

SPEECH MADE BY THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AT THE SECOND READING OF THE POLICE (AMENDMENT) BILL, 1960 AT THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MEETING IN KUALA LUMPUR ON THE 23RD JUNE, 1960

I beg to move that a Bill intituled "An Act to amend the Police Ordinance, 1952" be read a second time.

Sir, the aim of this Bill is to insert two new provisions in the Police Ordinance. The first provision is concerned with curfew measures. I should like to recall to Honourable Members of this House that, when I moved the second reading of the Public Order (Preservation) Ordinance in October, 1958, I spoke about the value of curfew measures in bringing riotous situations under control in Singapore and Penang. Such measures not only prevent mobs from forming but also hamper the activities of trouble makers and give individuals time to cool off in the quiet of their homes.

The curfew measures under the Public Order (Preservation) Ordinance can, however, only be imposed in an area in respect of which the Minister of Defence has issued a proclamation under the Ordinance. Such a proclamation would only be issued in a grave situation and there is necessarily at least some hours delay before a proclamation could be signed and made effective. If a curfew can be made as proposed in this Bill, it will help to prevent acts of violence pending a proclamation and may well have such a stabilising effect as to render a proclamation unnecessary at all.

The power to impose a temporary curfew is therefore required, in addition to the curfew powers under the Public Order (Preservation) Ordinance, and this Bill provides that, if a Chief Police Officer considers it necessary in the interest of public security, he may impose a curfew for a maximum period of 24 hours, which the Minister of Defence can extend for a further period of up to 14 days.

Sir, I should like to conclude my explanation by emphasising that this power of curfew is a preventive power which will rarely

be needed but which must be available to Chief Police Officers if they are to fulfil their duties of maintaining public order and of safeguarding the lives and property of the people of this country.

The second provision in the Bill is designed to enable persons to be appointed under the Police Ordinance as auxiliary police officers with honorary ranks. Auxiliary police appointments, which are unpaid, enable the status and powers of a police officer to be conferred as a temporary measure on persons other than the regular police, such as, for example, on army officers who are attached to and working with police units, and on members of specialised units, such as the Senoi Pra'ak, which are raised to operate in co-ordination with the police and armed forces. Some Home Guard units in certain kampongs in the border area are also being retained as Auxiliary Police Units.

The amendment provides for the making of regulations and rules under the Police Ordinance to govern such matters as the terms of engagement, the equipment and arms and the training of auxiliary police and also such matters as disability pensions and pensions to dependants. Such appointments are at present made under the Emergency Regulations, but this amendment is required to enable similar appointments to be made in the future as they can provide a most useful reinforcement to the regular Police.

Sir, I beg to move.