

August 26, 1942



DEBATES

SESSION OF 1942.

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PRINTED BY ORDER OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CEYLON

AT THE

CEYLON GOVERNMENT PRESS, COLOMBO.

1943

"Copy" received : January 6, 1943.

Proof sent : January 18, 1943.

Proof returned : January 29, 1943.

Published : February 10, 1943.

STATE COUNCIL OF CEYLON.

Wednesday, August 26, 1942.

The Council met at 10 a.m., Mr. SPEAKER [THE HON. SIR WAITIALINGAM DURAISWAMY] in the Chair.

NOTICES OF MOTIONS.

*Mr. G. R. de Silva (Colombo North): I give notice of the following motion:

That with a view to ensuring the proper enforcement of the distribution of foodstuffs and the control of prices, this Council is of opinion that Boards of Control should be associated with the Ministry to which is allocated Food Control and Control of Prices of Commodities in emergencies and that such Boards of Control should be set up in every Provincial Town and should include representatives of the people.

I also give notice, Sir, that I shall introduce a motion under Standing Order 153 to suspend all relevant Standing Orders to enable me to move this motion at an early date.

QUESTIONS.

(ORAL ANSWERS.)

41/42.

BHAJRI: IMPORTS & DISTRIBUTION.

Mr. S. Vytilingam (Talawakele): Will the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands be pleased to state—(a) How many tons of Bajri were imported by the Marketing Department from January 1, 1942? (b) How many tons were sold to Primary Distributors or Wholesale Merchants in the city of Colombo? (c) How many tons were sold to Estates and Wholesale or Retail Merchants in out-stations? (d) What was the selling prices per cwt.? Will the Hon. Minister please table a statement giving the names and addresses of the buyers of Bajri from the Marketing Department and the quantities sold to each and the dates?

The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Minister of Agriculture & Lands): The questions referred to deal with the disposal of Bhajri purchased in India and stored by the Marketing Commissioner on behalf of the Food Controller.

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

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Mr. Spe... Labour, I... position to

*The Ho... ter of Lab... I do not... matter. I... matter wo

*Mr. D... In this co... had at the... bags of B... purchaser... commodity... Colombo to... that to-day... Rs. 50 per... is somethi... regard to th

(PR... ANSWERS)

Director of Transport

(Mr. D. F. Jayasuriya): Will the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works please state—(1) What the duties and powers of the Director of Transport are? (2) Whether he has been vested with any powers under the Defence Regulations to co-ordinate the rail and road transport services? (3) Whether his report on the co-ordination of rail and road transport services will be tabled for the information of this House? (4) Whether the State Council will be given an opportunity to debate on the proposals?

(Minister of Communications & Works): (1) Mr. S. W. Nelson was originally appointed as Transport Expert to investigate and report upon the Railway position and to make recommendations for the further co-ordination of road and rail transport, with a view to securing the most convenient and economic method of travel and transport, having due regard to the interests of the public utilizing the transport services and the financial interests of the country.

In view of the new and urgent transport problems arising from the change in the position in the Far East it was decided that pending a full investigation of the problem of the long term re-organization of transport, Mr. Nelson

should investigate and make the immediate plans to meet the situation created by the present emergency. He is for this purpose appointed Director of Transport, Ceylon, with effect from March 20, 1942.

The Director has prepared schemes for the reorganization of road services. The motion of the Minister for Local Administration in regard to the reorganization of bus services was approved by the State Council on July 29, 1942. His duties generally cover the improvement and co-ordination of rail and inland water transport. He is a member of the Petrol Board, the Gas Disposal Committee and the Railway Priority Committee which makes daily allocations of available rail waggons. He is the sole requisitioning authority for motor vehicles, and spare parts. He advises the Government on problems affecting inland transport.

(2) No.

(3) and (4) As explained in the answer to (1) no report on the long term co-ordination of road and rail transport services can be expected for some time. When the report is made the House will have every opportunity of expressing its views thereon.

SEED PADDY: CASH ADVANCES PAID TO NEEDY CULTIVATORS.

***Mr. S. Abeywickrama (Udugama):** Before we get on to Government business, may I have your permission, Sir, to move a motion of which I gave notice a few days ago? The Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands has agreed to my moving the motion.

Mr. Speaker: Is it to be moved formally?

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Yes, Sir. The motion is:

That in the opinion of this Council cash advances paid to needy cultivators to buy seed paddy for the Yala seasons should not be recovered but treated as assistance given to them, as such advances were paid as Government had no seed paddy available for free distribution.

I formally move the motion.

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

POLICE STATION FOR NIKAWERATIYA.

Mr. J. H. Ilangantileke (Puttalam): May I have permission to move a motion standing in my name?

Mr. Speaker: Is it to be moved formally?

Mr. Ilangantileke: Yes, Sir. The motion reads:

That in the opinion of this Council a Police Station should be established at Nikaweratiya in view of the increase of crime, specially cattle thefts, in Nikaweratiya and Tambarambuwa village areas of Wannī Hatpattu.

I move the motion formally.

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

"FOOD CONTROL IN EMERGENCIES, &c."

The debate on the following motion of the Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Acting Leader of the State Council and Minister of Agriculture and Lands) was continued:

"That pursuant to Article 32 (2) of the Ceylon (State Council) Order in Council, 1931, the First Schedule to that Order as amended shall be further amended—

(1) by the deletion from Group V of the function described as 'Food Control in Emergencies' and the insertion of the words 'other than food-stuffs' after the word 'Commodities' in the function described as 'Control of Prices of Commodities in emergencies or to prevent profiteering';

(2) by the addition to Group II of the following functions:—

'Food Control in Emergencies'

'Control of Prices of Food-stuffs in emergencies or to prevent profiteering'.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva (Minister of Health):** When we adjourned last night, Sir, I was on the point of addressing the House with regard to certain observations made by the hon. Member

for Kankesanturai (Mr. Natesan). The hon. Member made a very careful contribution to the debate. He was followed by the hon. Member for Gallo (Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya) who practically endorsed the sentiments expressed by the hon. Member for Kankesanturai.

When I listened to the hon. Member for Gallo yesterday opposing the recommendation of the Board of Ministers, I could not understand his position in view of the directions that he gave the Board of Ministers as to how this question should be solved by them.

For the information of the House I will read a passage from the speech of the hon. Member for Kankesanturai:

"The amendment which I have in view is this, 'That an independent Ministry of Food should be created within the ambit of the present Constitution'."

[Laughter]. Perfectly right. Hon. Members are still in the dark. It is really difficult to understand whether, even at a time like the present we could create a separate Food Ministry within the ambit of this Constitution. The hon. Member went on to say:

"I think that could be easily done. My own personal view is this, that either the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce should take upon himself this question of food and give it his undivided attention or, if that is not possible, assign this function, preferably to the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands himself."

*Mr. S. Abeywickrama (Udugama): That has been done.

*The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:—

"Of course out of his modesty he could not make that suggestion himself, but I think his shoulders are broad enough to bear this burden, and I go further and say that in the circumstances of the case it is only the Minister of Agriculture and Lands who can tackle this question properly, not on account of any personal virtues which he has or of his personal abilities which are certainly well known, but I take my stand on this proposition, that the Minister of Agriculture and Lands is the Minister who is primarily in charge of food. He is in charge of food production."

That was a direction given to the Board. That was the contribution made by the hon. Member.

Mr. S. Natesan (Kankesanturai): I rise to a point of personal explanation. I have not resiled from that position. What I did say on that occasion and what I said yesterday was this, that the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands should be in charge of the Ministry of Food only, that he should not be

burdened with other tasks, and that he should give his undivided attention to his new

*The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva: I would again appeal to hon. Members of this House to consider the present situation. The hon. Member for Gallo, Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya, in Article 22 of the Order in Council, which you have made certain amendments, you must realize that you cannot disturb the character of the section. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands would not continue to be in charge of it if you take away the essential part of the Government's responsibility to him and give it to another Minister. We can do that if we have to travel with the Constitution.

I ask hon. Members, can we as a Council and Government implement

personally thought at the very commencement of the previous debate—and I said so—that this would be impossible and that it would not be legal to create a Ministry in the manner suggested.

The hon. Member for Kankesanturai said just now, "That is what I suggested—that the Hon. Minister should only deal with the question of food". Let us consider his position. What is the food problem? Who is responsible for the food supply of this country? Who supplies seed paddy, manure? Who is responsible for the distribution of foodstuffs? It is the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands.

The difficulty about our Constitution is this, that they have divided the functions of Ministers; they have not co-ordinated the functions. Therefore we thought that we should try to co-ordinate the functions at least now so that one Minister would be able to tackle the question of food whilst engaged in the production of food. Is that unreasonable? I ask hon. Members to bear this in mind, that we have done that in order to expedite matters in order to co-ordinate the functions of Ministers, in order to help the Hon. Minister who is responsible for the distribution of food to get along with the production of food.

[The Hon. Mr. de S
What are the functi the Hon.
Minister of Agricultu and Lands?
One of his subjects is agriculture. Is
that subject not closely connected with
the subject of Food? The other subject
he deals with is Co-operative Marketing;
he deals with Forestry; he deals with
Land. All these subjects are intercon-
nected with the production of food; you
cannot possibly say that he is not inter-
ested in food production. If he is inter-
ested in food production, I ask hon.
Members there is anything
wrong in allowing him to distribute that
food.

We have done the best we can. I do
not say this is the ideal, that it is
perfect. The House referred a motion
in connection with this matter to the
Board of Ministers, and we had to inter-
pret the proper meaning of the motion.
If we came here and said that we could
do anything, hon. Members would
have thought that we were defying the
decision of the House.

Let us take the present position. Is
the man who produces food not to be
enabled to hold the scales evenly and
say, " Now I must produce all this food.
I am now in a responsible position. I
must distribute this food equitably. If
anything goes wrong, they will hang
me ". This man will not be able to say,
" Oh, the food is imported from other
parts of the world; I must therefore keep
quiet ". He will have to find ways and
means of increasing food production. I
would beg of hon. Members to realize
the position we are in. It is not a ques-
tion of criticizing each other at the
present time; it is not a question of find-
ing fault with any particular Member of
the Board of Ministers, because how-
ever much you may try to tackle the
subject of Food, your attempts will be in
vain unless you co-ordinate the
functions.

Sir, there is one Minister who is at pre-
sent responsible for this work; and when
the Board of Ministers came to this deci-
sion we put it directly to him, " Are you
willing to continue to be the Food Minis-
ter?", and his answer was, " No."

*The Hon. Mr. G. C. S. Corea (Minis-
ter of Labour, Industry & Commerce):
Subject to qualification.

*The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva: He
said, " I do not want it. Let it be given
to any other Minister ". In the circum-
stances, I would ask hon. Members, is it
possible for us to come to any other con-
clusion than allowing the Minister of
Agriculture and Lands to deal with this
question?

Another point that I want hon. Mem-
bers to bear in mind is this. Rightly or
wrongly there is criticism day in and day
out against the distribution of food and
the Food Ministry. That criticism is
perhaps not justified. But we have to
do our best to help a Minister who is
already over-worked. We know that he
is over-worked. It is not his normal
functions that he has to perform to-day.
He has a large number of additional
duties, and his tasks are increasing.
Therefore, is it not the duty of everybody
who wants to solve this problem in a
satisfactory manner to solve it so that we
can tell the country that we have done
our best, that we are doing our best and
if we fail it is not due to want of desire
on our part to tackle this question?

We have spent three days over this
question; it has been discussed on three
different occasions. Hon. Members know
that we have appointed Mr. O. E. Goone-
tilleke as Director of Food Supply. He
is a man who has done his very best.
He is the best man we can get to solve
problems of this kind, and he has not yet
been given any chance to show what he
can do in connexion with this question.
This is a matter in which you must allow
a man to carry on for some time and do
what he can to solve the difficult
problem.

*Mr. U. Batuwantudawe (Kalutara):
He has too many irons in the fire.

*The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva: The
hon. Member says that he has too many
irons in the fire. It is the man who can
control the smelting of all those irons
satisfactorily who can solve these prob-
lems. It is not the man who sits in his
chair and says, " I have solved this prob-
lem," and gives directions to other
people. I know that Mr. Goonetilleke
is a man who goes to the very spot
to the very place where his services are
needed. He is not a man who sits in his
chair and gets other people to do his
work; he goes where his presence is

necessary, discusses matters with the people concerned, and formulates policies which are acceptable to the country.

***Mr. G. G. Ponnambalam (Point Pedro):** He will keep the home fires burning!

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** How can you alter the present position by having a Ministry only for this purpose—for solving this problem—within the ambit of the Constitution? At a time like the present, in a crisis like this, let us put our heads together; let us co-operate with each other. I know that there is a great deal of dissatisfaction in the country with regard to distribution of food. It is no use forgetting that fact. At the present time we have to keep our heads and try to solve this problem as best as we can. We feel that there is no better person to whom we can turn except the Minister of Agriculture and Lands.

***Mr. E. W. Abeygunasekera (Nuwara Eliya):** I had no intention of participating in this debate, but after the brilliant speech of the Minister of Health I am encouraged to speak a few words.

Before making any observations on the motion itself, I must say that I have great regard for the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands. Of all the Ministers on the Board, I admire the Minister of Agriculture most. But, Sir, he is asking us for a blank cheque. He has not placed before this House a scheme from which we can find out what he is going to do and when he is going to do it. What is the scheme by which the people of this country will be supplied with food?

I ask the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands whether he is in a position to tell us how many bushels of paddy he gets from his Minneriya Scheme, and for how many months that would be sufficient to feed the people of at least the North-Central Province? He has not told us even that, although we have voted millions of rupees for that scheme since 1931.

I have had the honour and privilege of being a Member of his Executive Committee. I know he worked hard on that scheme. He is in charge of the Forest Department; and food can be produced through that Department too. He is in charge of the Irrigation Department,

which covers all the schemes. Eliya aspect of the Scheme—and my speech on Eliya was very soon Nuwara brought put some whole so

What will give pass, this fine to Civil Service Heads of case of the put a C business lali" or do it.

The Commission the Hon. Minister of Local Administration that Village Committees should open depots to cater for the needs of the suffering masses in the rural areas. Under their instructions I opened a Village Committee Depot, and I was told that I could obtain sundries from the Controller. I went and had a talk with the Controller. He said, "Yes, I can give you sugar, chillies, garlic, Maldive fish". [A MEMBER: Salt]. Later on I obtained salt from the Commissioner of Salt. I obtained a few cwt. of Maldive fish but I found that it was all rubbish—there was a large quantity of sand—that the the Maldive fish had decayed. If Government sell articles that are not fit for human consumption, what should we do? Should Government not be charged in a Court of law? Out of 112 lb. I returned 60 lb. to the Controller, but he wrote to me to say that he could not refund the money. I think the stuff that I returned to him had to be buried.

I say that the buyer should be allowed at least to examine the contents of the bag. They say, "No; if you wish take the bag, or else clear out". Is that officer fit to control that Department? I do not think he has ever tasted Maldive fish. You have put in as the Head of that Department a man who has had no experience of such work. He has been a

[Mr. Abeysunaseker
Judge, he has been Pe ter-General.
He is a brilliant Civil t. He is a
very capable man for w n I have great
respect. But that is another matter.
For this work we want a "Mudalali",
a trader, a man who can manage a
business—a business-minded man.

Even if we give this subject over to the
Minister of Agriculture and Lands, he
he will continue to work with the
same people. Wh tever results the Hon.
Minister of , Industry and Com-
merce obtain ll be obtained by the
Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands;
nothing more an than—I can assure
you of it. I can predict all those things.

It is the fault of the Hon. Mini-
ster of , Industry and Commerce
that ed in regard to the distribu-
tion od. He does not know how to
select the right man. Apart from that,
even if he says, "I do not want this
an", the Public Services Commission
r the Chief Secretary will say, "No,
you must have this man". So he says,
"Ehei hamuduruwanay" to everything
the Public Services Commission say. I
trust, however that when this matter
is placed in the hands of the Hon. Mini-
ster of Agriculture and Lands he will not
say "Ehei hamuduruwanay" in the
same way. I remember, he was asked
to say so in regard to Irrigation Engi-
neers, but he did not. I admire his
conduct and his boldness.

The Hon. Minister has not, however,
given us a definite scheme, although the
resolution stated that there should be an
independent Ministry created. What is
proposed is not an independent Ministry;
it is the same old thing. I feel that until
and unless the Departments under the
Ministry of Agriculture and Lands are
taken away, this scheme will be a failure.
When that happens, hon. Members will
have to look up and say "Amen", just
as Christians say "Amen" the end of
prayer. If the Hon. Minister is to
handle the food problem, he must be en-
abled to handle it alone, instead of other
Departments being combined with this
work.

Then, there are certain people who are
misleading the public. They say that
the Ministers are responsible for the exist-
ing state of affairs. I know that it is
not so; but I want to tell the House that

whichever Minister may be in charge of
this subject, he should select the right
people, no matter whether they be clerks
or people who are outside the Service.
The people outside the Service are the
people who will best be able to tackle this
question, not Civil Servants. The Civil
Servant is trained to do a certain thing in
a certain way. He is not a person who
can handle the distribution of rice,
chillies, and other articles.

In the absence, therefore, of a definite
scheme I have not been able to make up
my mind whether to support or oppose
this motion. The hon. Member for
Anuradhapura (Mr. Freeman) wants me
to support this proposal. He, I feel, has
a great love for his own Minister. But
I will not love my Minister if he happens
to go astray. Even though Sir D. B.
Jayatilaka is my Minister, if he were to
bring up some "rotten" scheme, do you
think I would support it? I would be the
last person to do a thing of that sort.
Therefore, what I would suggest to the
Hon. Minister is that he should consult
some of the Members before he
formulates a scheme.

The whole trouble with the Hon. Min-
ister of Labour, Industry and Commerce
is that he never consulted the Members.
He consulted only a few so-called clear-
headed Members. Well, if they had at
least an ounce of brains, they would have
advised the Hon. Minister what to do,
how to do it and when to do it.
The Hon. Minister should at least con-
sult the Member of the area concerned
in order to find out what required to
be done for the area. I will be able to
formulate a scheme for my area, for
instance; I can do it.

The other day I had an interview with
the Civil Defence Commissioner, and I
told him how to check profiteering. I am
not going to tell hon. Members what I
told him; that would not be fair. But
if the Commissioner will only adopt the
method that I suggested, I am sure that
profiteering could very easily be checked.
Although I am not a man who can boast
of academical qualifications, still I claim
to be a man with common sense. I can
at least boast of having graduated in the
university of experience.

So, whether this resolution is passed
to-day or not—it is all the same whether
it is passed or not—I would suggest to

the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands that he should at least consult us. We would be able to advise him as to how to proceed in the matter.

I do not want to take upon myself the burden of advising the Hon. Minister as to what to do in respect of other constituencies, but in regard to my own area, I have already placed a resolution before this House to the effect that a depot for sundries should be opened at Kandy. Once that is done, the heart-burning of all these people in the Central Province will disappear. People from Nuwara Eliya and Matale will be able to come to Kandy and buy their sundries. Likewise, Government depots for sundries should be established in every Province; half the trouble will be solved once that is done.

Without doing something of that sort, the Minister sits in his chair, the Controller sits in his office upstairs, with a number of deaf people to attend to his work. I can prove it. The other day I went to the Controller's office and asked a Clerk, "I say, has the paper come?" He could not hear me; and I had to shout, "Has the paper come?". It was only then that he said, "Yes". How can you attend to this work with deaf, dumb and blind people? Yet the Minister of Health says, "Oh, we are patriots; we will do this and we will do that to secure the salvation of the suffering masses". That is all bunkum. This is all mere bluff, and I do not know how far they will be successful in their bluffing.

Now, if the commodities in the hands of the wholesale dealers are checked daily, I am quite positive that things could be brought to a normal state. But nothing whatever of that kind has been done. We simply waste our lungs here, and the Ministers do not take heed of what we say. This is a matter to be regretted. If the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands will only tell us, "This is how I am going to do this"—he is known as and termed the *avalara* of Prakrama Bahu; I verily believe it—it would enable us to make up our minds to vote for the motion.

Dr. A. P. de Zoysa (Colombo South) : Food production and the food supply are two matters of very great importance. They are of paramount importance, I should say, considering the condition of the country to-day. The very fact that

the hon. M. Ponnambal asking that established this matter industry set up purpose also House. This was moved, who moved special Min work.

But in trying to see if the proposal if they on another be going Furthermore matters involved it is suggested agriculture of transferred to Minister of Agriculture a vote of censure way, if a subject the charge of Industry and Commerce—say, the subject of the food supply which is a matter pertaining to commerce—is to be transferred to any other Minister, it would be an indirect vote of censure on the Minister of Labour. If he says, "I cannot do this because of other work" then he should be relieved of those other duties, and those duties given over either to the Minister of Local Administration or the Minister of Health or the Minister of Education; he would thereby be relieved of those duties.

Food production and a food supply are the two things which we want very badly in this country. Therefore, each Minister must be given the full opportunity of doing his best; otherwise we would not be able to blame that Ministry in case of failure. We must take it for granted that the best results can be achieved by division of work. That is why we want the Minister of Agriculture to do his best to produce food, and the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce to do his best, even neglecting the other subjects allotted to him, to supply and distribute food. To say that one Ministry could do both well is to deny that great principle of division of labour.

The Minister of Health pointed out that co-operation or co-ordination can be brought about by amalgamation. Com-

[Dr. de Zoysa.]
 ination is not co-ordinating. By "co-ordination" is meant to have separate bodies functioning together in order to produce good results. Therefore co-ordination can be brought about by working separately. I do not like the Hon. Minister saying, "I can play the lion too", and therefore, everything being given over to him. This is not the time for experimenting.

I should like to see the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands being even relieved of all matters pertaining to him except food production, or another Minister taking over food production. In the same way one Minister should take up the question of the food supply. If the Ministers of Labour, Industry and Commerce and his Ministry think that they are incapable of doing the work, then it should be handed over to the Minister of Local Administration alone, and his other subjects such as "Village Committees", and so on, should be attended to by some other Minister; he should not have to pay attention to those subjects.

When I consider the need for food in this country, I think we can afford to neglect education, health, and the work done by the Minister of Local Administration, so that all these Ministries may encourage food production. A great part of the time of the schoolmasters and the children could also be devoted to food production. So in the case of Doctors. The Chief Secretary should grant half a day's leave to a thousand or more Clerks working in the Secretariat Building for the purpose of food production. That will improve their health, and they will be doing a service to this country.

Therefore, food production should be attended to by the Minister of Agriculture alone, with the co-operation and assistance of all of us, and even Members of this House should where possible join in food production.

In the same way "Food Supply" should be allotted to one Minister because it is as important as, if not more important than, food production. Sir, when we voted for the motion of the Hon. Member for Point Pedro (Mr. Ponnambalam) we expected the Ministers to get one Minister to do this work. Of course, they are doing so by giving it to a Min-

ister whose services are as important as is the question of the food supply. However much the Minister of Agriculture and Lands may be willing to do this work, seeing the necessity for it, seeing the critical position that we are in, is it fair that we should burden him with a function which will divert his full energy and his full attention?

I think the Minister of Local Administration should come to the rescue. He should undertake to do this work if the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce refuses to do it, because, I feel, that his work is not so onerous just now and as the problem of the food supply is most important. I think, the Ministers themselves should come to a decision on the matter. Because the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce is overburdened with work, to put that burden on another Minister who has an equally heavy burden is not fair by that Minister, by the Council and by the country.

Therefore I propose that the Ministers should reconsider the matter. If the Minister of Health says that he has the necessary energy and can attend to this work, surely he should be given this work. Or the Minister of Local Administration could be given the work. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands, out of his energy and his enthusiasm, will do this work if he is asked to do it. But are we being fair in asking him to do it when he has a very urgent work on his hands, namely, the production of food? To say that the person who produces food is the best suited to distribute the food is not good economy. There should be this division of labour to enable him to devote all his attention to food supply. Therefore I oppose this motion, not because I do not want this Ministry formed, but because I want one Minister to take up the question of the food supply.

***Mr. R. S. S. Gunawardana (Gampola):** I should like to make a few observations on this motion. Whilst I have undoubtedly the fullest confidence in the ability of the Minister of Agriculture and Lands to discharge the duties of Food Minister, I do not think that the Board of Ministers has taken all the circumstances into account in arriving at this decision. Undoubtedly this House has the fullest confidence in the Minister of Agriculture and Lands, and the country

certainly will back him always in any measure that he undertakes for the welfare of this country. Those are facts which are acknowledged.

But I should like the House to consider this proposal of the Board of Ministers in a different way altogether. The Board of Ministers has signally failed to implement the decision of this House. Any proposal coming from the Board of Ministers need not be accepted by this House, nor need the Board of Ministers run away with the idea that any proposal, any camouflage, any attempt is good enough when a direct indication has been given by this House. The indication given by this House was that a separate Minister should undertake this important work. The House was dissatisfied that the Minister of Labour, saddled as he is with other responsibilities, should undertake food distribution and control too, and therefore desired that a separate Ministry should be assigned these functions.

In point of fact I did state even on that occasion that it was humanly impossible—it was not meant to be a reflection on the Minister of Labour; by no means that—for any single person to undertake such a tremendous responsibility as dealing with food control and food distribution in the present crisis. So that, what has the Board of Ministers done? The Board of Ministers has merely transferred "Food" from the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands.

The position so far as this House is concerned is very much the same, is absolutely the same. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands will continue to perform his normal duties while he will take on this added responsibility.

The proposal of the Board of Ministers is tantamount to a vote of no-confidence in the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce. It is the unkindest cut, coming as it does from the Board of Ministers itself. I wonder whether the Board of Ministers had paused for a moment to consider that aspect of the matter. If the Board thinks that the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce is incompetent, is unable to discharge the duties assigned to his Ministry and that it has no confidence in his capacity to undertake those responsibilities, then I think it would be a suitable occa-

sion to introduce a motion of no-confidence. There is absolutely no other way of dealing with that fact. I do not think that any single person can undertake those responsibilities, and if the House has no confidence in the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce, then it is the duty of the House to pass a vote of no-confidence.

That is how I would like the proposal to be dealt with. On the last occasion the House intended to pass a vote of no-confidence in the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce, by passing a resolution in the form of a motion of no-confidence in the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce. The Board of Ministers, however, decided not to do so in this veiled form. The Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce forfeited the confidence of the House of Ministers. [The question of confidence in the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce was not put in this House.] I shall consider their conduct and pass judgment as we think fit. But that a vote of censure should be attempted in this veiled form, in this indirect fashion is certainly very unkind.

As far as I am concerned, the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce has done his best; I have no hesitation in saying that. He has always listened to Members with regard to the requirements of each area. I am grateful to the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce for certain measures of relief that he undertook at my instance, and I think he is accessible to all Members. He has done his best, and he is prepared to do his best; and one cannot say that the Minister of Labour is unable to cope with this work except that one feels that it is impossible for one single person to undertake this responsibility because of the present situation.

Every moment, every minute the situation changes, and action has to be taken promptly. When the Minister has other duties to perform, there is no doubt that there is bound to be a certain amount of neglect. That is the reason why we wanted a separate Ministry created to attend to this work.

The Board of Ministers, I must say, has not made any attempt to meet the

[Mr. R. S. S. Guna lana.] wishes of this House. The Minister of Agriculture and Lands have no doubt, has vast experience in dealing with situations of this nature. I have nothing to say with regard to the . He is responsible, no doubt, for food production, and therefore in a way competent to undertake this important task. This is not a question of whether the Minister of Labour should be preferred to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands; the proposition is what. As the Board of Ministers would it, the proposition is merely this: Should the Minister of Agriculture and Lands be preferred to the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce? The proposition of the Board is plain. That is not what the House expects from the Board of Ministers.

It is not even an attempt on the part of the Board of Ministers to take away some of the functions of the Minister of Agriculture and Lands to give him a free hand in dealing with the situation. [A MEMBER: What are those subjects?] It is not for me to say what subjects should be taken away. It is an arrangement for the Board of Ministers. For them to say that the Minister of Agriculture and Lands can undertake this work in addition to his other duties is certainly not fair in view of the direct indication given by this House.

I say that not even the semblance of an effort has been made to implement the wishes of this House. If the proposal had been to allocate some of the duties of the Minister of Agriculture and Lands to other Ministers in order that he may be free to undertake this responsibility, I could have understood it. Even that effort has not been made.

We are not in possession of the Board of Ministers' secrets. Some say that the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce specially desired that "Food" be taken away from him. We are not concerned with the wishes of the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce or the wishes of the Minister of Agriculture and Lands. We are concerned with the manner in which this problem is to be tackled, and we say definitely that this is not the way in which the problem should be tackled. In those circumstances I am sorry I have to vote against this motion.

*The Hon. Mr. G. C. S. Corea (Minister of Labour, Industry & Commerce): Sir, I thought that the remarks of the Hon. the Legal Secretary in speaking on this motion made it quite clear what this motion really amounts to. He said that when the matter was considered it was found that it was almost impracticable to give effect to the decision of this Council and that this suggestion was therefore put forward for the consideration of this House.

Now, as far as I am concerned, I would like to refer to the first time that this question of a Food Ministry was brought up on a direct vote of no-confidence moved by the hon. Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama). When that motion was moved, I met it to the best of my ability and gave the position as I saw it to the House. The House decided the question by rejecting the motion of no-confidence. I therefore construed that so far as confidence or no-confidence was concerned, the matter was settled on that occasion when the House rejected that motion.

Later when the motion of the Member for Point Pedro (Mr. Ponnambalam) was brought up, there was a suggestion that that itself contained a suggestion of no-confidence in that there was present in that motion a number of words which could be construed as a vote of no-confidence. I refer to the words in that motion stating that a separate Ministry of Food be appointed with a view to a reorientation of policy in regard to purchase, distribution, control, and so on.

So, that raised the question of policy; and what was sought was a reorientation of policy. It was therefore felt in several quarters in this House—and I took it in that light—that it amounted also to a fairly direct vote of no-confidence. The House is aware of what happened to that motion. A direct amendment to remove those words was moved, and as stated by the mover of that amendment, it was done to delete that part of the motion which, if it were not a direct condemnation, certainly left several in doubt whether it was condemnation or not. That amendment was carried, and those words were deleted.

So, I think that on those two occasions the question of want of confidence or not was definitely settled.

As far as I am concerned, I would also like to say, in connexion with the question of confidence which has been raised, that in regard to this important motion I myself do not look up on it as a vote of confidence or no-confidence. I look upon it purely as a vote which can be stretched to this extent, that if the motion is accepted it is considered that the Minister of Agriculture and Lands and his Executive Committee would be able perhaps to do this work somewhat better than the Minister and the Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce. It certainly is not a vote of confidence or no-confidence. It is for the Members to decide the matter. Therefore I say that that does not amount to a vote of confidence or no-confidence. At least, I should like to clear that issue definitely.

Now, the motion that was ultimately passed has been explained by several Members, and it is perfectly clear that what the House intended, in the letter and in the spirit, as I understood it, was that there should be created a separate Ministry, a solo Ministry, and as the Member for Point Pedro, (Mr. Ponnambalam), I think, said someone appointed who would sleep food, dream food, eat food and do everything only in regard to food. I remember those words, which were uttered by an hon. Member. It is perfectly clear what the intention of the House was.

I would like to remind hon. Members that when I spoke on that motion I followed two lines. One was to meet that part of the motion in regard to policy. I took some pains to explain the policy that had been followed by the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce, and I did justify the work that had been done by my Ministry in connexion with the policy adopted with regard to food-control, supplies, and so on. And I told the House of what had been done in the matter, what reserves had been created, and how the distribution had been planned. I explained all that to meet the point that had been raised, although it was misconstrued and it was said that I was opposing that motion. I gave that explanation in order to clear away any misgivings that might have existed.

The other line I took was that the admission of the words "within the

ambit of the... narrowed do... almost impra... up by saying... be really give... outside the a... some other r... new Ministry... Cabinet Sys... National G... may call it... that motion;... ber of the I... motion, as i... least had bee... of the Hous... separate Min... possible wit... Constitution.

The Board of Ministers... motion; in fact... different occasions... matter was g... tion. On the... of Ministers... view, that the proposal was impracticable, except for the opinion of one Minister who said, "No, it is practicable. Let us go into the matter and see whether it cannot be given effect to in the spirit in which it was put before us by the Council".

While saying that it was impracticable, when it was pointed out that a method might be found of giving effect to the proposal by some form of redistribution of functions, a Sub-committee was appointed by the Board to consider the matter, and that Sub-committee considered the position. The Sub-committee reported to the Board that it could be done, that the proposal could be given effect to, and the Sub-committee put forward a suggestion which indicated one method of doing it. It put forward the proposal for consideration that "Food" should be left with the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce as its sole subject, with just one connected subject—the control of imports. Anyway, the idea was that "Food" should be the sole subject left with the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce and that all the other subjects should be distributed—the Labour Department; the Industries Department, and the other Departments—among other Ministries—

***Mr. Ponnambalam:** "as that the recommendation of the Sub-committee?"

***The Hon. Mr. Cor** : Yes.

That suggestion was considered very fully, and I pointed out that it was not possible to do that because it was against the Constitution—Article 32—as you would be completely destroying the main group or the main division—the main group of "Labour, Industry and Commerce"—if you transferred "Labour, Industry and Commerce" to other Ministers and retained only "Food".

Then we considered another alternative suggestion, and that was to remove "Food" from the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce and to allow that Ministry to function with all its normal subjects and to hand over "Food" to some other Ministry. There was one possibility of doing that. It was found that the subject of Food could have been given to one Minister, again by removing a great many of his subjects,—retaining one perhaps—and handing over "Food" to that Minister. When that suggestion was considered, there were certain objections and difficulties discovered with regard to it. When those difficulties became apparent, that proposal had to be given up.

It was after all these considerations were gone into that we found definitely that it was impracticable, impossible to give effect to the resolution of this House. Then the only question was, could it be reported that the proposal was impracticable, or could some solution be sent up to the Council? As the Legal Secretary said, and as the Hon. Acting Leader of the House pointed out when he moved this motion, the suggestion to hand over the subject to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands was put forward for consideration as the least objectionable, as the best out of a number of unsatisfactory solutions that could be found.

That is the position with regard to this motion as I see it, and I rose really to express that view.

Now I want to make one other point clear—I did not intend to refer to it at all, or intend to refer to any other matters besides those which I have just mentioned—but I do want to make one

point clear in justice to myself and in order to explain the whole position with regard to the motion brought forward by the Hon. Acting Leader of the House. I want to say that my attitude always was that if the decision of the House had to be given effect to, and a Ministry in sole charge of Food was to be created, and if that meant that "Food" alone would have to remain in my Ministry and all the other subjects would have to be removed, I certainly saw objection to it. It could be done under the Constitution; other subjects could be removed, and whatever the House may think, if my personal preference was sought I would rather have the subjects which are normally the subjects of my Ministry than the administration of "Food Control" alone, if in order to give effect to the wishes of the House all the other subjects had to be removed from my Ministry. If the subject of "Food" alone had to be taken away from my Ministry in order to give effect to the decision of the House, then too I had no objection to that being done. That is as far as I was concerned.

One other point only: there have been many personal references to me. I take no notice of them, and I only pray and hope that those who made those references would be endowed with the gift to see themselves as others see them.

I will only say this: the argument which the Minister of Local Administration so vehemently brought forward, and which was followed up by the Minister of Health, was never present at any moment in my mind and, as far as I can gather, in the minds of those two Ministers when this question of creating a separate Food Ministry was considered. When I was asked to shed the other subjects and take up "Food", there was no question of the importance of adding to it the subjects of "Food Production". I was asked to take up "Food" only, and it was not a consideration which was put forward at that time—[*Interruption*]: that is why I referred to it.

I would like the House to consider this proposal in the light of their wishes. As far as I am concerned, I will not take this motion as a reflection on me. If it is a reflection on me, I am prepared to take it as such. I am prepared to say that if the House thinks that this subject

should be linked up with " Food Production ". I have no objection personally, because it is a matter which the House has to decide; but I would only say this, that my position should not be misinterpreted. It should not be said that I either sought to cling to the subject of " Food ", or that I tried to get rid of the subject of " Food "—as the Minister of Health put it. I want to make it perfectly clear that I said that as far as I was concerned, if " Food " was to be left with me, then the removal of other subjects from my Ministry was both contrary to the Constitution and would not certainly meet with my wishes, but that if the subject of " Food " was taken away and given over to a separate Ministry, as desired by the House, I would have no objection whatsoever.

***Mr. S. Abeywickrama (Udugama):**

I was rather interested in the defence put up by the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce. He gave us details of the various stages in the consideration of this subject and of certain events, and it appeared to me that his tongue was not working at certain stages. There appears to have been a great deal of misunderstanding in the Board of Ministers with regard to this question, and we have now reached the fifth stage in the discussion of this problem.

The first stage was the no-confidence motion which I introduced. I then gave the House certain facts and I cited three concrete instances where the Food Control Department had failed.

I must say that the hon. Member for Point Pedro (Mr. Ponnambalam) has been quite consistent on this subject from the very early stages. He has always asked for a separate Ministry of Food. He consulted me when I introduced my motion, but I refused to accept his amendment, and the Chair also ruled it out of order. The hon. Member has held that view from the start.

With regard to the vote of no confidence tabled by me, I regret to say, unpalatable as it must be to some Members, that outside this House the opinion was that the Food Control Department had failed and that a drastic change was necessary, but when it came to voting on my motion, Members turned

it into a vote of confidence in the Minister of Labour. I accepted it and left it at that.

But who is to be responsible for this stage? The hon. Member gave a recommendation to the authorities. The Director of Food Control and the Ministers voted against the no-confidence motion. I am sure that the hon. Member would not have closed down the " higher authorities " if he had known who they were—a very important point tantamount to a vote of confidence in the Minister of Labour and Commerce. I am sure that the hon. Member would not have voted to appoint the hon. Member as Food Chief.

We are watching the results of the food-purchasing programme, and we know what people responsible for this programme

At this point in the discussion, the hon. Member introduced a supplementary vote when the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce was asked to bring food-purchasing programme. That has ended in a fiasco, and we know what stones are current.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I was not entrusted with any purchasing scheme in India.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** He was sent to bring food to this country, and we passed a supplementary vote for that purpose. As a result of that, our Auditor-General is in India inquiring into certain matters.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** I must protest against the way in which these statements are made. The hon. Member usually puts things in a straightforward manner, and if he did that on this occasion I would not have minded it. He says that I went to India to purchase food and that as a result the Auditor-General is making certain inquiries. I did nothing of the kind. I went to India at the request of the Board of Ministers to remove certain difficulties which had arisen in connexion with the arrangements made by the Minister of Agriculture and Lands.

The Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands arranged for supplies of rice being obtained from India through the normal

[The Hon. Mr. Corea.]
trade channels. We found that no licences were being issued in India. I was asked to take the matter up—and I did so—with the Central Government; as soon as I took it up, arrangements were made to issue licences. They were issued soon after I took the matter up with the Government of India at Delhi. The hon. Member should be fair in representing matters, and I am sure he will be fair when he knows the facts.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Sir, I know the facts. The Hon. Minister did not go to India for health reasons; he went there to deal with the food situation. Various matters are made known to us and other matters are suppressed. I am not prepared to accept the statement of the Hon. Minister, but it is also a fact that the Auditor-General is now in India inquiring into certain matters.

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** No, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Minister has explained his position; and the point mentioned by the hon. Member has no bearing on this subject.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Sir, am I not entitled to refer to the fact that the Auditor-General has gone to India to inquire into this matter? There is nothing direct against the Hon. Minister. Am I not entitled to refer to that matter on the Floor of this House?

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** But the hon. Member must not create a wrong impression.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** I am not giving way.

Sir, that is the other stage I am referring to. Then, there is another stage—when the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands went to India in connexion with the question of the food supply. After Mr. O. E. Gooralleke was appointed Director of Food Supply, however, another situation has been created. Two responsible Ministers went to India but failed in their mission, and the Hon. Leader of the House has had to go there; he is now in India negotiating for the purchase of food. These are facts, and it is very unpalatable to some people when they are referred to. That is the position today.

Now, if the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce is capable of managing the Food Control Department, and if he can obtain stocks, why did the Hon. Leader of the House have to go to India? Now, what has the Hon. Leader of the House to do with regard to "Food"? With regard to "Food", if Hon. Ministers cling to prestige and say that certain departments that are attached to them must always be attached to them, why was the anomalous position created of sending the Hon. Leader of the House to India to negotiate for the purchase of rice? Why does not the Hon. Minister of Labour go repeatedly to India for that purpose? Why does he not go a second, a third and a fourth time? Who is to be blamed when he is surrendering his work to others?

On the Floor of this House the Ministers are careful to define their departments and to say that this department or that department falls within the purview of their administration under Article 32 of the Order in Council. What is the position then, and why do you send the Hon. Leader of the House to India to negotiate for the purchase of rice?

The Hon. Leader of the House did not go to India on a Private Member's motion. The Ministers decided the matter within the four walls of the Board room and agreed to send the Hon. Leader of the House to India for the purpose. Is that not tantamount to passing a vote of no-confidence in the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce? You cannot have something when it is to your convenience to have it; cast it aside when it does not suit you to have it. The Hon. Leader of the House is now in India, and he has gone there to find food. Then, the Director of Food Supply has been appointed, but not at the wish of this House; he has been appointed perhaps on a request made by the Board of Ministers.

The setting up of a separate Food Ministry is the fifth stage. The motion moved by the hon. Member for Point Pedro (Mr. Ponnambalam) contained certain words which some Members did not like very much, particularly the Ministers. Those words were "a new orientation of policy"—with regard

[Mr. Abeywickrama.]
is my grouse. If the appointment of Mr. O. E. Goonetilleke as Director of Food Supply had not been made, then we could have again one to the Minister. Changes are made, and they are not accepted; then changes are made again and are accepted.

In the year 1931, when the allocation of the departments to the various Ministries were made, though there was no food crisis at that time the person who produced the food had a right to distribute it. Under the present circumstances, however, the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce cannot do it, he comes and says, "I cannot get rice from India; the Department or the Minister of Agriculture and Lands is not producing it and what can I do?" If there is one man dealing with the subject we can deal with him and say, "Why do you not produce the food?"

Sir, in this hour of travail there should not be this divided responsibility. We must have one man dealing with the whole situation; and the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands is a person—he came into the limelight not after this State Council came into being but long before that—who possesses the confidence of the Board of Ministers. I should like to speak of it because I have toured the country and know the facts. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands is the only man to take up this work and solve this problem today, because all his Departments—I challenge any Member to name any Department under his administration that is not connected with food—as was very rightly pointed out by the Hon. Minister of Local Administration deal with the problem of food.

I have always advocated that we must produce sufficient food in this country but the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce, has not done sufficient work in that direction. This is the time to produce food, and I am sure the Hon. Minister knows that he will be "ruined" if he does not produce proof of his ability to do the needful—that he will be "finished" as a politician and a public man. The criticism will be all the more severe, because—I presume he knows the position—where two petitions might have

had to be submitted, one would do now since there will be no separate Ministry of Food. If there was a separate Ministry of Food, he might be able to say, "I have not got the rice".

Now is the time to put our best foot forward. As the Hon. Minister of Health says, "Give land to the people to cultivate. Supply all the fields with water. Put your best foot forward, and in six months' time this country will not have to depend, to the extent it is depending now, on India and other countries for its rice".

I heartily support the motion, and I trust that the Board of Ministers will, at least on this occasion, bury their petty differences as the country needs relief by way of food very urgently.

***Mr. G. R. de Silva (Colombo North)**
rose.

Mr. Speaker: We must finish this debate before 12 o'clock.

***Mr. G. R. de Silva:** I do not think I shall take more than five minutes, Sir.

I think this debate has degenerated into wordy warfare and playing with words, and I think it is quite time that we actually faced a few facts.

The whole purpose of the motion brought forward by the hon. Member for Point Pedro (Mr. Ponnambalam) was absolutely "killed" when he accepted the amendment of the hon. Member for Kankasanturai (Mr. Natesan). I for one was fully prepared to support him in the motion that he brought forward. I am not mincing any words; these are not matters of personality. I for one was thoroughly dissatisfied with the administration of the food supply in this country.

Not only was the motion "killed" but I think the hon. Member for Point Pedro accepted the situation created today when he accepted the amendment of the hon. Member for Kankasanturai. Not only did the hon. Member for Kankasanturai move that amendment; he practically gave a direction to the Board of Ministers as to what he would like done. As a matter of fact, none of us thought, at least most Members did not think that

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there should be co-ordination between the production of food and the importation of food. It was on that direction that most of us felt that there was a possibility of accepting the amendment and making an attempt to reshuffle these subjects.

I quite agree with the hon. Member for Point Pedro, but once the Council has accepted a restricted motion and he has accepted it, I do not think we can blame the Board of Ministers today. We always blame them, but I think they have made an honest attempt to implement the decision of this Council. They have taken over the whole question of food—the purchase of food; the distribution of food, and the control of prices—from the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce, and pushed it on to the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. Of course, Sir, most of us suffered from the delusion that the Minister of Agriculture was a very hardworked man. Apparently he has not had as much work as we thought he had.

I do not think there can be very much of a grouse from the Members of the Executive Committee of Labour, Industry and Commerce, because these two subjects that have been taken over from that Committee are subjects that were to be taken up by that Committee only in an emergency—the emergency control of food and the emergency purchase of food. As a matter of fact, if I was a Member of that Committee I should never have considered those two matters when I became a Member of that Committee; they were only emergency work, and the Ministry is called the "Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce".

As a matter of fact, very great work and very important work has been done by that Ministry, and we must compliment the Minister on the work done which was his legitimate work. But unfortunately this work was thrust on the Minister and his Executive Committee. In fact, I remember, the hon. Member for Mannar (Mr. Sri Pathmanathan), in supporting the motion of the hon. Member for Point Pedro (Mr. Ponnambalam) said, "I am a Member of that Committee, but I have not been consulted by the Minister". He seemed to be dissatisfied with the way in which the Ministry was functioning with

regard to food, although he was a Member of that Executive Committee.

So that, I think, the hon. Member for Mannar is very much of a grouse against the Ministry of that Committee. It is true that they were away from them on their own terms, have admitted in the Council that they had not been consulted regarding the food supply by the Minister himself. I think the hon. Member for Mannar said so. Apparently they had not been interested in it. Although the hon. Member for Mannar (Mr. Wilho) said that the hon. Members who could have given him advice to the Minister, because they were not consulted, was criticized by the hon. Member for Mannar.

I for one indicated in one of my earlier speeches that the question of food should be concentrated in one person, and that food production, and food purchase as well should be in the hands of the same person. Apart from anything else, I think this House must realize that the hope that we will be able to purchase food is rather a forlorn hope as things stand; expecting to be able to obtain much food from abroad is merely hoping for the best. Sir, the time has come when we have to think of food production in this country.

Not only should this question of food supply be placed in the hands of the Minister of Agriculture, but I would strongly emphasize the point made by the hon. European Nominated Member that these (Emergency) Government Agents should themselves be brought under the direct control of that Minister, because it is very necessary that this work should be co-ordinated.

As I said earlier, it is very necessary for us to think of the conservation and the distribution of the food supply in this country, and for that task I think the most suitable person is the Minister of Agriculture who is interested in food production. I do not think there can be very much of a grouse against this proposal, because very little would be done regarding the purchase of food from India and there is very little chance of our receiving much food from abroad.

***Mr. R. Sri Pathmanathan (Mannar-Mullaittivu):** On a point of personal explanation. The hon. Member for Colombo North (Mr. G. R. de Silva) stated that we were not interested in

[Mr. Sri Pathmanathan.]
 food. I may say that we were as interested as he was. It is because we were interested that I questioned the Minister why he did not bring these matters before the Committee, and he told us that it was an emergency measure and there was no time to consult the Committee. But we are as much interested in the matter as the hon. Member is.

Mr. T. Prasuriya (Moratuwa):
 This food question has been debated so thoroughly in this House that I feel that it is time we came to some satisfactory conclusion.

I am in entire agreement with my hon. Friend the Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama) when he says that there is a great deal of feeling all over the country. The general feeling is that in this Council we are talking far too much on this question. As a matter of fact, this question, I believe, has come up for the third time in this Council, but still we have not been able to arrive at a satisfactory conclusion.

I can tell you, Sir, that in my own constituency there is a great deal of dissatisfaction. It was only the other day that I made representations to the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce, and I must say that I am very grateful to him for the patient hearing he gave me. But so far I am not aware whether he has done anything satisfactory in that connexion. On the last occasion the only assurance he gave me was that he had a certain scheme in mind and that he had submitted it to the Board of Ministers. That clearly shows that in these matters it is not only the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce who should be blamed; but I think I can say without any hesitation that the whole Board of Ministers are to blame. It looks as if they are fooling with this question, and fooling with this House.

I am inclined to sympathize with the Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce. He has made the best of a bad job. As a matter of fact, he has gone through the worst stages of the control scheme, and at a time when he might have been given a further trial, owing to certain circumstances he is forced to hand the subject over to the Minister of Agriculture and Lands.

As pointed out by the hon. Member for Udugama, I too am one who has great faith in the Minister of Agriculture and Lands. From the day notice of this motion was given, even the country feels that the Minister of Agriculture will be able to solve this question.

I know that a Director of Food Supply has been appointed, and it was only yesterday, at tea time, that I listened to a very interesting remark* by a senior Member of this House. He said that the Minister of Agriculture and Lands and Mr. Goonetilleke are always together, and that they even have their lunch together every day. If they do not have lunch together, they at least meet at the Minister's house. That clearly shows that the Minister of Agriculture and Lands is in a better position to come into closer contact with the Civil Defence Commissioner. Also, it may be that these two understand each other so well that there is bound to be better teamwork. So that, Sir, on those grounds I feel that with his able lieutenant, Mr. Goonetilleke, the Minister of Agriculture and Lands would be able to solve this question.

I trust that the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce will be in a position to let me know what steps he has taken with regard to the complaint I made, because, I know, in my own constituency the whole scheme has been bungled. There are some people actually starving. As a matter of fact, I have no peace when I go to my constituency. There are people who have not received their proper rations. The Urban Council of my area has made representations to the Hon. Minister, and I have also made representations. I trust that the Hon. Minister will look into this matter and come to some satisfactory arrangement.

I do not propose to speak at length, as I feel that the Hon. Acting Leader is very anxious to reply. I only wish to say that I am in entire sympathy with this motion, because I feel that there is no alternative but to accept the motion as it stands. You will remember, Sir, that when the hon. Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama) moved a vote of no confidence in the Minister, I was one of the few Members who voted with him. It is not that I have any ill-feeling to the Hon. Minister; he has been

very nice to me; in most matters where I have made representations to him, he has given me a patient hearing. But I feel that in fairness to the country we must face the issue boldly. It is no use allowing the Ministers to play the fool of us. We must act wisely and act quickly.

Therefore, Sir, I feel that the Hon. Minister of Agriculture will find a panacea for all ills, and will be in a position to settle this question to the satisfaction of this House as well as the satisfaction of the country.

***The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Acting Leader of the State Council & Minister of Agriculture & Lands):** Sir, I must say I was greatly surprised to listen to some of the speeches that I had to listen to yesterday and today. I am pained to see that some Members who spoke did so in such a way as would show that they do not realize the difficulty of the situation we are in and that they do not consider it and try to solve it in a practical manner. In fact, some hon. Members went even to the extent of introducing matters quite unconnected with the subject under discussion.

One of the issues raised was—[*Inter-ruption*]. We were asked to decide whether a successful President of the Cambridge Union or an unsuccessful aspirant to office in the Oxford Union would be the champion of lost causes. That is the sort of absurd idea that was introduced into the discussion. Again, we were asked whether the Minister of Labour or the Minister of Agriculture and Lands was the more competent. That is also an absurd suggestion to consider just now.

I submit that those are not considerations that should enter into the discussion of the subject before the House. We have to consider whether a situation has arisen which needs some change to improve matters, or whether we could simply ignore the situation that has arisen and try to make excuses—or "fly kites"—not in the hope of settling this question, but with a view to achieving some other object which is at the back of the minds of some people.

Today I propose to speak pretty plainly. I wish, first of all, to explain why I brought forward this motion on behalf of the Board of Ministers, but

since the personal aspect of this question has been drawn into the discussion, I should like to make one or two passing references to the aspect of the matter.

My hon. Friend the Deputy Nominated Member of Council is a very nice person who was in a state of confusion. I have been a member of the Board of Agriculture for some time and I have been in contact with food workers. I am sure that he has lost to some extent the confidence he had in me. I am sure that he is of the opinion that I should, however, like to say that some time ago I was elected a Member in this House and visited a country on exchange of Ministers and he did not although I had no other work commitments at all, I should be happy to say that I may perhaps be asked to be Executive Commissioner. I made a statement that I made in this House. Whether it was correct or not become inconsistent or whether I say since then fall in with the view that I say. There is one thing however that I have learned—that it is very necessary for a person to realize what he is doing that he is failing. I am thankful to my hon. Member—this is not an isolated case—for reminding me that there is a possibility of my failing. I shall certainly take note of that warning, because I feel that failure is coming in many respects.

There is another point on which I wish to make a few observations in passing. There are some Members who are under the impression that by this transfer of subjects they are going to confer on me a great benefit, or that they are bestowing on me some big reward. I certainly do not consider this matter in that light at all. When my hon. Friend the Member for Mannar (Mr. Sri Pathmanathan) spoke of the lovely baby the House was going to hand over to me, and asked me to hand over to his Executive Committee something in return for that favour, I could not help asking myself the question whether I considered that baby of such importance or value that I would at once embrace it. I am glad that the hon. Member is so proud of that baby; but I may tell him that when I agreed to take on this additional subject, I did not do so with any desire to reap any benefit thereby. I know the difficulties that I would

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have to face if I undertake this work. I know that the situation is deteriorating in India and in Ceylon. I know what the prospects are, and I know the discontent that exists in this country over the question of food. Knowing all that, I agreed to take this subject over, not as a reward, not for the sake of acquiring influence or power, but merely because I felt that I could be of service. I felt that if I could improve the situation, I should try and do the work although I would be risking my personal reputation. It is because of that that I consented to undertake this additional work.

As far as I am concerned, I have not the slightest objection to the House not transferring this subject to me. In the best interests of the country, I am willing to undertake this work, although I know that it is one of the most difficult, one of the most unenviable jobs that could be given to any man; I realize that quite well. But, at the same time, either old age or incompetence makes me feel quite competent to tackle this problem. I feel that I can tackle it better than it is being tackled now. I can devote to it the time that is necessary. If I have not the time to attend to the work, I would not have consented to undertake to do it.

I should like to submit that it is not my influence, it is not my confidence that the House has to consider; it is the country and the country's interests that should weigh in the minds of hon. Members. If hon. Members feel that in the country's interests this proposal should not be accepted, that in the country's interests something else should be done, then by all means turn this proposal down. As far as the Ministers are concerned, they feel that this is a less unsatisfactory course to take, that it is the best that can be done in the circumstances.

I was rather surprised at the attitude adopted by the hon. Member for Kankesanthurai (Mr. Natesan). I always considered him to be a very sincere, a very good, kind-hearted, level-headed, cultured, straightforward gentleman.

The Hon. Colonel J. L. Kotalawala
(Minister of Communications & Works):
And he is a Brahmin!

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** And a vegetarian to boot. On the previous occasion, my hon. Friend made a speech here and asked me to take over this subject. He did not end there; he came to me after that debate and asked me why I did not want to take up this subject. I told him that I could not give up my other duties. He said "Never mind; you take it up".

Mr. Natesan: I did not say that.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** If he says that he did not say that, I would leave it to the public to judge as between him and me. I say that he did say that.

There seems to be the impression made in the minds of hon. Members that I want to grab this subject from the Minister of Labour. I really came forward to take over this subject because I felt that there were some Members who wanted me to take over this job. Speaking personally, I do not want to take over anything. I certainly dislike people asking me to take over responsibility and then going behind my back and trying to do something else, which does not appeal to me. It is not the job that is the one concern. A person likes to attend to a job of this nature because he likes to serve the country. If there is any person who likes to avoid work, if he can help it, it is myself. I am not fond of too much work but if any work is given to me, I feel that I must do it to the best of my ability. Actually, at no time in my life did I canvass a job. I can honestly tell the House that I have not the slightest objection to hon. Members rejecting this proposal. I would feel relieved if that were done. At the same time, I feel that any delay in improving the situation will not be to the advantage of this country.

There is another thing I wish to refer to. My Hon. Friend the Minister of Labour made a personal explanation today. I am doubtful as to what he wanted to convey. I shall be glad to be put wise in that regard even now. I am not certain whether I am right in the opinion I formed on the matter. In fact, when the Board considered the matter, we felt that the House, in accepting the amendment of the hon. Member for Kankesanthurai (Mr. Natesan) did sort of indicate that the Hon. Minister of Labour should be given the sole right to administer the

subject of "Food". The first question I and, I believe, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Communications and Works put directly to him was whether he would take up "Food" and relieve himself of his other duties. He said, "No. I have built up all these industries. I have done all these things. I am not going to give up all these things. I would rather that "Food" was taken away from me". Perhaps we did not at that time quite realize what he meant. I feel that what he meant to-day was this that if anything is to be taken away, "take away 'Food'; but leave things as they are". The meaning that I could attach to what he said to-day is this, to leave him with all those subjects plus "Food".

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** No, Sir. I made myself as clear as possible.

Mr. Natesan: On a point of personal explanation—

Mr. Speaker: That stage is past. The Hon. Minister has not finished his reply. At the end of the Minister's reply, the hon. Member can make his personal explanation.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I have no objection to his making it now.

Mr. Speaker: Who wants to make a personal explanation? Is it the Hon. Minister of Labour or the hon. Member for Kankasanturai?

***Mr. Ponnambalam:** Who is in possession of the Floor of the House?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Acting Leader and Minister of Agriculture and Lands.

The Hon. Mr. Senanayake: I do not mind continuing.

Mr. Speaker: I think we had better adjourn now. The sitting is suspended till 2 P.M.

Sitting accordingly suspended until 2 P.M. and then resumed.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Just before we adjourned, I mentioned that if for one was, under the impression that if the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce, had to give up anything, he would prefer giving up "Food Control" rather than any of his other subjects. But, of course, I formed a different impression to-day. Even to-day, I believe, he made it clear that if he had to give up anything—

***The Hon. Mr. Corea:** That is the point.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I was prepared to give up the subject of "Food". In the circumstances, when the resolution of the Council was to the effect that a Ministry of Food should be created, and the suggestion was made that the subject of "Food" should be taken away from the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce, it is not fair for anyone to say that the Hon. Minister was vague in his answer. That is by no means a correct interpretation of our debate, because as that is concerned, the House itself decided that the Hon. Minister should not be condemned for what was proposed. Hon. Members realized that the situation was a difficult one, they realized that the situation required handling in a delicate way. If they felt that it was wrong to let the sole subject to be dealt with by the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce, that he should give up his other subjects, then it cannot be said that the Board of Ministers was not to condemn the Hon. Minister by bringing forward a proposal that they should work with the welfare of the House.

I come to the remarks made by the hon. Member for Kankasanturai (Mr. Natesan). He said that he wanted the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands to undertake this work and to give up some of its other subjects. I would like to refer to those remarks a little further. Whatever difference of opinion there may be between both of us with regard to the conversation that we had, there is this fact, that he wanted one Ministry of Food. He wanted either the subjects that were entrusted to me with regard to food production to be transferred to that Ministry, or that I should get the subject of "Food" into my Ministry and give up, according to the hon. Member himself, some of my other subjects.

With regard to that question, it has been definitely stated that many of those subjects are concerned with food. In fact, by the change proposed by this resolution, it has been made unnecessary even to change the name of the Executive Committee. The term "Agriculture and Lands" would include "Food"

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as well. But if the subject happened to be handed over to the Executive Committee of Health or to the Executive Committee of Education or to the Executive Committee of Local Administration, perhaps it would be necessary to change the name of the Ministry. If we take the subjects as they are, no one would say that the subject of "Education" should be taken away from the Ministry of Education if food has to be produced on a more extensive scale.

I am sure Members of this House realize that our efforts in Ceylon have to be increased if we are to prevent a greater shortage of food. We know that the situation in India is not very satisfactory; we know the difficulties that exist in India and we realize that it should be our endeavour to produce more food. Would you feel that the subject of "Irrigation"—irrigation is necessary for the production of food—should be taken away or not included in the Ministry of Food, or the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands under which Ministry food has to be produced? Would you feel that the subjects of "Forestry" or "Lands" should be taken away?

The suggestion was made by some hon. Members that the Survey Department might be removed from the control of the Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands. As a matter of fact, if there is any delay now in giving out lands, it is because a little delay occurs in the demarcation of boundaries. Although this Department is under the Executive Committee of Agriculture and Lands, it takes a little longer time than desirable to give out lands owing to the delay in the demarcation of boundaries. If the Department is handed over to another Ministry, the delay will be even greater than it is now. So the subject of "Survey" is also connected with food production.

Another suggestion was made, that the Registrar of Co-operative Societies should work under another Ministry. The Member for Kankasanturai (Mr. Natesan) will know to what extent the Registrar of Co-operative Societies has helped in regard to the food production scheme. He knows that the Jaffna District itself produces a large quantity of onions and chillies. It is the Co-operative Department that makes it possible

to distribute all that produce and arrange for sales. If any Ministry has to be in charge of the subject of "Food", I feel that the Co-operative Department has also to find a place under that Ministry; otherwise you will find that the contact between the cultivator and the consumer would disappear; and that is not in the interests of food production. When you consider this matter carefully and take Department by Department, you will find that the only Department that might be removed from my Ministry is the Department that deals with the purchase of rubber and tea.

I would ask hon. Members to consider this point. When it is recognized by everyone that the work that has been entrusted to the Ministers just now is very much heavier than it should be, do hon. Members think that it would lighten the burden of any Minister if one of his subjects is transferred to another Minister?

I have been dealing with this subject for a long time. We have to deal not only with the local Government but with foreign Governments as well. We are to-day purchasing goods for practically all the requirements of the Allies. Do you feel that it would be easier if this subject of purchase is taken away from a person who has been in touch with it and who knows how the scheme has worked and handed over to another? It will involve that person in a great deal of work; he will have to gather all the information and try to tackle the subject. Would it lighten the burden of the Ministers if that were done?

Although I have said that I am not anxious to do too much work, I feel that if this subject is retained by my Ministry there will be less work for me. The person who takes it over will have very much more work. As far as this subject is concerned, I know that we have a very fine officer. He is doing his work very well. It is not my policy to interfere with people who are doing their work well. I only intervene when it becomes necessary to come to decisions with regard to certain matters. So that it is not lightening the burden of the Ministers by any means when you try to transfer subjects.

There was another aspect that seemed to weigh with hon. Members of this House. They seemed to think—not that I am going to get too much work, or that

I am not capable of doing that work—that perhaps I would gain too much influence or have too much control of subjects by these means. As far as I am concerned, I can tell the House that I do not depend on influence for my existence. As far as I was concerned, I was ready to do this work only because the subject of "Food production" has been entrusted to me.

As I mentioned earlier, I know full well that the position with regard to food, in Ceylon, is deteriorating, and that the position in India is becoming worse; that there may be a time when this country will have to suffer very much more than it is doing now. I realize that when that situation arises—I hope we will be able to prevent it to a large extent—there will be a great deal of blame attached to the person who took up the responsibility. The hon. Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama) was quite right when he said that I am more or less putting a moose round my neck when I agree to undertake this work. I do so, not because I want to do more work or seek to get more power or influence, but because I feel that the situation might perhaps be a little eased. That was the only reason that made me say that I was willing to undertake this work.

If my opinion is asked as to what this Council should do in a time of trouble, knowing full well the great suffering that is likely to have to be endured by the people of this country I certainly feel that the best thing that could be done is to have this Council dissolved. Let the electors choose their representatives to do this work. It is not for us to remain here and say, "Let us adjust matters". That is my own feeling in the matter.

It has been said that we have to work the Constitution and that this proposal should have been framed so that it would be within the ambit of the Constitution; it was also said that the present proposal was contrary to the wishes of the House. I can only say this: I wonder whether there is any hon. Member who can say that we could have made any other proposal within the ambit of this Constitution except one—the only one possible—and that is to ask His Excellency to take over the subject of "Food", under the provisions of the Order in Council. We

did not do that. It is the wish of the House to make that proposal, we would rather that they did it. We felt that our proposal was the only one possible.

Granting that the hon. Member (Mr. Suriya) was not the only hon. Member who acted with the intention of the Constitution was to ask His Excellency to take over the subject of "Food" and to let the House and the Executive Council consider the question whether a Ministry of Food should be created. There would not be a Ministry. But that has not been done since the Constitution was passed.

If that is the wish of the House, let it please say so and let the Government take over the subject; but we are not going to do the recommended duty, as long as we are entrusted to do our best and discharge our duty, however unpleasant that duty may be.

There is one thing I would like to say before I conclude. It is my opinion that quite close to the subject there are many reasons given for the creation of a number of people who want different Ministries created. That is not permitted by the Constitution. Some people have asked me, "Why do you not bring forward a resolution to alter the Constitution so that some of us can get in there and work?". I shall tell you why I do not bring such a proposal forward.

I know that some of those who make these suggestions and expect me to bring forward a motion want to negotiate with regard to proportionate representation. I am not in favour of proportionate representation, for this simple reason: I know full well that the assistance of the minorities would be of great use in a Board of Ministers, but at the same time I feel convinced that if there is any hindrance to our obtaining self-determination in the future, it would be the dividing of our ranks into two camps of minorities and majority. If that happens, we shall lose for all time the opportunity of securing our freedom. That is why I am against it; and I shall never be driven to that position however much and however skillfully people may try to manoeuvre me into that position.

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If more than 7 Ministers are to be created, if the present situation is to be altered and more than 7 Ministers are necessary, I have not the slightest doubt that the best of the lot would be chosen; I have not the slightest doubt about that. But at the same time, if I consent to these internal arrangements of proportionate representation, I feel that I would be betraying this country. I do not want to be a betrayer of this country, at any cost; and any attempts made to gain that end, I shall do to my utmost.

There were one or two questions asked which I want to answer before I sit down. One was in regard to (Emergency) Assistant Government Agents. The position with regard to them is that the (Emergency) Government Agents and Assistant Government Agents are all under the Ministry of Home Affairs, but the functions they perform with regard to production of food are under my control and under my Ministry.

Mr. Susanta de Fonseka (Panadura):

Do they communicate with you direct even now?

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** They communicate with the Head of my Department. According to our Constitution, a Head of Department cannot communicate with another Minister except through his own Minister. A Head of Department can communicate with another Head of Department. That is the cumbersome Constitution we have. Where the practical working is concerned, there is no difficulty, because I can tell you that I have not found the slightest difficulty or inconvenience in trying to work as things are. I may say this, that if it becomes necessary for me to consider the whole food problem, I may have to get into closer touch with these people and I shall have to work in closer co-operation with all concerned. But that is a matter that I will have to consider.

My hon. Friend the Member for Nuwara Eliya (Mr. Abeygunasekera) asked me, "What is your scheme?" Well, if the Council passes this resolution, I am going to be entrusted with the responsibility for this subject. I have no scheme to put forward. I hope to discharge my responsibility to the best

of my ability. I know what the need is. That is all I can say with regard to that.

Another point I wish to mention is that not only will I have to work in close co-operation with other Departments, but it will perhaps be necessary for me to work in more than one Office, for the simple reason that my Office is far away and it may become necessary to have another Office here. Those are all official arrangements that have to be made.

Lastly I would say that as far as I am concerned I have always wished for the co-operation of everyone. I have never considered any subject that is in my charge to be my exclusive monopoly. With regard to Agriculture, as far as I go it is those who are concerned with it who do the work, and I only assist them. Even now the Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce are engaged in Agriculture. They have a farm. I do not say that that farm should not run. I do not see any reason why, if a planter can open up land, another Ministry or anyone else should not open up land?

What I say is, let us all work together. Even with regard to food production, it is not a question of my having a monopoly. I believe I have succeeded because of the co-operation and assistance I have received from almost every Member of this House. They have taken an interest in food production in their areas, and we have succeeded. It is no use my saying that increased production is due to my efforts. It is due to the efforts of all concerned, and I am very grateful to them for what they have done.

If this subject is to be given over to me, I hope I will be able to discharge that duty with the co-operation of all the people concerned, and I hope they will all realize that the times ahead are going to be difficult times and that with our combined efforts we may be able to avert something more disastrous than what might overtake us.

Mr. Natesan: By way of personal explanation, I wish to correct the impression created by the reference of the Hon. Acting Leader and Minister of Agriculture and Lands to a conversation which I happened to have with him after I moved my amendment to the motion relating to the creation of a separate

Food Ministry. I asked him to accept the suggestion that I made and take up the Ministry of Food. He said that he had difficulties in respect of some Departments of which he was already in charge. I said, "Why not give up the Survey, the Land Settlement and such other Departments?" He seemed reluctant to do that, and he said that it would have to be considered. There the matter was left.

I spoke precisely on those lines yesterday and said that it would have been proper on the part of the Board of Ministers to have implemented my motion within the ambit of the motion, that is within the strict terms of the motion.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I do not think it necessary for us to enter into a controversy over the matter.

Question put; the Council divided—
Ayes, 27; Noes, 17; Declined to Vote, 1:

AYES.

Senanayake, The Hon. Mr. D. S.	Freeman, Mr. H. R.
Kannangara, The Hon. Mr. C. W. W.	Griffith, Mr. F. H.
Bandaranaike, The Hon. Mr. S. W. R. D.	Jayasuriya, Mr. A. P.
Kotalawala, The Hon. Colonel, J. L.	Kotalawala, Mr. D. H.
De Silva, The Hon. Mr. G. E.	Kularatna, Mr. P. de S.
Mahadeva, The Hon. Mr. A.	Nugawela, Major E. A.
Abeywickrama, Mr. Simon Aluwihare, Mr. E. H.	Paritt, Mr. H. F.
Amarasuriya, Mr. Thomas De Silva, Mr. G. R.	Rajapaksa, Mr. D. M.
Dharmaretnam, Mr. S.	Ratnayake, Mr. A.
	Ratwatte, Mr. H. L.
	Samarakkody, Mr. S.
	Senanayake, Mr. Dudley
	Siriwardana, Mr. H. de Z.
	Tennekoon, Mr. K. S.
	Wanigasekera, Mr. D.
	Whitby, Mr. G. R.

NOES.

Amarasuriya, Mr. H. W.	Newnham, Mr. H. E., G.M.G., V.D.
De Fonseka, Mr. Susanta	Pereira, Diwan Bahadur I. X.
De Zoysa, Dr. A. P.	Ponnambalam, Mr. G. G.
Gunasekera, Mr. D. D.	Razik, Mr. A. R. A.
Gunawardana, Mr. R. S. S.	Sri Pathmanathan, Mr. R.
Hewavitarna, Mr. Rajah	Yytilingam, Mr. S.
Hanganilleke, Mr. J. H.	Wille, Mr. G. A. H.
Jayah, Mr. T. B.	
Kuruppu, Mr. J.	
Natesan, Mr. S.	

DECLINED TO VOTE.

Cores, The Hon. Mr. G. C. S.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is passed.

The House will excuse me from the remainder of the sitting. The Hon. Deputy Speaker will now preside.

MR. SPEAKER thereupon withdrew, and **MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER** [MR. SUSANTA DE FONSEKA] took the Chair.

† APPROPRIATION BILL, 1942.

Pursuant to the resolution of the Council of the House further to consider in detail the Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the payment of salaries, Services and allowances of officers and staffs taking for the financial year 1942-43, to authorise the payment of wages of officers out of Revenue of various departments during that financial year for special purposes, and to provide for the amount of such money to be drawn from the Estimates of the Revenue Department for 1942-43 (Second Session of July 1942), and the amendments to those Estimates tabulated on August 14, 1942.

In Committee

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER presided as Chairman.

SCHEDULE I.

Head 50, Police Department.

Sub-head 1, Personal Emoluments
Rs. 1,00,000—(contd.)

Amendment moved (by Mr. ...)
of Home Affairs, August 23]

(a) The number of officers for 1942-43 against the item "Wages of Porters and Watchers in Distilleries and Warehouses" to be increased from 106 to 107. No alteration in the money provision for 1942-43 should be made but an asterisk "a" and footnote added as follows:

a Money provision made for 106 porters and watchers owing to the temporary closure of Trincomalee warehouse.

(b) The existing asterisk "a" and footnote on page 113 to be renumbered "b".

(c) The vote of Rs. 67,349 for 1942-43 for Rent Allowance to be increased to Rs. 70,206.

(d) The vote of Rs. 360 for 1942-43 for Office Allowance to outstation Inspectors in charge of Rangers at Rs. 5 per mensem to be increased to Rs. 2,000.

† For the Observations of the Financial Secretary, and the Report of the Board of Ministers, see HANSARD of July 10, 1942.

The Hon. Mr. A. Mahadeva (Acting Minister of Home Affairs): There have been some remarks made reflecting on the senior officers of the Department. They were based mainly on the ground that illicit offences continue and that the Excise officers have not been successful in putting them down. I do not think that the hon. Members concerned in making those remarks, took note of the fact that the staff of the Excise Department has been greatly depleted during the present financial year. The officers have been engaged in large numbers on coast-guard duties, and therefore even the normal work of detection and prosecution cannot be expected of them.

In addition, I feel, the House itself is partly responsible for the great increase in illicit traffic that has occurred. I am referring to the resolution that was adopted by this House some time back under which it permitted the tapping of coconut trees for sweet toddy without licence. The House has recognized that it made a mistake, and it has now reversed that decision.

I think every endeavour will be made—and I will also make every endeavour to bring to the notice of the higher officers in the Excise Department the necessity for it—to put down illicit offences as much as possible.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva (Minister of Health):** I am not satisfied with the explanation given by the Hon. Acting Minister of Home Affairs with regard to the control exercised by the Excise Department over illicit offences.

I say advisedly that unless the Government takes serious notice of the matter, I think it is high time that the Excise Department was disbanded. I say deliberately that the Excise Department has been responsible for these illicit sales; and when one of the Ministers wrote in to say that the offenders should be prosecuted, the Excise Commissioner himself replied to the effect that he was helpless and that he was not going to prosecute them. I would ask hon. Members to realize the importance of that statement, made by the Head of a Department who is paid by this country—and paid a very handsome salary—to detect offences of this kind. If he cannot do it, his obvious duty is

to resign, not to say that this Council made a mistake in passing a certain resolution and, therefore, he was helpless.

I would ask hon. Members to realize that the good government of this country is in their hands. If Heads of Departments are allowed to defy this Council by not implementing our decisions faithfully, how can we expect the good government of this country to be carried on? I therefore feel that it is high time that we asked the Head of the Department to give up his job, if he is not able to control illicit offences, and hand over the task to someone who has the interests of the country at heart, not simply mark time, draw a high salary and say that he cannot do anything further.

***Mr. B. H. Aluwihare (Matale):** May I know what the Minister is doing about the amendment of the Excise Ordinance? The matter came up in Committee, and the Bill was made a little different to what it was.

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: I will have to consult my Executive Committee on that point—whether it is worth proceeding with in the form in which it was amended in the Committee stage.

***Mr. S. Abeywickrama (Udugama):** Last year, during the Budget debate I brought the fact to the notice of the Minister of Home Affairs that the present Excise Commissioner, immediately after we passed the resolution moved by the hon. Member for Kandy, went to a public meeting held at the Nalanda College and stated that he would eat his hat if the decision of the State Council could be implemented properly. That clearly shows that the Excise Commissioner was not prepared to accept a resolution in the spirit in which it was moved. The same Excise Commissioner is still continuing in office, and he has, as a result of that attitude taken up by him, let down the whole scheme which was passed by this Council and entrusted to him for carrying out. We brought that matter to the notice of the Minister of Home Affairs last year, but still no action has been taken. Furthermore, I was told unofficially that the Commissioner has

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asked the Inspectors not to prosecute, so that his picture of the situation may be proved to be correct.

I also want to know where the Head Office of the Excise Department is located. I believe it is at Katugastota. Is this particular individual of such great importance as to be allowed to take up his station at Katugastota—I might as well say in the wilds of Katugastota? There is a general complaint that as a result of people running away from Colombo, the morale of the people has been lowered. Then why on earth did the Minister allow this Office to be shifted? I do not know what documents there are that have to be preserved. Perhaps this officer is of such great importance that it is necessary to preserve his own person.

Everything connected with the Excise Department is wrong. They have passed eighteen months without functioning, because officers have been taken away for coast-guard service. What justification is there for these people to continue in the service at all?

There is also the discriminatory issuing of licences for liquor. I was told that a particular individual—an Indian gentleman; a Mr. J. A. D. Victoria—holds as many as thirteen retail and wholesale licences. In the notices appearing in the *Gazette* you will find the name "Victoria" appearing very frequently. Why on earth should not the people of this country be given the opportunity of earning a living from these licences? If we are going to abolish the system, let us abolish it altogether, but if it brings in more money and trade, then let the licences be distributed more equitably.

I would ask two things of the Hon. Minister: whether the Excise Commissioner did make a statement to the effect that I have mentioned, at the Nalanda College; and whether it was correct on the part of a Civil Servant in charge of a Department openly to flout the wishes of the State Council. What action has the Commissioner taken to implement the decision of this House, or did he obstruct the carrying out of that decision by telling his Inspectors not to implement it? I understand that this gentleman has even refused to come to the Committee

meetings. If that is so, let him be the Minister of Home Affairs and carry out

The Hon. Mr. Mahabadi: I think it is somewhat unfair to ask the Hon. the Head of the Department to say that he has refused to attend Committee meetings. His words are the result of meetings held by the Department concerning this Department, and his discussion. It is his business duty to bring to the notice of the authorities all difficulties that would arise in carrying out a decision of this

I also pointed out that it has been considerably postponed during the course of the year. There are emergency measures that it was necessary to take and we are the best that was possible in handling the staff to the Military for their purposes. These men will revert to the Department at the course of the next financial year.

As regards the moving of the Department, I think, the office they occupied in the old Secretariat Building was taken over by the Military. I do not know exactly why Katugastota was chosen, but I am sure it was done with the approval of the permanent Minister.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** I am told by the hon. Member for Dumbura (Mr. Ratnayake) that there are 10 illicit booths behind the Excise Commissioner's Office at Katugastota.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 1, as amended, was then passed.

Sub-head 2, Travelling, Rs. 238,530.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

Reduce the vote of Rs. 238,530 to Rs. 143,750.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 2, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 3, Uniform and Equipment, Rs. 7,200.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 7,200 for 1942-43 to be increased to Rs. 19,417 by the addition of Rs. 12,217, which amount was provided in the Estimates under Head 10, Sub-head 6, for the Excise Officers on Coast Watching Duty.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 3, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 4, *Rent of Circle Offices, Excise Stations and Warehouses, Rs. 55,561.*

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 55,561 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 72,000.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 4, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 5, *Stationery, Office Furniture and Office Requisites, Rs. 3,000.*

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 3,000 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 5,000.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 5, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 6 was passed without amendment.

Sub-head 7, *Rewards to Officers under the Excise Manual, Rs. 40,000.*

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 40,000 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 60,000.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 7, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 8 to 10 were passed without amendment.

Sub-head 11, *Transport of Arrack, Rs. 60,000.*

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 60,000 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 69,000.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 11, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 12, *Instructions to Excise Officers in First Aid and Provision of Equipment, Rs. 500.*

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 500 for 1942-43 to be increased to Rs. 1,000.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 12, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 13 and 14 were passed without amendment.

Head 50, as amended, was passed.

Head 51, Police.

Sub-head 1, *Personal Emoluments, Rs. 3,859,639.*

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

Additional Staff for Emergency Services.

(1) The number of clerks (G. C. S.) for 1942-43 under the caption "Additional Staff for Emergency Services" on page 117 of the Second Print be increased from 20 to 21 and in the details under this item the 20 Clerks, Class III., Grades I. and II., to be increased to 21. The money provision for 1942-43 should also be increased from Rs. 12,466 to Rs. 13,676.

(2) The details under the item "4 Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents" be amended as follows:—

	Rs.
1 at £400—25, 30 & 40—£960	} 26,472
2 at £380—50, 40, 30 & 20—£1,110	
1 retired officer at £273.6.8 being the difference between last salary and pension	

(3) The number of Chief Inspectors, Inspectors, and Sub-Inspectors for 1942-43 under the caption "Additional Staff for Emergency Services" be reduced from 21 to 16 and the money provision for 1942-43 from Rs. 38,500 to Rs. 32,000.

(4) The following new items be inserted under "Additional Staff for Emergency Services", Police Department, below the item "Chief Inspectors, Inspectors and Sub-Inspectors, Port Police":—

1941-42.	1942-43.	
		Rs.
	1 Chief Inspector Rs. 3,000—120—3,600	} 33,041
	2 Inspectors Rs. 1,740—120—2,340	
	26 Sub-Inspectors Rs. 600—90—1,410	

(5) The vote of Rs. 396 for 1942-43 for Boot Allowance, &c., on page 117 of the Second Print be reduced to Rs. 306 and in the details under this item 22 officers who are to receive this allowance be reduced to 17.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 1, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 2, *Travelling, Rs. 287,100.*

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 287,100 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 323,500 and the details of the make-up of this sub-head be amended as follows:

	Rs.
Travelling expenses of permanent staff	282,150
Travelling expenses of emergency staff	41,350
	323,500

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Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 2, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 3, Stationery, Office furniture and Office requisites, Rs. 18,500.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 18,500 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 20,585 and the details of the make-up of this sub-head be amended as follows:—

	Rs.
Recurrent expenses ...	12,000
Furniture for replacements ...	1,000
Railway warrants ...	235
Expenses in connection with Emergency work ...	7,350
	20,585

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 3 as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 4 was passed without amendment.

Sub-head 5, Rent of quarters, stations, barracks, offices, &c., Rs. 182,980.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 182,980 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 185,680 and in the details of the make-up of this sub-head the sum of Rs. 53,340 provided for rent of buildings, &c., used in connection with Emergency work be increased to Rs. 56,040.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 5, as amended was passed.

Sub-head 6, Uniforms & equipment, Rs. 230,000.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 230,000 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 232,965, and the details of the make-up of this sub-head be amended as follows:—

	Rs.
Uniforms, arms, equipment, &c. ...	190,100
Uniforms, &c., for Emergency staff ...	42,865
	232,965

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 6, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 7 was passed without amendment.

Sub-head 8, Water and Conservancy.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 30,324 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 37,645 and the details of the make-up of this sub-head be amended as follows:—

The Colombo Municipality for the supply of water to Police Department buildings to water supplied on contract to Police Department buildings in outstations, and for conservancy of all Police Stations and offices	22,500
Conservancy services and water to temporary huts for Emergency services	15,145
	37,645

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 8, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 9 to 16 were passed without amendment.

Sub-head 17, Secret Service, Rs. 500.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 500 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 1,100 and the following details of the make-up of this sub-head be inserted:—

Secret Service	400
Secret Service (Law Security Section)	700
	1,100

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 17, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 18 to 21 were passed without amendment.

Sub-head 22, Transport, Rs. 2,420.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 2,420 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 2,620.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 22, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 23, Furniture for Temporary Huts, Rs. 6,750.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

The vote of Rs. 6,750 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 7,250 and amend the description of this sub-head to read "Furniture for temporary huts, & c., for Emergency services"

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 23, as amended was passed.

Sub-heads 24 to 26 were passed without amendment.

*Sub-head 27, Incidental Expenses,
Rs. 27,500.*

Amendment moved [*Acting Minister of Home Affairs*]:

The vote of Rs. 27,500 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 28,800 and in the details of the make-up of this sub-head the sum of Rs. 10,500 provided for incidental expenses in connection with emergency work be increased to Rs. 11,800.

The alterations in the total which these amendments involve (pages 114, 117, and 118) should also be made.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 27, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 28 and 29 were passed without amendment.

Head 51, as amended, was passed.

Head 52, Department of Prisons & Probation.

Sub-head 1, Personal Emoluments Rs. 501,422.

Amendment moved [*Acting Minister of Home Affairs*]:

(1) The number of Superintendents of Prison and Probationary Superintendents in training for 1942-43 to be increased from 7 to 8 and the details under this item to be amended as follows. The money provision for 1942-43 to be increased from Rs. 35,049 to Rs. 39,249:—

* 1 at £400—25—£650.

* 5 at Rs. 4,200—240 & 300—7,500.

2 at Rs. 2,400—3,600.

(2) The number of Temporary Superintendents for 1942-43 to be reduced from 2 to 1 and the money provision for 1942-43 reduced from Rs. 7,200 to Rs. 3,600.

(3) The votes of Rs. 6,963 for House Officers to be increased to Rs. 7,275 and details under this item to be amended as follows:—

* 11 at Rs. 480—30—960.

4 at Rs. 480—30—960.

(4) The following new items to be inserted under a caption Additional Staff for Emergency Services Re-opening of Tangalla Prison:—

1941-42.	1942-43.		Minimum.	Annual Increase.	Maximum.	1941-42.	1942-43.
—	1	Superintendent ..	—	—	2,910	—	2,910
—	1	Jailer, Class II. ..	1,260	84	2,100	—	2,100
—	2	Sub-Overseers, Class I. ..	—	—	540	—	1,080
—	8	Guards, Class I. ..	—	—	390	—	3,120
		Daily paid temporary staff at 90 cents salary and 20 cents diet allowance per diem ..	—	—	—	—	1,028
		<i>Allowances.</i>					
		Diet allowance to staff ..	—	—	—	—	792
		Boot allowance to jailer ..	—	—	—	—	18

The alterations in the totals which these amendments involve (pages 118 and 120) should also be made.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I read a letter written by Mr. C. E. Victor Corea, in the papers. He was a very well known Member of the old Legislative Council; and he says that instructions were issued to the Prisons Department long ago that prisoners were not to be handcuffed. I wonder whether the Hon. Acting Minister can give us any information on that point—whether he saw the letter in the papers, and whether he made it his business to inquire into it.

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: I saw the letter in the papers. The fact is, this matter was raised in the old Legislative Council by Mr. C. E. Victor Corea who was then a Member of the Council. A Committee was appointed under the

Chairmanship of Mr. M. T. Akbar, who was later Mr. Justice Akbar. The Committee submitted a rather comprehensive report on how to deal with prisoners, but unfortunately that report seems to have been pigeon-holed and no action has been taken on it.

I became aware of these circumstances when the question of handcuffing detenus was raised in this Council. We are taking action; I pointed out the reason why it was not possible to relax the handcuffing rule as the law now stood, but we are taking steps to have that law altered so as to leave the discretion in the hands of the Inspector-General of Prisons as to who should be handcuffed and who should not.

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***Mr. Aluwihare:** Mr. Corea goes rather further than what the Hon. Acting Minister has stated. He says that at that time, Mr. Akbar, who was then Acting Attorney-General, said that the practice was that Police officers were asked to exercise their discretion in this matter.

Why I press this matter is because I rather suspect that the Prisons authorities in these cases do want to rub it into these political prisoners on their own. As the Hon. Minister himself must be aware, even in the case of these detenus there were many little unpleasantnesses that they need not have been goaded with, and I feel that this is another of those acts which we should not tolerate.

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: Sir, the question of omission or issue instructions following the recommendations of the Committee appointed under the Chairmanship of Mr. Akbar cannot excuse a violation of the law. I believe in the case of the first 4 or 5 detenus there was a relaxation of the law and they were not always handcuffed when they were moved about. But after their escape from the place of detention, the Inspector-General of Prisons, I take it, felt that he would not be justified in ignoring the strict instructions of the law. In fact, no one has given him instructions on this matter; and, as I said, unless the law is altered, nothing can be done. I am taking steps to get the law altered.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** We are always told that the law is this, and that it cannot be transgressed. It would interest the Home Minister to read a discussion in the House of Commons where, I believe, the law against certain publications in the Press was passed, and it was passed with the Home Minister's guarantee that those powers would only be used under certain circumstances, and he took upon himself a discretion as to how he would apply the law. I think it would be very salutary for the Home Minister to read up those proceedings. He will then know the extent of his power.

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: I would certainly welcome discretion being left in the hands of the Home Ministry. But the hon. Member forgets that there was a long discussion in this Council as to the rights of Ministries to interfere with the

powers vested in Heads of Departments and on that matter of a Special Committee was appointed which has not reported yet. I think we can consider when we go into that report whether or not these discretions in Mr. Mahadeva's concern.

***Mr. D. Mangalavan:** Well, we would like to raise the question of the employment of prison labour for food production work. It is a question of the matters that we ought to take into consideration. During these days, when food is so scarce, I do not see why political prisoners should be withheld while the payers are starving. I think prisoners should be put on a special ticket for work. I think our policy should be to see that able-bodied prisoners are employed in food-production work.

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: This matter was considered in our Committee. I do not know whether the hon. Member was present on that occasion, but we found that the number of prisoners that could be released for food-production work. I am quoting a Report of the Inspector-General of Prisons—would not exceed 200, and we ourselves considered the question whether the prisoners that could be released for food production should work under Prisons officers or whether, in view of the really great difficulties in guarding them and preventing their escape, it would not be better to release them on ticket of leave on condition that they work on particular food-production schemes. The Executive Committee was of the opinion that if we wanted to utilize a number of prisoners on this work, it would be desirable to release them on ticket of leave. I think that proposal was turned down by the Board of Ministers, if I am not mistaken.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** It is very amusing that the Prisons Department should send reports of this kind, because it is only people in the asylum who would seriously consider recommendations made by the Prisons Department.

The Board of Ministers referred this question to two Ministers, that is myself and the Minister of Communications and Works, and asked us to formulate a scheme. That report was sent to us. In

[The Hon. Mr. de Silva.]

fact, the Prisons Department does not want to do anything except discharge all the prisoners who come into the prison. The recommendation was to discharge most of the prisoners. So we found that if we go to discharge prisoners who have been convicted, we might as well, consistently not have Courts of law to convict these people, because once you convict these people and they are brought to prison they would be discharged.

So that, that that recommendation was a absolute farce. But when we decided that a large number of prisoners could be made to produce food, the Prisons Department said that the only number which would be available for this work would be 150 or 200. Naturally they reduced the number. Mind you, Sir, the prison population is over 5,000. Can you conceive that there are only 150 or 200 prisoners who are capable of producing food and that the rest of the prison population is only fit to be incarcerated for ever? It is only people who can be gulled by these propositions who will accept these statements. As far as we are concerned, we sent the report to the Home Minister, and evidently the Home Minister consulted the Head of the Department and the matter ended there as most things end in this Ministry.

Now, I would ask hon. Members to consider this matter seriously. Do you think that out of 4,000 or 5,000 prisoners only 150 or 200 can produce food? Should we go to India with a begging bowl every year asking them to give us food, when we can solve the problem in this country? I would appeal to hon. Members to realize the gravity of the situation. People who have not committed any offence are starving outside while people who have committed offences and have been sent to jail are fed and well looked after. By doing that you are encouraging crime in this country. That is the ultimate result of the present policy.

I think some years ago you, Sir, the Hon. Minister of Labour, Industry and Commerce and some other Members served on a Committee which made certain recommendations on this matter. We never heard anything about the

matter except that a report was sent. Surely, are we going to allow the present state of affairs to continue when we have men capable of producing food? And are we going to allow lands to lie fallow without getting the best out of them? Instead of answering these questions in a manner which would be beneficial to this country, we simply deceive ourselves and say that nothing further can be done.

The Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands has taken upon himself a very big responsibility. The House has entrusted to him the task of producing food as well as distributing food. I ask, if 3,000 people are utilized daily for 300 days on the production of food, what a quantity of food can be produced in this country? Have we not got the lands? Have we not got the brains? Have we not got the initiative? We always want to consult the Heads of Departments. We know that this country has been governed by Heads of Departments for 150 years or more without any progress being made. We have always been going backwards.

I would tell hon. Members that this is a proposition that can be put into effect. It can be put into practice within a very short time. The Assistant Government Agent of Hambantota says, "I have 10,000 acres of land which can be cultivated. I can take charge of these prisoners; I can look after them; I can make them grow food". All the conditions are ideal there. Water service and other amenities can be found for these prisoners there. But nothing further is done. They are only afraid about a man escaping and running away.

The other recommendation of the Prisons Department is that men who have been convicted should be discharged. Can you conceive of anything more idiotic than that? At one time they say that they are afraid to get the prisoners to cultivate land because some may escape. If you put them on the land and tell them that if they make good the land will be theirs, they will not run away. But the extraordinary proposal that is made is that in order to ease the congestion in the prisons, these prisoners should be discharged! My Hon. Friend the Acting Minister will realize that if we have the interests of the country at

heart, we cannot allow this kind of nonsense, pure nonsense, to be perpetrated year after year by having these reports placed before the Council and its Committees. [Interruption.] Do not blame the Board of Ministers in this matter. You can blame the Board of Ministers if we are negligent. But here a practical solution was found, so much so that the *Times of Ceylon* in an editorial stated that even now this proposal should be given a trial. But nothing has been done.

Sir, can I sit here as a Minister when I know that you are going to find food for nearly 5,000 to 6,000 prisoners who have committed offences and who can be put to do food-production work, while you allow a large number of people in the country to go with one meal a day? These are matters that I want hon. Members to consider. Do not blame the Board of Ministers in regard to this matter. Sometimes they may do something wrong for which you can legitimately criticize them. But when these big propositions are overlooked, how can you solve the food question and make the country self-sufficient?

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya (Galle): At the meeting of the Executive Committee of Home Affairs when the memorandum prepared by the Hon. Minister of Health and the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works was considered, I believe the permanent Minister told us that the Hon. Minister of Communications and Works confessed to the fact that he had only appended his signature to the report. The implication was that he had not had very much to do with the drafting of the report.

The father of the report was the Minister of Health. The report is a very interesting one, but it did not give us any practical solution to the problem. Their suggestions were far from practical. I wish the Minister of Health, who had volunteered to submit a report, had given us some helpful suggestions. The report had to be considered along with the report of the Head of the Department.

The work has not been neglected by the Executive Committee of Home Affairs. The Committee is most anxious to give effect to the principle underlying the well-intentioned proposals of the

Minister of Health in view of the practical difficulties involved in surmounting a large sum of money to ensure the release of prisoners. You are providing them with the necessary means of protecting the health of the prisoners of hospitals, and other amenities of Overseers are to be employed; a provision of housing factors.

The Minister blaming the Executive Committee has not done the report. The Minister of Health could not do the fact that the Board of Ministers for failing to take action on the report, something for Kandy to become the greatest of Ministers, seems to be all Ministers. The

Executive Committee of Home Affairs have not in any way neglected their duty, but they will address themselves to a practical scheme. Once the scheme takes practical shape, it will be introduced into this Council, and the Council will no doubt in due course approve the suggestions made.

***Mr. H. F. Parfitt (Nominated Member):** We in the Executive Committee of Home Affairs looked forward to reading the report of the Minister of Health on the problem of putting prisoners on the land, but having read it we found that most of the proposals made by the Hon. Minister had already been implemented by the Committee. It was not possible to put 7,000 of these prisoners on the land immediately, but as far as possible we had started getting the prisoners on to the various parts of the Island where they could go.

The Minister of Health says that these prisoners are going to do a great deal for food production, and now that

[Mr. Parfitt.]

the Acting Leader of the House has taken "Food production" under his care, I suggest that if he can intimate to our Minister the number of prisoners he could take and look after and provide for, I feel quite certain that our own Minister would be very delighted to let the Minister of Agriculture and Lands have as many prisoners as he wants—always provided, of course, that he will look after the protection and supervision of the prisoners and meet the cost of such supervision.

The Hon. Colonel J. L. Kotalawala (Minister of Communication & Works):

The Acting Minister of Home Affairs is not guilty of all the charges that have been made against him. He has come to the rescue of the Minister of Health in trying to get these prisoners on to the land. The hon. Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya) made a statement which cast an aspersion either on me or on the Minister of Health or on both—on me if he implied that I had appended my signature to a thoroughly "mad" report; or on the Minister of Health if the implication was that the Minister of Health had put some thoroughly "mad" report before his Executive Committee.

I must admit that most of the work over the report was done by the Minister of Health, and it was a thoroughly practical report. We indicated in the report how these prisoners could be put on the land; where they could be taken to; how they should be looked after. If something more "practical" than that was required, then both of us would have had to go to the prison itself and collect the particular prisoners and say, "These men must be sent; these are the implements they should take with them; and this is the kind of food they should be provided with" and so on. If by "practical suggestions", they mean that we should do all that, then they should hand over charge of the Prisons to us.

In our report we stated, "Here is a place suitable for the prisoners; the A. G. A. here is prepared to take on the work and in these circumstances, you can give him the required number of prisoners". But no! The main trouble with the Prisons authorities is that they think they are called upon to perform a specific job, and that is to pre-

vent the prisoners running away, to keep the men in cells after six in the evening, and seeing to it that everything was done according to the Prisons Ordinance.

I will give an instance of the "practical" side of the work of the Inspector-General of Prisons. Some time ago we were hard pressed for labour. We wanted 200 labourers at the Racecourse to come and help us to do certain work. The Inspector-General of Prisons said, "Oh, yes; I can certainly give you 200 prisoners for this work, provided you do all this: send your lorries to fetch the men after they have had their morning meal at 9 o'clock; then bring them back to the Prisons at 11 a.m. for their mid-day meal and take them back again to the place of work at 2 p.m.; then return them to the Prisons at 4 p.m. for their evening meal, and also, please have 75 first-class able-bodied men to look after them while they are working". If I had 75 able-bodied men, I would not have asked him for these 200 prisoners. I would get those 75 fellows to work 8 hours a day.

These are the "practical" men whom the hon. Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya) so much admires. To such people a report like the one submitted by us is "impracticable"!

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: I did not say that the Inspector-General of Prisons is a practical man.

The Hon. Colonel Kotalawala: The report indicated what should be done. When this report went up, I could visualize what happened. The Inspector-General of Prisons would have said, "Yes, we will send 200 prisoners where the Minister of Health wants them to go, but who is going to see that they will not run away? We will have to employ a Guard for each man. And when they retire to their quarters, are we to handcuff them? Again, how can we house them in cadjan sheds? They might set fire to the sheds".

All those considerations would be put before the Executive Committee, and the Committee would straightaway say, "This is impracticable". What would be the "practical" solution of the Prison authorities? They would say, "We have 5,000 prisoners now. Out of that number we require 2,000 for washing;

2,000 for cooking and another 2,000 for something else—in fact we are short of prisoners for our own requirements! Actually, we are running short of prisoners. But now that you have asked us for a number of prisoners, we will do this: we have in our prisons a number of men who are too weak to rob again. We will discharge them, and they can go and cultivate their lands. We do not have to worry. The problem is solved”!

Yet the hon. Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya) says that we did not give them a working scheme! I must say that the Acting Minister of Home Affairs does not know all the details of our scheme. It was submitted during the time of the permanent Minister. We did not want to worry what old gentleman, and we let the matter drop. I sincerely hope that the Members of the Executive Committee of Home Affairs, now that they know our views, now that they know how “practical” the Head of the Prisons is, will, after inquiring into the number and type of prisoners available, let us have a scheme at least for next year.

Mr. G. A. H. Wille (Nominated Member): The feasibility of making thousands of prisoners work as cultivators under prison conditions has been the subject of debate for very many years, and so far it has been regarded as rather impracticable. But I want to speak of something practical, and that is the proposal to get discharged prisoners to do some cultivation. An application was made to the Home Ministry to vote a sum by way of aid to the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Association, but there has been a great deal of dilly-dallying over it. I do not know why the proposal has not been taken up.

I wish to ask another question: whether the Minister of Health is correct in what he said—that the Prisons Department has made the suggestion that all convicted prisoners should be released. These statements should not go unchallenged.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** It is true. That suggestion was made. Everybody laughed at the idea and said that it was impossible.

Mr. Wille: I want the Minister of Home Affairs to explain that—what it is true that

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** No, Sir; that suggestion was made by the War Commission. We would like the matter. The suggestion was that the majority of the prisoners should be released.

Mr. Wille: Now we have come down to “majority”

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** It is men of the type of the Nominated Member (Mr. Wille) who make it impossible to effect any improvements in this country.

Mr. Wille: May we move on away from the Minister?

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: I have already answered that question. The Inspector-General of Prisons suggested that about 200 prisoners could be released on parole of leave if the scheme was to be attempted.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** The question wanted to know was about allowances for the detenus. The Legal Secretary some time ago gave us certain rules—

The Chairman: Does that question come under this vote?

***Mr. Aluwihare:** This is the Prisons vote. Some of the detenus are out—

The Chairman: We can deal with the question of the detenus under the vote for Defence and not under the Prisons vote. A vote was passed including allowances—

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I was referring to the allowances for the wives of the detenus. If you rule me out—

The Chairman: Does the hon. Member want to obtain some information?

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva:** About the payment to the detenus.

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: That was a matter that I dealt with about two or three days ago under the vote for the

[The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva.]
Home Minister. As a matter of fact, of the 14 detenus 5 have refused any assistance; one says that he will think over the matter; one states that he has no family. I believe 5 have said that they require assistance. The main point now is to get the money released.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** What is the difficulty?

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: I will have to make application for the release of the money.

One other point has to be decided: which Ministry should investigate these claims. It has been suggested that the Home Ministry should do it. If it is merely paying out a lump sum irrespective of the needs of the claimants, the Home Ministry could make the payment, but we have not the required machinery to make investigations. The Ministry of Labour, Industry and Commerce have a relief section, which can investigate these claims, but if they wish to pass on this work to the Home Ministry I am prepared to look into the matter.

But the immediate need is to get the money released. I am making an application to the Board of Ministers.

***The Hon. Mr. G. C. S. Corea (Minister of Labour, Industry & Commerce):** It was decided that it should be the Home Ministry that should carry out this task.

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: There are some difficulties, and I am putting up a memorandum to the Board of Ministers. I have no objection to dealing with the matter, but there are certain difficulties.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** May I know the basis on which these allowances will be paid? Are they to be based on the standard of life to which the detenus are normally accustomed, or is there to be some other standard?

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: I think the decision of the Board of Ministers in regard to that matter is that relief should be given which would amount to between Rs. 30 and Rs. 45 a month for a detenu. At present there is relief given to destitute persons, but that does not exceed Rs. 5 a month. That was considered entirely insufficient and, I

believe, the Board of Ministers decided that each detenu's family—[*Interruption.*] I thought each detenu's family would be entitled to Rs. 30 to Rs. 45 a month, but if any Member of the Board of Ministers know more about it, I would like him to state the facts.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I asked that question because it is necessary in these cases to make provision for the education of the children of the detenus also. Now, if it is a sum of Rs. 30 to Rs. 45 that is to be given, and any of these people depended on the earnings of the detenus for the education of their children and for their maintenance, it would obviously mean that the children would lose their education and they would be put to much hardship. Surely, the proper way of providing allowances is to consider the detenus' station in life and to make provision for the necessary expenses of the people.

I would ask the Hon. Acting Minister of Home Affairs whether he could not accept such a criterion. I think the Hon. Acting Home Minister will remember, for instance, a very recent case which was reported in the papers, which arose, I believe, when Sarat Chandra Bose the brother of Subhas Chandra Bose was put in prison. The question of his allowance was then discussed, and I believe the basis on which his allowance was calculated was the ordinary expenses that he would necessarily be put to.

It would be very unfair, Sir, merely to say that Rs. 30 to Rs. 45 would be sufficient, because, some of these detenus could not possibly maintain their wives or their children on Rs. 30 to Rs. 45 a month. The allowance should be a reasonable one.

Mr. Wille: May I have a statement from the Hon. Acting Minister of Home Affairs, about a vote for the Discharged Prisoners' Association, one way or the other, because I would like to know how matters stand? There was a special report from the Departmental Committee embodying a scheme under which the whole of the disbursements of this vote would be governed, but nothing has been done.

***The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Acting Leader of the State Council):** May I know what my hon. Friend wants

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to know? Does he want to keep these discharged prisoners as a group, apart from the rest? Does he want them to be under his protection and that of his Committee so that they can get assistance all the time, or are they to join the community and have the opportunity of finding employment?

Mr. Wille: I am surprised that the Hon. Acting Leader of the House has not kept himself abreast of this question. There has been a special Report issued. The Hon. (permanent) Leader promised this House that the matter would be taken up and something would be done in order to give effect to the recommendations of the Committee. What is proposed is this: when prisoners are to be discharged, the Committee of the Association should get in touch with them, find out what sort of work they wish to do, where they wish to start work and help them, and put them on their feet again; and we thought it would be a very good thing if these individual discharged prisoners could be placed on the land and take to cultivation. That is a practical proposition and one which is better than trying to get masses of prisoners under prison conditions to go in for cultivation. It is too late in the day to raise any question about the advisability of this proposal. The thing has been simply shelved, and I do not know why.

The Hon. Mr. Senanayake: Sir, I raised this question some time ago. I read this report, if I remember rightly, some time ago, one of the functions of the Special Committee is not only to draw money from Government and to dole it out, but also to go and find out in what surroundings these people live; and if there are any disputes among the people in the villages find out whether life was made possible for a man there, or whether he should be taken to some other place and put on the land. My hon. Friend is a Member of this Committee. Usually all these Committees that do not function well have Members who are nominated to them, and I do not know in what a state this Committee is.

I remember, this Committee made an application to me, some time ago, for land. In that application this Com-

mittee said, "On the other people have a... others". I said, "I think to... is to depend on the fact that... goes to... criminal... agricultural..."

My hon. Friend wants to know... is to be given. I would like... from him... what... the... have taken... and... what... worked... is. Usual... are enemy... then the... to jail is... want is to... Let the... them. It... table and... Committee... and to... "Give me... not the way... The Govern... these people... must assist... themselves..."

The Hon. Mr. Manabendra Perera: I speak for myself, to... a few words.

The hon. Burgher Nominated Member, (Mr. Wille) knows very well that there are a number of schemes for assisting people to get on the land, and very substantial sums of money are paid to those willing to work on the land. Instead of asking for all this money to be given to the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Association, they should send these men to some of the land Kachcheries and tell them how to get assistance in money, and thus help the men. As far as I know, if their object is to put men on the land, there are already a sufficient number of schemes sponsored by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands which give every assistance necessary to people lacking funds who desire to get on the land.

Mr. Wille: Sir, the sarcasm of the Hon. Acting Leader of the House is utterly misplaced. This is not a matter to be treated so lightly; and as regards what the Hon. Acting Minister of Home Affairs said, I cannot understand why he has not dealt with it. The reply that

[Mr. Wille.] was sent to me was that the Committee viewed the proposal of the Association favourably and the matter had to be considered. The permanent Minister of Home Affairs has taken a great interest in it, and he has seen the desirability of placing funds in the hands of the Association so that they may be used to help discharged prisoners.

I only mentioned the question of cultivation because cultivation was discussed in connexion with actual prisoners. But the Discharged Prisoners' Association are in a position to help discharged prisoners who have aptitudes for various vocations. They want some implements to do their work and they have to be helped with a little money to tide over the period before they can earn anything. So, there is no use in saying that we should direct these people to the land Kachcheries.

The Hon. Acting Leader of the House spoke as if he did not know of the position of Discharged Prisoners' Associations in countries like England. I do not know why all this opposition was not shown when that Report was published and when it was brought up here and recommended by the permanent Minister of Home Affairs. This is showing great belatedness of mind with regard to an important matter.

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: The hon. Nominated Member it was who referred to the lack of funds for placing men on the land, and that was the only point I addressed myself to. If he wants some funds for setting up people in other industries, he should say so. I did not direct my mind to that matter. Probably there are no schemes in operation for setting up people in industries. But I think the Board of Ministers will be always prepared to consider proposals on this matter.

Mr. Wille: The Hon. Acting Minister has forgotten what has come before this Committee. It was even decided that one of the officers of the Association should be sent before it in order to explain the proposal.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** Sir, may I have an answer to my question? Will the Hon. Minister consider the necessary expenses

of these detenus and not merely say that Rs. 30 to Rs. 45 per family will be allowed for each detenu, because with Rs. 30 to Rs. 45 it would be utterly impossible to do anything.

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: Sir, I mentioned the decision arrived at by the Board of Ministers. I do not suggest that the figures I mentioned are sufficient for detenus who have an income, normally, of over Rs. 1,000 a month. I think the matter may well be reconsidered by the Board of Ministers, to see whether provision cannot be made according to the status in life of the prisoners—the allowance to be dependent on their status.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 1, as amended, was then passed.

Sub-head 2, was passed without amendment.

Sub-head 3, Stationery, Office Requisites, &c., Rs. 2,000.

Amendment moved [*Acting Minister of Home Affairs*]:

The vote of Rs. 2,000 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 2,100 and the following details of this sub-head to be inserted:—

	Rs.
Current expenses ...	2,000
Emergency Services ...	100
	2,100

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 3, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 4, Lighting (Oil, &c.), Rs. 2,750.

Amendment moved [*Acting Minister of Home Affairs*]:

	Rs.
For lighting outstation Prisons and Training School buildings and for night patrols ...	2,750
Expenses in connection with Emergency Services ...	240
	2,990

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 4, as amended, was passed.

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Sub-head 5, Uniforms, Clothing, Equipment, &c., Rs. 64,000.

Amendment moved [*Acting Minister of Home Affairs*]:

The vote of Rs. 64,000 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 66,250, and the details of the make-up of this sub-head be amended as follows:—

	Rs.
Cost of uniform and equipment for Prison and Probation Staff: including sports materials for recruits under training, clothing and equipment for Prisons and Training School, furniture, tools, livestock, maintenance of machinery, plant, motor vans, &c., including repairs and replacements ...	64,000
Uniform and equipment for Emergency Staff and Services ...	2,250
	66,250

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 5, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 6, Water and Conservancy, Rs. 2,200.

Amendment moved [*Acting Minister of Home Affairs*]:

The vote of Rs. 2,200 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 2,800 and the following details of this sub-head be inserted:—

	Rs.
Supplies of drinking water to Prisons ...	792
Conservancy charges at outstation Prisons ...	1,408
Expenses in connection with Emergency Services ...	600
	2,800

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 6, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 7 to 10 were passed without amendment.

Sub-head 11, Incidental Expenses, Rs. 800.

Amendment moved [*Acting Minister of Home Affairs*]:

The vote of Rs. 800 for 1942-43 be increased to Rs. 850 and the details of the make-up of this sub-head be amended as follows:—

	Rs.
Cost of advertisement, premia on security bonds and other miscellaneous expenses	800
Expenses in connection with Emergency Services ...	50
	850

Amend ...

Sub-he ...

Sub-he ...

***Mr. A** ...

***The E** ...

Mr. W ...

The Ch ...

***Mr. A** ...

Mr. Wil ...

***Mr. Aluwihare**: That is an irrelevant opinion.

Mr. Wille: This Association has been recognized. The Departmental Committee worked under the aegis of the Executive Committee. When this matter was gone into, it was shown quite clearly that unless the Government gave a vote, the Association could not go on doing its work thoroughly. It was only before the late Chief Justice left this Island that he urged the claims of this Association both on the public and the Government.

***Mr. Aluwihare**: In which year was that?

Mr. Wille: It was about two or three years ago. We certainly find that the public have not sufficient liberality of minds towards discharged prisoners. They do not seem to think that these prisoners ought to be helped and not allowed to go further down hill as many have gone. The Association has been set

[Mr. Wille.]
up in order to help the discharged prisoner to earn his livelihood with some chance of making good.

Head 52, as amended, was then passed.

Head 53, Government Analyst.

Sub-heads 1 to 5 were passed without amendment.

Head 53 was passed without amendment.

Head 54, Zoological Gardens.

Sub-head 1, Personal Emoluments,
Rs. 14,496.

*Mr. Aluwihare: Sir, is it true that people are being collected to shoot all these animals in the Zoo in the event of any emergency?

The Hon. Mr. Mahadeva: I think, Sir, one has to protect the public in the event of dangerous animals escaping as a result of bombing. Poisonous snakes, for instance, it would be most desirable to kill; it would be desirable to kill the tigers and

the lions, and I should not be a bit surprised if there are plans formulated for that purpose.

*The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva: I think we will have to consider this question, because it is not safe to keep these animals here.

*Mr. Aluwihare: Cannot we sell them to somebody? We have already lost a good deal of money. There are plenty of people in India, I suppose, who would love to buy some of these tigers and lions. Why not sell them and disband the Zoo? I say that because this Zoo was bought by the Government from a bankrupt company, and there was a great deal of protest from a section of this House. Now you are running the Zoo at a loss and you are going to capitalize your loss at some time by shooting all your assets.

Sub-head 1, was then passed without amendment.

Sub-heads 2 to 7 were passed without amendment.

Head 54 was passed without amendment.

Head 55, Provincial Administration (Emergency Scheme.)

Sub-head 1, Personal Emoluments, Rs. 819,899.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

Gampaha, Alutkuru Korale South.

	Amount provided in 2nd Print.	Amended figure.
	Rs. c.	Rs. c.
Insert new item—		
1 Office Assistant at Rs. 1,917·84 p.a. (Government pensioner)		
Delete provision for—		
1 Clerk, Survey Clerical Service and	(for clerical	} 6,543 54
1 Surveyor, Grade III, and insert therefor	staff)	
2 Clerks, Rubber Control Department	4,128 0	
	(for Surveyor)	
	3,600 0	
Delete 1 Stenographer (temporary) at Rs. 2·50 per diem and insert therefor, 1 typist at Re. 1·70 per diem	783 0	620 50
Add to item "Cycle Orderly (temporary) at 75 cents per diem" plus cycle allowance of Rs. 4 per mensem	274 0	322 0
Rent allowance to be amended	2,048 0	1,919 84
Total	32,475 0	31,047 88

Gampaha, Siyano Korak.

	Amount provided in this Bill.	Amended figure.
	Rs. p.c.	Rs. p.c.
Delete item 2 clerks (temporary) at special rate of Re. 1.50 p.d. and insert therefor 2 clerks (temporary), 1 at Re. 1.70 per diem and other at Re. 1.60 per diem ..	345 0	1,03 30
Total ..	29,736 0	29,574 30

Homagama.

	(Total for Clerical Service)	
In item, 3 clerks G. C. S., substitute for 1 Class II. ..	4,200 0	5,313 0
1 Class I., on a salary of Rs. 3,000—180 ..	—	—
Insert new item 2 clerks (temporary) at Re. 1.70 per diem each ..	—	1,342 0
Rent Allowance to be amended ..	2,582 0	2,582 0
Total ..	67,812 0	59,237 0

Horana.

Insert new item: 1 Clerk, Tea Control Department, on a salary of Rs. 110 p.m. ..	—	1,700 0
Delete item re peon and insert, 1 peon on a salary of 300—6—444 ..	408 0	437 0
Amend Rent Allowance ..	1,764 0	2,405 0
Total ..	28,711 0	30,701 0

Kalutara Kachcheri.

Insert new item: 1 peon (temporary) at 75 cents per diem ..	—	274 0
Total ..	—	1,514 0

Matugama.

Amend total provision for A. G. A's (E) salary ..	6,855 0	6,896 0
Amend item 3 clerks G. C. S. to read—		
3 clerks, G. C. S., Class II. :		
1 at Rs. 900—120—2,820 ..	} 4,286 0	5,328 0
Class III., 1 at Rs. 600—42, 45—1,800		
Education 1 at Rs. 600—60—1,800		
Delete item 3, Agricultural Instructors ..	3,600 0	—
Insert new item: 1 Watcher at 75 cts. p.d. ..	—	274 0
Amend item Rent Allowance ..	456 0	1,644 0
Total ..	24,529 0	22,234 0

	Amount provided in 2nd Print. Rs. c.	Amended figure. Rs. c.
Minuwangoda.		
Amend item 3 clerk, by deleting "Class I.—1 at Rs. 3,000—180—,260" and substituting therefor Class II.—1 at Rs. 900—120—2,820 ..	6,583 0 ..	5,212 0
Amend item 2, Agricultural Instructors, to read 1 Agricultural Instructor at Rs. 864—60, 96, &c. 3,900 ..	3,342 0 ..	949 0
Delete item 2 Surveyors ..	8,040 0 ..	—
Amend Rent Allowance ..	3,959 0 ..	3,460 0
	40,537 0	28,234 0

Gampola.

Insert new item : 2 Clerks (temporary) at Re. 1.70 per diem ..	— ..	1,240 0
Total ..	17,985 0	19,225 0

Kandy Kachcheri.

Amend provision for 1 Stenographer (temporary) ..	783 0 ..	913 0
Amend provision for 1 clerk (temporary) ..	620 0 ..	621 0
Total ..	22,343 0	22,474 0

Kandy (E).

Delete provision for 1 Surveyor ..	3,600 0 ..	—
Delete provision for 1 Clerk (temporary) for Chief Headman ..	360 0 ..	—
Amend provision for Rent Allowance ..	832 0 ..	292 0
Total ..	30,461 0	25,961 0

Matale Kachcheri,

Delete provision for 1 land officer ..	12,150 0 ..	—
Amend item 2 Clerks G. C. S. to read 4 clerks, G. C. S., Class II., 1 at Rs. 900—120—2,820 ; Class III., 3 at Grade I., 1 at Rs. 440—45—1,800 ; Grade II., Rs. 600—42—1,398 ..	1,309 0 ..	5,413 0
Amend Rent Allowance ..	2,280 0 ..	1,671 0
Total ..	28,425 0	19,770 0

Insert Provision for (New Station), Nalanda.

1 Assistant Government Agent (E) (Assistant Settlement Officer) Rs. 3,600—360, & 420—12,480 ..	— ..	4,877 0
1 Clerk, G. C. Class II. at Rs. 900—120—2,820 ..	— ..	2,820 0
1 Clerk, G. C. Class, Grade II., Rs. 600—42—1,800 ..	— ..	625 0
1 Temporary clerk at Re. 1.70 p.d. ..	— ..	620 0
1 bicycle messenger at 75 cents p.d. plus cycle allowance of Rs. 4 p.m. ..	— ..	322 0
1 peon at Rs. 300—6—420 ..	— ..	332 0
Rent Allowance ..	— ..	282 0
Total ..	—	9,878 0

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	Amount provided	Amended
	Rs. c.	Rs. c.
Urugala.		
Include new item 1 clerk, G. C. S. Class Grade I		560 0
Include new item 1 peon		274 0
Delete item 1 clerk, temporary to Ratamahatma	350 0	
Amend item 2 clerks temporary to read 1 clerk temporary	1,240 0	670 0
Amend item Rent Allowance	1,074 0	1,230 0
Total	1,664 0	1,834 0
Akuressa.		
Include new item 1 part time latrine labourer Rs. 7.50 p.m.		50 0
Amend provision for Cycle Messenger by addition of "plus cycle allowance of Rs. 4 p.m."	274 0	328 0
Amend item, 2 clerks, G. C. S. to read 3 clerks		
Amend Rent Allowance	2,406 0	2,604 0
Total	33,810 0	34,146 0
Ambalangoda.		
Amend incremental scale of clerk, G. C. S., Class II., to read as "Rs. 720—108—2,448"		
Amend Rent Allowance	2,059 0	2,048 0
Total	31,483 0	31,472 0
Beliatta.		
Include provision for 1 clerk, Tea Control Department		690 0
Include provision for 2 temporary clerks		1,241 0
Total	14,290 0	16,221 0
Hambantota Kachcheri.		
Include new item 1 Assistant Shroff		744 0
Total	40,265 0	41,009 0
Matara Kachcheri.		
Delete provision for 1 Food Production Officer	3,600 0	
Include provision for another Surveyor, Grade I., at Rs. 4,600—200—6,000	3,329 0	8,446 0
Amend item 6 clerks temporary to read 2 clerks temporary (Other 4 clerks employed on Food and Price Control work)	3,720 0	1,240 0
Delete provision for 6 clerks to Chief Headmen	2,160 0	
Amend Rent Allowance	905 0	1,417 0
Total	19,434 0	16,823 0

	Amount Provided in 2nd Print. Rs. e.	Amended figure. Rs. e.
Jaffna (E).		
Amend incremental scale of A. G. A. (E) to read £25, 30 & 40	—	—
Amend item 1 Agricultural Instructor to read 1 Agricultural Instructor, Class I.—Rs. 3,600—240, 370—6,000	—	—
Amend incremental scale of Surveyor to read 120 instead of 12	—	—
Amend item 6 clerks to read 5 clerks G. C. S.— Class II.—1 at (stet)	5,997 0	5,229 0
Class III.—4 at (stet)		
Delete provision for 1 Sanitary Assistant	1,520 0	—
Amend Rent Allowance	2,553 0	1,353 0
Total	43,032 0	39,544 0
Mannar Kachcheri.		
Include provision for 1 clerk, Tea Control Depart- ment	—	882 0
Total	6,213 0	7,095 0
Vavuniya Kachcheri.		
Delete provision for 1 Surveyor, Grade II.	4,440 0	—
Amend Rent Allowance	668 0	224 0
Total	9,688 0	4,804 0
Kalmunai.		
Amend item 3 clerks G. C. S., Class II.—1 at Rs. 900—120—2,820; Grade II.—G. C. Class 2 at Rs. 600—42, 45—1,800	7,644 0	4,408 0
Amend provision for 2 Agricultural Instructors	2,289 0	2,164 0
Delete provision for 1 Food Production Overseer	600 0	—
Amend item 1 clerk temporary to read 2 clerks temporary at Re. 1.70 p.d.	620 0	1,240 0
Include new item 1 cycle messenger at 75 cents per diem	—	274 0
Amend provision for rent allowance	773 0	1,029 0
Total	28,531 0	25,720 0
Trincomalee.		
Insert new item 2 clerks temporary at Re. 1.70 p.d. each	—	1,240 0
Total	15,536 0	16,776 0
Chilaw.		
Amend item 3 clerks to read G. C. S., Class I.— 1 at (stet); G. C. Class, Grade II.—2 at (stet).. .. .	5,603 0	4,991 0
Delete item 2 Surveyors and insert herefor 1 Surveyor, Grade I., Rs. 4,600—200—6,000	10,285 0	5,845 0
Amend Rent Allowance	1,551 0	979 0
Total	26,612 0	20,988 0

	Amount Provided in 2nd Part.		Amended Sum.	
	Rs.	P.	Rs.	P.
Kurūnegala Kachcheri.				
Delete item 2 Surveyors	7,500	0	—	—
Amend item 1 clerk to read G. C. Class, Grade II.	1,820	0	1,113	0
Insert new item 1 clerk, Rubber Control Department	—	—	1,33	0
Amend Rent Allowance	2,312	0	1,764	0
Total	28,742	0	22,302	0

Narammala.				
Delete item 2 Surveyors and insert therefor 1 Surveyor, Grade III.	7,115	0	3,220	0
Amend Rent Allowance	2,181	0	2,661	0
Total ..	30,068	0	26,653	0

Puttalam Kachcheri.				
Amend item 2 clerks temporary to read 3 clerks temporary	1,240	0	1,852	0
Total ..	15,213	0	15,825	0

Anuradhapura Kachcheri.				
Amend item 2 Surveyors to read 1 Surveyor, Grade III.	7,200	0	3,600	0
Amend item 4 clerks to read, G. C. Class, Grade II.	—	—	—	—
Include new item 1 clerk, Rubber Control Department	—	—	780	0
Total ..	13,783	0	10,963	0

Polomaruwa.				
Amend item 3 clerks to read G. C. S., Class I., at Rs. 3,000—180—4,260; Survey Clerical Service, Class II.—1 at (stet); G. C. S., Grade II., 1 at (stet)	3,439	0	6,439	0
Amend Rent Allowance	309	0	609	0
Total ..	20,021	0	23,321	0

Badulla Kachcheri.				
Delete provision for 2 Farm Assistants	1,200	0	—	—
Include new item 1 clerk, G. C. S., Class II. at 900—120—2,820	—	—	1,620	0
Amend Rent Allowance	1,252	0	1,414	0
Total ..	13,992	0	14,574	0

Amount Provided in 2nd Print.	Amended figure.
Rs. c.	Rs. c.

Haputale.

Include new item 3 clerks temporary at Re. 1.70 per day each for a period of 6 months	—	620 0
Total	25,947 0	26,567 0

Kegalla Kachechi.

Amend item 1 Land Officer to read 2 Land Officers (1 Assistant Superintendent of Surveys at £450—25 & 30—£810). 1 Divisional Inspector of Schools (stet)	10,830 0	22,980 0
Delete item 1 Agricultural Instructor and substitute 2 Agricultural Instructors (salary scale—stet)	4,500 0	5,724 0
Delete item 1 Surveyor, Grade II. and substitute 2 Surveyors Grade II. at (stet) Grade III.—1 at Rs. 1,200—120—3,600	4,440 0	7,888 0
Insert new item 2 clerks G. C. S., Grade II. at Rs. 600—42, 45—Rs. 1,800	—	2,586 0
Delete provision for 1 Overseer and 1 Supervisor for Food Production work	457 0	—
Include new item 1 peon temporary at 75 cents per day	—	274 0
Amend Rent Allowance	2,145 0	4,000 0
Total	26,274 0	46,850 0

Pelmadulla.

Delete provision for 3 Surveyors and substitute therefor 1 Surveyor Grade II. at (stet)	6,480 0	4,320 0
Amend 3 Agricultural Instructors to read 2 Agri- cultural Instructors	2,892 0	2,896 0
Insert new item, 1 clerk temporary at Re. 1.70 per day	—	620 0
Total	23,796 0	22,260 0

Ratnapura.

Delete provision for 6 clerks to Chief Headmen	2,160 0	—
Amend item overtime to permanent clerks	1,200 0	1,500 0
Total	25,955 0	14,095 0

Ruanwella.

Delete entire provision	16,630 0	—
Include New Item : Special allowances to Officers at certain Stations ; concessions to officers in respect of house rent, &c., Special Duty Allowance for peons	—	22,986 0

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 1, as amended, was passed.

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Sub-head 2, Travelling, Rs. 155,690.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs] :

	Amount provided in 2nd Print.		Amended figure.	
	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.
The following amendments are necessary to—				
Apportionment 9	6,000	0	5,400	0
16	4,800	0	6,000	0
18	6,000	0	12,000	0
19	3,000	0	7,200	0
22	4,740	0	4,260	0
25	3,600	0	4,500	0
32	5,700	0	6,180	0
33	3,600	0	5,500	0
34	3,000	0	6,000	0
35	6,000	0	7,200	0
Delete Apportionment 36 and substitute therefor : Nalanda (Emergency) Kachcheri	2,500	0	3,000	0
Total ..	155,690	0	173,990	0

Make all consequential amendments.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 2, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 3, Stationery, office furniture and office requisites, Rs. 21,356.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs] :

	Amount provided in 2nd Print.		Amended figure.	
	Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.
Amend Apportionment 18	750	0	1,000	0
.. 21	30	0	50	0
.. 22	300	0	200	0
.. 23	250	0	500	0
.. 33	300	0	500	0
.. 34	500	0	650	0
Delete apportionment 36 and insert therefor : Nalanda (Emergency) Kachcheri	500	0	500	0
Total ..	21,356	0	22,126	0

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 3, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 4, Incidental expenses, Rs. 19,270.

Amendment moved [Acting Minister of Home Affairs]:

		Amount provided in 2nd Print.		Amended figure.	
		Rs.	c.	Rs.	c.
Amend Apportionment	9	100	0	280	0
"	18	400	0	500	0
"	19	1,000	0	100	0
"	33	700	0	900	0
"	34	300	0	500	0
Delete Apportionment 36 and substitute therefor Nalanda (Emergency) Kachcheri		2,000	0	300	0
Total		19,270	0	17,350	0

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 4, as amended, was passed.

Head 55, as amended, was passed.

Head 60, Minister of Agriculture and Lands.Sub-head 1, Personal Emoluments,
Rs. 43,526.**Mr. H. R. Freeman (Anuradhapura):**

Sir, I wish to bring to the notice of the Minister, the way the "food drive" is going on in the Wannu Hatpattu in the North-Western Province.

As the Minister is aware, there is a long history of prosecuting for the cultivation of chenas, and the whole of the Katuwanne Korale is now either being prosecuted for clearing chenas or the villagers are being called upon to pay compensation under the Ordinance for clearing chenas. Well, this is a peculiar kind of "food drive". On the last two occasions when I found chena clearers brought to jail at Anuradhapura from the North-Western Province, I intervened and specially asked the Land Commissioner and other officers to make a proper settlement and to stop prosecutions. It may be that there are serious faults in the land settlement in that area, but things cannot be left like this for ever.

This kind of "food drive" brings discredit on officials concerned. But if there is a case why these people should not clear chenas just now, let us hear what it is. We know there are many people in this country who have no knowledge of what the chena business is

so they are bound to make mistakes about it; and if they have no knowledge, the best thing is to come and live in the dry zone for a while and see what happens.

Now, the general reply is, "Oh, well, we cannot have the *mukalanas* and *athdanduwas* all cut down". Well, anyone who knows the Wannu Hatpattu of the North-Western Province knows that most of the land there has been cleared over and over again, and there is no question of *mukalanas*.

I understand fines have been paid to the Revenue Officers to avoid going to Court. But is this seriously meant as a food drive, food production? It is all sheer nonsense. I think the Minister must come and have a look at the Wannu Hatpattu and see what is being done. He will see that this is entirely opposed to what is officially prescribed as "food drive" and "food production". Even if these people have cleared *mukalanas* and *athdanduwas*, is not the Government doing that everywhere? Is not the Government doing it all over the Tamankaduwa and Anuradhapura Districts? And why should these people under a "food drive" have their bare living taken away from them, I want to know; because in the case of the village which heads this list, that is, Daladagama near Maho, it is a very poor village. When I visited this village in

there was hardly anything to eat in the village, it is a great shame that this should go on.

I do not know whether there is any explanation of what is being done now, but it must be seriously looked into, because it is constantly recurring. We heard just now that food production is the burning question of the country. These villagers, Sir, in the dry zone—agricultural villagers—are exactly like any other people interested in agriculture. They look about and want to find land that will give them a decent crop, and that is the one way in which the chena clearer gets a good crop. They are told, "Well, you must clear *landukele* but that is only a few feet high". But when they go to anything higher than that, officials start prosecuting and say, "No, you cannot have it". At this rate not only can they not produce food for this emergency; they cannot even feed themselves, and the thing becomes a perfect scandal.

I do not know whether there is anyone who could give any explanation. Well, I leave it to the Minister to see whether he can give any explanation. But it has happened so many times, and each time I put it up to the Land Commissioner to look for a general remedy so that these things may not occur. If he cannot do that, I must take it up in some other form.

***Mr. B. H. Aluwihare (Matale):** Before the Minister speaks, may I say that the same problem that the Member raised exists in our parts? Actually the fundamental error is that officials are convinced that kurakkan cultivation is a vice.

Mr. Freeman: Exactly.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** I do not know how this error has arisen.

Mr. Freeman: It arose about fifty, or sixty, or seventy years ago.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** It is about hundred years old. I believe it arose from the desire to have what are called economic crops on the land. But anyway at present the official mind has it, and a good many of us too have it, that kurakkan-growing is a vice, that it leads to soil erosion, the destruction of forests,

and all that kind of thing. Actually every clean-weeded tea estate ought to be suppressed unless precautions are taken, because it is the source of the worst soil erosion in the country. I think in a few years tea estates would be pointed out as one of the things that robbed Ceylon of a good deal of wealth.

But apart from that, I think it is time we drove it into ourselves that kurakkan is a grain whose food value is greater than that of rice, is better than that of wheat, and it is a grain that will save us from starvation if the food supply of our country failed.

Mr. Freeman: And the Wannu is flat country, not hilly country.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** So we have got to encourage our people to grow kurakkan not only on the *mukalanas* but on every bit of land available.

I think that is the fundamental error we make—that kurakkan is something that should be discouraged. Sir, "kurakkan" has got almost the same connotation amongst food as "natives" amongst human beings—that it is a low kind of food. I think we simply have to get over that idea. All this prosecution, all this taboo against kurakkan arises from ignorance of its fundamental value.

Mr. T. Amarasuriya (Moratuwa): Sir, I wish to invite the attention of the Hon. Minister to a large area of paddy-field in my constituency. It is in the Salpiti Korale; I am referring to that portion known as the Attidiya-Boralesgomuwa area. I think in days gone by it was a vast tract of smiling paddy-fields and this korale was known as the "Halpiti" Korale. Most of the rice that came to the Colombo District was from this Korale. At present all these paddy-fields are neglected, as during a part of the year they get under water.

I would request the Minister to look into this question and see whether he could evolve some scheme, some flood-protection scheme to get over this difficulty. Especially, Sir, at a time when we are badly in want of food, I would seriously request the Hon. Minister to consider this matter and see whether he could take some steps to assist the cultivators of this area to cultivate their fields.

[Mr. T. Amarasuriya.]

These fields, I am told, have been neglected for some time. I wish the Hon. Minister would visit this area and see things for himself. If he consents to inspect these fields, I am prepared to take him round.

Mr. J. H. Hlangantileke (Puttalam):

The land referred to by the hon. Member for Anuradhapura (Mr. Freeman) is in Katuwanne Korale in the Wannu Hatpattu. Only a few acres of land have been allotted to the villagers of Daladagama. These poor people have not sufficient land to cultivate kurakkan, and therefore off and on they encroach on Crown jungle. They are not allowed to clear jungle without permits. Only one-tenth of the land available is allowed for chena cultivation and that is not sufficient for the number of villagers there. There are no *mukatanas* at all in Daladagama in Katuwanne mentioned by the hon. Member.

I think the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands should take some steps to prevent the poor people living in these parts of the country from being prosecuted. In every village in the Wannu people cultivating chenas are prosecuted. It may be that here and there there may be bits of Crown land two, three or five acres in extent in the midst of chena land. If the villagers clear that land, I think their action should be overlooked. The people should be encouraged to take part in the food "drive". In our parts of the country there is no better food than kurakkan. The people should be allowed to grow their own food without being prosecuted.

The villagers of Wannu are, more or less, dependent on kurakkan during the first part of the year. I trust that the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands will do something to relieve the sufferings of these poor people. During the greater part of the year these villagers have nothing to eat but kurakkan. Paddy cultivation is very unsatisfactory in that part of the country. We are dependent upon the tanks for cultivation. There are one or two big tanks from which we can get water. We do not cultivate for both the Yala and the Maha seasons; sometimes we cultivate for Yala and at other times for Maha. I bring these

facts to the notice of the Hon. Minister with the object of enlisting his sympathy for the poor villagers in our parts of the country who lead a very difficult life.

***Mr. D. M. Rajapaksa (Hambantota):**

I wish to make a few remarks myself on this question.

The anti-chena mentality that existed among officials in the olden days is shown by results which I wish to quote now. In 1935, no fewer than 655 persons in the Hambantota District were prosecuted for illicit chena-clearing, and of them 389 were fined and 48 sent to jail. In 1936, the number of persons prosecuted was 704, of whom 459 were fined and 79 sent to jail. In 1937, up to the month of July, 256 persons were prosecuted, of whom 94 were fined and 21 imprisoned. I have with me figures from 1924 which show that it was a tradition with officials in those days to prosecute chena clearers.

But this year, of course, things have altogether changed. Villagers have been given a free hand in the matter of chenas and chena clearing is going without let or hindrance. The people in those parts of the country have responded splendidly to the call for food production.

I however want to emphasize and draw pointed attention to the state of affairs in regard to the development of peasant allotments in the Hambantota District. The present emergency food "drive" has almost entirely retarded the development of peasant allotments. I think that state of affairs should not be allowed to continue. It is all-important for the Minister to see that peasant allotments are not neglected. The Hon. Minister himself has visited some of the colonization schemes. I wired to the Minister about two years' ago to the effect that a certain colonization scheme was an eyesore. No improvement has been made in regard to that colonization scheme since my telegram to the Minister. I know that the Minister has visited that scheme twice but I do not see any improvement made in it.

I have grave doubts as regards the chena clearing that is going on at present, because it is done at enormous expense by Civil Servants. I do not mind if that money goes into the hands of the villagers but it goes into the hands—or, shall I say, into the pockets—of

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the middlemen. The money goes into the hands of the contractors, managers of farms, assistant managers, boutique-keepers and other species of middlemen.

Representations were made to me by some villagers to the effect that land which they had cleared had been given over to a capitalist who lived away from the village. I sent that petition to the Hon. Minister, and I trust that he will give careful consideration to that petition. That shows that the interests of the villagers are being sacrificed to further the interests of the capitalists.

That is all I have to say in regard to the subject.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya (Galle): I want to raise two questions under this Sub-head. My hon. Friend the Member for Hambantota has raised one of the questions, namely, that work under the Land Development Ordinance has not made sufficient progress during the last year or so. I believe I have brought that matter to the notice of the Minister myself. It is indeed a pity that people who have taken land under the Land Development Ordinance have even temporarily neglected their holdings. It would be very difficult for them to bring back those holdings into proper condition later.

One of the reasons I attribute to that state of affairs prevailing is that there is discrimination shown as between allottees under the emergency food "drive" and those who have taken land under the Land Development Ordinance. Those who have taken land under the Land Development Ordinance have to pay annual rents, but those who are given land under the emergency food "drive" are not charged rent.

***Mr. D. Wanigasekera (Weligama):** And they are paid.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: I think the Minister should not make any discrimination as between those two classes of people. I think during the war those people who have taken land under the Land Development Ordinance should be exempted from the payment of rent due from them.

It is true that under the vote for the Land Commissioner a large sum of money is provided for rendering assistance to peasants who have taken land under the

Land Development Ordinance, but they have to comply with certain rules and regulations, within a stipulated period, to receive such assistance. For instance, those people are assisted by a grant of about Rs. 100 to build a house, but the money is paid to the man at various stages. With regard to cultivation, they are given assistance according to the number of feet of drain cut, the number of feet or the number of chains of terracing done; and they are also given a certain amount of assistance if they carry out some permanent cultivation.

I think there is this question to be borne in mind. Particularly in the wet zone, after the first two or three crops, there is a natural deterioration of the soil; so that, without the application of manure, either artificial fertilizers or leaf mould, it is very difficult to maintain the fertility of the soil.

Those are the two reasons that have contributed very largely to the slowing-down or setting-back of the progress of the holdings taken under the Land Development Ordinance.

In certain parts of the country very hilly land has been released for the emergency food "drive". The House will appreciate that in the wet zone the best land is brought under cultivation of rubber, tea and, to some extent, of coconut. The next best land has been reserved by the Forest Department. Whatever land there is left over is either very steep or is in jungle and is very poor. Such land has been released for the cultivation of food crops. Either kurakkan, meneri or hill paddy is cultivated on this third type of land. Very soon, within the next month or so, those crops will be harvested.

No steps have been taken to effect soil conservation in such areas. This being an emergency measure, it was not possible to spend large sums of money on such activities because the future of these lands was not a certainty. I think the officials who alienated these lands made the people understand that these lands were given to them only for the purpose of food cultivation. The Minister must decide—and the sooner he does the better it would be—what his future policy should be in respect of these lands. I think these lands should be brought under the

[Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya]

Land Development Ordinance and given permanently to the people who cultivate them. If that is done, they will look after the land much better, because they will then know that the land will ultimately be theirs.

As regards land given under the Land Development Ordinance, the Agricultural Department should take a more lively interest in it and impress on the peasants the importance of using fertilizers—not necessarily imported fertilizers, but manure like leaf mould and cattle dung which is good enough for the purpose. This is a matter of some importance as otherwise in a few years' time you will find that land alienated to the peasants has been washed away and that the best use of the land is not made.

It is now 4 o'clock, Sir, and I am coming to a new point.

The Chairman: The sitting is suspended till 4.30 P.M.

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

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: I was dealing with the question of colonization. This was started about twelve years ago, and I think it is time that the Hon. Minister instituted an inquiry to find out what progress has been made by colonists.

I am making this suggestion for this reason. I found, while going through the country, particularly in the wet zone, that sufficient progress has not been made during the last ten or twelve years. Except for the two reasons that I have already given, I am unable to attribute others as to why the colonization schemes have not been a great success.

I know, in certain areas—particularly in the constituency of my hon. Friend the Member for Balapitiya (Mr. Kularatne)—sufficient progress has not been made. A colonization scheme was started in this area as early as 1931. I have been a member of that Colonization Board since that time. This Board has been advising the Land Commissioner and the Assistant Government Agent in regard to colonization in the Urugaha area. One of the main reasons why that scheme has failed is that land which is of a very poor type has been given to people. So that they are unable to make

the land produce anything like an economic return. There are other lands that are too steep for cultivation; there are yet other lands on which it is difficult to grow rotational crops owing to the heavy rainfall and because the rains affect the crops very badly.

Therefore I think it is time, especially in view of the great difficulties that we are likely to experience in the near future with regard to our food problem, the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands either set up a Departmental Committee to inquire into this matter or requisitioned the services of some agricultural expert to inquire into the working of the colonization schemes. I would like to make that suggestion to the Hon. Minister, and I hope he will consider it favourably and take the necessary steps to have a full inquiry held and a report published thereafter which, to my mind, will be of the greatest help to him.

I would also like the Hon. Minister to waive the lease rents of people who have taken land under the Land Development Ordinance, at least during this time of emergency.

***Mr. E. W. Abeygunasekera (Nuwara Eliya):** I want to know from the Hon. Minister whether there has been a proposal made by the Planters' Association to acquire 7,000 acres of land in Walapane in the district of Nuwara Eliya for the purpose of a food "drive." If so, I would like to know the terms, and whether our fellow-villagers will stand to suffer if the application is allowed. Is it also proposed, if the application is allowed to give back the land cleared by the Planters' Association to the villagers.

I would like to make a suggestion to the Hon. Minister. I do not want to speak for the whole country; I prefer to speak for Nuwara Eliya. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands has become the Food Minister now. Let us ask for food from him. We must place certain concrete proposals before him now.

I think everybody knows that every field has a *wanna*—an uncultivated plot of high land. This plot of high land is part and parcel of every field; that is where the threshing floor is situated. The threshing floor is called *kamatha*, and the hut is called *pala*.

What I want to tell the Hon. Minister is this—I think I made this suggestion to him in 1934; at that time, I presume, he was short of hearing and that is why perhaps he did not take the hint from me. If he had accepted the suggestion that I made to him then, he would have at least been able to boast of 100,000 acres of land being under cultivation in the wet zone. If the Hon. Minister is prepared to give a loan of Rs. 5, Rs. 10, Rs. 15 or Rs. 20—anyway, nothing more than Rs. 30—which can be recovered within a period of five to six years, for the purpose of asweddumizing or irrigating the portion of high land which is called *wanna*, I think he will be helping the villager a great deal. If you make a calculation, I think you will find that there are at least 100,000 acres of such high land that can be brought under cultivation. If this suggestion of mine is given effect to immediately, through the Ratamahatmayas and the new Divisional Revenue Officers, I think it would be a great acquisition to this country to have so many acres under cultivation.

I do not know whether hon. Members understand this subject, because 90 per cent of them have never been to a field. They do not know what ploughing is; they may have seen fields being ploughed while passing through the country in their cars, but they have never handled a plough. I have done so.

***Mr. S. Samarakkody (Narammala):** The hon. Member for Panadura (Mr. Susanta de Fonseka) once tried it and fainted.

***Mr. Abeygunasekera:** He did it perhaps because he felt that there was something in it; he perhaps did it because people would come to see him do it; perhaps he did it as an object lesson. It is a good thing no doubt; the hon. Member for Panadura has perhaps done a good thing no doubt. I want hon. Members to follow suit.

***The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Minister of Agriculture & Lands):** And faint!

***Mr. Abeygunasekera:** I do not know whether hon. Members understand what is meant by "*kamatha*" and ploughing.

An *amuna* of paddy is equal to 4 bushels of rice; a *pela* is equal to 1 bushel of rice. Some hon. Members may not know that. I am not trying to insult hon. Members by stating these figures, but I wish to acquaint them with these facts. A *pela* is equal to 10 *lahas*. An *amuna* of paddy is obtained from an extent of more than half an acre. The *wanna* is the place where the hut is built; it is reserved by people for various purposes—for growing vegetables, and so on.

I own certain fields; and if I had irrigation facilities I would be able to cultivate about 3,000 to 4,000 acres. I was foolish to neglect this acreage. Now if the State can accommodate people with small loans, say from Rs. 5 to Rs. 15, and make the loans repayable within a period of five to six years, I think our new Minister of Food would be able to come to this House and say, "Look here I have taken the hint from the Member for Nuwara Eliya. We have 50,000 acres under cultivation in the wet zone". I think he will do it.

With regard to the proposal of the Planter's Association, I might say that I have no objection at all to the land being leased. I do not mind it, because the planters are not going to take away the land; it will be left for the use of the villagers. Now, if the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands is prepared to make it a condition that one-fourth of the produce from the land should come to the State, it would be a good thing. We give out land for the sowing of kurakkan, but we do not accept money payment; we take one-fourth of the crop. Similarly, when the 7,000 acres are given to the planters for the food "drive," if they place one-fourth of the yield at the disposal of the State, for distribution among the people, it would be a very good thing. I do not know whether that proposal is already before the Ministry of Agriculture and Lands. I want the Hon. Minister to consult the Member for the area concerned, in regard to the matter, whether it be the Member for Nuwara Eliya or the Member for Kandy.

There is another point. Sir, I must speak out what I feel; if not, I shall not be happy at all. Even people like the Air Raid Precaution Wardens decorate

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their cars and put plates on them to indicate that they are Air Raid Precautions Controller. This morning, when I was going along McCallum Road, a car passed me which had a plate fixed on it with the words "A. R. P. Controller". A few hours ago also I saw another car with a similar plate. I thought there was only one A. R. P. Controller, but I find there is more than one. I do not wish to keep matters to myself; I must come out with them.

When the Hon. Minister visits any part of the country, it would always be well and wise on his part to notify the Member representing that particular area of the impending visit either by telegram or by letter. Of course, the Member should be given time. The Hon. Minister visited two or three places in my constituency recently, but I had no intimation of it. I heard that he was arriving there, but I said, "No, I shall not meet him". Why? I have no business to go there. Supposing I go there and he says, "I do not require your presence here. I came as a detective to find out what the (Emergency) Assistant Government Agents are doing. The Member for Nuwara Eliya is not wanted", it will be a rebuke.

When a Minister goes to a place by himself, it is a very bad thing. The people of the area will think that the Hon. Minister has no confidence in the Member for the area, or that the Member need not be consulted in these matters. My opinion is that it would be far better if the Member concerned goes and bows to the Minister upon his arrival in the constituency; it is far better, far more honourable, far more respectable than a Divisional Revenue Officer or a Ratamahatmaya bowing to the Minister. I say that in earnest. I say that we are elected by the people; a Member is elected by 100,000 people and if that Member venerates a great personage it means that 100,000 people venerate him. Even if you get 100 District Revenue Officers to venerate you, you cannot secure that same veneration. I apologize to the Hon. Minister for saying these things; but I must come out with what I have in my mind. Therefore, when the Hon. Minister goes on inspection or on circuit in the future, I trust

that he will inform the Member of the area concerned so that he can be met and shown round.

Coming to the paddy question, I do not know whether the Minister of Food—I shall not call him Minister of Agriculture and Lands in future—is aware of it, but I am sure hon. Members know that in village areas people are now giving paddy on loan. The reason is that they fear that the State will buy all the paddy from the field-owners. They think that they will be hit hard if that happens. Therefore they are giving out paddy on interest now. What is the interest? The interest is half a bushel for one bushel, for 6 months; that is for a crop. So, if you calculate the interest—compound interest—you will find that if a man gives out 2 bushels of paddy for four years, at that rate the man who borrows the paddy will have to give back, as interest, 52½ bushels of paddy.

This is being done in Kandy, Matale, Bibile and Badulla; it is done everywhere in the Central Province.

If 10 bushels of paddy are given on loan, at the end of six months, that is after one crop, be it Yala or Maha, the man who lends the paddy will get back 15 bushels. Then he gives out the 15 bushels to the same person and gets back 22½ bushels. If you calculate it in that manner, you will find that the person who takes 2 bushels for 4 years has to give back 52½ bushels. This is rather a high "rate of interest". I have brought this matter to the notice of the House even before this, but no action was taken by the then Minister of Agriculture and Lands, the present Minister of Food. I want him to take action immediately.

In some places, Sir, paddy is being sold at Rs. 7 a bushel, in some places at Rs. 8 per bushel; and in some places a bushel of rice is being sold at Rs. 12.50 especially to Indian labourers on estates. If we do not get sufficient rice from India, we will have to collect the paddy from each Chief Headman's division and store it up at a central store. Today we can get paddy from the field-owners. If we overlook these things and allow matters to drift, by the time the State steps in to buy paddy all the paddy will have been sold to the

Indian labourers. Therefore, if action is contemplated at all, action must be taken at once without any loss of time. By the time the Hon. Minister of Food thinks of buying paddy from the local paddy-field owners, the stocks will have disappeared—disappeared into the air, as it were—and that will be a great loss to the country. Therefore, if action is to be taken, it is very necessary to take immediate action. I hope the Hon. Minister will take action on the lines suggested, without loss of time.

***Mr. S. Abeywickrama (Udugama):**

With regard to colonization schemes, as pointed out by the hon. Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya), in the Galle District the scheme of giving land under the Land Development scheme is a miserable failure.

The Chairman: If the hon. Member wants to ask for details under colonization schemes, he might take it up under the particular Sub-head.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** I would like to refer to one or two things under "Personal Emoluments". I asked some questions of the Hon. Minister in this House, and I want to refer to them too. I asked for figures in order to draw the attention of the House to this matter. I asked the following question:

"Will the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands be pleased to state (1) the total number of acres allotted in the Galle District under Land Development Schemes in the years 1938, 1939, 1940 and 1941 (A) to Middle Class people and (B) to the landless?"

The answer given by the Hon. Minister was as follows—I am not touching on the middle-class Ceylonese; I am dealing with the extent of land alienated to landless peasants:

In 1938	...	...	527 acres
1939	...	...	2,168 "
1940	...	...	2,450 "
1941	...	...	1,779 "

Sir, the amount that was given by the Hon. Minister, in 1938, to the Government Agent, Galle, was Rs. 10,616. This amount was given by way of assistance to the peasant allottees, but of this amount only a sum of Rs. 5,242 was spent, the balance being paid back into the Kachcheri. Then, in 1939,

Rs. 7,250 was allotted, but only Rs. 6,040 was spent; in 1940, Rs. 12,185 was allotted, and Rs. 8,700 was spent; in 1941, Rs. 23,225 was allotted, and only Rs. 15,202 was spent.

Normally, with the expansion of the Land Development Department and the cry for more food during the last two years, I should have expected the Government Agent, if the funds that were given to him were not sufficient for the purpose for which the money was intended, to have applied for more funds by way of a Supplementary Estimate in order to assist these people. But when the meagre sums that are given by the Minister to the Government Agent are not properly spent, it is, I am sorry to say, a very unsatisfactory state of affairs. I take it that the money spent by the Government Agent is spent well, but at the same time I do not want money to be simply distributed to no purpose.

Of the total extent of land given to peasant allottees, something like 6,000 acres have been given under the Land Development Ordinance to people in my own constituency; and daily I receive complaints from the people to say that they do not get sufficient assistance from the Kachcheri. The Government Agent, himself has not got the time to deal with these matters. It is the Assistant Government Agent, a Mr. Misso, who is in charge of this work. He has been burdened with all kinds of extra duties for the last two years, with the result that he has no time to look into the progress of these lands.

The villagers are told at Land Kachcheries that they would be given money to cut drains in order to prevent soil erosion; that they would be given from Rs. 75 to Rs. 125 to put up houses, and that all kinds of implements would be given. On paper, the scheme is a very perfect scheme. It starts in a very liberal way on the Floor of this House, but when it actually reaches the man, the assistance given ends in a needle point, so to speak. The scheme sponsored by this Council is on a very large scale. It is like the base of a pyramid; and when it actually comes to the man who has to deal with it, it ends in an apex. For instance, there is a great shortage of agricultural implements. I dare say, owing to the war, the prices

[Mr. Abeywickrama.]
of these implements have gone up, and it might be difficult to purchase them, but in the years before the war these agricultural implements could have been liberally given to these people.

Then, with regard to assisting people to put up houses, it was only the other day that I received a complaint from a person to say that he has cut a drain according to the instructions given by the Headman, and that he would like to live on that land, and for that purpose he would like to have some assistance to put up a house. He applied to the Mudaliyar, and the Mudaliyar directed him to the Headman; the Headman told him that he had no time to inspect the place, and this poor man has not been given any assistance yet.

What I say is that the whole scheme is not supervised well. I do not blame the Minister. I will blame the Minister if his policy is bad. I blame the officers who are appointed to carry out this scheme. They are not working the scheme properly.

Let me be clear on that point. I am not attacking the Minister. If his policy is wrong, I will certainly criticize him, but still some responsibility lies on him to see that the work that he has undertaken to do is carried out in the correct manner in the districts that are allotted this work. The Government Agent there says that he has no time to look into it.

6,000 acres of jungle land have been cleared under the Land Development Ordinance Scheme, and yet there is nobody to go and inspect it. Every villager has another house to live in, and so these lands are neglected. I should like the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands, now that he has been saddled with added responsibilities—with the question of producing food, which is a very vexed and grave question—to see that the maximum benefit is got out of these 6,000 acres. These 6,000 acres could be cultivated with manioc, sweet potatoes, hill paddy and various other produce and if these lands are neglected, it would be a sheer waste.

I would suggest to the Minister, in view of the very large number of acres that have been given to people in the

Galle District, to appoint immediately, from 1st October next, from, say, the beginning of the next financial year, a Colonization Officer to the Galle District; otherwise, I feel, the work will not be satisfactorily carried out, because the Assistant Government Agent will have all kinds of excuses to give; for instance, that he is unable to devote any time to this work. The latest excuse that these officers give is that they cannot go about the country owing to lack of petrol; so they delegate the Mudaliyar to do this work. So I would therefore suggest to the Minister to appoint a Land Officer for the Galle District in order to bring these lands into proper cultivation.

There are various other matters that I should like to raise, but I shall take your advice and bring them up under the different Heads. I hope the Hon. Minister will appreciate these criticisms. As he himself is unable to go into these villages, it is our bounden duty to bring these matters to his notice. I am not blaming the Minister; but certainly the scheme is not working properly in that area.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** With regard to the question raised by the hon. Member for Anuradhapura (Mr. Freeman), I might say that I was not aware of the cases he referred to. I know the policy that is adopted in that area; it is this: every village has its chena reservation, and they are expected to clear a certain extent of chena land without any permit or any licence. This year, in addition to that, we are trying to induce people to clear as much chena land as possible for growing food crops. In fact it was not a case of prosecuting; we were looking for people to come and cultivate land.

I do not know what the cases referred to by the hon. Member are, but if he cares to send me details of those cases, I will be able to give him all the information that is necessary with regard to them. Although it is our intention and our desire to make people cultivate more land it is quite possible that there may be prosecutions against people who utilize land reserved for other people; or there may be other reasons for prosecuting. My hon. Friend the Member for Hambantota (Mr. Rajapaksa) practically gave one reason. There are a large

number of prosecutions in Hambantota. You heard him read out the figures. If you analyse the cases that have been instituted, you will find that in a large number of them it is either an influential person or a Headman who has utilized his own men illicitly to clear land reserved for the villager; the Headman prosecutes the villager in order to try to get his own men to clear the land.

In certain cases, prosecution becomes necessary. But at the same time I can assure the hon. Member, with regard to the chena policy, that I am in entire agreement with him as well as with the hon. Member for Matale (Mr. Aluwihare). I feel that it is our duty to try and prevent people from starving, to save humanity rather than conserve forests. That is the policy we adopt.

With regard to what the hon. Member for Matale said, I can assure him that I have a greater appreciation of kurakkan than many other people in this Island. I feel that there are very few people in this Island who consume more kurakkan than myself. I should therefore be able at least to appreciate the food value of it. I can tell hon. Members that there are absolutely no prosecutions entered against people who grow kurakkan. I realize that our endeavour should be to go in for more high-land grain cultivation than paddy cultivation. Paddy land is limited in extent, and we will not be able to obtain all the food we want if we depend entirely on paddy. As far as that matter is concerned, I am entirely with my hon. Friend. Therefore, I think, with his assistance we will be able to secure better and more satisfactory results.

So far as what my hon. Friend the Member for Hambantota (Mr. Rajapaksa) said goes, in Hambantota an effort has been made to cultivate chenas, and perhaps it has resulted in certain advantages being secured by the wealthier class of people. Actually, when you start a scheme and try to push it through, it so happens that the very people whom you do not want to assist get the benefit of it. I know my hon. Friend takes a great deal of interest in these matters; he keeps me and the Land Commissioner informed about them, and he himself happens to be a Member of my Committee.

So with the co-operation of these three Members I have not the slightest doubt that we will be able to evolve something more satisfactory to all concerned.

I can assure my hon. Friend the Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasinghe) that the suggestions he has made are most helpful, and they will be given due consideration. But there were one or two suggestions made which I would like to deal with now.

One suggestion was that we should give up collecting rent from colonists. It is true that we give land to cultivators under the food-production "drive". We also give them seed and other assistance, and we try to get the utmost possible quantity of food from those lands. But the lands that have been given to colonists are given under a different system. These lands were given in some cases about 6, 8 or 10 years ago. In the first 3 years no rent is collected. During that time the Government in most instances give money to these people to bring the land into cultivation. The Government even build houses for them. Some of the lands given under the colonization schemes have been planted with citrus and other crops which are now giving the colonists very handsome profits. When handsome profits are obtained by these people from economic crops, for us to say, because of the present food-production "drive", that they should be exempted from the payment of the rent due after about 8 years is not justified. In some cases these lands have been planted with rubber, cinnamon, jak and other trees.

The colonists have had an opportunity of establishing themselves, and a certain nominal rent—it is only 2 per cent. of the original value of the land—is charged, and in no case I think does the rent come to more than Re. 1. But at the same time, if the crops do not yield a good return, we grant the colonists an exemption from the payment of rent. I feel that that policy is a fair one, and if we try to deviate from that policy our colonization schemes are bound to suffer.

I remember some time ago my hon. Friend the Member for Batticaloa (Mr. Tambimuttu), with his usual shrewdness and his interest in the villager, managed to get the collection of the paddy tax

[The Hon. Mr. Senanayake.]
suspended in the Batticaloa District. But now, even if he tries to collect the paddy tax from the villagers, he will not find any difficulty. If after spending so much money in establishing colonists in these schemes some return is not to be expected from them, I do not think we could go on with these colonization schemes. But I can assure my hon. Friend that we do consider special cases and grant exemptions. Our Committee is very generous in their recommendations for exemptions, and I do not think there are many cases in which we have refused applications for exemption from the tax.

Sir, with regard to the suggestion he has made about the condition of the land that has been given to these colonists, I must admit that it is not the best land. That is not my fault nor his. Unfortunately my predecessors, the officials, were not so interested in the peasants and therefore they were not given land when land was available. In the same way, fortunately for my hon. Friend, his predecessors were there to take the land that was available at that time. So my misfortune is that my predecessors were not of the same opinion as myself. His good fortune is that his predecessors were able to get the land. The result was that we had to make the best use of the land that was available. The wealthier people had their choice, and only what was left was available for the peasant. Such land was not given for colonization at all; it was given for village expansion, although it is called colonization.

I do not think any colonization scheme will be successful if an economic unit is not given to a person, and I do not consider one acre to be an economic unit at all. I would be very happy if I had the support of my hon. Friends to give these unfortunate people an economic unit by acquiring the lands that have been obtained by some of our wealthier people for cultivation, so that each individual may have a block of land from which he could derive an income. Although that would be the policy that I would like to adopt, I feel that such a step is not necessary for this reason. Our country has an area of 16,000,000 acres of which only 3,500,000 or 4,000,000 acres are planted up. The rest of the country is

still available, and we could without depriving people of their possessions give the landless people land to the extent of four times the area that is planted now. Then let there be competition between the two parties.

With regard to the policy that is adopted, I can tell the House that I feel that the assistance which we are now giving these colonists is not sufficient. I do not blame anyone for it. I certainly think that it is perhaps a lack of foresight that has brought about the present state of affairs. In the proposal that I brought before this House, provision was made for giving money to these people for different works which they carry out. We expected the cultivator who is given land to do many things, sometimes within 3 months, and earn about Rs. 200 or Rs. 300. It is not physically possible for him to do that, and the result is that he cannot earn that money. Now it is my determination—and I think it is a policy that would be acceptable to this House—not to depend on the man to do the preliminary work but to do the work ourselves and to put him on the farm that is built.

I think that statement of mine also answers the questions raised by my hon. Friend the Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama). The reason for not spending the money is not because of difficulties of supervision, but because it is impossible for the man himself to earn all the money that we have provided for him. I think matters have improved a great deal now, because this year we have not only spent the money that was provided in the Budget but even obtained supplementary votes for the purpose, and now with the co-operation given by Members I have no doubt we would obtain better results.

***Mr. S. Vytilingam (Talawakele):** I wish to know from the Hon. Minister what his policy would be in respect of prices fixed for locally-grown foodstuffs, whether those prices would have any bearing on the prices of imported foodstuffs, and whether he would fix very low prices which would not encourage cultivators to produce these foodstuffs. If the Government had only encouraged the cultivator by fixing a minimum guaranteed price all these years, we would

have had more foodstuffs available. I know, as a matter of fact, that imported kurakkan is being sold at Rs. 15 a bushel. I wish to know how prices are going to be fixed by the Minister and his Department.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I would be rash if I gave an answer to that question now. I have just been chosen by the House to deal with food problems, and I do not know yet whether that choice would be accepted by His Excellency the Governor. For a person who has not yet been established in his new office to indicate the policy would be an act of rashness, which I do not want to be guilty of.

I can, however, say this to my hon. Friend: my one great desire is to see this country independent of other countries in the matter of foodstuffs. To that end I shall apply my energies. Whether I shall succeed, I do not know. In the matter of fixing prices, that end would be kept in view.

With regard to the question asked by the hon. Member for Nuwara Eliya (Mr. Abeygunasekera), about a planter's application for land, I may explain that I have not yet received that particular application for 7,000 acres. There have been a certain number of applications made by planters. The conditions on which the lands will be given are that the applicants should take all necessary measures to protect the soil and make the land more fertile for the villagers when the time comes for the return of the land to Government, to be allotted to the villagers. No planter will be given any land in areas where the villagers themselves require land.

***Mr. Vytilingam:** I do not want the Acting Leader of the House to give us details of his policy as Food Minister. I merely want to know whether the Commissioner for Agricultural Marketing is prepared to buy locally-grown foodstuffs, and if so at what price.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** The purchase of foodstuffs was in the hands of another Minister. With regard to the organization that is necessary for carrying on this work, I have a meeting fixed for 6.30 p.m. to-day. Perhaps that

meeting might go on till 1 p.m. to-night. I will see what can be done. I am just trying to think of these matters. I cannot give an answer now.

Sub-head 1 was then passed without amendment.

Sub-head 2, Travelling, Rs. 2,700.

Amendment moved [*Minister of Agriculture and Lands*]:

Increase provision from Rs. 2,700 to Rs. 4,800. Under details of sub-head. Make the following amendments:

Minister and staff (Rs. 4,500) and Sub-Committees of the Executive Committee (Rs. 300) ...	Rs. 4,800.
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Make the consequential amendments in the totals.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 2, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 3 and 4 were passed without amendment.

Head 60, as amended, was passed.

Head 61, Commissioner for Development of Agricultural Marketing.

Sub-head 1, Personal Emoluments, Rs. 109,318.

Mr. H. W. Amarasureiya: The House will remember that some time ago there was severe criticism of the accounts of this Department, by the Auditor-General. Unfortunately, this year we have not had an opportunity of examining the Auditor-General's latest report, and therefore I would like to inquire from the Minister whether he is satisfied that this Department is now better organized and more business-like in its transactions.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** With regard to the accounting side of these Departments, I depend entirely on the Auditor-General to keep them up to the mark.

There is hardly any officer who has put in as much work and come to the rescue of so many Departments and persons as the Commissioner for Development of Agricultural Marketing. Whenever there was any trouble,

[The Hon. Mr. Senanayake] whether in the matter of supplies of foodstuffs to local bodies, or finding food for labourers—for anything and everything—the services of the Marketing Commissioner have been utilized. In this respect, he has given great satisfaction. I do not know how on earth he was able to do all this work. In that respect, I feel quite satisfied with the work he has done.

If, owing to the large volume of work he has to undertake under emergency conditions, he has lost a few rupees, or if the accounts could not be properly kept, I would not blame him. I would rather that he did the work than that he should have failed to do the work for the sake of accuracy in accounting.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: The Auditor-General has passed some very severe strictures.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** May I appeal to the hon. Member to realize that at present we live in times which are difficult enough without our dragging in the past? Let us deal with the problems of today and not hark back to the criticism of the Auditor-General of two years ago. Let us concentrate on the difficult situation facing us today.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: I am thinking of the immediate past, not of two or three years ago. I want to know whether in the Hon. Minister is satisfied that the Department is being better-managed and that they have introduced better business methods and systems of accounts.

Another point: the Minister of Agriculture and Lands should fix economic prices for manioc and yams, etc. This problem will arise very shortly. Most of the areas that have cultivated these products will very shortly harvest the produce, and the Department should establish buying centres. It is necessary that prices should be fixed, and that guaranteed prices should be given to the cultivators. This is a very important matter, and unless the Minister addresses himself to this problem, there is bound to be considerable dissatisfaction in the country.

Then there is the question of the preservation of food, an equally important matter. Who is going to be in charge of this work—the Marketing Commissioner or the Department of Agriculture? Whoever is in charge, should act quickly and have his organization ready to meet the situation that is likely to arise.

Mr. P. de S. Kularatne (Balapitiya): There is a shop in Chatham Street run by this Department, known as "Ceylon Products". I would like to draw the attention of the Minister to the desirability of keeping this shop open between the hours of 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. Government and mercantile employees have their lunch interval between these hours and they would like to do their shopping then.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** The Shop Act is against that.

***Mr. Kularatne:** Is it not possible to make some arrangement about it? The shop is now closed between 1 and 2 p.m.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** If the Shop Act did not apply to me, I shall be very happy to adopt the hon. Member's suggestion. That is the trouble.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: May I have an answer to my question from the Minister?

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I thought the answer was taken for granted—that all the advice given by the hon. Member will receive due consideration.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: That sort of flattery is not going to win me over! I want the Hon. Minister to tell us whether guaranteed prices would be paid, and if so, whether they would be economic prices. The problem is an important one and is likely to arise in an acute form. We have more or less undertaken to pay these people guaranteed prices for their products, but so far no announcement has been made by the Hon. Minister about his policy in regard to the matter.

It being 5.30 p.m., proceedings on business under consideration were interrupted under Emergency Standing Order 2 (4).

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Before I answer the question, may I have your permission, Sir, to move, that we carry on with the Budget until 6 P.M. without interruption?

The Chairman: The Council will now resume.

The Council having resumed—

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair.

***The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Acting Leader of the State Council):** I move that Emergency Standing Order 2 (4) be suspended to enable the consideration of the Appropriation Bill, 1942-43, in Committee to be continued beyond 5.30 P.M.

Question put accordingly, and agreed to.

The Hon. Mr. Senanayake: I move that Council do go into Committee further to consider the Appropriation Bill, 1942-43, in detail.

In Committee—

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER presided as Chairman.

***The Hon. Mr. D. S. Senanayake (Minister of Agriculture & Lands):** With regard to the point raised by the hon. Member for Galle (Mr. H. W. Amarasinghe); the reason why I said that I could not give an answer but that I would consider the matter was because it was not a question that could be easily settled in this House in the way in which the hon. Member thinks it could be settled.

The first and foremost point that we have to bear in mind is that the food that is grown in this country should be made available to the people here for their consumption. The idea of an economic price can be over-emphasized. When we speak of an economic price for manioc and other produce, let us remember that that price has to be paid by the poorer classes in this country. The price of rice today is 28 cents a measure, and if on top of that the Government go and say, "We will buy manioc at 5 cents or 8 cents a lb.," we shall be making it impossible for the unfortunate people to buy these articles for their own consumption.

What we have done was to say that there was an economic price for tapioca.

At that time the price was 1 cent per lb. We asked the people to grow tapioca; and anyone who could not sell it could get 1 cent a lb. for that tapioca. At the same time, it is not my intention to keep the price high artificially. But, owing to the scarcity of food, or perhaps because of the economic conditions, the price goes up, as it has gone up today; in some places the price is 3, 4, 5, and even 8 cents a lb. Let the price go up, but I do not want to put the price up, because the price of locally-grown food should be maintained at as low a price as possible to the people.

***Mr. Wanigasekera:** With regard to the food campaign, thousands and thousands of acres are now planted with sweet potato and manioc. There will be a yield in less than a month's time, and there will be a very large quantity available—more than can be consumed by the people in those areas—and one of the complaints that the people have made is that they might not be able to sell their manioc and other produce at even a cent a lb.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Government will buy it at 1 cent a lb.

***Mr. Wanigasekera:** If Government will pay them a price of 4 or 5 cents a lb. it would be reasonable.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Why? As it is, Government have guaranteed to pay at the rate of 1 cent a lb.; even if it came to throwing the article away.

***Mr. Wanigasekera:** I do not say that you should buy the produce at such prices, but what I do say is that if the Government buy manioc you will have to devise means by which you can keep it for a reasonable length of time. In that case, you will have to have small mills to mill the manioc and then keep it in the form of flour. To do that there must either be small hand-machines distributed throughout the areas where these articles of food are grown, or else you will have to bear very heavy expenditure in transporting the commodity to centres where there are established mills.

Your Engineers should be able to produce some machine which would enable the people to convert the yam

[Mr. Wanigasekera.] into flour. There are many tea and other factories in various localities; and if you set up a small machine for the purpose of milling yam, it would be most useful. I know a person who resides in Kandabodapattu and who is trying to bring out some machinery so that he may be able to mill the manioc that is grown in a certain area. You will have to have some centres where this article can be brought and converted into flour.

I wish to speak on another point. The Hon. Minister is aware that we import sugar to the extent of about Rs. 14,000,000 into this country. There are vast areas, especially areas that get under floods, which are not cultivated at present; and I think sugar cane can be planted in those places. Government should supply cuttings and see that sugar cane is cultivated on an extensive scale. Down in Baddegama where my hon. Friend the Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama) lives, sugar cane can be cultivated on either side of the Nilwala-ganga and in other areas. Next to rice, sugar is the one commodity on which the people of this country spend the largest amount of money. We import sugar to the extent of Rs. 14,000,000 annually, and if the cultivation of the sugar cane is encouraged, I think you will be encouraging the people of this country to produce their own sugar.

Sir, if you go to Mysore you will see sugar plantations on an extensive scale. Railways have been laid there, and thousands and thousands of acres of land have been under sugar-cane cultivation. The Government owns part of the cultivation. The Mysore Government has invested a great deal of money in the cultivation of the sugar cane. Plantations of that kind must be encouraged in Ceylon, and I would beg of the Hon. Minister to prepare a scheme for the purpose and put it into effect.

*Mr. Abeywickrama: With regard to the question of the price of manioc, I do not think the urgency arises now. I was afraid that at a certain stage we might over-produce manioc, and difficulty might arise in disposing of the article.

Now, in my area a large number of acres have been planted up, and I find that traders go there and buy manioc and sweet potatoes at a price which the

villagers never received before. They receive 4 cents a lb. for manioc and 6 cents a lb. for sweet potatoes. As far as we are concerned, the problem has been automatically solved. I am not speaking of distribution to other places. But my fear was that we might not be able to sell the yam.

I do not think any fixing of prices is necessary at this stage, because our object was to give as much as possible to the cultivator. If a price is fixed upon, it might deprive the cultivator of a price that might be remunerative to him.

Mr. G. R. Whitby (Nominated Member): I should like to endorse the remarks made by the hon. Member for Weligama (Mr. Wanigasekera) with regard to the preservation of manioc. I think it is obvious to anybody that manioc can be produced anywhere. It is equally obvious to anybody that if arrangements are made for the proper preservation of the crop, enormous quantities can be used instead of being thrown away.

The establishment of central mills on the lines of desiccating mills can be carried out at small expense, and I suggest to the Hon. Minister that that should be undertaken. In certain areas, such as the North-Western Province, there are a large number of desiccating mills most of which are standing idle. Everyone knows that manioc can be preserved almost indefinitely in a desirable form for food purposes if it is properly dealt with by machinery. If that is not done, I am convinced that thousands of tons will have to be thrown away.

*The Hon. Mr. Senanayake: Sir, with regard to that matter, we have issued instructions, and even certain machines are being bought. Two machines have been obtained by the Minister of Education; and there is a person in the Kalutara District—he is a conductor on an estate—who has produced a machine. There is also a Father at Gampaha who has produced a machine, and we are trying to get them.

*Mr. Abeywickrama: The machine turned out in the Matugama area cost Rs. 35.

***The Hon. Mr. C. W. W. Kannangara (Minister of Education):** There are two machines that have been produced in my area; one costs Rs. 50 or Rs. 60, and the other, Rs. 6.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** From whom can we get these machines?

***The Hon. Mr. Kannangara:** They can be obtained from the (Emergency) Assistant Government Agents.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** With regard to the cultivation of sugar cane, I should like to tell my hon. Friend that when I went to the place with the Hon. Member for Udugama (Mr. Abeywickrama), I visited the locality mentioned and we have decided to open up a nursery for the purpose of distributing sugar-cane. The necessary instructions have been issued. But I must say that it is not possible just now to manufacture refined sugar with the sugar cane available. We can grow sugar cane only for the purpose of manufacturing jaggery.

***Mr. Wanigasekera:** Buying sugar is expensive, and bringing in machinery for manufacturing sugar will cost millions of rupees. But you can induce the people to grow sugar cane and have jaggery made.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Is it true that the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands went to an area in my constituency where land was available and gave orders to one of his Divisional Inspectors to make a start at once with one or two acres to serve as a sugar-cane nursery? The villagers know it; but up to date I have not even seen the Divisional Inspector; there is no action taken yet.

Sub-head 1 was then passed, without amendment.

Sub-heads 2 to 15 were passed without amendment.

Sub-head 16, Purchase of kurakkan, amu, maize, and other grains at the guaranteed price in order to stimulate food production and create reserves (token vote) Rs. 100.

Amendment moved [*Minister of Agriculture and Lands*]:

Alter the title of this sub-head to read as follows:—

“Purchase of kurakkan, amu, maize and other grains and manioc, sweet potatoes and other yams at the guaranteed price in order to stimulate food production and create reserves (token vote)”.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 16, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 17 was passed without amendment.

New Sub-head 18, Establishment of a Cold Storage Plant, Rs. 200,000.

Amendment moved [*Minister of Agriculture and Lands*]:

Insert the following new Sub-head:

	Rs.
18, Establishment of a Cold Storage Plant	200,000
Make consequential amendments in the totals.	

New Sub-head 18 was passed.

Head 61, as amended, was passed.

Head 62, Appeal Board.

(Land Settlement Ordinance.)

Sub-heads 1 and 2 were passed without amendment.

Head 62 was passed without amendment.

Head 63, Land Commissioner.

Sub-head, 1, Personal Emoluments, Rs. 96,693.

Amendment moved [*Minister of Agriculture and Lands*]:

Under Details of Sub-head:
Item Parakrama Samudra Scheme
(Sluice No. 3).

	Rs.
Delete “Assistant Colonization Officer	720”
and substitute “Colonization Officer.	1,800”
Amend the totals under Personal Emoluments as follows:—	

1940-41	1941-42	1942-43
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
84,096	88,055	97,773

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 1, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 2, Travelling, Rs. 3,738.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Amend the totals as follows:—

1940-41	1941-42	1942-43
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
2,212	2,623	3,858

(iii) Amend the total of Recurrent Expenditure as follows:—

1940-41	1941-42	1942-43
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
565,929	721,749	976,920

(iv.) Amend the total of the Head as follows:—

1940-41	1941-42	1942-43
Rs.	Rs.	Rs.
565,929	1,021,749	1,286,920

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 2, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 3 to 11 were passed without amendment.

Head 63, as amended, was passed.

Head 64, Land Settlement Department.

Sub-heads 1 to 8 were passed without amendment.

Head 64 was passed without amendment.

Head 65, Survey Department.

Sub-head I, Personal Emoluments, Rs. 1,895,894.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Under Details of Sub-head.

Under item "Superintendents of Surveys" increase money provision for 1942-43 from Rs. 62,300 to Rs. 77,900.

Amend line 2 of footnote "a" to read "one officer on Military duty".

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 1, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 2 to 5 were passed without amendment.

Sub-head 6, Field Labour, Rs. 300,000.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Increase provision from Rs. 300,000 to Rs. 375,000.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 6, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 7, Transport of Government Stores and Labour, Rs. 21,000.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Increase provision from Rs. 21,000 to Rs. 21,000.

Make the consequential amendments in the totals.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 7, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 8 to 15 were passed without amendment.

Head 65, as amended, was passed.

Head 66, Department of Agriculture.

Sub-head 1, Personal Emoluments, Rs. 765,344.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Under Details of Sub-head:—

(i.) In Column "Numbers 1942-43" reduce the number of Research Assistants from 5 to 4, and in the last Column reduce money provision from Rs. 16,102, to Rs. 13,402.

Amend footnote, "d" to read "One post deleted and a new post of Assistant Chemist created".

Add "d" after the number "4" in Column "Numbers 1942-43" against Research Assistants.

(ii.) Under "Additional Staff for Emergency Services"—

(a) Delete "7 clerks, G. C. C., Grade II., Rs. 600—42 & 45—1,800 d 4,368" and substitute "7 clerks, daily paid at Rs. 1.70 per diem Rs. 4,344".

(2) Delete "2 peons, Rs. 264—6—408—528" and substitute "—3 peons at Rs. 264—792".

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** I wish to draw the attention of the Hon. Minister of Agriculture to the meagre assistance that is given to people who are engaged in food production. I have personally mentioned to him the difficulty of obtaining manure for the coming season.

According to the distribution of the various responsibilities under the Emergency Scheme, though Government Agents are placed under the Minister of Home Affairs, the supplying of manure and agricultural implements as well as

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materials is a duty assigned to the Department of Agriculture. And what does the Department of Agriculture do? We have voted large sums of money time and again for that Department. Normally we should have thought that the Department was very keen and would do its work very earnestly in this matter. But unfortunately the officers of the Agricultural Department do not show even the enthusiasm of a villager at this time. I am sorry to mention these matters here, but all the same we have to do our duty.

In the matter of supplying manure for the Yala cultivation, the Director indent-ed for manure from various firms, but the manure was not sufficient last year. He had booked a certain number of tons at Rs. 90, and later on the price went up to Rs. 120 and still later to Rs. 160. Transport was so difficult that manure was given to people only after the sowing of seed paddy, and in those circumstances the people had to do a very difficult job.

But I do not want the same thing to occur in the Maha cultivation. It has started now. You have about two months' time for issuing manure. I am bringing this matter to the notice of the Minister of Agriculture so that a sufficient quantity of manure might be delivered in time. There should not be the excuse that although the manure is available in India there is no transport available. If 260,000,000 lb. of rubber and nearly 260,000,000 lb. of tea can be transported across 7,000 miles of ocean, surely for a sailing ship to go across Palk's Strait to bring manure from India to Ceylon, a matter of 21 miles, is not so very difficult. If it is a question of the incapacity of the present staff, then the Commander in Chief or the Military authorities should arrange for transport. If we are to produce sufficient paddy and other food crops, we must have manure; there was a great shortage last year and as a result the people were put to tremendous difficulty.

To-day the position is this: normally a cwt. of bone meal sells at Rs. 4 in the market. Today the price is Rs. 12, and it is not available even at that price; and unless Government provides this manure, it will be impossible for the cultivators to cultivate their paddy-fields satisfac-

torily. They can simply sow the seed paddy and obtain the same quantity of paddy for their trouble. When they have paid the reaping charges, they would have nothing left for their benefit. But, as the Minister is aware, if you apply manure you will obtain a crop of at least one-third more than the crop that you would get normally.

But the trouble with the Minister of Agriculture is that once he says a thing he will never change; he is adamant; we cannot make him change his view. It is not so with the other Ministers; we can keep on repeating these matters. But the answers of the Minister of Agriculture are given in such a way that we cannot follow them up with other questions.

I hope this question will not end in the same way. Manure is wanted, and orders must be given to the Director of Agriculture; and if he cannot do it, the Minister himself must have some organization in Colombo to see that this manure is speedily dispatched. I want the Minister to tell us whether he could arrange for the manure to be delivered in that manner.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** As a matter of fact, the question of manure has been receiving my attention for some time. I realize the need for it and the shortage there is, and it is my endeavour to obtain as much manure as possible and try to distribute it. I will do my very best.

***The Hon. Mr. G. E. de Silva (Minister of Health):** You might manufacture compost manure.

***Mr. Wanigasekera:** Another question I would like to ask is with regard to bee-keeping. Has the Minister taken any steps to see that bee-keeping is made popular with the people of Ceylon? I read in a book the other day that in America during the flowering season millions of hives are placed round about the corn fields and the bees flitting from flower to flower carry the pollen from one to the other, and the result is a bumper corn. In this country, although we have an Agricultural Department, nothing has been done to

[Mr. Wanigasekera.] see that people take seriously to bee-keeping. We may apply manure to have our crops increased, but if every agriculturist takes to bee-keeping, if we have millions of beehives in Ceylon, you will see that our crop will be doubled. That is also a form of manuring. That bee flies from flower to flower fertilizing the corn, and as a result you get a bumper crop.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Yes, Sir, bee-keeping is encouraged.

***Mr. Wanigasekera:** The Hon. Minister may say that bee-keeping is encouraged, but what has he done all these years in that direction? I would like to see the distribution of at least 10,000 beehives being made in the next few months. The Minister is taking up food-production; and one of the things I would request him to do is to encourage the people in bee-keeping. Other countries are doing it. In America, as I said, millions of beehives are given out. The strange thing about these beehives is that once a hive is set up and a queen bee gets into it, every other bee goes to a particular hive, though there may be several millions of them.

We have had a Department of Agriculture for half a century, but nothing has been done by way of improving the present state of affairs. That is why we are suffering today.

***Mr. Aluwihare:** The trouble has been to isolate the queen bee!

***Mr. Abeygunasekera:** Sir, I wish to bring one fact to the notice of the Minister of Agriculture. We have an Agricultural Instructor. I see him once in three months going along the Kandy-Hanguranketa Road in a Baby Austin car, but it is very seldom that he is seen in the villages. Once he attended a meeting that we held in regard to food production.

He seems to be deaf, and I think it is high time that he was sent before a Medical Board. I am making this complaint to the Minister so that the officer may be tested. If the Hon. Minister speaks to him and finds him deaf, then he should take action. He is a worthless, useless Instructor.

The Department itself is a white elephant, and the sooner it is scrapped the better for this country. I want to know what the Director is doing. He has never come to Nuwara Eliya. Of course, he may have come to Nuwara Eliya for a change, with his wife and children. Perhaps he is afraid to come to Nuwara Eliya, because Nuwara Eliya is very, very cold, and he is an asthmatic subject like myself. Anyway, as Director of Agriculture he is seldom seen anywhere; he is indoors. I do not know whether he goes along with the Minister of Health, but I want to know whether he has attended any meetings anywhere, in any district, and told the people what to do.

I think he must be sent away, like Mr. Wadia. I now understand that Mr. Wadia has been taken away by the Chief Secretary from the Ministry of Home Affairs. That is good news. That action must have been taken after the speech I made here on Friday last. Let him be promoted and sent as the Governor of the Gold Coast! I do not mind it. It is very good to learn that Mr. Wadia has been removed from the office of Excise Commissioner.

The Chairman: We are now dealing with the Agricultural vote.

***Mr. Abeygunasekera:** Likewise, I want the Hon. Minister of Agriculture and Lands, who is a Friend of the Director of Agriculture, either to make him work or get him out of the Department.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I do not know whether I need reply to those remarks. I quite appreciate the value of the bee and the advantage of a bee sticking to one queen bee. As I realize its importance, I will bear that suggestion in mind.

***Mr. Wanigasekera:** With regard to the suggestion made by the Hon. Minister, of a bee sticking to one queen, I should like to remind him that in ancient days our kings had several queens.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I cannot alter Nature, Sir.

***The Hon. Mr. S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike (Minister of Local Administration)** : Yes ; that is the bee's nature.

***Mr. Abeywickrama** : I should like the Minister of Agriculture and Lands to explain why a retired Government Servant, in the person of Mr. L. L. Hunter, has been given the very responsible post of Additional Director of Agriculture at this particular time when you want in that office a very young, energetic and educated officer who is able to move about the country. I understand that he is a Burgher gentleman—I do not know whether he is a Burgher or a European—and that he is not conversant with the type of food taken by the masses in this country. One day a letter was sent to me stating that Mr. L. L. Hunter had been appointed Additional Director of Agriculture. A retired Government Servant who has no qualification whatsoever for the job is appointed Additional Director of Agriculture, and above him there is the Director, Mr. Edmund Rodrigo, who may be regarded as a misfit in the Agricultural Department. It is no wonder that the work of this Department has been a failure everywhere.

I find that the Director of Agriculture has gone on leave and that a Mr. Crawford is acting for him. Such action reduces the potential energies of the Department. That is why the Agricultural Department is not up to the required standard. I should like to know what qualifications Mr. L. L. Hunter has to be appointed Additional Director of Agriculture. I should also like to know whether he is doing that work properly. I am not satisfied with that appointment.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake** : I am aware that Mr. Hunter and the hon. Member had a little disagreement between themselves. But I think the hon. Member is satisfied now.

Mr. Hunter has been appointed to deal with Assistant Government Agents (Emergency) who are handling the question of food. As far as I am concerned, I feel very grateful to that gentleman for coming to our assistance from his retirement. At times people

disagree, but whatever the disagreement between the hon. Member and Mr. Hunter may be, they have one common object, that is, both of them want to increase food production in this country. I have not the slightest doubt that Mr. Hunter is doing very good work.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 1, as amended, was then passed.

Sub-head 2, Travelling, Rs. 109,000.

Amendment moved [*Minister of Agriculture and Lands*] :

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 4,400.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 2, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 3, Stationery, Office furniture, and Office requisites, Rs. 7,410.

Amendment moved [*Minister of Agriculture and Lands*] :

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 70.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 3, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 4, Botanic Gardens, Rs. 33,650.

Amendment moved [*Minister of Agriculture and Lands*] :

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 60.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 4, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 5, Maintenance of Agricultural Schools, Rs. 153,922.

Amendment moved [*Minister of Agriculture and Lands*] :

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 800.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 5, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 6, Agricultural Stations and Experiments, Rs. 658,953.

Amendment moved [*Minister of Agriculture and Lands*] :

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 2,500.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 6, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 7, Upkeep of Laboratories, Libraries, Herbarium, and Museum, Rs. 19,880.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 115.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 7, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 8 and 9 were passed without amendment.

Sub-head 10, Propaganda Work and Grants-in-aid for Agricultural Shows, Rs. 17,000.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 150.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 10, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 11, Awards in Agricultural Competitions, Rs. 10,000.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 100.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 11, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 12, Development of Animal Husbandry, Rs. 567,485.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 3,400.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 12, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 13, Issue of Planting-Material, &c., Rs. 135,250.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 1,200.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 13, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 14 to 16 were passed, without amendment.

Sub-head 17, Cattle Branding, Rs. 10,000.

Mr. Ilangantileke: I should like to know from the Hon. Minister as to when cattle branding is likely to be introduced in the Puttalam and Kurunegala Districts. This is a very urgent matter.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** May I have an opportunity of looking into the papers? I have taken steps in regard to the districts that have been proclaimed. It may be that regulations have to be framed. I do not know whether that part of the work is in the hands of the Legal Secretary. I shall look into that matter.

***Mr. E. R. Tambimuttu (Trincomalee-Batticaloa):** Am I to take it that the idea of the Department is that any kind of branding is good enough? Mere branding without description is of no use. The number of cattle thieves about the country has risen so high that if cattle come into, say, Tamankaduwa they are seized by people, and it is difficult for the owners to prove that the cattle belong to them.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** With regard to branding itself, I think the Ordinance is being drawn up. There is optional branding which it is proposed to undertake in each district.

Sub-head 17 was then passed without amendment.

Sub-head 18, Incidental Expenses, Rs. 3,755.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture of Lands]:

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 520.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 18, as amended, was passed.

Sub-heads 19 to 20 were passed without amendment.

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Debates.

Sub-head 21, Establishment of Rubber Budwood Multiplication Nurseries, Rs. 26,800.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Increase provision by a sum of Rs. 150.

Amendment agreed to.

Sub-head 21, as amended, was passed.

Sub-head 22 was passed without amendment.

Sub-head 23, Food production, Rs. 2000,000.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: This is a very large vote, amounting as it does to Rs. 2,000,000. I do not suggest that food is not necessary, but I should like the Hon. Minister to give us an idea as to how he proposes to spend this money.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** With regard to the expenditure itself, I can tell this to hon. Members, that although the vote is large, I expect to spend more this year. I want to supply manure, seed material, and so on, to the cultivators and also to assist them in cultivation. All that expenditure has to be met from this vote.

Mr. H. W. Amarasuriya: Will the Department itself undertake the cultivation of food?

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** Yes, to this extent. Where it becomes necessary to maintain good seed, and so on, the Department proposes to undertake cultivation in the areas concerned.

Sub-head 23 was then passed without amendment.

Sub-heads 24 to 26 were passed without amendment.

Head 66, as amended, was passed.

Head 67, Forest Department.

Sub-head 1, Personal emoluments, Rs. 559,697.

Amendment moved [Minister of Agriculture and Lands]:

Under Details of Sub-head:

Item: Forest Rangers.

(a) Increase money provision for 1942-43 from Rs. 81,983 to Rs. 83,783.

Amend footnote "c" to read " Cadre approved on recommendation of the Retrenchment Commission is 35, provision has been made for 8 surplus officers who are engaged on field work connected with timber supply for war purposes".

(b) Increase Rent Allowance from Rs. 32,066 to Rs. 32,332.

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** I want to raise an important question on this vote. The Forest Department is illegally withholding—that is the only description I consider appropriate—certain land urgently required for food production in the Galle District. In the village of Batapola, you find an isolated block of 67 acres which is not made available to the people for food production. It is called a forest reserve.

It is difficult to understand what is meant by a forest reserve. You do not find contiguous lands as forest reserves. The Public Works Department road has been in existence in that part of the country for a number of years but yet isolated blocks, which are not required as catchment areas or for any other purpose are kept apart as forest reserves.

What happened was that the Government Agent and the Mudaliyar got together in the olden days and decided that these isolated blocks of land should be set apart as forest reserves, and the Forest Department has taken over such blocks. For instance, in Batapola you find an isolated block of 67 acres set apart as a forest reserve. There is not even much timber on that land, and it is of no importance even from the point of view of water-supply as there is no stream running through it. When we apply for that land for the purpose of increasing the food supply, we receive the stereotyped reply from the Minister and the Department that it is a forest reserve and cannot be released.

The people in that area have not been given a single block of land to cultivate food crops. I drew the attention of the hon. Member for Balapitiya (Mr. Kularatne) to the matter. I am quite acquainted with the place because I have to pass it frequently on the way to Elpitiya. You find the Hollebedde reserve in one place and these 67 acres, denuded of large trees—it is patana land—

[Mr. Abeywickrama.]
in another. But it is extremely difficult for the people to get a satisfactory reply when they apply for these lands.

The Chairman: Has the hon. Member many more points to make on the subject?

***Mr. Abeywickrama:** Yes, Sir, but I shall finish in two minutes.

I want the Hon. Minister to give an assurance that when application is made for certain lands, if on examination it is found that those lands are classed as forest reserves for no obvious reason—there are at least about 500 acres of such isolated patches of land—he will release such land at least to the people in my area. We will not make such requests if we know that those lands are reserved for some valid reason.

***The Hon. Mr. Senanayake:** I cannot give any such assurance, for the simple reason that I do not know what the lands the hon. Member refers to are. The hon.

Member knows that I have released to people in his area some 3,000 or 4,000 acres of reserved land. If there is any possibility of releasing further land to encourage the food-production "drive", I shall certainly see that as much land as possible is released. But if such an assurance is demanded from me merely to pass this vote, I shall not give it.

Committee to report progress, and ask leave to sit again.

The Chairman: The Council will now resume.

The Council having resumed—

MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER took the Chair.

Committee report progress; to sit again.

ADJOURNMENT.

It being 6 p.m., MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER adjourned the Council without Question put, pursuant to Emergency Standing Order 2 (3), until 10 a.m. on Thursday, August 27, 1942.