

The State Council of Ceylon.

No. 35.

July 29, 1942.



DEBATES

SESSION OF 1942.

CONTENTS:

	PAGE
Reorganization of Bus Services	1280
Private Members' Motions	1296

PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON

AT THE

CEYLON GOVERNMENT PRESS, COLOMBO.

1942.

"Copy" received : August 20, 1942.

Proof sent : August 29, 1942.

Proof returned : September 3, 1942.

Published : September 7, 1942.

STATE COUNCIL OF CEYLON.

Wednesday, July 29, 1942.

The Council met at 2 p.m., MR. SPEAKER [THE HON. SIR WAITIALINGAM DURAISWAMY] in the Chair.

ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Mr. Speaker: Under Standing Order 132 I have appointed—

- (a) Mr. R. S. S. Gunawardana to take the place of the late Mr. W. A. de Silva on the Select Committee of the State Council appointed to inquire into the working of the Buddhist Temporalities Ordinance, No. 19 of 1931, and
- (b) Mr. G. A. H. Wille to take the place of the late Mr. Francis de Zoysa on the Select Committee of the State Council to which the Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the partition and sale of land held in common" has been referred under Standing Order 77 (b).

QUESTIONS.

(ORAL ANSWERS.)

32/42.

General Clerical Service Examination: Urban Council Clerks.

Mr. Simon Abeywickrama had asked [July 28]:

"Will the Hon. Minister of Local Administration be pleased to state—

(a) Whether the following resolution, "That the regulations of the General Clerical Service Examination should be so amended so as to allow the employees in the Clerical Service of Urban Councils to sit for it, irrespective of age and qualifications", passed by the Beruwala Urban Council, was received by him?

(b) Whether such resolutions have been passed by other Urban Councils in the Island and forwarded to the Honourable Minister?

[Note.—An asterisk (*) against the name of a Member indicates that his remarks have not been revised by him.]

(c) If so, what action has been taken so far to implement the request made therein?"

The Hon. Mr. C. H. Collins (Acting Chief Secretary): There was the question put by the hon. Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama) yesterday. The answer to (a) and (b) of the question is in the affirmative. The answer to (c) is that the matter is still under consideration.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Have representations been received?

The Hon. Mr. Collins: Yes.

REORGANIZATION OF BUS SERVICES.

The debate on the following motion† of the Hon. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike (Minister of Local Administration) was continued:

That the following recommendations of the Executive Committee of Local Administration for the reorganization of bus services be approved:—

- (a) bus services shall not be operated along any road except under exclusive licence, subject to such conditions as may be attached to the licence, including a condition that the grantee shall compensate any persons at present operating buses under licence along the route who are displaced;
- (b) if the persons at present operating buses under licence along a route shall form a limited liability company, that company shall be granted the exclusive licence for that route, provided that the grantee compensates any person operating a bus under licence along that route who does not elect to join the company and whose rights to participate in the company have not been acquired by any other person."

***The Hon. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike (Minister of Local Administration):** I had just started to reply last evening when the House adjourned. I was drawing attention, Sir, to the actual motion that was before the House before proceeding to answer the more important criticisms that were levelled.

In the first place, I would like to say a few words on the Constitutional or pseudo-Constitutional issue that was raised regarding this motion. Apparently my Friend the Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya), thought that this proposal should come by way of a report, a report from the Executive Committee.

† For the Observations of the Minister of Local Administration and of the Financial Secretary, and the Report of the Board of Ministers see HANSARD of July 9, 1942.

[The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike.]

He objected to the fact that this motion happens to be a motion of which the Executive Committee has approved. Although the words "recommendations of the Executive Committee" occur, they are an indication to the House that, although the motion is brought by me and stands in my name, it is a motion that has the approval of my Executive Committee. Not only so, Sir; it is a motion that not only received the unanimous approval of my Executive Committee, but a motion which was considered at great length by the Board of Ministers where they had an opportunity of listening to all the points of view urged by the Director of Transport himself, to whom various questions were put before the Board itself decided that, in all the circumstances of the case, this step had to be taken.

What all the circumstances of the case are, I shall explain in due course—I hope, fully and clearly to the House—once again—although I did so to some extent in my opening speech. Not only so; from the Defence point of view the matter was considered fully, along with the possible alternatives suggested by the hon. Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya) as well as, I think, the hon. Member for Matale (Mr. Aluwihare)—as to meeting the present emergency from the point of view of Defence by any other alternative. All those alternatives were fully explored, and it was found, for reasons which I shall give, that no alternative was feasible. It was after all those steps were taken that this motion has come up before this House.

Though the motion stands in my name, it is not a motion that I am moving in my capacity as a Private Member. Although it is not a report from the Executive Committee, it is a motion that has the approval of all those bodies to whom I have referred it and as their mouthpiece, I, as Minister of Local Administration and, therefore, in charge of road transport to some extent—in that capacity I have placed this proposal before this House.

So much for the first point on which a few words were called for—as to why this proposal came as a motion and what my precise position in placing this motion before the House is—is it that I am

bringing forward a Private Member's motion as such, or what is the status of this motion that the House is asked to consider? I hope the House will now see that the motion had the approval and the careful consideration of my Executive Committee, of the Board of Ministers and the War Council before it was placed before this House in my name. So much for the Constitutional aspect of the motion that has been raised.

I would like to explain the motion again in the light of that further detailed explanation, which is not contrary to the motion in any way, that further explanation which was not given in my opening speech and which received further consideration by the Board by way of further elucidation, but which I was unable to give yesterday and which my hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture and Lands gave to the House. The motion is simply this: the substance of the whole motion is that, generally speaking, there will be one licensed entity for one route. That is the motion. That itself, as will be noticed from my Observations, has a certain exception to it, because there are points at which two routes may overlap over a small area. Therefore, making provision for such slight difficulties, the general principle that the House is asked to decide is that one route shall be operated by one legal entity.

Sir, why should that be so? In the first place, I must tell the House why this one main principle needs to be adopted, particularly at the present time—that in the case of buses, one route should be operated by one unit. That is the main point. I will also deal with the question of companies. Although most of the arguments were addressed to the question of the formation of limited liability companies, hon. Members did not address themselves sufficiently to this main object of the motion, namely, one unit, one route.

Those are two aspects of this motion, as was pointed out by myself and also stressed by other speakers, particularly the Hon. the Acting Chief Secretary. There are two courses that we are recommending to the House. There is the Defence point of view, and the other, the question of general reorganization of the bus services. Let us consider these two aspects, with the precise relationship that exists between the two, for throwing light

upon the question as to what decision this House should arrive at, upon the motion before it.

The Defence point of view has been explained. It has been found absolutely necessary for transport to be dealt with at this time of war, as it is one of the most vital matters from the point of view of the needs of war. The House knows the present position with regard to transport in this country. The transport service is in a very bad condition; indeed not only as regards the transport required for the Fighting Services, but also as regards the transport for all civil needs, both the Railway and road transport have reached a stage where an extremely critical situation has arisen—from the point of view of carrying on essential transport.

That is one aspect of the transport problem created by war conditions, namely, the problem of providing the necessary transport under the most difficult conditions. In the case of road transport, the most difficult conditions are those of obtaining the necessary petrol, the necessary tyres, the necessary spare parts and of organizing road transport so that every vehicle could be made use of to the fullest extent to deal with the special problems of transport created by war conditions. In the case of the Railway the problems are of a similar nature—the lack of fuel, the lack of coal, the inability to provide the necessary renewals, the impossibility, with an enormous quantity of materials to be conveyed from various places, of finding the necessary wagons or anything like the necessary wagons to deal with them.

Take food, Sir. There are tons and tons of rice at Jaffna which, as my Hon. Friend the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce will tell you, the Railway cannot cope with. Nor is there a satisfactory means of road transport to cope with that rice. Then there are thousands of tons of paddy in the North-Central Province which we find we cannot remove. There are foodstuffs in Colombo—in the bottle-neck of Colombo—which have to be removed to various parts of the Island. Those foodstuffs cannot be removed at the time required. Then there are all the enormous needs of transport for the Services that must be attended to. Those needs simply must be attended to.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya (Galle): You want lorries for that.

***The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** It appears that you want lorries for that. I was dealing with the general question of transport into which buses also enter. The time will not be too distant when even a lorry will not be able to transport the hon. Member to Galle. Let us not be pessimistic. The hon. Member goes in a car to-day, and he may want a lorry to-morrow. We may be compelled even to adapt the bodies of buses and utilize them for the transport of goods. But however that may be, it is only a little pleasant interlude.

Let me resume the trend of my argument. There are all these goods in Colombo which have to be transported. What about all the vegetables that have to be brought to Colombo? What about the copra that the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce is purchasing and which has to be brought to Colombo? What about all the rubber and what about all the tea that have to be brought down to Colombo? Then, what about all the human traffic that has to be transported to Colombo under these difficult conditions?

Sir, the House will, I think, gather from what I have said that the problem of transport becomes completely converted at a time of war. Not only is it one of the most essential matters, but the problem itself becomes extremely complicated. That problem is one which we are trying our level best to handle as efficiently as we can in the circumstances of the case.

Some of my hon. Friends wanted to know what was the precise position of the Director of Transport. This matter has been gone into and explained time after time. Again, this question has been raised here. I cannot recall who it was who raised it yesterday, but as a matter of fact one hon. Member's speech dealt mostly with that question. I am not at all sure whether it is my egregiously Friend from Galle who raised it.

But however that may be, cannot the House realize that having obtained the services of this expert who was to report upon the general co-ordination of transport in normal times, his services could

[The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike.]

be utilized to deal with this much more pressing problem which did not exist at the time that we passed the resolution originally in regard to obtaining his services? I do not think there is anything wrong in that. I think it was a very wise step to have taken, and I challenge any hon. Member, knowing the circumstances which I have tried to explain briefly, to say that that was an unwise course to have taken, namely, the appointment of that gentleman for the purpose in this time of emergency.

When the Director of Transport started work, one of the first things which he noticed, with regard to road transport, with regard to buses, was the fact that a very large number of buses were owned by a large number of people; that is, 1,000-odd buses owned by some 100-odd persons. Now, in this time of emergency to serve the two purposes required by the war, one of which I have explained in detail—namely, the difficulties of transport itself, apart from the question of requisitioning or immobilization of vehicles which I will come to in a moment—the first thing that occurred to him, as it must occur to any such person, was that this situation was impossible. Why impossible? In the first place, from the point of view of making the best use of these buses in the sense of getting the utmost degree of transport from every single one of them to its fullest capacity, results could not be achieved under the present circumstances.

I am not blaming the bus owners. Within their scope and their ability, they have done their best. I am not denying that. They did not contemplate the difficulties that have arisen in this time of emergency. They did not bring their minds to bear upon that problem; they were not asked to bring their minds to bear upon it. So it was quite open to them to turn round and say that after the Motor Car Ordinance of 1938 was passed they had done their best. That is all granted. But that is not the position.

Now under a scheme like the one proposed what will happen if we have one unit for one route? As we all know, Sir, there are a number of buses for the conveyance of persons on a route.

There are fixed fares; there are fixed time-tables; there are places for them to garage the buses, and various other conditions. You may find a surplus of buses left on that route. There will be the buses of people who do not want to become shareholders available. If the company does not want to take them over the Government can buy them up and pay the owners the fullest compensation. The buses that may not be required by the companies can be taken over by the Government to form the nucleus of the central transport system. The bulk of the buses can be easily adapted for the transport of goods. There will be that surplus that would be available.

Now, at the present moment we do not know what surplus there is. At a time when almost every drop of petrol is becoming precious, at a time when tyres are not available, there is no way of knowing whether a bus plying on a particular route is doing the utmost work required of it at this time. You can never find that out in the present circumstances. You can do it with the Railway. The Railway is run by the Government, and we know the number of wagons that are available and we can so adjust and organize the distribution of wagons as to get the fullest possible work out of them.

In the case of buses, there is no means of doing that at all under the present system. Therefore, the one-route one-unit idea becomes almost rational and indeed the only possible course to adopt, from that point of view.

But there is another aspect of the matter from the Defence point of view, namely, in the event of an invasion, there is the question, not of the requisitioning of buses which was suggested, but of the immobilization of all vehicles. How is that to be attempted or achieved under a scheme where you have 750-odd owners owning 1,000 buses plying over the vast network of roads throughout the country? How can you do it? Can you order these owners to bring all their buses and garage the vehicles at one place? Is that feasible? Supposing on the Colombo-Kandy route or the Colombo-Galle route there are thirty owners of buses. Are you going to order all those small men to bring their buses

and keep them in a garage in one place in Colombo when they now keep them in their back-gardens or in some convenient places and bring them out early in the morning to operate? Are you going to insist on all those poor men about whose unfortunate plight the hon. Member for Matale (Mr. Aluwihare) nearly drowned us with a flood of tears—

***Mr. B. H. Aluwihare (Matale):** That is what you are going to do when you form the companies.

***The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** I will come to the question of what effect these companies will have on these people in a moment. But under the present scheme you cannot make adequate provision for immobilization. Pressing these people to garage their vehicles at one place will be an intolerable position for the small man; he simply will not be able to do that. We know how these people run their buses, and where they keep their buses. If we press them to garage their vehicles in one place, we will drive them out of the routes without any compensation whatsoever. That is my answer to the proposal about garaging.

Then, some Members say, "Requisition; if it is for Defence purposes, requisition". But as I pointed out, the so-called Defence needs created by the war situation cannot be so met. It is not like the Government going round saying that they want fifty buses and asking the people to hand them over. It is not that. It is the organization of the entire bus system throughout the country, so that it can be put to the best use. It is not a matter of the Government taking over twenty or thirty buses and letting the others carry on as best as they can on the various routes. So that, requisitioning does not meet the situation; nor can we, under the present system, insist upon rules, such as the garaging of buses at one place with so many different owners.

What is the other suggestion? We are told, "Why not have unions?" The word "union" has such a magic connotation with the hon. Member for Panadura (Mr. Susanta de Fonseka); unions are things that he is always striving for—official unions, unofficial unions, formal unions and informal unions. Let us see

how these unions are going to be formal and informal, and what their value is going to be for this particular purpose. What he means by a union is some informal liaison that has no legal connotation or legal recognition, a union which can be broken off by any of the parties who perpetrate that union at their sweet will and pleasure. That is the only type of union, informal, unofficial union that I am aware of. There are certain bus unions of that nature, but what on earth is the use of unions of that kind to us?

If you consider this one aspect of "one route, one entity", you will realize that it must be some legal entity with whom you can deal. You must be able to issue a licence to that entity; you cannot issue a licence to a union. A union has no legal recognition. Even if you have these informal, unofficial, unions of bus-owners, you would still have to issue route licences to each separate owner. There is no control that you can bring to bear upon unions of that kind. For the purpose we have in view, that kind of union is valueless. It cannot serve the purpose that has to be served.

Another hon. Member suggested that we should have Group Organizers for buses in the same way as we have Group Organizers for lorries. Let us see how that works. I can assure my hon. Friend the Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya), who made that characteristically brilliant suggestion, that the difference between buses and lorries which has necessitated a difference in the method of dealing with those two types of vehicles, is that the lorries ply over vast distances, over large districts. There are no routes for them. In the case of many of the lorries, they ply over the whole Island. The whole of Ceylon is their route, and lorries are owned to a great extent by private individuals who have one or two lorries for the conveyance of their produce or goods. The number of hiring lorries is limited.

How on earth can you form lorry-owners into a unit and restrict their use to a particular route? The only reason why lorries were not dealt with in the way proposed for buses is that it is not possible to deal with them in that manner. What is this "Group System"? It is merely the appointment of a Group

[The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike.]

Organizer for a district, who has some idea of the needs of the district and who tries to allocate the lorries to a particular type of work and sees that they are given a full day's work with the object of freeing other lorries for essential needs.

How can you possibly have any such scheme working in the case of buses? You cannot have a Group Organizer issuing orders, let us say, to the buses plying between Colombo and Kandy. He would have to issue orders to these bus-owners more or less coincident with the conditions that Government will now lay down under this scheme. How can a Group Organizer possibly do that?

Certain hon. Members were rather confused in their minds as to whether I am a Hitler or a democrat. I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Panadura (Mr. Susanta de Fonseka) for praising me for my democratic qualities, an outstanding example of which, according to him, was the fact that I had brought up this motion before the House when the matter could have been dealt with under Defence Regulations. On the other hand, other hon. Members charged me with trying to be a Hitler. Poor, dear old Hitler! He has his failings, poor man. But may I ask hon. Members to try and understand what that person really stands for before that "exalted" title is attached to people who do not deserve it?

Here is the Hitlerite suggestion made by some hon. Members that we should have Group Organizers for buses. A Group Organizer is an "informal" officer who would issue orders to all the bus-owners—that a certain bus is to ply on a particular route; that its owner is to do that, this and the other; that he is to bring his bus to a certain place, and ply it in the way he is directed to do. The bus-owner has to obey this order and that order of the Group Organizer.

That is not a possible solution, I respectfully submit, and I think therefore that I have a right to claim that the need for "One route, one unit" exists, and that any kind of argument in favour of the other suggestion that has been directly or indirectly advanced in this House can scarcely bear any kind of

consideration. In view of the emergency created by the war in the matter of transport, and of the need for dealing with these vehicles in a particular manner in a time of emergency, not one of the suggestions made can be considered satisfactory.

That is the chief part of this motion: "One unit, one route". The other part of the motion deals with the question of how you are going to achieve the object of "One route, one unit". The suggestion has been made that the most satisfactory solution would be, if the owners plying upon a particular route consent, for those owners to form themselves into a limited liability company.

Let us see what is suggested in this motion:

"If the persons at present operating buses under licence along a route shall form a limited liability company, that company shall be granted the exclusive licence for that route."

The persons at present operating under a licence along a route are given priority. They will be given the licence without any further question. The House may well ask, "If they do not form themselves into a company or refuse to form themselves into a company?" It has been indicated in the report, but not very clearly, what would be done in those circumstances. I will further clarify the position, in addition to what the Minister of Agriculture and Lands has said on the point.

In the first place, you ask the owners of buses plying on a particular route—say, Colombo-Kandy—whether they are willing to form themselves into a company. If they do form themselves into a company, that is the end of the matter, and they will get the exclusive licence.

There is another possibility: all of them may not be prepared to form themselves into a company, but a majority of them may be prepared to do so. They might say, "We will form ourselves into a company, but there is a minority who do not wish to come in". An exclusive licence would be granted to the company composed of the majority of the bus-owners on that route, provided they pay compensation to those owners who do not want to join the company.

If a sufficient number of bus-owners on that route are not willing to form themselves into a company, we would ask any one of the owners operating on that route to take up the business. Of course, there is nothing to prevent a number of bus-owners on the route forming themselves into a partnership. That partnership will be given the licence, there will be no objection to that. Failing even such a legal entity—a partnership—(we must remember that a partnership can involve a large number of partners; up to twenty people can form a partnership)—failing the formation of even a partnership, some individual who is prepared to run buses on that route and to compensate the other owners—I repeat that in the event of even a partnership not being formed, even an individual—a legal entity—can be given the licence for that route.

If we cannot get a limited liability company formed of the owners on a particular route, or even supposing we do not get them to form a partnership, or if we fail to get even an individual owner on that route to run the buses, then those who are at present engaged in the bus industry in, say, Colombo, can send in applications for that licence—those who are bus operatives in Ceylon to-day. Suppose even that fails. Then, some Ceylonese company that is willing to run buses will be asked to come in—and there it will stop.

There will be no question whatsoever of this proposal being utilized as a lever to hand over the industry, now in the hands of Ceylonese, to outsiders. May I give that definite and final assurance to the House? We want one legal entity for a route; there may be various forms of legal entity possible; if the present owners form themselves into a limited liability company, well and good; if they do not, we are not going to compel them to do it. Nor are we going to give the licence for the route to any other company. Any legal entity, such as a partnership, or an individual owner operating on that route, would be offered the licence. Failing that, any other company or partnership composed of those working not on that route at the moment but engaged in the bus industry elsewhere would be offered the licence. Failing that, as a last resort, some

Ceylonese company would be given the licence.

It is necessary for me to give that further, detailed explanation of exactly what is intended. Let that be taken as a definite assurance that is given in this House on behalf of this Government. I am giving that assurance on behalf of the Government. Therefore the question does not arise of people being compelled to form, being "kicked" into forming, limited liability companies, being compelled by the exercise of Hitlerite powers, to form limited liability companies. That situation does not, and will not, arise in those circumstances.

I would like to say a few words about these limited liability companies. These companies were not suggested or proposed with some Machiavellian desire to damage the interests of bus-owners, with some vile motive to help the Railway or some foreign capitalist at the expense of the bus-owners.

Hon. Members will agree with me that if it is possible for these bus-owners, if they are willing, to form themselves into limited liability companies, that is the one method by which the interests of these bus-owners will be best preserved. If the bus-owners do not want to form themselves into companies, there are other alternatives. If they do form themselves into companies, that is one method by which their interests are likely to be preserved.

Now we come to the poor, the poor who are always with us and whose name is so often taken in vain—the poor bus-owner with one rickety bus. What horrible fate is going to overtake him! We will examine that for one moment. The small bus-owner will have to wait for his dividend, says the oracle from Matala. But is that correct? Let us see what has happened elsewhere. What has happened in practice elsewhere to these poor bus-owners when limited liability companies were formed? The small man who owned one bus, who is given compensation by way of shares, is to a great extent, wherever possible, employed in the company itself, where he can be paid weekly or monthly not only his salary but a subsistence allowance based upon the dividend to come. That is being done in practice.

[The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike.]

It was being done in Malaya very successfully, where the same type of situation existed—only in a very exaggerated form. In Malaya there were a large number of small owners plying on the roads there, belonging to all kinds of races and communities. They formed themselves into these companies, and the small owner who was provided for in the way I have indicated, did not suffer at all. I would like to say that definitely, in view of the objection that was raised on the score of the small owner having to wait for the dividend.

The hon. Member for Matale (Mr. Aluwihare) in his exordium, said, "This amounts to expropriation of the small bus-owner". I would like to draw the attention of the House to an interesting paradox: those from whom the strongest objection to these recommendations has emanated are a few of the biggest bus-owners of this country, not the small bus-owners. [Interruption.] That is not correct, I am told, but if my hon. Friend would only direct his eyes, if he can only direct a bright glance at the Galleries of this Chamber, he will find confirmation of my statement. [A MEMBER: That is no indication.] But I know from petitions received and from the objections that were made to me, that the persons by whom they were made—

*Mr. Aluwihare: I hope the Hon. Minister does not say that I am a large bus-owner.

*The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike: I do not know, Sir, whether the hon. Member is a large bus-owner. It is worth considering. I am not blaming them for objecting to the scheme, but, as far as I am aware, these objections have come chiefly from that source, and it is a point worth pursuing and considering.

Now, what is the position of the small bus-owner in the country to-day? The general tendency all along, particularly after the introduction of the Motor Car Ordinance, has been for the small bus-owner to be "squeezed" out by the big bus-owner. There has been an increasing tendency for these routes to be restricted to the bigger man who owns a large number of buses. What is the compensation that the poor man gets?

It is a process which has been accelerated one hundred-fold after the outbreak of the war. The small man simply cannot get the necessary spare parts, tyres, and so on, to run his bus. He has to get out of it, and that without a red cent!

Are their interests going to be worsened? Are they going to be thrown to the wolves of some nebulous capitalism by a system which would ensure and protect their interests, where they will be given compensation not only for the value of their vehicles as such, but also for the goodwill, for the money that they would earn on that route; where they can also be ensured a reasonable subsistence allowance, a salary which will not make it necessary for them to wait for six months or one year till the company pays a dividend? These companies will have to have a suitable person to go into all those points.

So that, it will not be left to the free will and pleasure of some bus company to say "You had better take it or go", and put that man into difficulty. If he wants to keep out of the company, he will receive compensation under this scheme, which he will not be able to dream of otherwise. If they want to keep on the road, and if a bus company wants to buy the buses, they can do so. If some other owner who is a shareholder in this company, wants to buy him out, he can do it. If they do not want to do that, the Government of Ceylon will do it, because the Government needs the vehicle. Even ramshackle vehicles will be of great value to Government. He need not be afraid of that.

Then, what is this grievance about expropriation of the small man? I sincerely confess, looking at the matter from every point of view as far as I am able, that I am of the opinion that the small owner does not stand to lose in the present circumstance; he stands to gain in every way. I can well understand the natural conservatism of humanity—that some of the big bus-owners object to it *bona fide*. I am not blaming them. It is their duty to put forward these views.

May I say that I am thankful to the bus-owners, small and big, for their co-operation in working the Motor Car Ordinance under the difficult circumstances that have arisen now? I admit that

July 29, 1942]

they have been very helpful, but I would ask them, as well as Members of this House and the public, to consider whether this scheme is going to be such a terrible bogey as it is made out to be. If they do not want limited liability companies, they have the various other alternatives that they can resort to.

At this stage I would like to explain the two parts of the motion, and, having dealt with the more important criticism that has been levelled against either or both, to deal with certain special points of the criticism that some Members raised.

My hon. Friend the Member for Panadura (Mr. Susanta de Fonseka) who made a very striking confession in his own speech of his own changed notions, namely, that in the last State Council he himself was strongly of opinion and he recommended that—

***Mr. Susanta de Fonseka:** Not in the State Council.

***The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** As a Member of Council, he was strongly of opinion—an opinion I think he must have formed after due and mature consideration—that Government should force these people to form companies. Not only so, but I believe at a much more recent date—perhaps he claims the privilege of callow youth for that earlier opinion expressed somewhere in 1935—at Kalutara he expressed the opinion at a meeting, or to the Director of Transport more or less, that he was in favour of the principle of the formation of bus companies. I am not blaming him, but, of course, now he sees certain objections which he urges.

We are thankful to him for putting forward his point of view. But I must join issue with him when he labours like the proverbial mountain to produce a mouse and point out the inconsistency of his argument regarding the appointment of Mr. Nelson as Director of Transport. He quoted from my speech on that March Resolution. I explained the whole position with regard to road transport. I explained the whole position with regard to the expert coming out here, and this is what I said:

“As far as I am concerned I have no objection to this expert coming out to report on this subject. Perhaps in view of the extremely technical

nature of the subject, it may be desirable to obtain his services. But I only wished to impress upon the House that there is no proposal to import an expert to cripple road transport services for the doubtful benefit that might accrue to the Railway therefrom.”

That was my speech. I did not object to the expert coming. I made it clear that the expert's duty was not merely to come and smash road transport for the benefit of the Railway. I said that it was desirable to have him from a technical point of view.

It ceases even to be a complete mouse! It is one small fraction of a mouse that the labour has produced by some terrible inconsistency—some terrible fault and error on my part in objecting strongly! That was the impression my hon. Friend tried to create in regard to the importation of Mr. Nelson and then later on approving of his functioning as Director of Transport. That is a small point, but still I mention it to show that I was perhaps inadvertently misinterpreted.

Sir, I thank my hon. Friend the Member for Colombo South (Dr. de Zoysa) because, in a very full speech, he put forward every single point that had to be urged and could have been urged on behalf of bus-owners. I think in the course of my remarks I have dealt with certain points which he himself made. I would merely like to state this: he said that the bus-owners were being hanged without a hearing; and there was a reference made also to “Hitlerian tactics”, and so on, at a Conference that was held.

What is the truth regarding that? When Mr. Nelson put this scheme for the formation of limited liability companies up to me, he told me that he proposed, to begin with, informally to go round the country to meet all the bus-owners, and to explain the full details of the scheme, and see whether they would voluntarily agree to the formation of these companies. I said, “All right. Go ahead”. Mr. Nelson did that; and he was charged with having made certain statements which in effect amounted to a threat that this scheme would be imposed on them, and so on, if they did not agree. Well, I think there was some misunderstanding; but whether there was that definite statement made or otherwise, he said that this measure may become necessary.

[The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike.]

I explained all that clearly to the bus-owners. A large number of them came to see me. At a conference it took nearly four hours to come to any kind of a decision on any material point at all. I explained that that was a misunderstanding. When Mr. Nelson went round the country and placed his scheme before the bus-owners, some of them were agreeable whilst others were not. Finally the position was crystallized.

The moment the position crystallized, I informed my Friend the hon. Member for Colombo South (Dr. de Zoysa), and asked him to put down in writing all he had to say. I said that I would call a conference and discuss matters there. The conference was held. Unfortunately at that conference we could not get down to discussing details of this scheme. Certain other proposals were made with regard to unions, and I asked my hon. Friend to send me further details of any objections and any further suggestions he had to make about the union scheme, and so on, to be considered.

In the meanwhile the matter became one of grave urgency. At the same time, as far as I was able to, I sent answers to the various points that had been raised, and I brought the matter up in the circumstances which I explained earlier, by way of this motion. Why must my hon. Friend flatter Hitler by making comparisons like that? Surely Hitler is a blacker sheep than that? I repudiate the suggestion, with all the strength I am capable of, that I acted in any way in an unfairly and unjustly autocratic manner in trying to force people to do certain things. I have not the slightest doubt that my hon. Friends themselves will be the first to admit that they are mistaken in saying so.

There were certain other points raised by some Members. I think the hon. Member for Jaffna (Mr. Mahadeva)—he is not here at the moment—asked why buses cannot be dealt with like lorries. I have answered that question. I have also answered the question raised by the hon. Member for Matale (Mr. Ahuwihare). I do not think there are any other arguments that I need answer.

I may say this, finally. There was this one point raised and repeated here by my hon. Friend the Member for Colombo South (Dr. de Zoysa). He wanted to know why the details of the scheme were not given; what the capital of the company should be; what would be the precise route; where the garages were, and so on. He wanted to know why I had not supplied him with those details. My answer is that we are intending greatly to reduce the number of routes at present in use. Before the final decision is taken as to routes, I shall be prepared to appoint a suitable Arbitration Board to go into all these matters. If there is anybody who wishes to make suggestions, he can make them before we finally decide on matters, and we will consider all the objections; then we can decide upon the number of routes.

Would my hon. Friend prefer me to adopt that attitude, or to come here with a pre-arranged list of routes and say, "Take it or leave it"? It is surely much better to permit objections to be brought forward, and be heard by an impartial body of men. If there is an Advisory Board, the members of it can be the Commissioner of Transport, the Director of Transport and certain others. Then, with regard to the actual formation of companies and all these questions, any objections that may be made, how they are to be dealt with, and so on, can be referred to the Board.

I do think, Sir, that if such a method is adopted most of the difficulties that my Friends envisaged and which they want me to solve beforehand could be removed. Before the House agrees to the general principle, they want me to come here with full, cut-and-dried details. I do not think that should be the manner of dealing with a matter like this measure.

My hon. Friend the Member for Panadura (Mr. Susanta de Fonseka) asks me whether I would come before this Council again in regard to this matter. There is this question of legislation. I thank him for having asked me that question, because there was some misunderstanding about this question of Defence Regulations. Some Members were of the idea, "Oh, if this is a Defence matter, why do you not deal with it in

that way"? I do not think that an important matter of this kind should be settled above the heads of the Members of this House, without Members being allowed to express their opinions in any way they like, for the simple reason that not only is it a purely Defence matter in that sense, but it does concern a certain reorganization of the bus services which has an element of permanency in it.

There again I must not be misunderstood. When I said that the matter could be reconsidered after the war, I meant that the Defence needs would have ceased and if the public of this country, or the bus-owners, or Members of this House felt, "Now that the Defence needs have ceased, let us reconsider the whole subject and have a different scheme", the House could do that. It will be open to the House to do it, though I think I can give the assurance that once this scheme has been working for a year or two the very last people who will want any alteration made would be the bus-owners themselves. They will find that this scheme is satisfactory. But if they do not, it will be always open to the House to make any alterations or changes it wants. It is in that sense that I used that phrase when I intervened in the debate.

The Hon. Member asks me, "Well, very good; have you got to come before the House at all"? The wishes of the House as expressed here may need legislation. That legislation can be introduced in two ways; legislation can be introduced to give effect to the wishes of this House by Defence Regulations, or by amending the other Ordinance. I am in favour of the amending of the Motor Car Ordinance. That matter can be brought before the House for its further consideration, because once the matter has come before the House, the House is entitled to go into the further details of the working. But the decision of the House will be given effect to. If it is a matter of using the Defence Regulations—I am against that course myself—there will be the added advantage that the Defence Regulations will cease to operate at the end of the war and naturally and automatically the matter will be reconsidered. That is a point that requires to be reconsidered.

There is no question that some legislation is required. It may be some very small legislation, namely, legislation to the effect that in future buses can be given one unit for a route described in the manner we have explained in the Ordinance. It may not need very extensive amendments to 50 or 100 sections. That is the position.

With regard to the working out of any administrative scheme, I shall be perfectly ready to consider any matter that is brought up by hon. Members with regard to a Board, how that Board is going to hear appeals, what the matters are—I think I have explained them—we will be ready to bring before the House matters that prove controversial and which hon. Members feel require the approval of the House.

I think it is not necessary for me to take the time of the House longer. In all sincerity without any attempt to fool this House or to take advantage of the House, I would commend this motion which is in the best interests of the public, of the bus-owners and of the country generally.

Mr. Speaker: I will put the amendment of the hon. Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya) first. Does the hon. Member press his amendment?

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: Yes, Sir.

Question put, "That the motion be referred back to the Board of Ministers for further consideration".

The Council divided (under Standing Order 68): Ayes, 17; Noes, 23.

Mr. Speaker: That amendment is lost. Does the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Wille) press his amendment?

Mr. Wille: I wish my amendment to be put to the House because it makes clear what the Hon. Minister intends.

***The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Minister of Agriculture & Lands):** The Minister is for partnerships, and if this amendment is put to the House and lost, it may look as if the House is against partnerships.

Mr. Wille: The motion as it stands provides only for licences being issued to companies.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. Member press his amendment?

Mr. Wille: Yes; the Hon. Minister says that my suggestion is implicit in his motion, but I wish to make it clear.

***The Hon. Mr. Bandaranaike:** I do not mind that word being added, Sir.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** The only objection to it is that when you have that addition after this explanation, it means that you are restricting it to a company or a partnership.

Mr. Wille: As it stands, it is limited to liability companies. It makes matters worse from the point of view of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands.

Question put, "That the motion be amended by the insertion of the words 'or partnership' after the word 'company' wherever it occurs in Clause (b) of the motion".

The Council divided (under Standing Order 68): Ayes, 4; Noes, 8.

Main question put; the Council divided—Ayes, 25; Noes, 17:

AYES.

Jayatilaka, The Hon. Sir	Goonasekera, Mr. H. A.
D. B.	Griffith, Mr. F. H.
Kannangara, The Hon. Mr.	Jayah, Mr. T. B.
C. W. W.	Jayasuriya, Mr. A. P.
Senanayake, The Hon. Mr.	Kateel, Dr. M. C. M.
D. S.	Kannangara, Mr. R. C.
Bandaranaike, The Hon.	Kuroppu, Mr. J.
Mr. S. W. R. D.	Newnham, Mr. H. E.,
Corea, The Hon. Mr.	C.M.G., V.D.
G. C. S.	Nugawela, Major E. A.
Kotalawala, The Hon.	Parfitt, Mr. H. F.
Colonel J. L.	Pereira, Diwan Bahadur
De Silva, The Hon. Mr.	I. K.
G. E.	Razik, Mr. A. R. A.
Batuwantudawe, Mr. U.	Vytilingam, Mr. S.
De Silva, Mr. G. R.	Whitby, Mr. G. R.
Freeman, Mr. H. R.	Wille, Mr. G. A. H.

NOES.

Aluwihare, Mr. B. H.	Jayasuriya, Mr. D. P.
Amarasuriya, Mr. H. W.	Kularatne, Mr. P. de S.
Amarasuriya, Mr. Thomas	Natesan, Mr. S.
De Fonseka, Mr. Susanta	Ponnambalam, Mr. G. G.
De Zoysa, Dr. A. F.	Rajapaksa, Mr. D. M.
Dharmaretnam, Mr. S.	Senanayake, Mr. Dudley
Goonasekera, Mr. D. D.	Siriwardhana, Mr. H. De Z.
Hewavitarna, Mr. Rajah	Tambimuttu, Mr. E. R.
Ilangantilleke, Mr. J. H.	

RAILWAY: INQUIRY INTO COAL SHORTAGE.

Dr. A. P. de Zoysa (Colombo South): I move,—

That in the opinion of this Council a Commission should be appointed to inquire into the defalcations relating to coal and other things in the Ceylon Government Railway.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Communications and Works, under Standing Order 57.

ARRACK: ALLEGED FRAUDS AT KANDY WAREHOUSE.

Dr. de Zoysa: I move,—

That as the series of frauds, which were systematically committed at the Kandy Warehouse during the period 1929 to 1932, have cost the revenue of this country nearly half a million rupees, this Council is of opinion that a commission of inquiry shall be appointed to ascertain whether these frauds were committed with or without the knowledge of the higher officials of the Excise Department.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Home Affairs, under Standing Order 57.

SCHOOLS IN COLOMBO.

The following motion of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam was, by leave, withdrawn:

That this Council calls upon the Minister of Education to consult the wishes of the parents in regard to the keeping open of schools in Colombo for the next three months.

WAR ALLOWANCE FOR GOVERNMENT OFFICERS DRAWING RS. 3,600 PER ANNUM AND UNDER.

Mr. S. Abeywickrama (Udugama): I move,—

That in the opinion of this Council the figures disclosed in the index of the cost of living published in the *Gazette* each month are no indication of the actual rise in the prices of essential commodities on a retail basis and considers that all subordinate officers of Government drawing salaries not exceeding Rs. 3,600 per annum should be given a war allowance on a percentage basis in relation to the salaries drawn by them.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Financial Secretary for report, under Standing Order 57.

SENIOR SECONDARY AND HIGHER GRADE SCHOOLS.

Mr. B. H. Aluwihare (Matale): I move,—

That this Council is of opinion that in the redistribution and establishment of Government Senior Secondary or other higher grade Schools, the present facilities afforded by Assisted Schools must be taken into consideration, and in view of the dearth of education facilities in the Kandyan Provinces, at least one school should be established in each Revenue District of the Kandyan territory.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Education, under Standing Order 57.

**RICE: INCREASE OF RATION
("HEAVY" WORKERS).**

Mr. D. P. Jayasuriya (Gampaha): I move,—

That this Council is of opinion, that the weekly rice ration per person should be increased to 4 measures as "heavy" workers find it impossible to perform their duties on the present ration of 2 measures per week, per individual.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce, under Standing Order 57.

**TEXTILE AND MAT-WEAVING
WORKERS.**

Dr. de Zoysa: I move,—

That in the opinion of this Council, either the workers in the Textile and Mat Weaving Demonstration Centres should be paid or, if they are considered as pupils, the Demonstration Centres should be designated schools, so that the relations subsisting between the pupils and the school may be made clear.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce, under Standing Order 57.

**POST AND TELEGRAPH WORK-
MEN'S UNION.**

Dr. de Zoysa: I move,—

That in the opinion of this Council, the ban enforced by the Postmaster-General on the activities of the Post and Telegraph Workmen's Union—(P) is not based on any authority derived under Public Service Regulations Nos. 172 to 184, which the Chief Secretary in reply to Question No. 33/41 stated governs the procedure relating to Public Service Associations, and (2) the ban should therefore be forthwith rescinded and liberty of action restored to the Union to take immediate steps to make the working of the provident fund acceptable to the Postmaster-General.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Chief Secretary for report, under Standing Order 57.

**PADDY AND RICE FOR BATTI-
CALOA VILLAGES.**

Mr. S. Dharmaretnam (Batticaloa South): I move,—

That in view of the fact that certain villages in the Batticaloa District are not food-producing areas and in view of the fact that considerable difficulties are being experienced by the people in these villages for securing their normal requirements, this Council requests the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce to formulate

a scheme for making available to the people in these non-producing villages paddy at a price not exceeding Rs. 2.40 a bushel and rice at Rs. 5.20 per bushel.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committees of Agriculture and Lands, and of Labour, Industry and Commerce, under Standing Order 57.

**REFORMS: DEPUTATION TO SIR
STAFFORD CRIPPS.**

The following motion of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam was, by leave, withdrawn:

That this Council is of opinion that no deputation should meet Sir Stafford Cripps on the question of Constitutional Reform on behalf of the State Council or the people of Ceylon without the prior and express sanction of this House.

**COMPENSATION FOR OWNERS
OF REQUISITIONED
PROPERTIES.**

Mr. Abeywickrama: I move,—

That this Council is of opinion that persons whose properties are requisitioned by the Military should be paid adequate compensation immediately they are served with a notice to quit their premises.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Chief Secretary for report, under Standing Order 57.

**WICKREMASINGHE BUDDHIST
SCHOOL, LELWALA.**

Mr. Abeywickrama: I move,—

That this Council is of opinion that the Education Department should continue the management of the Wickremasinghe Buddhist School at Lelwala in Galle District until the present dispute is satisfactorily settled.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Education, under Standing Order 57.

**EVACUATION ADVANCES: REPAY-
MENT.**

Mr. A. P. Jayasuriya (Horana): I move,—

That in view of the rising cost of living and hardship caused, this Council is of opinion that the evacuation advances made to Government Servants should be made payable in easy instalments with effect from January, 1943, as is done by the Colombo Municipality, and that deductions to be made on pay sheets of May, 1942, onwards should be forthwith suspended.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Financial Secretary for report, under Standing Order 57.

RICE RATION: PRISONERS.

Mr. D. P. Jayasuriya: I move,—

That this Council is of opinion that, in view of the small quantity of rice allowed per person under the rationing scheme, and in consideration of the fact that prisoners have to perform their very "heavy" tasks on the present inadequate rice ration, such prisoners should have their jail sentences appreciably reduced.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Home Affairs, and to the Legal Secretary for report, under Standing Order 57.

LAND ACQUISITION FOR EXPANSION OF TALAWAKELE.

Mr. S. Vytilingam (Talawakele): I move,—

That in order to meet the growing needs of Talawakele, this Council is of opinion that sufficient private land within the town limits be acquired and be made available to people at reasonable rentals.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committees of Local Administration and of Agriculture and Lands, under Standing Order 57.

DEFENCE: TRAINING SCHOOL FOR OFFICERS.

Dr. de Zoysa: I move,—

That in the opinion of this Council, a Training School for the training of officers for the Ceylon Defence Force should be established.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Chief Secretary for report, under Standing Order 57.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF TRANSPORT EXPERT.

Dr. de Zoysa: I move,—

That in the opinion of this Council, no recommendation made by Mr. Nelson, the Transport Expert, be given effect to, until such recommendation is considered and approved by this Council.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Local Administration, under Standing Order 57.

POST OFFICE, ATCHUYELI.

Mr. S. Natesan (Kankesanturai): I move,—

That this Council is of opinion that inasmuch as the proposal of the Postmaster-General to "downgrade" the Post Office at Atchuyeli will deprive the populous Division of Valikamam East

of the only Post Office it has at present, the Ministry of Communications and Works should not give effect to the proposal.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Communications and Works, under Standing Order 57.

DHOBIES OF JA-ELA: LICENCE FEE.

Mr. D. P. Jayasuriya: I move,—

That this Council is of opinion that the Sanitary Board Fees of Rs. 3 per licence, levied on dhobies of Ja-ela, be waived in view of the fact that the greater majority of their patrons have evacuated from Colombo, thus reducing the incomes derived by these dhobies very considerably and making it extremely difficult for them to eke out even a bare existence.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Local Administration, under Standing Order 57.

INQUEST ON BODY OF AUSADAHAMY OF MAKADUWAWA.

Mr. J. H. Ilangantileke (Puttalam): I move,—

That in the opinion of this Council early inquiries should be made as to why an inquest was not held on the body of Ausadahamy of Makaduwawa in Pahalawisideke korale in Wannī hatpattu who met with an accident on May 5 last and died on May 7 last at the Nikaweratiya Hospital.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Health, and to the Legal Secretary for report, under Standing Order 57.

MAGALLA TANK, NIKAWERATIYA.

Mr. Ilangantileke: I move,—

That in the opinion of this Council inquiries should be made why the Medical Officer of Nikaweratiya and the staff were allowed to clear the tank reservation of Magalla Tank at Nikaweratiya for Gingelly cultivation against the express conditions in Circular A. G. 49/38v of December 10, 1941.

Motion ordered to be referred to the Executive Committee of Health, under Standing Order 57.

***Mr. Samarakkody:** I have given notice of a motion yesterday—

Mr. Speaker: It appears on the Order Paper only to-day.

July 29, 1942]

***Mr. Samarakkody:** I gave notice that I shall move the suspension of Standing Orders.

Mr. Speaker: It is not a very urgent matter. We can take it up next week.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** There are some motions on the Addendum too.

Mr. Speaker: Members have not had 5 days' notice of those motions.

ARAMBEKADE-DEHIDENIYA & GALAGEDERA-HARANKAWA ROADS.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion† of Major E. A. Nugawela,—

That in the opinion of this House the Arambekade-Dehideniya and Galagedera-Harankawa V. C. roads should be taken over by the D. R. C.

Mr. Speaker: We will now continue the debate on the motion of the hon. Member for Galagedera (Major Nugawela).

***The Hon. Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara (Minister of Education):** The mover is not here, and the Minister concerned too is not here.

Mr. Speaker: But there are other Members who can speak on the motion.

The Hon. Colonel J. L. Kotalawala (Minister of Communications & Works): Either this motion should lapse or it must stand down. There is neither the mover present to give reasons in support of the motion nor the Minister to oppose the motion.

The Hon. Mr. H. J. Huxham (Financial Secretary): I think, on a previous occasion you ruled that if a Member moves a motion formally, he should, when the motion comes up for consideration in Council, speak not only in reply but also state the reasons why he moved the motion. The mover of this motion

is not here at the moment to abide by that ruling.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I move that the debate on the motion be deferred.

Consideration of item deferred.

SENIOR SCHOOL CERTIFICATE (ENGLISH) EXAMINATION: PRIVATE STUDENTS.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion† of Mr. A. Ratnayake,—

That this Council is of opinion that private students should be allowed to sit for the Senior School Certificate (English) Examination.

***The Hon. Mr. Kannangara:** This motion might be withdrawn, Sir, because the mover has agreed to what is stated in the report.

The Hon. Colonel Kotalawala: May I ask whether we should allow all motions to stand down if the movers are not present?

Mr. Speaker: Is that the wish of the House?

The Hon. Colonel Kotalawala: Perhaps if the mover was here he might have opposed this report.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Hon. Minister want to postpone consideration of a motion every time the mover is not present when the motion comes up for consideration.

The Hon. Colonel Kotalawala: It should be one of two things: either the motion should lapse, or it should stand down. It is not right for us to vote on anything that has been put before us for the first time when we have not heard the reasons which prompted a Member to move the motion.

Mr. Speaker: Every Member should come ready.

† Report of the Executive Committee of Local Administration not reproduced.

† Report of the Executive Committee of Education not reproduced.

The Hon. Colonel Kotalawala: If the mover is not here when the motion is taken up, that motion should lapse. May I move that this motion do lapse?

Mr. Speaker: There is no provision in our Standing Orders for such a course to be adopted. A motion that is before the House should either be withdrawn or be debated and put to the House.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I move that this debate be adjourned.

Consideration of item deferred.

MAGISTRATES: KNOWLEDGE OF VERNACULAR.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion † of Mr. A. Ratnayake,—

That this Council is of opinion that all Magistrates should be able to read and write the vernacular and should possess a good knowledge of the habits and customs of the people of the place.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I move that this motion of the hon. Member for Dumbura do stand down because he has been given leave of absence by this House. The hon. Member is ill.

Consideration of item deferred.

REVENUE OFFICERS: SELECTION BOARD.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

713. To continue the debate on the motion † of the Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva,—

That in the opinion of this Council the Selection Board for the appointment of Revenue Officers should be discontinued and that the selection should be made on the same lines as it is being done in the case of the Civil Service.

Mr. Speaker: Has the Hon. Minister anything to say?

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva (Minister of Health):** This debate has been deferred on the application of the Hon.

Minister of Home Affairs, because he said that he was considering this matter.

The Hon. Sir D. B. Jayatilaka (Minister of Home Affairs): This question is being considered and we are revising the regulations with regard to these examinations. I think this matter might stand down.

Consideration of item deferred.

COCONUT BOARD.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

714. To continue the debate on the motion † of Mr. A. R. A. Razik,—

That in the opinion of this House the Coconut Board should be scrapped forthwith in the interest of the Coconut Industry.

***Mr. A. R. A. Razik (Nominated Member):** The Hon. Minister promised to give us further information about this matter.

***Mr. H. F. Parfitt (Nominated Member):** Why should not the motion be taken up by the hon. Member: it can be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is to be debated.

***Mr. Razik:** I am waiting for further information from the Hon. Minister.

***The Hon. Mr. G. C. S. Corea (Minister of Labour, Industry & Commerce):** I did not know that this motion was coming up to-day. I have not my papers with me; I am sorry.

Mr. Speaker: This item might stand down.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** Or it might be taken up later.

***Mr. Parfitt:** This motion has been on the Agenda for a long time, and I think it ought to be taken up. Why should we not discuss it? It is up to the Hon. Minister—

***Mr. Aluwihare:** The Hon. Minister wants the item to stand down. Surely we have always extended that courtesy.

***Mr. Parfitt:** This item has been on the Agenda for a long time.

† Report of the Legal Secretary not reproduced.

† Report of the Executive Committee of Home Affairs and of the Chief Secretary not reproduced.

† Report of the Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce not reproduced.

Mr. Speaker: The debate might be adjourned.

***Mr. Parfitt:** No, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: The House is in favour of such an adjournment.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** We will divide on the question of deferring this item.

Mr. Speaker: I do not think the European Nominated Member (Mr. Parfitt) presses his amendment.

***Mr. Parfitt:** When is the Hon. Minister going to be ready? He said that he would be ready with the information at the next meeting.

Consideration of item deferred.

EMPLOYMENT EXCHANGE.

The debate on the following motion of Dr. A. P. de Zoysa was continued: That in the opinion of this Council the Employment Exchange should be closed down.

Report of the Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce under Standing Order 57.

The Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce considered this motion at its meeting held on June 24, 1941, when Dr. A. P. de Zoysa was present on invitation.

2. The Government of Ceylon Employment Exchange was established as one of the essential elements of the campaign to alleviate unemployment. In addition, useful purposes are served by the fact that it enables an estimate to be formed of the unemployment existing in Colombo and so of the remedial measures necessitated. Indications are also obtained of the spheres of activity in which there is likely to be employment and also opportunity is provided of introducing Ceylonese into occupations which were hitherto regarded as the special preserve of non-Ceylonese. An examination of the activities of the Exchange under these various Heads will indicate to members of the State Council the value of the work performed.

3. In the first week after the establishment of the Exchange the registration of the "unemployed" was carried out in various centres in Colombo. Since that date registration has been undertaken regularly at the Exchange itself. The total registrations are as follows:—

	Colombo.	Suburban. UCC.	Outstations.	Total.
1938-39 ..	18,246 ..	3,950 ..	3,969 ..	26,165
1939-40 ..	4,923 ..	1,029 ..	95 ..	6,047
1940-April, 1941 ..	2,440 ..	195 ..	10 ..	2,645
	<u>25,609</u>	<u>5,174</u>	<u>4,074</u>	<u>34,857</u>

These figures are in process of revision and so far only those of 1938 to 1939 are being reviewed. Of these, 50 per cent. of those registered have not renewed their registrations when invited to do so and one may judge from this that some of them may have found employment.

4. Incidentally, the figures cannot be considered as an accurate estimate of the number of unemployed in Colombo as some already in employment may have registered their names hoping to obtain posts offering better conditions of employment.

5. Since its establishment in September, 1938, the Exchange has secured for the "unemployed" 10,689 situations, permanent and temporary. This number is distributed as follows:—

1938-39 ..	1,806	} average of 5 persons a day } excluding 832 relief workers
1939-40 ..	5,983	
October, 1940-April, 1941	2,900	
	<u>10,689</u>	

Though suitability and fitness for the work required is the main test in the selection of persons for consideration by employers, every opportunity is taken to give prior consideration to those cases where selection for appointment would bring relief to the maximum number of dependants.

6. The total number of orders from employers received by the Exchange was—

1938-39	1,047
1939-40	1,686
October, 1940-April, 1941	812

of these, 2,096 were from Government and 1,449 from other employers.

7. Reference should be made to the educative work the Exchange performs in introducing Ceylonese to employment hitherto regarded as reserved for non-Ceylonese. Special success has been achieved with regard to conservancy labourers. In 1938-39, 186 permanent and 100 temporary posts of this nature were filled through the medium of the Exchange. In 1939-40, 51 permanent and 319 temporary and substitute posts were filled. In 1940 to April, 1941, 48 permanent and 158 temporary and substitute posts were filled. When it is remembered that at the time the Exchange was opened not a single Ceylonese registered himself as willing to undertake the work of a conservancy labourer, the Exchange must be congratulated on the success it has achieved in this direction.

8. In every sphere of activity equal success has been achieved which has taken every opportunity to encourage Ceylonese labourers to take up all forms of employment.

9. Applications received at the Exchange also indicate that in certain spheres of employment there is a scarcity of work. With this data at its disposal the Department of Labour can suggest means by which labourers can undergo the necessary training to fit themselves for appointment in these occupations.

10. In a minor degree recruitment by Government Departments through the Exchange has enabled the selection especially of unskilled labourers from a wider sphere than before. By the utilization of the Exchange, the possibility of danger of employment in certain Government Departments being limited to near relatives of those hitherto employed is eliminated.

11. Lastly, it must be mentioned that in the adoption of many forms of legislation designed to improve the conditions of employment, the Exchange plays an important part and though as yet Ceylon has not adopted many of these forms, the Exchange plays a useful part in the performance of the functions allotted to it and the expenditure voted annually by the State Council for its maintenance is being amply justified. Its discontinuance now that it has become a recognized institution in the placing of workers in employment would entail considerable hardship to the workers of Colombo.

12. For the above reasons the Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce is strongly opposed to the closing down of the Employment Exchange.

Dr. de Zoysa: I wish to emphasize the fact that the Employment Exchange is not necessary.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Is the hon. Member replying?

Mr. Speaker: It has been suggested that the mover who formally moves a motion might explain the reasons why he moved it.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** It cannot be done.

Mr. Speaker: It can be done.

The Hon. Colonel Kotalawala: Has the hon. Member the right of reply. This means that he must initiate the debate.

Mr. Speaker: He did not put forward his arguments on the last occasion, for the information of hon. Members.

The Hon. Colonel Kotalawala: He will have to start the debate; he cannot come in in the middle of it.

Dr. de Zoysa: The employment Exchange was necessary before the war. At present there is a great deal of employment; people can obtain employment without going to the Employment Exchange. It has been suggested that the Municipal Councils and the other local bodies could be entrusted with the work of finding employment for people in their areas. So that a Central Employment Exchange is not necessary, if we decentralize the work. Therefore I think hon. Members will realize that we are paying for some officers who could very well be employed on other work. The work of the Employment Exchange could very well be done by the municipalities and other local bodies.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** I would like the Hon. Minister to tell us how much it costs to maintain the Exchange, because the officer in charge has been taken over by the Civil Defence Commissioner to do A.R.P. work in Dehiwala; he is the Chief Air Raid Warden of Dehiwala. I do not think the Exchange is functioning now. At the present time you will find that there are sufficient people available for jobs, and that work is obtainable. Therefore there is no justification for spending money on maintaining this Exchange. In the present circumstances, I would like to know how much is being spent per month to run the Exchange.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya (Galle): We would like to know whether the Employment Exchange is functioning.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I have sent in a report on this motion which has been reproduced in the Agenda. Unfortunately that report was sent some time ago. This matter was considered in June, 1941. The report sets out the main reasons why we should have the Exchange.

The House will remember that this question was considered by the last Council on certain reports that were presented by the Committee. The Council went into the matter and it was decided that there should be an Exchange. The purpose of the Exchange is very well known, and I need not go fully into that matter. But the point is that the object of the Exchange was to facilitate not only the registration of the unemployed,

particularly in Colombo, and in the out-stations thereafter, but also to enable people to obtain employment speedily, and to enable employers to find out whether suitable workers could be found. From the time the Exchange was started it has fulfilled that intention very satisfactorily because—

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Up to a certain date.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I am just coming to that point. Up to date the total number of people who have been found employment is something like 22,000. This is since the Exchange was established.

There seems to be an idea, just because of the present war conditions and the existence of many forms of employment, that the Exchange is useless; on the contrary it is still continuing to perform the same function. I think the daily average of people finding employment is 22. At the present time people are required for all forms of employment, ranging even from people engaged in latrine work to those capable of performing many other forms of work. These workers have to be registered; they have to be classified, and the list has always to be kept up to date in order to meet the call for workers for a particular type of work. If you had no Exchange, what would happen is that people would have to go roaming all over the place in search of employment. Employers will have to depend on one or two people—either subordinates in their Offices or someone else—to find workers when they are wanted for a particular type of work.

The cost of running this establishment is very small. The total number of people employed in the Employment Exchange is 10: there is the Manager; the Assistant Manager; 5 Clerks; 2 Peons and 1 Labourer. We pay a small rent for the premises occupied. So that the annual cost to the taxpayer on account of this Exchange is very small. As against that, the country gets the general advantage of having this Exchange in order to enable people to register themselves and find employment.

On the figures I have quoted, there is clear proof that the Exchange has been useful to a very large number of people.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Is the Manager working?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** The Manager is doing part-time work as an A. R. P. Officer, Dehiwala-Mount Lavinia. The Civil Defence Commissioner asked for his services, and we have approved of his doing A. R. P. work as well. He works every morning in the Exchange, and in the afternoon his Assistant does the work; in the afternoon the Manager attends to A. R. P. work. In this time of emergency we did not feel justified in refusing to allow him to do A. R. P. work. Most of the work of the Exchange comes in in the morning and continues right up to lunch time. The Manager attends to that work. The work that comes in in the afternoon is being attended to by the Assistant.

Personally I do not mind whether you abolished this Exchange or not. But I would only like the House to consider that this is an institution which was intended to assist the worker to find work. That it does attain that object, is clear from the figures.

I am only sorry that the latest figures are not with me at the moment; it is my fault for not having brought the papers. I did not think that this question was going to be taken up to-day. I thought Government business was going to be taken up in the afternoon; it is a mistake of mine.

But I am quite satisfied that the Exchange, in spite of any limitations or difficulties or defects, has served a very useful purpose especially where the poor, unemployed worker is concerned who has been enabled to find employment. That is a very great service that it has rendered.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** I should like the Exchange to continue to do its work even at the present time. It is true that on account of the war there is no difficulty in workers finding work. But unless there is an organization recognized by the Government, you will never be able to find out the number of people available for employment.

It is perfectly true that at the present moment the activities of the Exchange are not as great as they perhaps used to

be. But this Exchange was asked for by hon. Members of this House because the poor who wanted to find employment as masons, carpenters, labourers, and so on, were handicapped for want of information. We wanted this Exchange established to help these people. Perhaps to-day some of the officers may be doing other kinds of work. But I do not like this organization to be disturbed because of that.

I know that when labourers had no work in village areas, we were able to find them a certain amount of employment through this Exchange. When work on the Hydro-Electric Scheme was started, I had to appeal to the Ministry, and we were able to secure a certain amount of work for these labourers.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** You had registered 5,000 yourself.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** A large number had been registered.

When we were discussing the question of the extent of unemployment in this country, we found that we could not obtain proper figures. Now an Exchange like this could supply us with up-to-date figures. In all the circumstances I think it is best that we should allow the Exchange to function for some time.

Mr. Rajah Hewavitarne (Matara): We considered this matter in our Committee about a year ago. I think times have changed. As an employer of labour in this country, I find that it is very difficult to get skilled workers for various grades of work to-day. People are to-day joining the Labour Corps and they are also enlisting in various units of the Army. I would like this matter to be referred back to the Executive Committee to see how the position stands to-day.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** This will be a very fine moment to find out how many people are registered in the Exchange, because I am certain that there may be a large number registered although there are no people to be found to-day to perform certain jobs. This Employment Exchange functions only in Colombo, and I am not so certain that all the officers are doing useful service.

There are some people who register at the Exchange, and some people who register are those who are in employment. It would be rather interesting to find out whether there are any registered people

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** This report may be referred back—I have no objection—

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Yes.

The Hon. Mr. Corea:—So that the latest figures may be looked into.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I would second the motion of my hon. Friend the Member for Matara (Mr. Hewavitarne) that this report be referred back.

The Hon. Mr. Corea: I have no objection, if the mover of the motion has no objection to this report being referred back.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Can we have a guarantee that information as to the present position will reach this House before 1950, because after all our grouse now is that this is information that is out of date? We now want to send the motion back to the same Committee. Is there any chance of that other information being up-to-date when it does come up for discussion?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I can give the guarantee that I will send in that information in two weeks.

Mr. Speaker: I do not know whether it is in order to refer this item back to the Committee.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** No; we will adjourn the debate.

The Hon. Mr. Corea: Will we have a right to speak again then?

Dr. de Zoysa rose.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member will lose the right to speak again.

Dr. de Zoysa: I do not mind, because I would like to say that if the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce are willing to reconsider the matter there are certain points I want to put before them.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** The hon. Member can come before the Committee and do that.

Dr. de Zoysa: I do not like to do that. These particulars do not very much help us.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** There is one objection to the hon. Member speaking. He has no objection to losing his right to speak again but—

Dr. de Zoysa: I am speaking at the moment, and I am on my feet.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I am raising a point of order.

You mentioned, Sir, that the hon. Member will lose the right to speak again, if he is replying now. He will speak now and lose the right to speak again, and he being the mover and the last speaker, we will all lose our right to speak.

Mr. Speaker: I believe the hon. Member is speaking on the motion to adjourn the debate.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Then it is a different matter.

Mr. Speaker: Please confine your remarks to the motion for the adjournment of the debate.

Dr. de Zoysa: I should like the Ministry, if they are ready to go further into this matter, to take into consideration the very important fact that there is only one Employment Exchange in the whole Island, and ascertain whether it is feasible to get the different Municipalities and Urban Councils to have their own Employment Exchanges so that we will know how many people from Kandy, for instance, are unemployed. Most of the people registered are supposed to be unemployed in Colombo, but the fact is that some people from outstations have given Colombo addresses and had themselves registered.

I would like the Minister to consider that point.

Question, "That the debate on the motion be adjourned", put, and agreed to.

**COTTON GINNING MILL FOR
EAST GIRUWA PATTU,
HAMBANTOTA.**

The debate on the following motion of Mr. D. M. Rajapaksa was continued:

This Council is of opinion that a cotton ginning mill should be established in the cotton-growing area of East Giruwa pattu of Hambantota District.

Report of the Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce under Standing Order 57.

Mr. Rajapaksa was not present, though invited, when this motion was discussed.

2. At present cotton is grown only in chenas. About 1,750 acres are under cultivation with an annual average yield of 4,000 cwt. Present production is now at its maximum even on the basis of the most liberal issue of chena permits. Revenue departments are reluctant to allow unlimited chena production of cotton.

3. The entire supply of locally grown cotton is sold to the Wellawatta Spinning and Weaving Mills under an agreement in return for certain concessions given to the company on the import of textile machinery. The mill is already equipped with ginning machines. The cotton purchased by it is supplied with seed. Approximately 33 per cent. of lint can be obtained from cotton with seeds.

4. The mill pays approximately 10½ cents per pound for seed cotton. As only one-third of this quantity is pure cotton, the price the mill pays for a pound of cotton is approximately 31½ cents. This does not include ginning costs. In India, the price of ginned cotton as quoted by the Bombay Chamber of Commerce is 16 cents per pound. If Government is to establish a separate ginnery in Hambantota District there is likely to be heavy losses if the object is to sell cotton in the open market. The Wellawatta Spinning and Weaving Mills can afford to pay the present high price as it has received certain concessions under the agreement.

5. Present production of cotton is only sufficient to keep the ginnery at the Wellawatta Spinning and Weaving Mills occupied for three to four months a year. There is hardly any justification for the establishment of a separate Government ginnery.

6. The Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce is of opinion that the establishment of a separate Government ginnery is uneconomical and does not recommend acceptance of the motion.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I want to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister and the House to the unsatisfactory way in which spinning is being conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce. [A MEMBER: Ginning.] Ginning is part of spinning and weaving.

I think hon. Members are aware of the enormous amount of unwoven yarn that is imported into this country, and we thought at one time that the Minister was establishing spinning and weaving centres. A few months ago—I think about eighteen months ago—the Minister wanted some accommodation in my area for the purpose of spinning and weaving. Well, a gentleman in my area promised him the accommodation, and his Inspector went there. We were told to carry out certain repairs. The building is now available, but it is about a year now and nothing has happened.

The important point about delays like this is that the whole business of growing cotton, spinning and weaving are inter-connected. Take the Matale District. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands is aware that about five years ago the whole of Matale North and a good part of Matale East were taking to cotton-growing on chenas almost without any Government encouragement, because at that time there was a scheme of cotton purchase.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** We have that scheme even now.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Now because that scheme of cotton purchase has not worked as smoothly as it should in Matale, cotton-growing is dwindling.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Last year it dwindled but this year it has increased.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I do not know what the figures for this year are. Here the hon. Member for Hambantota (Mr. Rajapaksa) wants encouragement to his cotton-growers. The report says:

“At present cotton is grown only in chenas. About 1,750 acres are under cultivation with an

annual average yield of 4,000 cwt. Present production is now at its maximum, even on the basis of the most liberal issue of chena permits. Revenue departments are reluctant to allow unlimited chena production of cotton."

Merely to accept that and refuse the facility, I think, is a mistake. The thing is to go for Revenue Departments and get the people the land and encourage cotton-growing. Instead of that, merely to refuse the facility which the Member wants is to kill any possibility of starting the industry.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** I should like to say a few words with regard to this question, especially because at the present moment there is a great deal of difficulty in securing material for the purpose of carrying on weaving. There are people who are anxious to keep themselves occupied by weaving, and something must also be done to prevent traders profiteering in cloth.

Sir, this question is a very important one, and I think the Ministry has failed and failed miserably with regard to this question. I am surprised that after functioning for twelve years this Ministry has not been able to tackle the question of producing sufficient cloth for the country. The Hon. Minister has sent in a report to say:

"At present cotton is grown only in chenas."

Why chenas only? They take a stock term "Chena" and they cannot get out of that "chena" spirit and that idea. Why have they not made any attempt to have large-scale cotton cultivation? Why should we depend on other countries to get cotton here? Everyday this is happening. Every time something has to be done, you must depend on other people. We have given a large sum of money for the purpose of supplying charkas to villagers. What is the use of the charkas unless they have cotton? There are thousands and thousands of acres not being used. Under this cursed Government Agent system you cannot get a piece of land.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Who says so?

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** I say so; I know it. I have had experience in these matters for the last twenty-five

years. I know how difficult it is to break the Kachcheri habit and get land for people. If you apply for a piece of land, you have to go to 150 people, and you have to bribe everybody. I would ask any hon. Member to say whether this is not true. Can a man get a piece of land by appealing to the Government Agent?

At the present moment we have appointed (Emergency) Assistant Government Agents and I must say that they have done a certain amount of good work. I must say that they have practically broken with the old system. Immediately after the emergency, these (Emergency) Assistant Government Agents may cease to function. [MEMBERS: No! No!]. I hope the system will continue, because I am entirely in favour of it.

But I feel that it is no use closing our eyes to certain facts that are in existence now. If a man wants to plant cotton, he cannot get the land. Here the hon. Member asks in this motion that ginning mills be established to encourage cotton-growing, so that people who grow cotton will be able to sell it there and that the material will be made fit for spinning purposes. Nothing is done. A report is sent in saying that there is not sufficient cotton!

If there is not sufficient cotton, what is the remedy? You must make people grow it, and in order to make them grow it, you must give them lands. When the Government says, "We have the lands but will not give them to you", how can you expect these unfortunate people to grow cotton. To-day you cannot buy a sarong for less than Rs. 5 or Rs. 6.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Rs. 8.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** A poor man has to spend Rs. 8 for a sarong. He cannot be without some kind of garment, and therefore he must pay a high figure and buy something.

We are not giving any encouragement for cotton-growing. They also say, "Oh, there is the Wellawatta Spinning and Weaving Mill". We know that. But that is not an answer to the question. After all, if money is wanted, the

[The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva.]
Board of Ministers and this Council will be willing to give money. If lands are wanted they must apply for the land and make it available and say that in such a district they have a thousand acres, and ask people who want to grow cotton to take the thousand acres on certain terms and grow cotton. Something must be done to overcome all the difficulties. To-morrow if India is not going to send any cloth, we will experience the same difficulty as we are experiencing in regard to rice to-day.

I want hon. Members to support this motion and give every encouragement to the people to grow cotton, and allow them to make some living out of this industry so that they can do something for themselves.

Mr. Speaker: The sitting is suspended till 4.30 P.M.

Sitting accordingly suspended until 4.30 p.m., and then resumed.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** The report submitted by the Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce states:

"Mr. Rajapaksa was not present, though invited, when the motion was discussed."

I have a complaint to make in this connexion, in the matter of the notice given by Executive Committees, of their meetings. We do not receive these notices in time to enable us to attend the meetings. Some time ago I received notice of a meeting by express letter which was delivered to me on the morning of the day on which the meeting was to take place, and I had to send a telegram to get the meeting postponed.

It has apparently become the habit of Executive Committees to make this insinuation against Members, "Though the Member was invited, he was not present". Surely this passage could be omitted from these reports! This is a characteristic feature of the reports submitted to this Council by the Ministers—the insinuation that Members give notice of and move motions, but are not quite serious or sincere about them. In fairness to Members, these reports must state the date of the notice sent to Members and the date of the meeting.

Take this case: how could the Member for Hambantota (Mr. Rajapaksa) have come to the meeting of the Executive Committee if he had received as short notice as we are accustomed to receive from these Executive Committees? I have already quoted my own instance, where I received notice of a meeting by express letter on the morning of the date fixed for the meeting! Unless the meetings of the Executive Committee take place on days when this Council meets, we must have at least a week's notice of the meeting of an Executive Committee at which our motions are taken up for consideration.

It is a curious feature in this Island that while we are providing essential commodities to other countries, we have not thought of producing in this country articles which are essential to our needs. We produce tea and rubber, and to help in that production we are compelled to pay dearness allowances and other allowances to our labourers—because these articles are regarded as essential for the war effort, but food and clothing are essential to the people of this country.

As the Hon. Minister of Health has pointed out, the price of cloth has gone up tremendously. An ordinary sarong which used to be sold at Re. 1.50 is now priced at Rs. 7! Long cloth, which formerly sold at 30 cents a yard now costs Re. 1.30 to Re. 1.50 a yard. It is time the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce thought of controlling the prices of textiles and of evolving some scheme to save this country from these cloth merchants.

It is a step in the right direction to establish weaving mills. This work should have been given precedence.

I observe that notice of this motion was given in 1937. Is that correct? The motion is numbered 405/37, and the Ministry has apparently taken more than four years to report on it. I do not think the Minister can get over the indictment that his Executive Committee has failed to take any action for nearly five years.

The report on this motion is uninformative. It contains facts and figures gathered some years ago. The situation has now materially changed. The Department of Industries have established a textile factory at Baddegama. The

price charged for cotton is somewhere about Re. 1.50 a lb. whereas to the Wellawatta Mills the charge is 31 cents a lb.

This report deals with the position two or three years ago, but now what is the use of spreading textile centres throughout the Island without an assurance or guarantee that cotton will be available for these centres? Daily the difficulty of finding cotton is increasing, and when requisitions are sent to the Department, they cut down the supply to the minimum owing to shortage of supplies. Recently, the Department had a windfall: some cotton yarn meant for another country was landed here, and the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce must be congratulated on his taking prompt steps to buy for us a fair quantity of that shipment. That saved the situation to a certain extent, but it is only a temporary measure; it has relieved the situation for only a month or two.

The principal centre for cotton-growing is the Hambantota District, but the present attitude of the Ministers cannot save us from the difficulties created by the shortage of cotton. I am surprised that the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce and his Executive Committee have not taken steps to control the supplies and the distribution of these textiles, which are now sold at very high prices. It has become impossible in this country for the poor people to buy their requirements of clothing.

There are various other points mentioned in the report, which I do not wish to deal with at this stage—[*Interruption*]: The number of the report is 726. The hon. Member who asked for the number of the report is equally guilty with the other Members of the Executive Committee for the "sleepy" attitude they have displayed over this question. They have taken $4\frac{1}{2}$ years to report on this motion, and the situation has gone from bad to worse.

We know that no fresh supplies of textiles have been imported into this country for about a year, but the merchants are daily raising their prices. If you go to a merchant in the morning, he will quote one price; and if you go to him in the evening, he will quote another price. That is the state of the textile market in this country to-day.

Even the present imperfect system of control of prices and distribution now applied to other commodities should have been applied to textiles also.

I would appeal to the Minister to take steps forthwith to establish a ginning mill, regardless of what is stated in the report now before us. I do not think it is strictly correct to say that one has to bribe 150 people to get an acre of land in this country, but bribery is going on in the Kachcheries where permits have to be applied for. We are told in this report:

"Revenue departments are reluctant to allow unlimited chena production of cotton."

I wonder whether the Revenue Departments are a parallel form of Government outside the control of the Central Government! The Board of Ministers are expected to get things done through the Revenue Officers, and if the Revenue Departments are reluctant to carry out the wishes of the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce, he should have brought it to the notice of the Board of Ministers, the Chief Secretary and the Governor or anybody else concerned. It will not do for the Minister merely to say that the Revenue Departments are reluctant to allow unlimited chena production of cotton. To whom are we to appeal, except to the Board of Ministers, when a report like this is presented? If the necessary land is not given, are we to get hold of the necks of the Government Agents, or are we to get at the Board of Ministers? Who is going to remedy this state of affairs?

In the Hambantota District there is land suitable for cotton cultivation. At least a State-subsidized scheme of cultivation can be started on about 10,000 acres. All the textile centres opened by the Ministry will be absolutely useless if we do not open the necessary land in cotton.

Daily the situation is growing worse. I am in touch with the textile centre at Baddegama, and I know the difficulties it has to meet.

I hope the Hon. Minister will withdraw this report of his Executive Committee and accept the motion of the hon. Member and take steps to establish a ginning mill. He should obtain a report from an expert and take immediate steps to establish the mill.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: I am surprised at this report. The principle advocated by the Minister in this report is contrary to an announcement made by the Hon. Leader of the House some years ago when we discussed the textile quotas.

The House will remember the occasion when the Secretary of State imposed quotas for the importation of foreign textiles into Ceylon, and there was a long debate on the subject. The Leader of the House made a vigorous speech on that occasion and said that the only way in which we could fight the quota system was by the establishment of as many textile centres as possible, and bringing large acreages under cotton cultivation and by the establishment of ginning mills. If the scheme enunciated by the Hon. Leader had been put into operation, we would not be in this sad plight to-day.

Therefore I am rather surprised that the same Board of Ministers should have presented a report quite contrary to the sentiments expressed by the Hon. Leader which, on that occasion, were subscribed to or had the concurrence of the entire Board of Ministers.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** This report has nothing to do with the Board of Ministers.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: I am referring to a Minister who is a Member of the Board of Ministers. In certain matters they claim collective responsibility, but in other matters they single out themselves and say that they are not responsible. When it is convenient to them, they act like a happy family, and when it is inconvenient they single one of them out and make that poor Minister the black sheep and disclaim any sense of collective responsibility.

In this matter, I should have thought that the Minister, in dealing with this report, might have referred it to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands. He might have been well-advised to consult the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands who is responsible for the growing of cotton.

The whole trend of this report shows that there is not sufficient cotton avail-

able in the Hambantota area which would justify the establishment of a ginning mill. It is really a sad state of affairs, because I believe, the cotton industry has been carried on for so many years and there are areas not only in the Southern Province but also in Matale and other places where the land is quite suitable for growing cotton, particularly at the present time when the prices of textiles have increased by probably 500 per cent. to 600 per cent.

I understand that even the quota system which was operating some time ago has been removed in the case of certain textiles. I am given to understand that the quota placed on Japanese textiles has been removed altogether, with the result that those textiles have gone up in price by a very large percentage. Those who had Japanese textiles, hoarded them. Now once the ban is removed, they are making profits by the sale of those textiles.

The policy embodied in this report is a very short-sighted one. The Hon. Minister will probably tell us that this report is so many years old, and that we were not at war then, and that this report requires to be conditioned by the situation obtaining to-day.

I am in entire sympathy with the motion of the hon. Member, that every encouragement should be given to those in the Southern Province to which he has made particular reference. But wherever cotton can be grown, the Department concerned should take an interest in the matter and promote it so that, at least in the next few years we shall have sufficient cotton to get our textile industry properly established. I would strongly support this motion.

Mr. R. Sri Pathmanathan (Mannar-Mullaitivu): Sir, the criticism levelled against the Hon. Minister, by the hon. Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama), is in one sense correct, because it had been the practice of the Committees continually to postpone the solution of different problems. This may have been correct at the time it was made, but what was true a week ago is not true now. The position is continually changing owing to the conditions brought about by the war.

I also agree with the hon. Member when he says that cotton-growing should be one of the principal matters that should engage the attention of the Board of Ministers. I am sorry that this matter was not referred to my Hon. Friend the Minister of Agriculture and Lands. I am certain that he would pay great attention to this most important subject, especially in view of the fact that cloth has gone up so much in price.

Few Members perhaps know that Ceylon in ancient times had a very important cotton port. The name of that port is point Pedro which even to-day is called in Tamil "*Parithiturai*", which means "Cotton Port". Formerly cotton was grown in large quantities in the Wannu, and in the Mannar District, not only for weaving cloth but also for exporting surpluses to India. Unfortunately, from that time until now the history is that our weaving industry has dwindled and dwindled and the whole industry will, in a very short time, practically disappear from Ceylon. In Jaffna, the weaving industry was a very important business, and there is a section of the people who live by it. Unfortunately I understand that there too the industry is fast dying out.

So, I would wish that, not only in the Hambantota District, but also in the Wannu and the Mannar District this industry should be encouraged. When this particular scheme was before our Committee, it was argued that the business was non-paying. It has all gone off my head; it is three or four years now since we dealt with this matter. Matters such as these must be attended to immediately within the same year. The report is perfectly useless now, under war conditions.

Some of my motions have still not been reported upon. I gave notice in this House of several motions as soon as I came in as an Elected Member. It is time that this Council closed down. We are in a very unfortunate position. So, I trust that the Hon. Minister, when the time comes—he is an excellent Minister; we do not deny that—will come up to scratch and review this matter once again, with all these circumstances before him.

***Mr. Dudley Senanayake (Dedigama):** Sir, I must confess that I am

rather surprised at this particular report. It starts with a statement of various facts which go to show that cotton cultivation to a large extent has not been encouraged at all. We are told that Revenue Departments are reluctant to allow chena production of cotton. After reciting various facts, which go to show Government's reluctance to encourage the cultivation of cotton, this report ends up with the statement that since there is a lack of supply, it is not advisable to have a mill. The Government, having discouraged the production of cotton, uses that as a reason why a mill should not be established or the various facilities enumerated in the report be afforded.

I am not surprised that the hon. Member for Mannar (Mr. Sri Pathmanathan) asked for the encouragement of cotton-growing in his district. But there is no doubt that, according to the terms of this report, one particular spinning and weaving mill, namely, the Wellawatta Spinning and Weaving Mills does take this cotton at a certain rate, utilizes it and finds it profitable to run the mills. I do not see why a Government mill cannot do likewise.

There is a general reluctance, particularly on the part of the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce and generally, I say, of the Government, to interfere with certain vested capitalist interests. As long as certain interests exist, particularly as in this case, they are trotted out as a reason for not encouraging similar Government industries. I do feel that if the concessions that are granted to the Weaving Mills are granted, such as importation of the machinery required for this purpose, Government will be in a position to run a mill economically and profitably.

Furthermore, at a time when cotton-growing has been discouraged, as indicated by this report, or when it certainly has not received any encouragement from Government—considering the situation—if Government were definitely to encourage this industry even now a number of mills can be started, as visualized by the hon. Member for Mannar (Mr. Sri Pathmanathan). After all, food and clothing are the primary needs of any country, and Government must cater for them. The primary needs of a country for self-sufficiency ought to be obtained.

[Mr. Dudley Senanayake.]
and therefore I have no hesitation in lending my whole-hearted support to this motion.

Mr. D. Wanigasekera (Wellgama):
Sir, we import several million rupees' worth of cotton goods into this country. According to this report, the Government is not going to encourage any cotton-growing. Two things are necessary for this country, and they are food and clothing.

In the matter of clothing, the establishment of a ginning mill in the Hambantota area would have been an encouragement to thousands of people who are planting cotton in that area. If this industry had been encouraged five years ago, to-day we would be producing several million rupees' worth of cotton in that area. But owing to the attitude of Government, we have been discouraged from engaging in this noble occupation.

Now, the Hon. Minister is against the establishment of any cotton mill in the Hambantota area. His attitude is one which this Council and the whole country would condemn. Instead of establishing one ginning mill, the Board of Ministers should have started a five- or ten-year scheme and opened up thousands and thousands of acres in cotton and made this country independent of foreign clothing. Instead of doing that, the little help they could have given to this industry in the Hambantota District has been denied to them.

I support this motion.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** There are a few points I would like to refer to on this very important motion, especially as there is a very strong misconception with regard to this report. I think I owe it to the House to clear it up, and I am sure the House will give me a few minutes to enable me to do so.

In the first place, I want to dispose of a preliminary point raised by the hon. Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama) that reference is made in the report to the fact that the Member who moved this motion was absent, although he was invited to be present, when this matter was considered by the Executive Committee. I can assure the hon. Member that there was no desire on the part

of my Committee to put that in unnecessarily. Under the Constitution the presence of the Member is required. He has to be invited, to be present and if a report is to be made, reference has to be made in the report to his presence or absence. It is not a peculiar pleasure of ours to mention the fact that the Member was not present. It does not give any pleasure to record that fact, I can assure the hon. Member; and we only had to perform a duty which is laid on us by the Constitution.

The other point the hon. Member raised—that my Committee in particular, if I understood him aright, gave very little notice to Members—I say is altogether incorrect. It may be that in a particular instance, owing to the sudden necessity to discuss the question, very short notice is given, but I can assure the hon. Member that not a single motion is taken up in my Committee, in connexion with which a Member has been invited to be present, unless the motion has appeared on the agenda at least four times; every time it is postponed to suit the convenience of the Member. There were two motions this morning, where for the third time the Member concerned did not attend the meeting, but we did not dispose of them; we put them off again and informed the Member concerned accordingly.

With regard to this particular motion, I have a file here and I notice that it was postponed on three occasions.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** For five years!

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** The hon. Member, I am sorry to say, sometimes makes statements without ascertaining the facts. The hon. Member charges me with having put this matter off for four years. That is not a fact. This motion was referred originally to the Minister of Agriculture, and the Hon. the Speaker referred it to me in 1941. So how can there be four years between the middle of 1941 and 1942?

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Will the Hon. Minister give way to enable me to make a personal explanation? It is not so stated in the report.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** Of course, it is not stated.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Then how can one imagine these things? Then I charge the Board of Ministers with having delayed this matter.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** The hon. Member cannot charge the Board of Ministers with delaying this matter. I am meeting the charge that I have taken four years to report on this motion.

***Mr. R. S. S. Gunawardana (Gampola):** How long did the Hon. Minister of Agriculture take?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I say that the motion was referred to my Committee somewhere in 1941. The motion is an important motion, seeing that it deals with an important subject. We are not dealing with all those points, with regard to details. However, I am meeting the charge that was originally made by the hon. Member. I cannot remember when I sent the report, but I am sure this report has been on the State Council Agenda for quite a long time.

Mr. Speaker: It was reported upon on July 14, 1941.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** And it was referred to us in June?

Mr. Speaker: It was referred to the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce on 13th May, 1941.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** Thank you, Sir. On 13th May, 1941, the motion was referred to my Committee, and my Committee reported in July. It could not have been done quicker.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Notice of the motion had been given in 1937.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I cannot carry the sins of the world on my shoulders.

So much to dispose of that point. I wish to draw the attention of the House to the terms of the motion, but there is one other point I want to touch upon before I deal with that point. I think the hon. Member for Dedigama (Mr. Dudley Senanayake) was a Member of my Committee in July, 1941.

***Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam (Point Pedro):** Let him forget his mistakes, please.

The Hon. Mr. Corea: Towards the end of 1941, the hon. Member transferred himself to the Committee of Communications—in November 1941. This report was formulated by the hon. Member himself, and now he is criticizing it as a very bad report. However, I am just pointing this out as an interlude. The hon. Member may have forgotten the circumstances which led us to make this report.

I want straightaway to tell the House, that I am entirely in favour of the establishment of cotton-ginning mills, cotton-spinning mills and cotton-weaving mills. That has been my policy; that is my own attitude towards this matter. We had to consider this specific motion in the light of the information which was available to us.

Now, we had to consider the suggestion that there should be a ginnyery in Hambantota, a ginning mill for cotton. We had to get all the facts before we reported on the matter. I have often in this House stated that at any rate our industrial policy is this, that we go in for the establishment of industries only in regard to those raw materials which are available, unless there is some very special reason against our doing so. We try to industrialize Ceylon from that stand-point first; that is, we try to utilize existing raw materials for converting them into manufactured articles.

When this motion came to us, we tried to find out whether there was any possibility of getting any raw material to justify the establishment of a cotton-ginning mill. The facts with regard to the matter are stated in my report. It is on those facts that we have reported to this Council that it is not possible to consider the establishment of a ginning mill. You spend all that money and get out the machinery and establish the mill. Unless you have the raw material to feed that mill it will be impossible to carry on that mill. My Committee was dealing with the industrial possibilities of the establishment of a ginning mill.

Now we have shown in that report that the cotton available in this country, available at that time and available to-day is sufficient only for a period of

[The Hon. Mr. Corea.]
 three to four months for the Spinning and Weaving Mills which gins all that cotton. Further, there is the fact that there is a contract between the Government and that Mill to supply all that cotton at a specified price to that Mill. [Interruption.] There is a contract that the Mill will buy that cotton at a certain fixed price.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** For how many years? What are the terms?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I am charged, again by the hon. Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama) with having a partiality for that company and with giving a contract—

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** I never charged the Hon. Minister with anything like that.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I am sorry, I meant the hon. Member for Dedigama (Mr. Dudley Senanayake). He said that we have a partiality for this capitalist concern and enter into agreements with them to supply the cotton.

***Mr. Dudley Senanayake:** That is definitely a misrepresentation. I said that the Ministry in particular and the Government in general did not touch vested interests.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** Well, the Minister in particular.

***Mr. Dudley Senanayake:** The Ministry.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** That is not a fact, because my Ministry had nothing to do with any contract or with supplying any cotton.

***Mr. Dudley Senanayake:** If you establish a Government organization, it will compete with the private organization that is already established. I never spoke about any contract.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** We did not know that there was a contract.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I say that the quantity of cotton produced now is sufficient only for about three or four months' requirements of that mill. Where is the cotton for a ginning mill that my Committee might start? Where is the cotton? What is the good of importing

machinery to establish a mill when there is no cotton?

***Mr. Dudley Senanayake:** Cotton is grown.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** The cotton that is being grown is bought by the Spinning and Weaving Mills.

***Mr. Dudley Senanayake:** Take it yourself.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** We cannot take that cotton.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Collective responsibility of the Board of Ministers!

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I am not claiming any collective responsibility; I am merely pointing out the facts. The total quantity of cotton available is utilized by them; there is no cotton left for any ginning mill.

***Mr. R. S. S. Gunawardana:** An uneconomic proposition.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** Even if there was no cotton given to the Spinning Mills, the fact remains that there is only three to four months' supply available in this country for a ginning mill.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** That is, for a big mill like the Spinning and Weaving Mills.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** Then there is the question of price. My information is that these people are now paying 37½ cents for a pound of cotton. We are paying 37 cents to the cultivator. Sir, the cost of ginning, for instance in India, is very much less; so if we gin the cotton here, we will have to compete with the price of ginning in India, which is very much less.

Therefore we reported that in view of the fact that there was no cotton available to justify the establishment of a mill, we were unable to recommend the starting of a ginning mill. If there is cotton available, I certainly agree that there should be a ginning mill established in this country.

It was the same situation that was disclosed when we had under consideration the question of installing further plant for the extraction of castor oil. There was no case which we could make out for

the establishment of another mill, because there was a lack of an adequate supply of the raw material.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Who has to provide that?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I say, if and when the cultivation of cotton increases and a large quantity is available, then the industrial branch of the Government should provide the machinery to take on the cotton that is produced. Of course, it may be asked, like the old story of the chicken and the egg, "Which comes first, the chicken or the egg?" Should we start a ginning mill because when there is a ginning mill cotton cultivation would expand and the mill would be fed? Or, should we wait for the expansion of cotton-growing and then as it expands, establish a mill to deal with that cotton?

We say that unless there is a guarantee that the raw material will be available, we think it is unwise to establish a ginning mill. That is the view that the Committee has expressed. I shall not be at all sorry if anyone says that a mill should be established. We are quite prepared to do it, except that in the face of the facts available to us we feel that economically it is an unsound proposition to establish a mill in the present circumstances. I have some figures of the acreages—

***The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Minister of Agriculture & Lands):** Who gave you the figures?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** The agricultural Department.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Is it stated there that it is from the Agricultural Department?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** Yes, signed "Director of Agriculture".

I have figures of the total acreage. In 1939-40, in the whole of the Northern, Southern, Central, Eastern and South-Western Divisions the *Maha* acreage was 1,274; the yield was 2,992½ cwt. of cotton. In 1940-41, the acreage was 1,743, and the yield 5,198 cwt. The House will therefore see that there has been an increase of nearly 500 acres under cultivation between 1939-40 and 1940-41, and the yield has very nearly doubled itself. For the present cotton is a chena crop.

This is the first decision that my Committee arrived at after this matter came before it:

"The Committee was of opinion that as there was not an adequate supply of locally grown cotton, it would not be economical to establish a ginning mill until a reasonable supply was assured, and desired that inquiry be made from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands as to whether it was prepared to take steps to further the cultivation of cotton to enable the establishment of a ginning industry."

So, we asked for that information from the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands whether an adequate supply of cotton could be supplied for us to justify starting a ginning mill.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** And what was the reply?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I will come to that presently. Then we were told that cotton was only a chena crop. I am stating the bare facts.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I should like the Hon. Minister to read the reply he received from the Minister of Agriculture and Lands.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** This was from the Director of Agriculture.

Mr. R. C. Kannangara (Morawaka): What was the reply from the Minister of Agriculture and Lands?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I shall deal with that later. What I referred to was the report of the Director of Agriculture. This is what we wrote to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands:

"I am directed to forward herewith a copy of a Memorandum by the Director of Commerce and Industries and of the decision of this Executive Committee in connection with the above, and to request the favour of the views of the Hon. the Minister of Agriculture and Lands on the inquiry desired by this Committee."

And this is what we received in reply:

"I am directed by the Hon. the Minister for Agriculture and Lands to forward herewith two copies of reports received from the Director of Agriculture on the above-mentioned subject."

We went on those reports. What is pointed out in those reports is that at present cotton is grown only on chenas. That is a fact, I think. This is what the report of the Director of Agriculture says:

"At present cotton is grown only in chenas. I think that the present position is very near the

[The Hon. Mr. Corea.]

maximum possible expansion even on the basis of the most liberal issue of chena permits. But the revenue departments appear to be reluctant to allow unlimited chenas. In the circumstances, it is unlikely that there will be any increase in chena cotton.

Therefore large expansion in cotton growing in this area can come only with the advent of the capitalist. That is to say, there must be people of means who are prepared to invest their money and their personal effort in cotton growing in the expectation of a gross income of about Rs. 50 to Rs. 60 per acre. Men of that class do not exist.

As the Director of Commerce and Industries says in his report, to-day the price paid by the Weaving Mills for cotton is nearly double the world price. It is probably possible to attract the capitalist to cotton growing by tariff-manipulation which will raise the price of cotton and to about four or five times the world price. But that will put the Weaving Mills out of action.

For the present at least cotton must continue to be a chena crop and considerable expansion is impossible."

The Hon. Sir D. B. Jayatilaka:

Whose report is that?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** That is the report of the Director of Agriculture. We were told by the Director of Agriculture that further expansion of cotton-growing was impossible.

Mr. R. C. Kannangara: Did the Minister of Agriculture and Lands tell you so?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** No; it is the Director of Agriculture who said so.

Mr. R. C. Kannangara: Our agricultural expert!

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** Then, there is another report as to how our requirements could be met by rotational crops, and so on. I do not want to go into that matter.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** That is rather important.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I do not know whether it is so. There is another report dated August last year, in which the Director of Agriculture states:

"The price paid by the Spinning and Weaving Mills for Grade I. cotton was Rs. 12 per cwt. in 1940 and Rs. 12.50 per cwt. in 1941. The question of the renewal of the existing agreement between Government and the Spinning and Weaving Mills will be raised shortly and the Mills have agreed that Rs. 14 per cwt. may be fixed as the price in the next agreement, if it is decided to renew. At this price it is anticipated that cotton cultivation under the present

conditions will be more popular. It can be made more popular by guaranteeing a still higher price, and this method of stimulation may be applied indefinitely.

Assuming that prices can be raised in a protected market, which may be an unsound assumption, the question arises whether extensive chena cultivation for growing cotton is desirable. I am very strongly of the opinion that it is not and I do not recommend the adoption of such a scheme. For the present therefore the cotton crop should occupy the minor place it does to-day as a small money supplement to the income of those who are engaged in raising food crops in chenas.

If cotton is to be a major crop on the dry zone, it must be incorporated in a settled rotation with or without irrigation. As a rotation crop under irrigation it has now been under trial for a year but I am not yet in a position to express an authoritative opinion. It can be made a yala crop in irrigated lands only if large contiguous tracts are available exclusively for high land crops. Unless there is a complete change of outlook amongst land owners, it is not likely that large tracts will be withdrawn from paddy in the yala season. Therefore we must look to unirrigated rotation for some time to come.

Trials carried out during the last fifteen years have proved that cotton can be grown in high land rotation; but whether it is economically practicable for peasants to adopt such a rotation has not yet been proved. The first trial to determine this point was launched at Kurundankulam two years ago, and I shall shortly put forward proposals for a more extended and more reliable trial as soon as I have two or three tractor units under my control.

In the meantime, I recommend that the Honorable the Minister for Labour, Industry and Commerce be informed that it is not practicable to effect a substantial increase of cotton growing in the country in the immediate future, but that trials will be undertaken to introduce the crop in a scheme of rotational farming in the dry zone. Even if these trials prove successful, it will be some years before extended cultivation results from these trials."

The Hon. Sir D. B. Jayatilaka: What is the date of that report?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** It is dated August 20, 1941.

You will see, Sir, that we definitely went into the question whether there was sufficient cotton available then or would be available in the immediate future to justify the starting of a ginning industry. Does the House think that on that report we, as a responsible Committee, could have recommended the establishment of a ginning mill? I would have been the first to support the establishment of a ginning mill if I were able to find the raw material necessary for this purpose.

Then there is the other connected point; attention was drawn to the importance of weaving. [*Interruption.*] I am really glad to say that there has been a very real expansion in the cottage industries we have undertaken. To take the case of a small industry—mat-weaving. If the hon. Member for Panadure (Mr. Susanta de Fonseka) were here, he would have borne testimony to the fact that in the case of mat-weaving we have completed our work. We are now more or less self-supporting in regard to that industry.

When we introduced weaving, there was hardly any weaving activities carried on in the country, except in the schools run by the Education Department and the work done by the Hewavitarne family. We took up that industry as from 1938, when the Department was formed, and in the last three or four years the industry has expanded very rapidly.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** What is the price of a lb. of yarn?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** On 30th September, last year, after nearly two years work, we had established six centres and several factories. We had forty-six factories then, and to-day we have sixty-eight. A further twenty factories will be opened before the end of this financial year; so that, there will be eighty-eight centres and factories by the end of this financial year.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** But where is the cotton?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** We have made arrangements for that purpose now. We do not want to leave those people to find the cotton for themselves. There is every effort made to find the necessary cotton. We have fed every centre from our cotton store. We have a yarn store in which there is a very large quantity of yarn, and to-day we are feeding all the centres from that store. We feed not only the centres run by us but also the looms of the people privately engaged in this industry. As the hon. Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama) said, it was certainly a wind-fall that came our way. We could not get any yarn from India, and therefore we acquired a stipply of yarn that would

last us for a year. We supplied that yarn to our centres and factories. There is however some difficulty about obtaining dyes, as a result of the war.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Did the Financial Secretary recommend against buying the full quantity of yarn available at that time? Were you persuaded only to buy a percentage of the yarn available?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I think there was a suggestion made from some quarter that a small quantity of yarn should be bought.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** I heard that that suggestion emanated from the Treasury.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** Whether there was any objection on the part of the Treasury, I do not know. Anyway, we purchased the whole quantity that was available.

There are other difficulties; for instance, there are difficulties with regard to the establishment of hand-looms, with regard to the establishment of new looms, for instance, at the Matale centre. We are making all the looms here, but we have great difficulty with regard to reeds. All the reeds have to be imported; they are made of copper.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** We gave you everything.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** No; they gave us only the building.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** No, Sir. We offered the full, complete machines.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** That is not correct.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** It is no use saying that there are no machines; come and see.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** If the hon. Member says that he will supply the machines—

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Well, I have the machines.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** There is very serious difficulty about this matter. We have established textile centres; and in addition, we are developing the larger-centre idea. We want to have what are

[The Hon. Mr. Corea.]
called textile workshops. There are four of those workshops already in existence, and we are hoping to have two more very soon. In all those workshops there are a large number of looms assembled, and we are trying to train workers by taking them on to those centres. The centres become more or less small-sized factories and we have several of them already. In the space of three years, we have built up an organization; we have trained the people; we have set up six centres, and in the case of textiles alone, we have sixty-eight factories and by the end of September that number will be increased to eighty-eight.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Will the Hon. Minister move the adjournment now because it is 5.30?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I have given the reasons for making the report on this motion that is before the House. It should not be construed in any way as a definite objection to the proposal. All that I say is that in the circumstances we had no alternative but to report as we have done.

***Mr. Dudley Senanayake:** On a point of personal explanation. The Hon. Minister said that I was in his Committee when the report on this motion was made. I had no hand whatsoever in making that report. I was transferred to the Executive Committee of Communications and Works on November 28, 1940.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I understand that more time is required for discussing this motion. Might we have the undertaking that the adjournment will be moved in about another ten minutes, because—I have given notice of it to the Minister—there is a very important matter regarding food regulations that I want to raise? I would like to have that matter taken up this evening.

Mr. Speaker: We will give time to the hon. Member to comment on that matter on the adjournment motion. We will take that up at about 5.45 p.m.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Yes; I shall be very grateful if that is done.

It being 5.30 p.m., proceedings on

business under consideration were interrupted, under Emergency Standing Order 2 (4).

KOLAMUNU-OYA; ANICUT AT MAHANTEGAMA.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion of Mr. R. S. Tennekoon,—

That in the opinion of this Council, Government should take immediate steps to construct an anicut across Kolamunu-oya at Mahantegama in Giratalane korale of Dewameddi Hatpattu in the District of Kurunegala.

Report of the Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands under Standing Order 57.

The Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands, at a meeting held on June 25, 1941, considered the above motion moved by Mr. R. S. Tennekoon, M.S.C.

2. The work is on the Investigation Priority List for the current year.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** This work will get into the Priority List.

Question put, and agreed to.

CONSTRUCTION OF GAL-OYA RESERVOIR.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion of Mr. S. Dharmaretnam,—

That in the opinion of this Council, the Scheme for the construction of the Galoya Reservoir should be taken up without delay as there is great demand for land in this area and the scheme would bring under irrigation 66,000 acres and largely increase food production in the Island.

Report of the Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands under Standing Order 57.

The Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands, at a meeting held on July 31, 1941, considered the above motion moved by Mr. S. Dharmaretnam, M.S.C.

2. Necessary action has already been taken. Investigations are proceeding and an engineer has been appointed to work out the details of the scheme.

Question put, and agreed to.

IRRIGATION: MINIPE-ELA SCHEME (ALLOCATION OF CROWN LAND).

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion of Mr. A. Ratnayake,—

That this Council is of opinion that, in the allocation of Crown land under the Minipe Scheme, the claims of the villagers of Dumbara should receive first consideration.

Report of the Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands under Standing Order 57.

The Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands, at a meeting held on June 25, 1941, considered the above motion moved by Mr. A. Ratnayake, M.S.C.

2. The suggestion made in this motion is embodied in paragraph 12 of the Report on the Minipe-Yoda-ela Scheme (Sessional Paper VI. of 1940), which has already been approved by this Committee. Paragraph 12 reads as follows:—

“As there is a considerable demand for land from peasants in the locality, most of whom are at present landless, and as the irrigable land is not sufficient even to meet their demand, we recommend that the recruitment of colonists be restricted to the peasants of the locality, viz., Uda and Pata Dumbara divisions. Over 2,000 applications have already been received from them.”

Question put, and agreed to.

CAUSEWAY ACROSS MI-OYA AT PALUGOLLA.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion of Mr. J. H. Nangantileke,—

That this Council is of opinion that a causeway should be built across the

Mi-oya at Palugolla on Ambale-Mahannneriya D. R. C. road.

Report of the Executive Committee of Local Administration under Standing Order 57.

The above motion was considered by the Executive Committee of Local Administration at its meeting on October 16, 1941, Mr. Nangantileke being present.

A grant of Rs. 7,800 was made for this causeway under Head 77, Sub-head 43 of Estimates, 1938-39, Grant-in-aid to Road Committees for Minor Roads.

The work was completed at a cost of Rs. 7,797.51.

Question put, and agreed to.

HOUSE OF COMMONS: CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS COST OF RECONSTRUCTION.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion of Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam,—

That this Council is of opinion that it should make a contribution towards the cost of reconstruction of the House of Commons which has suffered damage recently from Nazi bombing.

Report of the Financial Secretary under Standing Order 57.

I see no objection to a moderate contribution towards the cost of reconstructing the House of Commons after the War, if funds then permit. If the motion is accepted, the local representative of the Empire Parliamentary Association might inquire whether a contribution would be welcomed.

*The Hon. Mr. Senanayake: Merely because a Committee or a Minister agrees to a certain proposal, does it mean that the House accepts the proposition? As far as this motion is concerned, it involves financial implications. I might say that I am opposed to this motion; I am not in favour of making a contribution towards the reconstruction of the House of Commons.

Consideration of item deferred.

TELEGRAMS: EXTENSION OF FREE DELIVERY RADIUS.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion of Mr. D. P. Jayasuriya,—

That this Council is of opinion that the radius within which telegrams are delivered free of portage charges should be increased from three to five miles.

Report of the Executive Committee of Communications and Works under Standing Order 57.

(The motion was considered by the Executive Committee of Communications and Works at its meeting held on February 10, 1942.)

2. Mr. D. P. Jayasuriya was present as a member of the Executive Committee.

3. The Executive Committee resolved to report that it is in favour of the adoption of the proposal.

***The Hon. Mr. Kannangara:** This is also a financial measure.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I rise to a point of order with regard to this motion. An increase from three to five miles, in connexion with portage charges on telegrams certainly involves financial implications, and it is not in order for the Council to accept this motion without a report from the Board of Ministers.

Mr. Speaker: It is only a general recommendation.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** That is true. But the motion says: "This Council is of opinion that" this work should be done. Is there anything that is done without the sanction of the Council? I would merely like to say that an expression of opinion by this House—

The Hon. Sir D. B. Jayatilaka: It is not binding.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** That amounts to saying that the opinions of this House could be ignored. If they are not binding on anyone, does it mean that the opinions of this House—

Mr. Speaker: We have allowed such motions previously.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I have always raised points of order in this connexion. Even now I do so for the simple reason that this sort of thing is bringing this House into contempt. To say that an opinion of this House, once expressed, could be ignored by the Board of Ministers or anyone else is not to take the House seriously. Merely because the wording of the motion is, "That in the opinion of this House . . ."

Mr. Speaker: I will reconsider this matter.

Mr. G. A. H. Wille (Nominated Member): The executive should have the courage to exercise its discretion and take the risk of a vote of no-confidence.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I am surprised at the arguments of my hon. Friend. Taking a risk does not mean the defying of a decision. If we are going to defy a decision, no Minister should function. A decision must be honoured by the Board of Ministers; otherwise they should resign. It is not fair to say that we must defy a decision after it has been reached.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I support the Hon. Minister because when the wicked man turneth away from wickedness his soul should be saved alive!

Mr. Wille: According to Constitutional practice, the executive is not bound by every decision of the House.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** They are.

Mr. Speaker: I will consider that matter. We have in practice accepted these motions and debated them.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** That is so. We must very seriously consider this matter. Very often you find, during the Budget debates, Members getting up in this House and time after time saying "Here you are. The Council passed this item. Why have you not included it in the Budget?" There are certain lump-sums provided in the Budget and people are made to believe that all their proposals are to be given effect to out of that sum of money. To some extent it is possible to do that, and the people are happy. This is a serious matter and I would like you to consider it.

TIMBER FOR HOUSE-BUILDING.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion of Mr. H. R. Freeman,—

That this Council is of opinion that as "colonists" and Land Development Ordinance permit-holders are subsidized with scheduled timber for house building, ordinary villagers also should be allowed necessary scheduled timber for house building and repairs to houses.

Report of the Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands under Standing Order 57.

The Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands, at a meeting held on December 4, 1941, considered the above motion moved by Mr. H. R. Freeman, M.S.C.

2. The rules under section 20 of the Forest Ordinance (Chapter 311) permit the issue of grants of scheduled species provided the Government Agent or Assistant Government Agent is satisfied (a) that a free grant is necessary and (b) that scheduled species are necessary.

3. In the case of Proposed Reserves under control of the Forest Department the Conservator of Forests is authorized by the same rules to issue free grants of scheduled species. In such areas the advice of the Government Agent is sought in regard to the provision referred to in paragraph 1.

4. Free grants of scheduled species from Reserved Forests can only be authorised in the case of forests managed under Regulation 9 (2) of the Regulations under sections, 6, 7, and 8 of the Ordinance.

5. Colonists and others referred to in the Land Development Ordinance are allowed the use of trees of unscheduled species only in cases where such trees stand on the land allotted to them. When such land has been cleared for cultivation they come under the same rules and regulations as ordinary villagers.

Mr. H. R. Freeman (Anuradhapura): What about item No. 830? To reply will take one minute.

Mr. Speaker: Is it an unopposed motion? Only unopposed motions are being taken up now.

Mr. Freeman: I have just got to reply, and the motion will be passed.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** What does the Hon. Minister say about it? Is he opposed to it.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I am not opposing the motion. But I am only pointing out the injustice.

The Hon. Mr. J. H. B. Nihill (Legal Secretary): We are on another motion.

Mr. Speaker: I have deferred consideration of the motion.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I am in favour of the motion. What I mentioned to you is this: I am subsidizing colonists and doing all that sort of thing. But you will realize the extent to which we are committing ourselves when I tell you that this House passed a motion just now without knowing the full financial implications of the proposal. That work is going to cost Rs. 31,000,000. I will be very happy to get that sum of money and start the work. I am not going to spend out of my own pocket—

***Mr. Aluwihare:** We are on another motion.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** But I am in favour of this motion too.

Mr. Speaker: Do you oppose it? If nobody is opposing the motion it may be passed.

Mr. Freeman: May I reply.

Mr. Speaker: It is not necessary.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** I am amused at the arguments adduced by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands. Now there are financial implications in the motion of the hon. Member for Anuradhapura (Mr. Freeman). The Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands says that he accepts the motion, and the Board of Ministers and this House are ignored. But when it comes to a question of a recommendation from our

[Mr. Abeywickrama.]
Committee the Hon. Minister has something else to say. We discussed a matter in our Committee and we adopted the proposal. But the Hon. Minister raised a point of order in that connexion. It was only in that case, that the financial implications involved were glaring.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I am surprised at the hon. Member. The hon. Member did not listen to what I said. I said that although I was in favour of the motion, I did not consider the procedure regular.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Why not extend the same concession to other motions?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please! Will the hon. Member please resume his seat.

Question put, and agreed to.

A. R. P. MEASURES IN COASTAL AREAS.

The following motion of Mr. S. Abeywickrama was, by leave, withdrawn:

That this Council is of opinion that the Revenue Officers and Emergency Assistant Government Agents should forthwith establish A. R. P. measures in all coastal areas of this Island.

Report of the Chief Secretary under Standing Order 57.

A circular was issued on February 11, 1942, by the Civil Defence Commissioner to all Government Agents, Assistant Government Agents, Assistant Government Agents (Emergency), the Chairmen of Urban Councils, Members of the State Council and Heads of Government Departments. This circular indicates that action is being taken for the enforcement of A. R. P. schemes all over the Island.

LEGISLATIVE ENACTMENTS: REVISED EDITION.

The following item stood upon the Orders of the Day:

To continue the debate on the motion of Mr. B. H. Aluwihare,— •

That a revised edition of the Legislative Enactments should be issued,

removing the difficulties and inconveniences created by the recent publications.

Report of the Legal Secretary under Standing Order 57.

The Hon. the mover explained that the "difficulties and inconveniences" were these:—

- (i.) the absence of a separate index to each volume of the Enactments: a general index relating to all the Enactments published in one volume is insufficient;
- (ii.) where amendments effected by an amending Ordinance are embodied in the principal Ordinance, the omission of reference to the amending Ordinance;
- (iii.) where the numbering of sections has been altered, the absence of a note to draw attention to such alteration;
- (iv.) the system of "chaptering" has now no significance, as new Ordinances are still numbered.

2. The Legal Secretary agrees that the matters referred to in (i.), (ii.), and (iii.) of the preceding paragraph cause inconvenience and difficulty; with regard to (iv.) the Legal Secretary prefers arrangement alphabetically, which can also be made into a subject matter arrangement if titles are suitably changed; in this case all Land Ordinances will begin with the word "Land" and the titles will, for instance, be Land (Settlement of Title) Ordinance, Land (Compulsory Acquisition of) Ordinance, &c.

3. The Legal Secretary accepts the view that these difficulties and inconveniences should be met when the Legislative Enactments are next revised. Having regard to the existing paper shortage, the heavy burden thrown on the Legal Draftsman and the Government Printer, by reason of the present emergency, he does not consider it possible to undertake a special revision of the Legislative Enactments now.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I accept the report. I hope the new Legal Secretary will not forget this matter.

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. Member withdrawing his motion?

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I accept the report.

Mr. Speaker: Therefore the hon. Member withdraws the motion.

***The Hon. Mr. Kannagara:** The motion is not agreed to.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** The Hon. the Legal Secretary agrees to the motion.

Mr. Speaker: In substance.

Motion, by leave, withdrawn.

ADJOURNMENT.

The Hon. Sir D. B. Jayatilaka (Leader of the State Council): I move that the Council do now adjourn.

***Mr. B. H. Aluwihare (Matale):** I would ask your permission to read to you the report of a case that occurred in the Matale Courts:

A villager named Mudiyanse of Laggala was charged with having transported 13 measures of kurakkan from Laggala to Raithalawala.

Continuing, Mr. Edward de Silva said that the accused, his parents, and a sister came on a visit to another sister of his who was ill at Raithalawala. They expected to stay over for three or four days and brought the 13 measures of kurakkan for their use during their stay there. Their sick sister lived within a rationed area, and if they failed to bring their own supply of food, they had no alternative but to starve. They had no ration books, said Mr. de Silva, as they were from a self-supporting area. The only thing they could have done was to bring a quantity of their supply, sufficient for them for the period of their stay. They did so, and the accused, who carried the supply of food for his parents and sister, was charged.

The Magistrate said that he appreciated the difficulty, but he had to administer the law as it was.

The police stated that the accused could have eaten bread.

Magistrate: Why should they buy bread, when they have their own supply of food?

After further discussion the accused was fined Rs. 5 and the kurakkan confiscated."

Sir, what I want to put before the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce is this. Our Executive Committee foresaw this difficulty, and in our regulations allowed the transport, by villagers, of kurakkan under 2 bushels in quantity. The Hon. Minister—he is entitled to follow his policy—repealed those regula-

tions. Why is it that the Hon. Minister is not alive to these difficulties?

This was a particular case. As a matter of fact, before this case occurred I put this as a hypothetical case to the Minister himself. I said that this was going to be one of the difficulties, and yet, Sir, these cases are allowed to occur. Why have not instructions at least been issued to the Revenue Officers not to prosecute in these cases?

Laggala is one of the poorest areas in Ceylon, and these people who brought kurakkan have not only had their kurakkan confiscated, but have also been put to the expenses of a trial, of retaining a lawyer, and have been fined Rs. 5. Is that not criminal administration? That is one matter that I wish to place before the House.

Then, the second point is this: Members will remember that a few weeks ago the Hon. Minister told us that he was revising the ration so that the workers may get more. How is it that progressively the workers have been issued less? I presume, therefore, that there is a shortage. How is it that in spite of that, private people—capitalists—are allowed to purchase paddy?

Yesterday I was informed that after the Government monopoly of purchasing paddy had been removed, a boutique-keeper in the North-Central Province bought 80,000 bushels of paddy. 80,000 bushels of paddy! As a matter of fact, I was told that but for the repeal of the regulations, the North-Central Province would have supplied the Government with 1,000,000 bushels of paddy for distribution. But what happens now? When the Government offers Rs. 3, the trader offers Rs. 3.10; when the Government offers Rs. 3.10, the trader offers Rs. 3.20, and the supply is bought up and "collared". Nothing is done, and yet the Government, when it is faced with this question of distribution, is not controlling all the sales of paddy.

I shall give you another instance. I am sorry the hon. Member for Batticaloa South (Mr. Dharmaretnam) is not here. Sir, we have all been grumbling about the price of paddy. The hon. Member showed me a notice issued by the Government Agent which said that all owners of paddy in the Batticaloa District

[Mr. Aluwihare.]

had to deliver their paddy at the Batticaloa Rice Mill and that the Government would in no circumstances pay more than Rs. 3 per bushel of paddy; and that if they did not do so the Government would have to take steps to requisition paddy.

The hon. Member for Batticaloa told me that some of these paddy growers lived 40 miles away from the Mill and they had to carry their paddy for 40 miles and deliver it at the Batticaloa Mill for not more than Rs. 3. I ask you, again, is that not criminal when the policy of this Government is to grow food against a siege? I do say that just at this time the Government cannot afford to play the fool in this way. You do not restrict your prices of tea; you do not restrict your prices of plumbago. Coconut is, at least on paper, fetching a first-rate price. Why do you want to grind down the one man that grows your essential food? We are going to starve, Sir, unless these people produce their maximum; and yet everything is done to prevent these people doing so.

I want to raise four points because they are all inter-connected, and the Hon. Minister can deal with them at once. Now, the other point is that the Hon. Minister, in the administration of his rationing scheme, does not deal equitably even with regard to consumption as between the grower and the capitalist. On 26th June last he passed regulations which require every person who grows paddy to deliver up his ration card. Well, in itself one had no objection to that, provided the purchasing scheme was under the control of the Government and no one was profiteering. But there are those capitalists who hoarded paddy, thousands of bushels, in their barns. He scrupulously avoids touching them. I say "scrupulously avoids", Sir, because of the wording of Regulation No. 6. I myself have raised the point over and over again. The Hon. Minister once said, "I am dealing with that position" but he avoids dealing with the man who hoards. This is as far as he goes:

"Where any paddy field is comprised within or forms part of any estate, the Deputy Food Controller (Estates) shall, in determining the quantity of rice which the superintendent of that estate shall be authorized to purchase during any week under the authority of a ration

card, have regard to the quantity of paddy produced on the estate.

It is not paddy available for distribution on that estate. How many estates grow paddy? The fact is that the bigger estates have hoarded paddy and grain. Surely where you are cutting down the ration to the bone, the distribution must be equitable; and why should you give preference only to the people who have sufficient money to "collar" the grain on the market?

There is the fifth point and it is this. It occurs in my own area. I do not know whether the complaint is universal. It has been said, "Give people rice and flour", but last week the Government did not make it their business to see that there was flour in the retail market. In Matale the Government Agent and the retail dealers complained to me that they were unable to obtain flour from the wholesalers. In dealing with an article of food you cannot afford to allow days to pass before redress is given; redress must be given at once. At least machinery must be organized, so that these main abuses cannot occur. There must always be a supply in the market. Why is that not done?

I do not want to deal with the whole rationing scheme, but I do hope the Hon. Minister will satisfy us on those points.

***The Hon. Mr. G. C. S. Corea (Minister of Labour, Industry & Commerce):** Sir, in the course of the five minutes available, I shall try to deal with all the five points raised. Before doing so, however, there is one point I would like to make. As the hon. Member knows and we all realize, these questions raise very important points, and it would be helpful, I think, in the interests of everybody—I am only throwing out a suggestion—if Members, when they have these important points to raise, would, if possible, intimate those points to us if only for the purpose of looking up the papers and having the information ready. I carry most matters in my head, no doubt—

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Why, I told you about it.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** The hon. Member said that he was raising the question of the Laggala people, but not the other matters.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I am sorry.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** It would help the hon. Member and the House if that is done. I will do my best to deal with the five points raised, with the knowledge that I possess and without any reference to papers.

With regard to the last point raised, the hon. Member is aware that there are a very large number of supply stations and retail dealers throughout the country who are distributing rice; and a part of our flour scheme is that this flour will be distributed through these same people so that it may be available to everybody throughout the country. There are hundreds of these dealers and supply centres throughout the country and we supply every centre from Colombo.

There are sometimes delays through transport difficulties. We find that at one station stocks are low and we try to rush replenishments there, and transport difficulties sometimes stand in our way. I look into this as often as I can, and I find that there is a supply at all these stations. I have not the slightest doubt that because of delays in transport stocks in some places may be sold out.

Flour, unlike rice, is not rationed, and the quantities that may be sold to people are not fixed; so that you can buy large quantities. In addition to rice distributors, there are other retail dealers who sell flour. I do not say that the system is quite perfect, but flour has been distributed all round and in most places it is available now.

For instance, I was in the Ratnapura and the Badulla Districts last week, and I myself went to several boutiques as I passed along, and I also questioned Members of the Assistance Committee; I found in all these places that there was distribution going on. The hon. Member for Ratnapura (Mr. Kuruppu) will bear testimony to it if he were here, because he spoke about it at the meeting; several others too said so, and I myself saw it. But there must be one or two other places where there were no stocks.

There are serious difficulties in regard to transport. We have to face this fact, that we are living at a time when transport difficulties are great. But I say that stocks are being sent out in the best possible way.

With regard to Batticaloa, the position is this—the hon. Member for Batticaloa (Mr. Dharmaretnam) informed me of it by telegram: the Government Agent had no business to commandeer any stocks. He has no instructions to commandeer stocks, and if he did so he was going completely beyond his instructions. As soon as I received the telegram I wired to the Government Agent to the effect that he had no business to commandeer stocks and requesting him to stop it forthwith. But we have told him that he must buy as much paddy as possible, paying up to Rs. 3 a bushel, if he can. I have seen that notice which says that if anybody wishes to offer paddy for sale, he should deliver it at the Mills or the various depots set up. The threat of commandeering is not correct, and the matter has been put to right.

With regard to the question of inability to buy—the hon. Member referred to the case of the North-Central Province—the Government Agent, North-Central Province, told me that he would, before the end of this year, be able to supply about 1,000,000 bushels of paddy. There is the question of transport and storage. Well, I have arranged with the Railway, to the best of my ability again, for a wagon a day to be made available at four definite stations, throughout the period, for removing the paddy. That is the utmost the Railway could have given us; and that is not bad.

Apart from that, the Military authorities are prepared to place at our disposal about fifteen to twenty of their lorries when they are returning empty from Anuradhapura. They have already done that once or twice. It is not a very regular means of transport, but whenever their lorries are returning empty, they are prepared to allow us their use. The Government Agent has been instructed to utilize them. We are dealing with that question of transport in that way.

Mr. R. C. Kannangara (Morawaka): What about the Anuradhapura Mills?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** The Mills are supplied fully and they are working twenty-four hours a day.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Why do you not make use of the villagers?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** We are utilizing them. They are milling paddy. We are trying to use the private mills too, but what happens is that everybody tries to seize the opportunity; and the only way to get over it is to requisition those mills. We are considering that matter. When the Government Mill can do it at 37 cents a bushel of paddy, these people will not do it under Re. 1 or Re. 1.20. You cannot possibly do that and sell the rice to the public at a low price. Then the question of requisition comes in.

***Mr. S. Abéywickrama (Udugama):** Government buildings?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** There is no building available for storage purposes except the schools, which we have taken over.

I want to deal with one other point, and that is with regard to the question of purchasing paddy. There is one very serious difficulty, and that is that you cannot buy paddy at Rs. 3 per bushel. I have stated that to the Board of Ministers; I have put it up to the financial authorities. I have no voice in financial matters.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Then resign!

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** No single Minister has any voice in financial matters.

There is another very serious matter. You have to follow the market and—

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Why do you not become the sole buyer?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** That is another question. The paddy must be compulsorily purchased. These are the two points of very great importance, whether paddy should be compulsorily purchased and whether it should be purchased at the fixed price of Rs. 2.50 or Rs. 3 or whatever price is considered reasonable. If you are told that you can buy paddy at Rs. 3.50, everyone will be compelled to sell his surplus.

With regard to the case of Laggala, I have not been able to obtain any report. As soon as this matter was mentioned to me, I called for a report. If the facts as related are true, I certainly think that prosecution should not have been launched because people are given the right to take away rice on a permit from self-supporting areas. That point should have been considered in the case of people like those to whom the hon. Member referred. The prohibition is there to prevent large-scale removals. The people in this case should not have been prosecuted. I will look into the matter.

It being 6 p.m., MR. SPEAKER adjourned the Council without Question put, pursuant to Emergency Standing Order 2 (3), until 2 p.m. on Thursday, July 30, 1942.