lands now, it is not only to grow rice but to grow all the other commodities which they need. What the hon. Minister of Finance does not know is that the Cubans are pressing to produce by 1970, 10 million tons of sugar and 10 million head of cattle. He is still living in the past, talking about dropping from 6 million to 3 million. He does not know that from June to the end of this year, production will have reached 6 million tons.

Mr. Speaker: Your time is up.

Mr. Bissember: I beg to move that the hon. Member be given an

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extra 15 minutes.

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. Jagan: My hon. Friend (Mr. Chandisingh) who has just returned from there said that it had reached 5,000,100 tons by the end of last month. The Minister of Finance just said that they proposed to produce, as I said, 10 million head of cattle. Dumont was there, too, not only here. He told us that we must plan away from sugar and rice and go into cattle. That is the kind of advice he gave here, and there too. When they looked at the figure they found that it would be far more profitable for the Cuban economy, to concentrate on cattle instead of rice. This is economics. Therefore, do not sell^{us} the idea that the Cuban market would have disappeared in the near future. This is not so. Hon. Members, however much they may have expounded pre-election that they would continue to trade with Cuba, have forgotten this.

In the first place they defended themselves on the bilateral trade and shifted blame on the Board, that the Board should have gone and done it. Boards cannot sign bilateral trade agreements; only Governments can. Suddenly they have come to realise, having gone to Puerto Rico, that they have to sign a bilateral trade agreement, so they have changed their tune and made a switch in policy decision. I should like to remind this House of the P.N.C.'s statement which was made prior to the Elections. This is very vital. They said they would retain the Cuban market and take immediate steps to expand British Guiana's overseas rice trade as they would be in a better position than the P.P.P. to sell to other countries.

They talk about majority pointing to Government benches. Everyone knows this had been produced by a fraud and aside from that, supported by a very thin layer even in numerical terms. I appeal to them not to tamper with the Board but go to Cuba. Let them tell us of all their explorations in all the other parts of the world where they said that they would be in a better position

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to sell rice. If Castro is Jagan's godfather, the godfather of the other side of the coalition is Uncle Sam. Go and get markets. In Jamaica the market which I and the Board negotiated for packaged rice is now being taken away by the Americans. From 1960 onwards we got the Jamaicans to take all our packaged rice. After that we sold 3,000 tons of rice. When I went there I took our packaged rice on pieces of paper and said, "Look gentlemen, maybe in the past we could not produce the quality you wanted, but we can do it now." They were satisfied. They said, "We will take all our packaged rice from you." We even went to the trouble of meeting all the businessmen who were importing different brands. We produced different brands for them. The same rice went into different names and packages and we gave them out. From 1,000 tons it jumped to 3,000 tons but then Uncle Sam came in because Uncle Bustamante wanted Uncle Sam's dollars and so he told Uncle Sam to come and set up a base, and also to open the markets again.

It is a known fact that on a free trade basis, poor markets like British Guiana cannot compete with giants like the United States because of the techniques that must be used today in advertising and marketing.

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[Dr. Jagan contd.]

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Even countries like the United Kingdom and Europe cannot compete with the United States. This is why the U.K. did not agree to the disbanding of the Commonwealth bloc as a trading bloc, which was demanded by President Roosevelt after the war. The U.K. Government knew that on the basis of free trade she would sink. How then can we?

Where is the policy of this Government? Jamaica, whose market we had secured, is now going West. So they have gone to Jamaica to see if they could rehabilitate themselves. But what happened? Only God knows what they have done; the people do not know, in spite of much talk about consultative democracy. They must have signed rice agreements with Jamaica and made commitments which we do not know of. But the Trinidad Guardian of Wednesday, 19th May, 1965, writes about Jamaica being 1,300 miles away from British Guiana and Trinidad 300 miles away. Then it goes on to refer to this new shift in trade from Trinidad to Jamaica in asphalt, cement and other products. Then it goes on to ask:

"What does all this mean? First, we cannot take traditional markets for granted. Second, we cannot expect tacit, reciprocal undertakings to survive of their own accord. Third, our trading policies must be more positive and active.

Jamaica thinking on the matter is mollifying, but not without some constructive, ironical undertone."

Here the Minister of Trade and Industry tells us that the Cubans are no good; they do not honour agreements. But I have pointed out what was the advantage of the agreement with Cuba - that it was to be a bilateral trade agreement. The Trinidad Guardian is complaining that this Government is not prepared to honour tacit agreements made, and there is the definite danger that we will lose the biggest market we have today in the Caribbean if we are not careful.

Representatives of this Government have gone to Puerto Rico. They have not told us what price they have secured for rice, but in a private conversation I am told that the price I negotiated for the sale of rice to East Germany is far higher than what they have

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negotiated with their bosses in Puerto Rico who are taking orders from the U.S.A. That is why they dare not speak before, because they cannot come here and talk intelligently to Members of this House and to the people of the country. Their first trip was to Venezuela. What has come of that? What has come of those wild promises they made before the General Election, that they had better markets (\$10 more per bag) than we got in Cuba - that the P.P.P. Government was giving away our rice. Where are those markets now? Please tell us how you propose to get out of the dilemma which is confronting you? Do not only try to act ruthlessly, because you have a majority, to take over the Rice Marketing Board and crush the rice industry.

Government has a serious responsibility not only to the rice farmers but to all the people of this country. If the rice industry is imperilled - already we see dangerous signs - there can be great difficulties in this country. Today farmers cannot reap what they plant. On the East Coast people who plant coconuts and what not cannot reap their produce. Is this going to encourage agriculture? During the war years Governor Lethem had to impose very serious penalties for praedial larceny. Put the Rice Marketing Board back in the hands of the old brigade, the landlords, Water Street merchants, and the sugar planters, and you imperil the rice industry.

What then is the main purpose of the Government's intervention? They have not told us how they propose to solve the problems of the Board. They have not told us what policy they will pursue - whether they will subsidize the rice industry or reduce wage rates. What are the real motives of this Measure which is being rushed through? First, jobs for the boys. The first thing that this Government did was to issue an edict from the Minister of Trade and Industry to the Board: "Please do not fill any appointments until I, the dictator, say so." Yes, this is how we are supposed to run things without political interference! We see even now instructions are being given by the Minister about whose rice the

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Board should take and whose not to take. Only yesterday I was told that the Board was instructed to take rice from somebody in Mahai-cony. It was brought to the Board but there was no space in the bond, so it was dumped outside the premises. This is efficient management - jobs for the boys and favouritism. Let those who are in high positions reap, even if it means jiggery-pokery business on the side.

Mr. Speaker: Your time is up.

Mr. Chandisingh: I move that the hon. Member be granted a further 15 minutes to continue his speech.

Mr. Hamid seconded.

Agreed.

Dr. Jagan: From the time of the intervention of the P.P.P. in the affairs of the Board and the R.D.C. they have introduced Measures to control fraud and so forth by what is called a system of coding. That was part and parcel of the life of the organization before. I know it from long association with the industry. Bring the old brigade back into the saddle. Bring back John Fernandes who used to make a fortune with his schooner pool because it had control of shipping rights.

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Dr. Jagan contd.

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This is why the Government wants to control so that people who can fill their pockets with \$40,000 per year can put, I suppose, Peter Bayley who might be coming back. We had the other Ramphal who was the bright blue-eyed boy of that era. Now we have another one, Sonny Ramphal. I suppose we are going to see a lot of fellows like these hovering around on the scene. There is no doubt that the industry faces a grave threat if it is going to have political interference as we have seen already. If you are going to bring the old brigade back in the saddle with all the nepotism which went on before, then surely you are going to destroy this industry.

Let us look at what the hon. Members and their party said about this industry. They accused the P.P.P. Government of being a rice Government. They said that the P.P.P. Government was making too many concessions on rice and that it was spending far too much money on drainage and irrigation schemes. The Minister of Trade and Industry (Mr. Kendall) in 1958, when he was not Minister, recommended the withholding of duty-free gasoline to rice producers. In the Legislature in 1962, the United Force spoke for the ending of duty-free concessions and the withdrawal of any subsidy to the rice industry. Now Mr. d'Aguiar as Minister of Finance tells us about \$16½ million to the rice industry as if this is a grant to the farmers.

How was this divided up? He said the sum of \$5 million is for the Rice Development Company Limited, \$5 million overdraft to the Board and about \$6½ million to finance operations at Black Bush. First of all, the \$5 million for the Mahaicony/Abary rice mills was not negotiated by the P.P.P. and the Government. The so-called wizard McDavid negotiated it and the planning was very faulty. First of all, they cited the mill at the wrong place. It was not right on the water-front so it entailed extra handling which added to cost. Secondly, the mills were so large they did not have enough paddy for an economic "through put"; therefore,
/the mill'

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the mills made losses. Of course, the other factor of the loan which the hon. Member referred to was the six and seven per cent interest which the Government had to pay to our benevolent British Government through the C.D.C. They charged six and seven per cent interest for this so-called depraved industry and yet we hear a lot of criticisms about Cubans and Russians who give interest-free loans to the high Aswan dam project in Egypt. Hon. Members must hear these facts. Therefore we accept no responsibility. But I may just remind hon. Members that it was only when the P.P.P. came on the scene and took control, and as a result of its other measures, that the R.D.C. began to show a profit for the first time.

As regards the overdraft by the Board, practically every Water Street merchant will tell you that they all - except the big foreigners who have their own banking arrangements and everything else - face an overdraft. That is how business is done. The Board would not have been in this difficulty today had it got the world price during the best years - the war years and the post-war years. Had it not been thrown down the river, the Board would have got between \$10 million to \$15 million more which could have been retained in the Board for reserve, working capital, or for extension and improvements in the industry. This is a fact of life. Therefore, the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar) must not be, I would say, deliberately misleading and dishonest to lump all these things in a global figure and say that the P.P.P. is to be blamed for all of these things.

Coming to Black Bush. If \$6½ million - I do not know what is the precise figure - is to be spent on Black Bush, why didn't the hon. Minister read what the experts said about the financing of agriculture, The Government has the files now, let them look up and see what one of our best men, Gavin Kennard, had to say. I am going to see what the Government is going to do when he begins to demand \$4,000 per month. Mr. Kennard made repeated reports that it is necessary to find more money to finance agriculture - far more
/than ...

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than we have done in the past. Indeed, let those who served in the interim Government - this is the second interim - tell us about the Courbois Report. He was a man who was brought here right after the Government assumed office in 1954. They brought two men after Lyttleton said: "There would be no shortage of money. As long as you have worthwhile schemes, you will have all the money you need. Money is no object." They brought Courbois and a man named Brown from Gezira.

Courbois said that this was an agricultural country, but when you looked at credits you found that those who controlled the banks, insurance companies and everything else, were diverting an insignificant amount of money in the agricultural sector in a predominately agricultural country. He made the point that something had to be done about this deficiency.

We are criticized a great deal about Black Bush. But the planning of Black Bush was not devised by the P.P.P. Brown did it, a man from Gezira. I am not going to go into this because I can defend this at any time. I merely want to say that even this small amount of money which was suggested as being a fantastic loss, is not our fault. If the Board borrows money on an overdraft, then it is the farmers who are losing because the sum of \$333,000 which was paid last year as overdraft interest charges to the Banks for the money which was borrowed does not come from the Government but from the pockets of the rice producers because they are the ones who lose in the end. The Premier: "How?" Simple mathematics. If that money were there it would belong to the farmers and they would be given increased prices.

Credits are necessary for this industry, and I warn that there is grave danger. Members talk about the rice industry and compare it with sugar, but, surely, we are not talking about equals. All along we are told that money was squandered in the rice industry and we are told in a statement from the horse's mouth that this industry is being pampered and petted and something must happen to it. This is the image which the Government has created.

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They quoted the sugar industry. [An hon. Member: "Who quoted it?"] Your Minister of Finance is always telling us how efficient the sugar industry is. We know that the sugar industry is efficient, we are not denying this, but we know also that the sugar industry has become efficient at the expense of the lives of the people who worked there.

Over the last 15 years while production has doubled, the labour force has dropped by half. They do not say anything about this, but they criticize mechanization in the rice industry. I criticize yes, but I criticize all around.

Any person who dared to touch the sugar empire always was hit not only Peberdy; there was another one whose name was Hutchinson. He had the foresight to recognize the problems which we now face in this country. He saw it coming and said, "Open up the lands, more and more drainage and irrigation." Not only that, he said, "Let there be charges according to ability to pay." He said that sugar was the only economic crop producing the most income, but it was using the most irrigation water. What did he recommend? These are the differential rates that he recommended:

Existing Sugar Cane	...	...	...	\$5 per acre
New Sugar Cane	...	...	...	\$8 per acre
Banana	...	...	...	\$4 per acre
Autumn Rice Crop	...	...	...	\$2.25 per acre
Spring Rice Crop	...	...	...	\$1.50 per acre
Pasture	...	...	...	\$ .75 per acre

Here was a man dealing on the basis recommended, and dealing on the basis of logic, value of crop per acre, amount of water utilized for irrigation purposes. What happened? The big gods who then controlled the Legislature went against it.

Mr. Speaker: Your time is up.

Mr. Persaud: I beg to move that the hon. Member be given an extra 15 minutes.

Mr. Hamid seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

/The.. /

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Dr. Jagan: The Governor, then Sir Charles Wooley disagreed with Mr. Hutchinson and suggested a flat rate of \$4.00 per acre, and this is how he put it:

"Mr. Hutchinson in assessing the revenue position of the project used a system of applying differential irrigation rates to the different crops. In practice this system would be extremely difficult to apply particularly in respect of small interspersed areas of fruit trees, ground provision, pasture, etc."

This was only rationalization not to implement a proposal which had merit. Even the Daily Argosy which was a Colonial mouth-piece had to attack the Government. Here are their words:

"it looks to us, nevertheless, as though it (local opinion) has been given too much weight by senior officials in whose hands the decisions lie, and it may be that one day - and that not too far hence - this fact will be bitterly opposed."

This is the old order that we are being told to go back to.

I asked the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, many of whose supporters are ordinary poor people, to think about them, having got their votes. Let me remind them of what happened in the days when the Ratgevers, John Fernandes and Deeroops had control of this Board.

In 1955 the Board dropped the price of paddy from \$6.30 to \$ 6.00 - the first interim Government. In the second interim we are going to see the same thing happening, dropping of prices. This is what is facing farmers but they do not have the guts to tell them. They are talking about inefficiency in the Rice Marketing Board.

I warned hon. Members that if they destroyed the rice industry they will only be creating their own grave diggers. Note what is happening in neighbouring countries because of a downward price trend generally. In Jamaica and Trinidad people are leaving the rural areas and gravitating to the urban areas. In Jamaica, despite all the ballyhoo we have heard about industrialization, only about 10,000 people have got work in industries while more than 25,000 people are going to the labour force as a result of increasing population from the bottom, plus people who are being thrown off the land because of agricultural depression. What is going to happen in
/this..//

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this country? The Government will soon find out.

I heard the hon. Premier talking about economics. He said not long ago that \$4.00 is the minimum that a worker will require. The Premier: "But you did not give it to them, you said, 'not a cent more'."] Incidentally, I am glad the hon. Member raised this point. I would like to nail this lie which has been repeated over and over. Only this week I saw it in the New Nation, this lie, this falsehood. It is true that I used this phrase, but it was in another context with reference to another matter. Let those who like to lie and distort know that it was used in connection with the Gorsuch Report, where recommendations were made to increase the minimum wage to \$2.70 per day. My Government had increased it to \$2.75. There was a recommendation for no increase for the middle brackets and fat increases for the top brackets. It was in this context that I said, "Not a cent more." Those falsifiers of history continue to peddle this falsehood to give a wrong impression to the Guianese people, and to other people.

C O P Y

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[Dr. Jagan contd.]

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Let the Government be careful about what it is contemplating now. It should know what is taking place in Trinidad and Jamaica and try to avoid it happening here. Fortunately for us quite a lot of the Guianese people still like to go on the land. Those are the dilemmas developing now. One Member talks about increasing the \$4 per day minimum wage, but he does not know whether the economy of this country can stand a \$5 per day minimum wage. Having let loose the Frankenstein monster they are being threatened by another monster. [The Premier: "What is the monster?"] The monster of the U.S. controlled Trade Union movement in this country. Having reared it up you are trying to muzzle it, but when you let loose a tiger it is a different story.

I notice that the only independent Member who is not subject to political control, the Minister of Economic Affairs, has opened his mouth, and the truth has come out about American tutelage. However, we shall see what we shall see. But let them tell us how they are going to develop this country and provide the jobs and the increased standards of living. We at least had agriculture to absorb the new people coming into the labour force. But what is the Government going to do when it destroys the rice industry? "Analyst", writing in the Evening Post has always attacked the Government about its agricultural policy, but I find him suddenly saying "I hope it will dawn on the Government and many people that agriculture will still continue to be the backbone of this country for a good many years to come." Having declared that its road programme would absorb up to 10 per cent of the unemployed, the Government is now faced with the reality that it is only going to provide work for a measly 300 persons.

If the Government's programme is not going to be based on industrialization - it has bartered away our rights to oil and bauxite without even informing this House - will it tell us how

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those industries are going to be developed? One day the Minister of Economic Affairs blurted out an attack on the Demerara Bauxite Company, but I noticed that the next day ~~that~~ he was put in line. I should like to know what this Government will do - barter away the mineral and other rights to foreigners? Will you borrow money for infra-structure development, mainly roads and the bridging of rivers, to allow foreigners to take our minerals away? That sort of thing will never lead to development. Go to South America where American influence has been operating for many years, and see where it has got them.

So far as the gift of the gab is concerned my friend the Premier is a master, but he knows nothing about figures. What are the facts, the realities of our situation? These are the facts: Our national debt has increased by leaps and bounds from \$24 million in 1954 to \$127 million in 1964. The annual debt charges have increased from \$ $\frac{3}{4}$ million in 1954 to \$10 million in 1964, jumping from 5 per cent to 17 per cent of our annual revenues. In a few years to come - in 1968 - we were told that our debt burden will increase from \$10 million to \$17 million, and Berrill did us the great service of reminding us that if we had a development programme based on \$200 million financed predominantly from outside, that by 1970 one-third of our revenue would go towards debt charges.

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Persaud: I move that the hon. Member be granted an extension of 15 minutes to continue his speech.

Mr. Ram Karran seconded.

Agreed.

Dr. Jagan: The Government's programme is obviously going to lead this country into bankruptcy, and will lead the rice industry to even greater disaster. The solution is not to go backward and to interfere in the operations and running of an organization which is democratically run. The solution is to have a correct economic programme and policy. But I regret to say that Government has not even thought about this.

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The solution to this country's problems is not to deprave and destroy the rice industry, which everyone knows is a very marginal industry. One economist from the University of the West Indies told us that the rice industry is very marginal, that, taking into consideration expenditure as against revenue, one is left with a net profit of only \$7 per acre. A West Indies University economist, Dr. O'Loughlin, told us that. If you tamper with this, it is a precarious situation. If you interfere with this industry without consulting the people, it is likely that you will destroy it. As I see it, the answer is to take command of the commanding heights of the economy of this country.

It is no use telling us that sugar and bauxite are different. Sugar, bauxite, manganese, insurance, banks, shipping and foreign trade are mostly in the hands of the foreigners. /Mr. Clarke: "Why didn't you do something about it?" When I tried to do a little bit in 1962, what did you do? The then Opposition joined with the big businesses and foreigners to bring down the Government. Don't talk about what we did! Instead of moving in the direction in which we led, the Opposition moved in another direction - although the then Leader of the Opposition said that he was not opposed to the taxation measures on big businesses. The poor population of Guiana has been relegated to the risky and the hazardous and now, instead of trying to help, instead of robbing the robbers and giving - like Robin Hood - to the poor, the Government wants to rob the poor people so that it can fatten the robbers some more.

Let the hon. Members take these statistics: Last year \$50 million profits were made by the big foreign companies in this country. Added to that, another \$10 million went out as debt charges, making a total of \$60 million. Most of it went out. While this was happening, how much came in? Between \$20 million to \$25 million came into this country. You cannot have development like this. Impossible! This is the super-structure on which you have to restrict, modify, and control, if you want to solve

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problems. You will get this side of the House any time you want to talk that kind of business; we will be with you. Do not come and talk nonsense to us. Any time you want to talk business at that level, you will have more than 100% support - if that is possible - from this side of the House. I repeat that all this talk about consultative democracy is only good for copy in England so that the Telegraph and Times, the imperialists' organs, would be able to build up this Government and its leaders. What the actual reality is, is what the Times said: "If this is the great consultative democracy, why is it still necessary to have an Emergency, and detention for eight days?" Answer that!

The hon. Premier (Mr. Burnham) was inviting me to talks. We will talk; but we must talk over the whole range. What is necessary in this country is a political settlement, not about Mon Repos. What is needed is a political settlement, and a programme which is going to take this country forward to progress and to peace. When the hon. Premier is ready to talk at that level, he can call me; otherwise, he is wasting his time. When the hon. Premier is ready to break from his imperialist apron-strings and disassociate himself with this Fascist Party; when he wants to talk about socialism, working-class and peasantry, then he can invite us; we will be willing to come and talk.

The consultative democracy, which has been so much talked about and published, is merely a euphemism for what we have seen here today - big-stick methods, railroading of this Measure before the people had the opportunity of listening to facts. See the direction in which these people who talk about consultative democracy are going! They rioted when we introduced the Labour Relations Bill in 1963 - the same Measure which the hon. Premier supported when he was not Premier, when he was Minister of Education. They rioted because of a Bill which was meant to bring democracy in the trade union movement. Where is the consultative democracy if you do not allow the people to vote, to decide who should represent them? Where is the consultative democracy when over a long historical

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process we have built up a democratic structure in the Rice Marketing Board and today, by one swoop, you hope to instal the old brigade and the old order?

This is what Sir Gordon Lethem said long ago. He said that the Board "was far too much a bureaucratic war-time control organization run from the top at headquarters, and far too little identified with the industry and the people who get their livelihood from it." He hoped that the establishment of the R.P.A. would "in a real and effective manner identify the whole community engaged in the rice industry in this Colony with the organization which is going to handle the marketing." This is what Sir Gordon Lethem said. He also ran afoul of the sugar planters, and consequently, the Colonial Office refused to renew his second term. Anyone - Hutchinson, Lethem, Jagan - who runs afoul of the people will be forced out, but their stooges will be put. History moves forward regardless of the blocks put in its way.

Even Sir Frank McDavid and the previous Attorney-General from Barbados, who were the arch-pillars of reaction of the old order, were talking way back about democratization of the Board. In 1946, Sir Frank McDavid said that he hoped that the Association "would prove to be a live body fostering in every way possible the interest of rice producers and . . . in enthusing in them that spirit of co-operation and self-help which is so necessary if this industry is to progress and prosper." This is how Sir Frank Holder puts it:

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/Dr. Jagan cont'd. 7

"The Bill proposes to confer on rice producers a substantial measure of self-government in their own industry which should begin the education necessary for the ultimate control of their own affairs."

Mr. Speaker: Your time is up.

Mr. Ram Karran : I beg to move that the hon. Member be given an extra 15 minutes.

Mr. Hamid seconded.

Question put and agreed to.

Dr. Jagan: The People's Progressive Party had the honour of implementing these recommendations and views, but what do we find now? We find that people call themselves socialists and say that they want to see the working class and the peasantry prosper. In the New Nation which I have just been reading, they said that the bulk of their following comes from the urban population. They said they wanted to foster the development of co-operatives. Well my God! They should practise what they preach.

The Rice Marketing Board is a living example of a statutory co-operative if they want to call it that, co-operative nevertheless. How dare they then, after all these pronouncings they^{have} made, seek to destroy it now? If they want to dishonour the mouthings which they have made, they should at least be guided by someone who knows about the industry, and who is in their camp.

In 1955 Deeroop was on our side. There are a lot of chameleons in our country. He has switched from being a colonialist to a fighter. A big meeting was held at the Town Hall and a resolution was passed. I would like to read to you this resolution so that you could see what the rice expert of the Government said when he appended his name to it. Today they silence people like him, the iron fist being exerted not only in the House, but on the people. This is what their resolution said:

/"Be../"

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"Be it Resolved that this representative meeting of rice farmers and consumers requests Government to:-

1. Propose to the Secretary of State for the Colonies the summoning of a round table conference of all shades of political opinion in British Guiana for the purpose of holding discussions on the issue of full self-government for British Guiana now.
2. Implement immediately the major Hutchinson Water Control (Drainage and Irrigation) Schemes.
3. Embark on a price support scheme for the rice industry similar to that established in the U.S.A. and the return to the R.M.B. of all 'cess' collected since 1952.
4. Introduce amendments to the Rice Marketing Ordinance for the purpose of placing full control of the R.M.B. in the hands of the rice producers.
5. Carry out a full enquiry into the financial affairs of the R.M.B. with the object of reducing the present high administrative and operating expenses.

Be it Further Resolved that this meeting requests His Excellency the Governor to grant an interview to Messrs. Deeroop Maraj, C. Jagan, Bally Lachmansingh, W. Grant, J.A. Sookdeo, Sanjit, Baboo Jagdeo, M. Khan, W.C. Cadogan and R. Lyte for a full discussion of the above named five points.

That was in 1956. This person is now a Minister without portfolio, responsible for our foreign affairs. He is ostensibly an expert on rice affairs, silent now because of what he said, but you cannot get away from history. We introduced amendments to the Rice Marketing Board Ordinance for the purpose of placing full control in the hands of the producers. Now that we have achieved this through the People's Progressive Party Government, the hon. Members governing go against this. Incidentally, they have another expert, Rev. Trotman. He knows about these things too because he used to protest. He was on the outside and he used to join us. [The Premier: "He is on the inside now."]

Clause 3 of the Resolution states:

"Embark on a price support scheme for the rice industry similar to that established in the U.S.A. and the return to the R.M.B. of all 'cess' collected since 1952."

I do not hear them asking, "Why did you not do it?" because we they cannot. What/did was criticized vehemently. The People's Progressive Party was called a rice Government. It was accused of running the Government only for the Indians.

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We are always told before the world how wonderful the United States is. The United States supports its rice farmers, subsidizes them by what is called a support price system. It buys from them at one high price, dumps it or gives it away, sells it for any price it can get. This is what is happening in the United States of America.

These so-called champions who want to sell us the American free enterprise system should do that in British Guiana with the rice industry when it is threatened. The rice industry is not threatened because of inefficiency and what not, it is threatened because of factors out of its control factors of a drop in the world prices. This is not something which affects us only, it is affecting countries all over the world today. I have just got some statistics about Ghana, Brazil, and Malaya in terms of exports equivalent to 1 ton of steel imported from industrialized countries. Ghana had to sell 283 per cent more of cocoa to get 1 ton of steel. Brazil had to give 240 per cent more of coffee. Malaya had to give 334 per cent more of tin to get the same ton of steel. It is happening in the sugar industry and in the rice industry. Why blame the Rice Marketing Board and the men who have done a good job.

[Dr. Jagan contd.]

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But on the whole they have done a magnificent job. To have made profits three years successively is a wonderful achievement.

I heard the Minister of Finance attacking the Rice Producers Association because of what he said is its limited membership, and the fact that its membership fee is a nominal sum. I know about that because I was a member of the Association. We do not judge democracy by the dollar sign. It is only in the United States that they do that. We know that to become the President of the U.S.A. one has to be a millionaire. Dollars signs mean control of the Press, the radio and television. The Rice Producers Association had 16, 643 members at the 31st of December, 1964, and 17,006 members at the 17th of May, 1965. All the rice farmers need not register as members of the Association if they do not want to, but the facility has been given to them. That is the reason why the membership fee was fixed so low, so as not to allow any excuse for not joining the Association. Membership is no indication, although it is a very large membership, and those people participate in elections.

The Rice Producers Association is democratically run, and by and large the people are satisfied with the way in which it is run. If it were not then the way to correct it is to tell the rice farmers, whether P.P.P., P.N.C. or U.F. supporters, that the Board as represented by the elected R.P.A., has misled them and sold them down the drain. That is the way the Government should seek a change.

I should like in conclusion to appeal to hon. Members of the Government. - there is a lot of goodwill on this side of the House - to take a second look at this very serious step they are now contemplating. We cannot look at it from the narrow point of view as to who will get jobs. I know that political patronage is a fact of political life, moreso when it comes to the "Opposition"

22nd May, 1965.

Legislative Assembly

11.20 - 11.30 a.m.

over there. [The Premier: "Opposition?] They are still the Opposition. [Laughter.] We all want peace, but you cannot buy peace with the big stick. The United States will learn this very soon, even in its own backyard where it thought it could do anything. It is now realizing the facts of life.

I ask that the Government should withdraw this Bill; defer it in the Committee stage for at least some period of time. That is what the members of the Government asked for when the Labour Relations Bill was being debated - [The Premier: "But you passed it."] - that it should be referred to a Select Committee. In spite of the fact that there was far more consultation when that Bill was introduced, in spite of the fact that there was a history to that Bill inasmuch as leading members of the P.N.C. had associated themselves with it, and in spite of the fact that the T.U.C. had supported it in 1953, and even though the Minister of Labour (Mr. Chandisingh) at that time had consultations, because of the protest made of lack of consultation, after the Second Reading we deferred consideration of the Bill, and I personally took charge of the discussions so as to iron out the defects with the hope of moving forward in a democratic manner, in a representative manner. What we want is not only democracy but that things should be done in a representative manner. The hon. Premier said that when the Waddington Commission came here in 1951, so I fail to see why at this time when a backward step is being taken adequate notice was not given. Normally a Bill has to be published for seven days before it is read the First time. But what has happened in this case? Practically the same day, before the ink was dry on the Bill it was brought here and rushed through the House. Why this indecent haste? Are you afraid of the people?

22.5.65.

House of Assembly

11.30 - 11.40 a.m.

Again, I say that it is no use inviting me to talk about disturbances. It is no use inviting me to talk about how to solve problems and bring peace in the country, when we have vital issues before us, when we see railroading, when we see that the wishes of the majority of the people who are vitally concerned with this matter have not been taken into consideration. I urge the hon. Premier to look again and not to take a step for which he is likely to be sorry later on. [Applause.]

Cheddi Jagan Research Centre