

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana (Constitution) (Temporary Provisions) Orders in Council, 1953 and 1956).

Thursday, 15th December, 1960

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. Major I. O. Smith, O.B.E. (acting)

Attorney-General, Hon. A. M. I. Austin, Q.C.

Financial Secretary, Hon. W. P. D'Andrade.

ex officio

The Honourable B. H. Benn

—Member for Essequibo River

(Minister of Natural Resources)

„ „ Janet Jagan

—Member for Western Essequibo

(Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)

„ „ Ram Karran

—Member for Demerara-Essequibo

(Minister of Communications and Works)

„ „ B. S. Rai

—Member for Central Demerara

(Minister of Community Development and Education).

Mr. R. B. Gajraj

—Nominated Member

„ W. O. R. Kendall

—Member for New Amsterdam

„ R. C. Tello

—Nominated Member

„ F. Bowman

—Member for Demerara River

„ L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.

—Member for Georgetown Central

„ S. Campbell

—Member for North Western District

„ A. L. Jackson

—Member for Georgetown North

„ E. B. Beharry

—Member for Eastern Demerara

„ S. M. Saffee

—Member for Western Berbice

„ Ajodha Singh

—Member for Berbice River

„ Jai Narine Singh

—Member for Georgetown South

„ R. E. Davis

—Nominated Member

„ A. M. Fredericks

—Nominated Member

„ H. J. M. Hubbard

—Nominated Member

Mr. I. Crum Ewing—Clerk of the Legislature

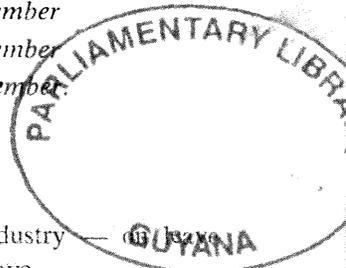
Mr. E. V. Viapree—Assistant Clerk of the Legislature.

ABSENT :

The Hon. Dr. C. B. Jagan, Minister of Trade and Industry

Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E., Nominated Member—on leave.

The Clerk read prayers.



MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, 9th December, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DR. JAGAN'S ABSENCE

Mr. Speaker: I wish to announce that the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan) is out of the Colony on official duty but expects to return by the 19th inst.

PAPERS LAID

The Financial Secretary (Mr. D Andrade): I beg to lay on the Table:

- (i) Post Office (Overtime) Regulations, 1960 (No. 25), made under Section 97 of the Post and Telegraph Ordinance, Chapter 132.
- (ii) Report of the Directors of the New Widows and Orphans' Fund on the working of the Fund for the year 1959, together with the Director of Audit's Report and Certificate thereon.
- (iii) Order in Council No. 95 of 1960 made under Section 8 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, on the 24th day of November, 1960, and published in the Gazette on the 10th of December, 1960.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES
MOTIONS

The Financial Secretary: I beg to give notice of the following Motion:

"Be it resolved: That this Council in terms of Section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 95 of 1960, which was made on the 24th day of November, 1960, and published in the Gazette on the 10th of December, 1960."

CONTINUANCE OF RENT RESTRICTION ORDINANCE

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan): I beg to give notice of the following Motion:

"Whereas the Rent Restriction Ordinance, Chapter 186, came into operation on the 8th day of November, 1941;

And whereas Section 33 of the said Ordinance provides that the Ordinance shall continue in force up to and including the 31st day of December, 1951, but that, prior to the expiration thereof, the Legislative Council may, by resolution published in the Gazette, declare that the said Ordinance shall continue in operation for a further period of one year, and that thereafter may from time to time declare that the said Ordinance shall continue in operation:

And whereas the said Ordinance has been continued in operation until the 31st December, 1960:

And whereas it is considered expedient that the said Ordinance shall be continued in operation for a further period of one year;

Now, therefore, be it resolved: That the Rent Restriction Ordinance, Chapter 186, shall continue in force for a period of one year up to and including the 31st day of December, 1961."

ORAL ASKING AND ANSWERING
OF QUESTIONSLEGISLATION FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT REFORM

Mr. Hubbard: I beg to ask the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education Question No. 1 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

Will the Honourable Minister of Community Development and Education please say:

- (1) How many more Ordinances will have to be enacted to give full effect to the Government's proposals for Local Government Reform?
- (2) What subjects will these Ordinances deal with?
- (2) What stage has been reached in the preparation of each of the respective Bills?

The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Rai): The replies to the hon. Member's Questions are:

- (1) Two more Ordinances will have to be enacted to give full effect to the Government's proposals for Local Government reform, and parts of the Public Health Ordinance will have to be amended.
- (2) The first Ordinance will deal with the setting up of the Local Government Service Commission and all matters relating to staff. The second Ordinance will contain all the enabling powers which it is proposed to give to the Local Authorities for the time being.

As already stated, the Public Health Ordinance will have to be amended.

- (3) The Local Government Service Commission Bill has been drafted.

The Powers Bill is half completed, and drafts of several of the amendments to the Public Health Ordinance have been prepared.

It should be noted that —

- (a) The Financial Instructions to be issued under the Local Authorities (Constitution, Election Procedure and Financial Provisions) Ordinance have been completed.
- (b) Draft Regulations prescribing conditions of service of staff will also have to be prepared by the Local Government Reorganisation Team for consideration by the Local Government Service Commission.

Mr. Hubbard: As a Supplementary Question, can the Minister give us any idea, in point of time, when he will

be ready to put this legislation before the Council?

The Minister of Community Development and Education: It is expected that all the legislation will be drafted and put before the Council before 31st July next year.

Mr. Burnham: As a further Supplementary Question, can the hon. Minister tell us why the 31st July next year when this Government had made up its mind since 1958?

The Minister of Community Development and Education: Because we think seven months more are necessary to complete the legislation.

Mr. Burnham: Why are seven months more necessary? Government has already had 24 months.

The Minister of Community Development and Education: The Minister is continually being solicited by the Georgetown Town Council to pass all sorts of amending legislation to correct errors and omissions perpetrated by the Town Council, and that naturally distracts him somewhat. *[Laughter]*.

Mr. Burnham: Do I understand that slight amendments to Chapter 152 took up so much of the Minister's time and the Law Officers' time?

The Minister of Community Development and Education: The answer is yes.

Mr. Burnham: How many of those amendments mentioned have been considered within the last two years?

The Minister of Community Development and Education: I do not recall.

Mr. Burnham: Will the Minister therefore admit that his first answer was both illogical and inaccurate?

The Minister of Community Development and Education: The Minister does not admit that. *[Laughter]*.

**LEGISLATION TO REGULATE
HIRE- PURCHASE AGREEMENT**

Mr. Burnham: I beg to ask the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry Question No. 2 standing in my name on the Order Paper: When does Government propose to introduce a Bill to regulate Hire-purchase Agreements?

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing: On behalf of the Minister of Trade and Industry, I wish to say that the answer to the hon. Member's Question is as follows: Preparation of a Bill with respect to Hire-Purchase and sale upon credit of goods, etc. is almost complete. The Ministry hopes that it will be before the Legislative Council very soon.

Mr. Burnham: As a Supplementary Question, can the Minister tell us how soon?

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing: The draft legislation is in its final stage.

Mr. Burnham: The hon. Minister has not answered my last question. I asked: How soon?

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing: The drafting of the legislation is in its last stages. After that I do not envisage that there will be any great period of time from the moment the legislation is submitted to the Ministry and the time it is gazetted.

Mr. Burnham: Is it possible for the Minister to tell us in terms of days, weeks or months, how soon it is likely to be placed before this Council?

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing: As the hon. Member is aware, I am not working in the Attorney-General's office. I am dependent on the officers there who have quite a bit of work to do, and I think they are giving priority to this drafting work.

Mr. Burnham: Will the Minister tell us whether the Attorney-General's

Office has been responsible for this delay for one year after the Motion was passed in this Council?

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing: It has been my experience that before legislation can be brought to the stage when it is gazetted there are periods of consultation, examination and re-examination before the final draft is ready for publication. I believe that the hon. Member should be aware that there is need for caution in preparing legislation which is so important, and which is entirely new to this country. We do not wish to make any errors. We are doing the best we can to the best of our ability, to bring this legislation, which is very necessary, before the Council at an early date.

Mr. Burnham: As a further Supplementary Question, will the hon. Minister state whether it is true that the Law Officers submitted their first draft over six months ago to the Ministry?

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing: I do not have the file before me. I cannot say, but I do know that with most legislation, the draft passes back and forth between the Ministry and the Attorney-General's office until the final amendments, which the policy-makers have in mind, are brought into legislation. It is very rare that draft legislation is totally acceptable on its first submission.

B.G. AIRWAYS (GOVT.)

Mr. Tello: Mr. Speaker, I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Communications and Works, Question No. 3 standing in my name on the Order Paper: Will the Minister of Communications and Works state whether Government is negotiating the sale of B.G. Airways (Govt.) to the British Overseas Airways Corporation, and if so, what progress has been made in the negotiations?

The Minister of Communications and Works: Government is not negotiating the sale of British Guiana Airways

(Govt.) to the British Overseas Airways Corporation. I have taken advantage of the opportunity afforded by the presence in this area of the Chairman of the B.O.A.C. and the Chairman of the Corporation's Associated Companies to discuss with them some of our domestic air transport problems with a view to seeing if there is any way in which the Corporation can be of assistance to us in dealing with these problems.

Mr. Tello: As a Supplementary Question, may I ask whether the assistance sought of the B.O.A.C. would involve, also, the possible sale of B.G. Airways to B.O.A.C.?

The Minister of Communications and Works: The answer is in the negative.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Financial Secretary: I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the

Loan (Electricity) Bill, 1960.

Sir, I propose with the Council's consent, to proceed with the Second Reading of the Bill on Wednesday next, 21st December.

The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran): I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the

Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 1960.

I propose, with the Council's approval, to deal with the Second Reading on Wednesday, 21st December.

I also beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the

New Amsterdam Electric Lighting Order (Extension) Bill, 1960.

The Chief Secretary (Major Smith): I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the

Amerindian (Amendment) Bill, 1960.

ORDER OF THE DAY

BILLS — FIRST READING

The following Bills were read the First Time :—

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the raising of a loan of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds sterling."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Electricity Ordinance."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to extend further the duration of the New Amsterdam Electric Lighting Order, 1960. and to amend the said Order."

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Amerindian Ordinance."

VOLUNTEER (AMENDMENT) BILL

The Chief Secretary: In moving the Second Reading of the Bill intituled an Ordinance to amend the Volunteer Ordinance, I would like to say that this Amendment is by way of a tidying up operation. It has been pointed out by the Secretary of State that the United Kingdom Army Act, which has been referred to in the Volunteer Ordinance, has been repealed by the Army Act of 1955, and Section 2 merely seeks to substitute "Army Act of 1955" for that of the "United Kingdom Army Act".

Section 3 deals with the substitution for the figures "39" of the figures "192". Section 192 is the relevant Section in the new Army Act and relates to the old Section 39.

In Section 4, there is the substitution for the word "court" of the word "board". Under the existing legislation, reference is made to "court of inquiry". That has been changed to "board of inquiry".

Section 5: The Cadet Corps was established in 1933 by Administrative Act and not by Legislative Act. It has been pointed out that the establishment

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of the Cadet Corps should be by Legislative Act, and Section 5 seeks to do this — not making the Cadet Corps a part of the Volunteer Force, but affiliated to the Volunteer Force.

I now beg to move that the Bill be read a Second time.

The Attorney-General (Mr. Austin): I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Council resolved itself into Committee and passed the Bill as printed.

Council resumed.

The Chief Secretary: I beg to report that the Volunteer (Amendment) Bill, 1960, was considered in Committee and passed without amendment. I now move that the Bill be read the Third time.

The Attorney-General: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time and passed.

EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Community Development and Education will move the Second Reading of the following Bill:

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Education Ordinance."

The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Rai): Mr. Speaker, this is a very short and simple Bill. It deals with the control and management of primary schools in the country. Primary schools, at the pre-

sent time, fall under three categories — Colonial schools, denominational schools and undenominational schools. With the denominational and undenominational schools, there exists a system of management and control which is commonly referred to as dual control. Under this system, the denominational authorities are responsible for the appointment, promotion and discipline, to a large extent, of the teachers who work in those schools and who are, in point of law, employees of the denominations. Government, on the other hand, is responsible for paying every cent of the teachers' salaries out of the public funds of the Colony.

Great dissatisfaction has arisen out of the system, and this has gone on for many years resulting in general discontent in the teaching service and in the community as a whole.

No less than 35 years ago, this problem attracted the attention of the Governor of the Colony, Sir Graeme Thompson, K.C.M.G., who appointed a Commission under the Chairmanship of Sir Charles Major, then Chief Justice, and the Commission reported as follows. *inter alia*:

"While fully acknowledging the great services which the churches have rendered to education in the past, we are of opinion that the time has now arrived to initiate a bold and comprehensive policy which will replace the existing denominational schools by Government or colonial schools."

No legislation was enacted in pursuance of this recommendation.

The Royal Commission which visited the West Indies and British Guiana in the 1930's under the Chairmanship of Lord Moyne, recorded in Command Paper 6174, Page 12:

"In schools at present managed by the denominations, if salaries are paid by the Government, complete control in staff matters should be assumed by Government, and new schools provided wholly from public funds should be in all respects administered by Government."

In 1941, the Educational Adviser to the Comptroller for Colonial Development and Welfare in the West Indies, Mr. Hammond, in a recommendation embodied in Sessional Paper No. 11 of 1942, stated:

(a) "denominational control affects not only the property but the teachers . . . The field of selection and promotion of teachers tends therefore to be restricted to their denomination and varies with the number of schools owned by the Church to which the teacher belongs. A non-Christian has little chance of appointment as an assistant teacher and no chance of appointment as a headteacher . . ."

Again, nothing was done by way of legislation.

In 1953, the first Minister of Education in this country, my hon. and learned Friend, the Member for Central Georgetown, Mr. Burnham, stated that he proposed to implement his proposal to remove dual control by way of legislation. Thirty-five years have elapsed since the first recommendation of which I am aware was made, and it is the general feeling, as far as I can gather, that this system calls for revision and reform.

During this year, at my instance, I had talks with the representatives of primary schools, denominational and undenominational, and suggestions were put to them whereby the country would have an integrated teaching service; whereby a Teachers' Service Commission would have been appointed to look after the appointment and promotion of teachers in denominational, undenominational and Government schools all over this country on the basis of academic and professional qualifications, seniority and so on. The proposals were put to them with a view to ameliorating the defects in the present educational system, but no agreement was reached with them.

About two months ago I had another meeting with them, in which I disclosed that Government proposed to

take over the management and control of the schools which were now being controlled by them and which were built out of public funds. The school buildings involved are about forty. This does not take into account those denominational schools extended out of public funds by way of newly built buildings.

In 1941 Mr. Hammond made certain recommendations in connection with this matter. A local committee was set up consisting of local persons, representatives from the various Governing Bodies of schools, and they submitted a report to the Government. The report was accepted, and in a Message to the Legislative Council by the then Governor, Sir Gordon Lethem, is was clearly set out that while the denominational system should continue to operate, it should not do so in an exclusive form, but that Government was free to erect and build its own schools. The provision of Government schools was envisaged and provided for in Chapter 91 of the Laws of British Guiana.

So far as the Dual Control Agreement is concerned, the report which was submitted by the Committee provided that Government would be permitted to put up schools on Church land and that such schools would remain the property of the Government. As far as I am aware, no one is challenging or saying that these buildings belong to any person other than the Government.

It is further stated: "Where a denominational school is rebuilt entirely from Imperial or Local Government funds on Church land, the land shall be leased to Government for educational purposes at a peppercorn rental at the rate of \$5 per annum for a minimum period of ninety-nine (99) years." No such lease has been executed, and the only inference that can reasonably be drawn from this clause is that when the Government puts up a new building on Church land, the Church is then required

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to execute a lease of the land to Government to enable the Government which already owns the building to make full use of the building for school purposes by having an assured tenancy of the land.

It has been argued by representatives of denominational bodies, that the intention was to give a lease to Government but the buildings erected on Church land for school purposes should be under the control of the denominational bodies. I have argued that if that were the intention, they would not have been required to execute a lease of the land to Government. Inasmuch as Government pays the salaries of teachers in over 300 denominational schools, it is now sought to control only about fifty schools which are now under denominational control — such control would be assumed by the Director of Education on behalf of the Government

This system of dual control is rather unsatisfactory, and, in the interest of our educational system, it needs a revision or reform. Under this system heads of various denominational bodies, for example, Catholic, Anglican and Lutheran, have said categorically that they will not permit people from other denominations to be headteachers in their schools. The Anglican Archbishop has said that he would not have a Catholic as headteacher or deputy headteacher of one of his schools, and the Roman Catholic Bishop is saying the same thing. The taxpayers are paying the teachers employed in these schools, and Government cannot permit that sort of discrimination to continue. The Anglicans will not have the Catholics; the Lutherans will not take the Wesleyans, and so on. As a result of this discrimination among themselves the educational system in this country suffers, and the most efficient qualified teacher does not always get the promotion which he merits. If we do

not have the best teachers in our schools, if the teachers who deserve promotion cannot get it, then there will be frustration and the education of the children will suffer.

Reference has been made by Mr. Hammond to non-Christians: Hindus and Muslims. One can hardly expect the Christian denominational bodies who discriminate among themselves to admit non-Christians as teachers in their schools. At a time like this when we are seeking to integrate the peoples of this country; when we hear so many people suggesting that there should be integration, we still find people objecting to our attempt to give people employment regardless of their religious persuasions. I think that the old system has outgrown whatever usefulness it may have had.

The school is no longer looked upon as an appendage of the Church in any part of the civilized world. In the U.S.A., one of the foremost democracies in the world, no church or parochial school receives assistance from the Government. As far as I know this system is supported by the President of America himself, a very prominent Catholic.

In Mexico, I am informed, no religious instruction is allowed in the schools. In Puerto Rico, a Catholic country, religious instruction is not given in the schools. I have assured all denominational bodies that religious instruction of the type which is now taught in these fifty schools will continue to be taught in recognition of their services to education and in recognition of their continued interest in education.

I have gone further and said that religious instruction of the particular denominational type will be ensured to those pupils whose parents are adherents of the particular denomination. In each denominational school, at least, one certi-

fied teacher will be made available to give religious instruction. I can see no real reason on the part of Church Bodies to say that religious instruction is not going to be given, that religion will be banned from the schools, or that the morals of the children will go from bad to worse.

I have been told that in progressive countries, religious instruction is not given in schools. It can be argued, as it has been argued, that Christian religious instruction should not be given in schools where you have Christians, non-Christians and atheists in the country. One is free to practise or not to practise religion. Where is the freedom to practise one's religion, when people are coerced to change their names and religions in order to get jobs or promotions in schools? Each week I receive complaints from people who have not been given jobs in certain schools as a result of this practice. If people wish to change their faiths, they should be free to do so. But where is the freedom to practise one's religion, when one has to change one's name or religion in order to get a job as a teacher—a job for which the salary is paid by the taxpayers?

As I have said the first Minister of Education in this country was in favour of the abolition of dual control. I am merely seeking to reform the system, and I have sought very sincerely to meet any valid and reasonable objections which have been raised in connection with this matter. The most important objection is the question of religious instruction. But the schools will be provided with teachers belonging to the respective denominations to give religious instruction to the children.

According to the Education Ordinance, it is Government's responsibility to provide free, compulsory, primary education. It is not the responsibility of private bodies to do this, though they would be free to open and staff schools and pay their teachers. That is the sys-

tem which, I think, they advocate when they say they want freedom to educate the children in their own way. It is not sought to interfere with this freedom, so where they are free to erect, staff and equip their schools that right is satisfied.

At the 14th Session of the United Nations Assembly, September to December, 1959, it was urged that non-self-governing territories should communicate to the Secretary-General information as to the measures taken and progress achieved towards establishing universally free and compulsory primary education. So that at the United Nations, a body on which world opinion is represented, nations are being urged to institute a system of universally free and compulsory primary education, which is what we are going to do now.

The B.G. Teachers' Association was also consulted in this matter, and my information is that the members are not in agreement among themselves, but that the Association as a whole would like to have a modified system of dual control of schools. About 20 years ago, however, the Teachers' Association advocated the complete abolition of the system of dual control of schools. There was a report in the "Daily Chronicle", but I am reading from "Thunder" of the 13th August, 1960. I quote:

"On the occasion of its Diamond Jubilee the B.G.T.A. spoke on this question. At that time, says the "Daily Chronicle", "hundreds of teachers from Demerara and Essequibo joined in the lively discussion (on dual control) and a telegram received from the Essequibo District Association stated that a similar meeting was held there. The news item was headlined:

'DUAL CONTROL MUST GO'

B.G.T.A. Urges Government to Assume Full Responsibility for Schools'

"In his Presidential Address H. S. Jackson declared that their references concerned not men but measures, and that he was 'inspired by no other motive than

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that of securing for the people's children the best a good government should give in order that life in the future may be much more comfortable than it is today.

"In those days, too, the Church rose up in arms against the idea. Jackson, while paying tribute to them for their pioneering work, had commented, 'We have to adjust ourselves to changed conditions, and the Church, too, should be prepared for its share of change'. But the clerics had organized themselves into what is known as the 'United Christian Front'. Said Jackson in reference to this body:

"This Colony is magnificent in many things, even in farces".

That is what the President of the B.G. Teachers' Association said 20 years ago. In 1956 the President of the Teachers' Association, Mr. F. R. Williams, now an Education Officer, said :

"We are not happy over the working of dual control of schools and hope to see some radical improvements in the policy."

This measure does not propose the abolition of dual control of schools. Government merely proposes in this Bill to exercise control and management over 50 schools, the buildings of which were put up with Government funds.

The Bill also seeks to give a right of entry on and after a date to be known as "the appointed date", whereby "any person shall have the right to enter into any aided school that is deemed to be a government school, or upon any land on which it is situate, for any lawful purpose in connection with the activities of the school".

Opportunity is also sought in the Bill to substitute for the expressions "colonial school" and "colonial school-house" wherever they appear in the Principal Ordinance, the expression "government school"; the substitution for the expression "colonial grant" the expression "government grant" and the sub-

stitution for the expression "colonial revenues" the expression "the revenues of the Colony".

I now formally move that the Bill be read a Second time.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn) : I beg to second the Motion and to reserve my right to speak at a later stage with your permission, Sir.

Mr. Davis: I rise to oppose this naive bit of legislation. I wish to remark at the outset that if the shoe had been on the other foot this Government would not have dared to introduce legislation of this kind. [*Loud applause from the gallery*].

Mr. Speaker: I wish to ask those persons who are in the gallery not to applaud or say anything. They must understand that in this Chamber they are strangers. We wish them to stay and follow the proceedings, but if they repeat their conduct I shall be compelled to limit attendance only to those who will conform to the rules of this Legislative Council.

Mr. Davis: I say that, because I see in this bit of legislation another attempt at vote-catching. Let me state my position here and now clearly and categorically. I am a product—perhaps not a brilliant one—of dual control as well as State-controlled schools. Like my friend, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, I attended St. Scots School. I subsequently went to an Anglican School, Christ Church School, and later Queen's College, a State-controlled school. From a lad of 10 or 12 years I have been connected with the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and in later years I advanced to the position of a member of the Governing Body, which I treasure. Therefore, if I should speak on this matter with undue emotion you, Sir, and hon. Members would pardon me.

I hold here a booklet produced a few months ago when the Methodist Body celebrated its bicentenary throughout the West Indies and British Guiana, and I would like to quote from it to show its connection with education in this country over the past 122 years. The Methodist Body had made its contribution to education in this country in good faith, and hoped that in due course it would have been appreciated. I quote from an article headed "The Methodist Contribution to Guianese Education" on page 84 of the brochure, in which it is stated :

"Charles Joseph Latrobe in 1838 carried out an investigation into Negro Education in British Guiana and Trinidad. His report was made to Lord Glenelg, the then Colonial Secretary, now better known as Secretary of State for the Colonies and for War. In this report Latrobe observes that in 1838 there was one Wesleyan day school in B.G. but there was none in Trinidad. The school in B.G. was under the general superintendence of the District Committee, Barbados Circuit, under the Rev. S. Mortier, Chairman. Latrobe says it was an excellent and efficient school".

The article goes on :

"Some who have a flair for naming institutions after persons call this school the Hornabrook Memorial School. Mrs. Hornabrook is recorded by Latrobe as having run a private school at Oona Creek in 1838. The original Abram Zuil school was 30 feet long and 18 feet wide, and at the time of its erection it was calculated to accommodate 100 children; that is twice the number allowed today by the Code of Regulations governing schools. The estimated cost of the school was £225 but the actual cost was £350—a not inconsiderable sum 122 years ago. It was twelve months from the time the contract was entered upon to the time of the completion of the building, but Latrobe paid it the compliment of its being one of the neatest and best finished constructions of its class in the Colony".

I mention that to show the Methodist Body's attachment to education. I have a personal interest in two of the schools listed in the Schedule to the Bill for annihilation. I hope my friend, the Minister, will accept that word, and note

that I did not say "liquidation". I refer to the Kingston Methodist and the Strath Campbell Methodist schools. The Kingston Methodist school ran into difficulties in 1953 when on account of its dilapidated condition it was considered unsafe and unsuitable to accommodate the increasing school population. The significant part of the matter was that the Education Department approached our Governing Body on the subject of the re-building of the school.

With your permission, Sir, I desire to quote from a letter that was sent by the Governing Body, through the Chairman and General Superintendent of our Church, to the Education Department. It is dated 31st January, 1953. I ask Members to note the date particularly—1953, a significant year—so that as the story unfolds, you will see that we were ultra-cautious and particular in these matters. I quote:

"The Director of Education,
Georgetown.

Sir,

I understand that the Education Department is willing to put up solely at Government expense, a new Kingston school on the present site, in place of the present building, the site to be leased to the Government for a period of 99 years, building to be the property of the Government, the school and school-building to be under the management and control of the Methodist Church.

I am prepared to recommend this proposal to our District Synod and to the Methodist Missionary Committee, provided that we have a firm guarantee from the Government through the Education Department that the building will be at all times under the control of the Methodist Church, and that the Government will not use it or consent to its being used for any purposes which are inconsistent with the Regulations which govern the use of Methodist Church Property. It would, I think, be necessary to insert into the Lease a Clause providing for this safeguard. No one can say at the moment what changes might take place in the Government of this Colony, and the Methodist Church would want to have as firm a guarantee as possible against its

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land or premises being used for any purposes which are inconsistent with its principles. I would be very grateful to have an early reply to this letter, in order that I may have something to put before our District Synod, which is due to assemble on February 4th"

This governing body was favoured with a reply on the 4th February, again, 1953. It states :

"Education Office,
4th February, 1953.

Dear Sir,

With reference to your discussion with the Building Officer and your letter of the 31st January, 1953, I am to inform you that when the Kingston School is rebuilt, it will be handed over to the Methodist Governing Body as a replacement. The building, although it will be a Government property, will be solely under your control, and any one seeking to use it must in every case obtain the permission of the Governing Body or its local representative. There is therefore no possibility of its misuse from the Methodist viewpoint. The land must however be leased to Government for a period of ninety-nine years under the dual control Regulations.

(Sgd.) Director of Education.

Now, Sir, this is what the Government, through the Education Department, gave to an organization which was a co-partner with them in this business of running schools under a system of dual control.

The hon. Minister, a few minutes ago, said he has given an assurance to the denominational institutions, and he went on to add about religious teaching and the like. But I want to ask : What further or better assurances he needed than this written word by the Director of Education? Yet—! Not so long ago, I think it was in Barbados, another politician, Mr. Albert Gomes, said at a Rice Conference that he was the Government and governments change their minds. Yes, that is true, but Members must remember the great howl and noise which I and a certain section of the community

made against those remarks, and we were right. So a Government must be expected to honour not only the written word, but the spoken word should also be completely honoured. I ask of the Government today: Has this bit of legislation revealed their policy to honour their obligations to the denominational schools or, rather, bodies that have, throughout the years, held their torch towards trying to get British Guiana into the state that it is today?

The hon. Minister, just now, spoke of getting the best qualified teachers. Fair enough! fair enough! But there is something else to be mentioned on a matter to which I was very intimately connected. I refer to the Methodist school at Strath Campbell, East Coast, Demerara. The school again fell and got into a state of disrepair. I was fortunate to obtain a site which seemed to be able to accommodate the school, in the area. I got three-quarters of an acre, but the then Director of Education said that that was useless—that it would be impracticable for a proper school with all its attachments to be run on that site. The governing body had to acquire two acres; and after that, my hon. Friend, the Minister of Natural Resources, who was then Minister of Education, gave us the green light to go ahead with our proposals and the school was completed about two years ago. When the Governing Body put all the effort they did so as to try to get this school going again, they did so on the premise, evidently at the moment false, that the government would also play its part and continue to honour its obligation such as the one I have just read to you.

Having explained that, let us go back to the value of some of the sites over the years. Let us take the one in Kingston. The Church, there, collapsed a few years ago. Our Governing Body did not want to honour, to its fullest, this partnership arrangement—and the Gov-

erning Body has had to control the size of its Church so as to accommodate the school. It is a very valuable property, but so as to accommodate the Government, it never entered into the minds of the Management or the Governing Body at all, that it must vary its arrangement with the Government, when trying to make do with what was left. We did this, again, in the spirit of utmost co-operation and in trying to continue the partnership that has existed all these years with the Government in this business of education. And Sir, let me state here and now: It has not always been easy to do this.

The Church, or rather, its Governing Body, has accepted management of all the schools, and such services which have been given freely, fully and at length throughout the years, and we have got reports from the Department. I see the Acting Director sitting there; he knows it and has sent commendations, paying tribute to the work of the schools management, and these may be seen from the reports by the Department over the years. After all these efforts we find that Government has introduced a Bill that, with the stroke of the pen, will oppose them. I see the Minister shaking his head. I shall be glad to be convinced otherwise. *[Interruption.]* The Minister shall have his opportunity, and I shall be glad to be convinced otherwise.

The Minister says that these schools do not always get the best qualified teachers. It is an open question which should come first; it is yet to be proven. You may give a man all the learning it is possible for him to acquire, but, if he has not the background of that necessary moral fibre, I am afraid the chances are he will put his acquired knowledge and learning, perhaps, not to the best use. What is wrong with religious learning and religious knowledge? I feel that our people have been all the better for it as

the years go by. Let us put it the other way: if our people did not get the benefit of this religious boosting, our situation today, whether it be considered good or indifferent, would have been, in my judgment, much worse.

The Minister spoke of integrating the peoples of this Colony. That is fair enough. The Methodist Body, to which I have been making reference, has always done that. We have Hindus and Muslims on our staff—I challenge anyone to say that my statement is incorrect—and we have had them all through the years. *[Mr. Jai Narine Singh: "Which year? That has recently been done?"]* Should you travel more, you would find out. We have had them in some of the Essequibo Islands' schools, and I would like to pay tribute to them for the work they have done in their schools. It is true that we have never had a non-Christian or a Muslim as a headteacher in our schools, but their time will come.

If the Government feels so strongly on this question of schools and of the fact that promotion opportunities are not given to non-Christians, then Government controls the purse-strings and, I hope, has the initiative for this situation. There is a crying need for more schools, and I feel certain that if the proper approach is made in this matter the number of schools could be increased.

I observe that the Minister is rather pleased to refer to places like Mexico where, he says, there is a strong Roman Catholic influence. The schools in our setup is part of the machinery whereby our people are made better citizens. If the schools have done their job efficiently, I take it that every denomination has endeavoured to produce better citizens. Our schools are used in the evening for other cultural and community advancements, and on Sundays we use the buildings for the purpose of holding Sunday schools and sometimes church services.

Mr. Speaker: Your time is up.

Mr. Fredericks: beg to move that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, be given ten minutes more.

Mr. Bowman: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Davis: Hon. Members, I thank you. The Methodists have certain strong principles to which I shall make reference in a few minutes. We use the buildings for holding Sunday Schools in the hope that we are making a substantial contribution to young citizens. When our Churches are in disrepair, we use the schools for carrying on our religious functions and services. At the moment we are doing that at Kingston. The schools are being used two or three times a week and on Sunday for the purpose of holding religious services. We have felt all through the years that it was fair recompense for our efforts to get along with the Government to use the schools on our lands, even if the buildings were put up out of Government funds. We feel it is fair recompense for that privilege.

Let us remember one other similar point: some of these schools, to which the hon. Minister has made special reference, have been erected from funds obtained from sources out of the Colony — from Colonial funds. That is another moot point. Hon. members will know that I refer specifically to the grants from C.D. & W. funds.

Plaisance is listed as one of the schools to feel the weight of the hammer. At the moment that school is overcrowded, and I am sure the Minister knows that. We accommodate 130 odd in the Church. In this business of partnership, we try to make our fair contribution not only in living up to the letter of the law, but in spirit and in deed. I would ask the Government to do likewise. Might is not always right; let them remember that.

Let us take another aspect of the matter. We ran into trouble with a school at Johanna Cecelia in Essequibo, which was deemed unsafe by the authorities for carrying on school work. The Church has hired a building, at some expense, in order to carry on its undertaking. The Church is carrying on the business of education at its own expense in that far sector of Johanna Cecelia, while it awaits the decision of the Government to do the right thing. We still hope that the hon. Minister will see reason, and that justice will not only be applied but will be done in this matter of dual control of schools. At the moment I am not saying that the system is not in need of being streamlined and brought up to date. I would be the first to agree with the Minister if he says so, but the answer is not to publish a Bill and raise the heavy stick. My friend here says——

Mr. Speaker: Please do not take notice of any remark—any aside.

Mr. Davis: Very well, Sir. I am not saying that the system of dual control of schools is not in need of revision or a stick in the arm. I am convinced that it needs streamlining and more realistic and modern thought, but it should be done around the conference table where there must be evinced a spirit of give and take. I cannot speak for all the Churches but I can speak for the Church with which I am connected, and I can assure the Minister that he will always find the Governing Body of the Methodist Church ready, willing and anxious to do just that — to give and take.

Mr. Fredericks: This Education (Amendment) Bill, 1960, is one of the most dishonest, one of the most flagrantly unjust pieces of legislation ever to be introduced into this Council under the regime of the present communist-inspired Government in power. [*Applause from the gallery*]. And it is indeed sad to think that this piece of legislation can and will only become law because of the votes of a few Members here who are

prepared to sacrifice the innocence of little ones on the altars of their misguided political aspirations and ambitions. Those Members refuse to accept the stark facts of life—that it is accepted communist technique to use and then discard any stepping stones in order to achieve their objective. And that objective, so far as education is concerned, is the complete suppression and, if possible, the abolition of all religions and the worship of the cult of materialism. Consequently, the Members who will vote for this Bill, and who are not members of the People's Progressive Party, deserve the sympathy and compassion of this Council.

The question of the dual control of schools between the denominational bodies and Government, has engaged the attention of past Governments of British Guiana and has been the subject of discussion and much controversy over the past two decades, and it would serve no useful purpose to recount in this Council the history of that long-drawn-out issue. Suffice that it be said that in 1946 the establishment of Schools Control Committees was agreed upon between the denominational bodies and the Government. Those Committees were to comprise of three members of the denomination and two representatives of the Government for each denomination, and these Schools Control Committees would have the complete management of the respective denominational schools, including staffing.

The decision to establish Schools Control Committees was arrived at in consultation with the British Guiana Teachers' Association who gave the idea their blessing, and the principle of the establishment of those Committees was ratified by the Legislative Council in February, 1946. It is sad to say that the appropriate legislation was never enacted, and the Schools Control Committees were never formed.

Also in 1946 a document known as the Dual Control Agreement was drawn up between the Government and the

Governing Bodies, in which Government undertook to rebuild and/or replace all the dilapidated denominational schools or those which were too old and had outlived their usefulness, on the distinct understanding that (1) the new replacement schools were to remain the property of the Government, (2) the lands on which the schools stood, and which form part of the schools, should be leased to the Government for 99 years at peppercorn rentals of \$5 per year. Not included in the agreement but distinctly understood was that those replacement schools would remain under the control of the respective denominations. To say, as the Minister has said, that it was implied in the agreement that the replacement schools were to be under Government control, is to put a false interpretation on and is contrary to the spirit in which the agreement was made. It is unthinkable, unreasonable and illogical to assume that the denominational bodies would ever have consented to have the replacement schools under Government control.

The hon. Minister of Community Development and Education is a man of courage. He should have come out and said boldly that it is the intention of his Government to implement the avowed policy of its Leader who claims that he is a Marxist. Karl Marx has said that religion is the opium of the people. The Minister has stated that out of the fullness of his heart he would permit a teacher appointed by the denomination to give religious instruction in each denominational school taken over. What he has not said, but what I am told took place during the discussion, is that that concession would only be granted if the denominations agreed to continue the peppercorn rental of \$5 per year for the land. What blackmail, what effrontery, what degrading tactics to be resorted to by a supposedly responsible Government!

The Minister stated that the teachers are not happy; that they cannot find avenues for promotion in their own denominational schools. Assuming

[MR. FREDERICKS]

that what he has said is correct, where will Government find the qualified head-teachers and deputy headteachers for the 25 new schools which his Government has stated publicly that it proposes to build each year? Those new schools could have provided avenues for promotion of those teachers and would have also provided places for those Hindus and Muslims who cannot now find promotion in the denominational schools. No one, as far as I know, has ever prevented the Hindus or Muslims from building their own schools, and if they have not done so they have only themselves to blame.

Government should give financial aid to the Hindus and Muslims to encourage them to build their own schools. In the political party to which I belong I have advocated such a measure which is not new. It has been adopted successfully by the Tanganyikan Government which has given financial aid to Muslims to build schools, so that the number of Muslim schools in relation to the Muslim population of the country would be on par with that of the Christian population.

The present Government does not seek a solution to the problem of dual control of schools. The present situation is tailor-made for the Government to exploit for its own end—the stultifying of all religious growth, which is the enemy of Godless communism. There is no such thing as a non-religious school. Education is a living thing; it must grow out of the substance of life itself. If a school is not denominational then it would be physically impossible to teach all the main religions. The Minister has said that a teacher would be allowed to give religious instruction in a Government controlled school. He knows as well as I do that that is impracticable, and that the teacher's efforts would be useless. If no religion is taught then automatically a new religion is created. That

religion will be the cult of materialism, which would be inevitable in non-denominational schools.

Sir, the materialist interprets everything against a background which does not admit the reality of an all-wise and superior Being. All that matters to the materialist is the pride of position and the glorification of material progress.

In these days of stress and strain there are so many forces undermining the moral standards of youth—as the cinema, for example. Parents in British Guiana are acutely aware of the urgent need for proper religious training, especially in the formative years of a child when he is at primary school level, and the catastrophe of juvenile delinquency has its roots in the failure of boys and girls to grow up in grace and wisdom before God and man. And if religious training is withheld or, in any way, restricted then such education must and will go through a despiritualizing process which, automatically, creates a fertile field for the growth of communism; and the objective of any such despiritualized education is to mould the minds of children to believe that they are animals and nothing more. By separating religion from education, children are not trained to believe that they are inviolable persons made in the image of God Himself. If there is no morality, there can be no other law but that of force.

Parents in British Guiana have always relied on education as provided by denominational schools to obtain for their children, a clear concept of morality dedicated to the belief that the universe is created by definite laws—the laws of God—and the violation of these laws incur a penalty quite apart from that of the laws of the land. Education in its truest sense, must not only train the will, but must also train the intellect to form a well-disciplined and well-integrated individual, recognizing the existence of a personal God and dedicated to the proposition: "what

does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and suffers the loss of his own soul?"

Mr. Speaker, this type of education is absolutely necessary. The preservation of democracy demands that we must introduce in our class rooms, religious truths which form the very basis of our existence. We cannot, we must not abandon our children to the evil designs of those whose gospel is hate and materialism. We have to see that they grow up in an atmosphere conducive to the democratic way of life. Today, the very basis of our society involves recognition of the proper use of the rights and responsibilities we receive from God.

The Minister has referred to America. I would draw the Council's attention to a clause in the American Declaration of Independence, in which it states that to secure those rights, governments are instituted among men. The source of democracy is God; and we cannot preserve our democratic way of life if we are to permit our children to be trained in Government schools and grow up as Pagans, deprived of religious training.

The educational crisis in British Guiana is primarily an economic one, as the resources of the denominational bodies cannot afford to pay decent teachers' salaries and also to build, maintain and upkeep proper school buildings. But simple justice demands that Government should undertake this function, and all taxpayers have an obligation to see that all schools in the country give religious training; and in so far as the denominational schools are concerned, they be allowed control of the schools to teach their particular religions.

The hon. Minister has stated that the present Bill seeks far less than he has originally asked for. He and his Party, Mr. Speaker, are fooling no one. Today, primary schools; tomorrow, secondary schools. Their ultimate aim

is complete abolition and suppression of all religious training. And it is indeed pitiful that the Hindus and Muslims are not fully alive to this fact. May they awake from their slumber before it is too late! May the Christians also understand, that if the present Government returns to power—[Mr. Benn: "Which it will."] Do not be sure—there will be no place for Christianity in their scheme of things. The Christian denominations should realize this fact which should stimulate them to purposeful and organized resistance against the insidious growth of communism in British Guiana.

Mr. Hubbard: Mr. Speaker, the proposition before us this afternoon is a very, very limited one. It is the proposition that certain schools, which are at present carrying on in buildings constructed at Government's expense, should be turned over to the Government for complete control in view of the fact that the Government has been, for a number of years, paying the salaries of the teachers in those schools and in view of certain other needs which must be met in order to improve our educational system. But our discourse has proceeded along much wider lines and, as is often the case in propositions which we come to debate in this Council, emotion rather than reason is the precept of some of the Members here.

The last two speakers, both representatives of religious bodies who will be dispossessed of their right to manage certain schools, and the emotion they put—

Mr. Fredericks: To a point of correction. I am not a representative of any denominational body.

Mr. Hubbard: I stand corrected, Your Honour—representatives or spokesmen. Sir, the emotion which they injected into their speeches has led me to search my mind to discover whether there is something deeper underlying their opposition than what appears from the purpose of this Bill.

[MR. HUBBARD]

My friend, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, opened his discourse with a vituperative outburst, which included me since I am a supporter of this Bill. Let me say this: that I have controverted with the advocates of dual control long before any member of this Government was active in politics. I have taken my stand against dual control because I look at education as a very important social objective. Education, Sir, is a process of imparting knowledge to draw out ability. That is what education is. The difficulty we encounter when we entrust this to religious bodies, is that they have preconceived notions about what knowledge should be imparted for the drawing out of ability.

We have not forgotten that when Galileo first propounded his heretical theory that the world was round, he was threatened with being burnt, and had to withdraw it. [Mr. Burnham: "Not Galileo, Copernicus."]. So valiant an advocate of religious control in the schools as Father Fenn has admitted in public that the Church made a mistake about Galileo. Education must, therefore, be entrusted to an authority which has no preconceived notions about knowledge.

The next point that I wish to deal with is the insistence by some Members that religious instruction or rather religious control of schools is necessary, if we are to have good citizens. Their insistence and, indeed, their emotionalism on this point have driven me to consult a document which is part of our history. I have here "The Demerara Martyr", Memoirs of the Rev. John Smith. In a Pre-factory Note prepared by Mr. J. Graham Cruickshank, Superintendent of Government Archives, is reproduced the letter of instructions handed to the Rev. John Smith as he was about to commence his ministry in British Guiana. I should like to read it. It states:

"In the discharge of your Missionary duty you may meet with difficulties almost peculiar to the West Indies or

Colonies where Slaves are employed in the culture of the earth, and other laborious employment.

Some of the Gentlemen who own the Estates, the Masters of the Slaves, are unfriendly to their instruction; at least they are jealous lest, by any mismanagement, on the part of the missionaries, or misunderstanding on the part of the Negroes, the public peace and safety would be endangered. You must take the utmost care to prevent the possibility of this evil. Not a word must escape you, in public or private, which might render the Slaves displeased with their Masters, or dissatisfied with their Station. You are not sent to relieve them from their servile condition, but to afford them the consolations of religion, and to enforce upon them the necessity for being subject 'not only for wrath but for conscience sake' (Rom. 13, 5, and Peter 2, 19).

The Holy Gospel you preach will render the Slaves who receive it the more diligent, faithful, patient and useful Servants, will render severe discipline unnecessary, and make them the most valuable Slaves on the Estates, and thus you will recommend yourself and your Ministry even to those Gentlemen who may have been averse to the religious instruction of the Negroes. We are well assured that this happy effect has already been produced in many instances, and we trust you will be the honoured instrument of producing many more."

It seems to me that these instructions give us the key to the great hate that is engendered over the proposition that some rational management should be applied to so important a sector of our social life as education. I am not unmindful of the facts when I look at this document, and recall that when we had our upheaval in 1953 when the people voted "unintelligently", it was said, and the Government that they had voted in had to be thrown out, that one of the first acts of the persons who took over the Government was to see to it that an additional religious programme was broadcast over the radio every week. That is how we got our Wednesday night religious programme.

I have nothing against the Churches. The Church, after all, is the political manifestation of the in-

dividual's desire to meet his God and worship Him in a relationship with others. But I do resent individuals coming here and suggesting to us that what was appropriate in the days of the appointment of the Rev. John Smith is appropriate in these days — it cannot be.

My friend, the hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Fredericks) told us that "God is the foundation of democracy". He must certainly have forgotten his English, because God is the foundation of theocracy; the people is the foundation of democracy. The people in the schools which will be taken under Government management by this Bill will have their right to religious instruction. They will have the right to practise their religion, and they will have the right to acquire knowledge without any inhibitions, without let or hindrance, without any prior considerations as to how this knowledge fits in with any preconceived notions of the world.

I think it is high time that we get away from this practice of calling by an ugly name something that we do not like, and cannot rationally argue against. I think it is high time also that we produce at the Table of this Council rational rather than emotional approaches to the problems that we have to consider. After all, we have a great responsibility, and it is only by using reason and judgment that we can improve the conditions of the people of this country, and make a contribution to the world at a level which will help us to live in peace and progress towards a better life.

Mr. Jackson: Twice during the course of his remarks on the introduction of this Bill, the Minister of Community Development and Education referred to the fact that when the Member for Georgetown Central was the Minister of Education in 1953 and a member of the People's Progressive Party, he undertook to abolish dual control of schools. It is my view that this does not embarrass the Member for George-

town Central, for he was a member of a political party which was sworn and is still sworn to the abolition of the dual control of schools. His function, therefore, was to carry out the policy of the party of which he was a member at the time. Therefore, it seems unfair to me for the Minister to make that statement in this Council, when he knows that the Member for Georgetown Central is now not only a member of another political party, but he happens to have the proud honour and distinction of being its leader.

As I listened to him and looked across the Table, I felt a great deal of sympathy for three Members of the Government who are bound to vote in favour of this Bill. Are they Members of the party to which the Minister belongs? When they vote in favour of this Bill, will they be accused, as the Member for Central Georgetown has been accused, of not being in favour of the dual control of schools? It is unfortunate that they find themselves in this Council in the circumstances, for I am confident that in their heart of hearts, if they were to be asked individually outside of this Council, each would say that he is not in favour of the abolition of dual control of schools. I have been informed that two of them are members of the Anglican Church, and one is a member of the Roman Catholic faith — all three of them are committed to the policy which the Church pursues.

It is not the first time these officials of the Government have found themselves in this embarrassing position. On another occasion, before this Government was in office and in power, there was a Bill to provide financial aid to secondary schools. When it was introduced, the Officer introducing it said that "it was the best scheme which was ever thought possible for the assistance of education in this country." No less than a year after he had made that statement, he had to come back in this Council and vote with the Government for a change of policy in that direction.

[MR. JACKSON]

I know that at the street corners the statement which has been made against the Member for Georgetown Central is being peddled, but I little thought it would have been peddled here this afternoon, when one knows that in party government every member of the party must follow the policy of the party, and if he does not he has to leave the party. That is, in my view, one of the reasons why the Member for Georgetown Central left the People's Progressive Party; he was not in agreement with their views in some directions. It seems to me unfair and wrong that some Members should take such an opportunity as this to accuse another Member of the Council of something which he did when he was following the policy of the party to which he does not now belong.

Having said that, let us put the record straight. This Bill has nothing to do with dual control of schools. If I heard him correctly, the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education said so. If I am wrong he is there to correct me. He said that the Bill has to do with the taking over of school buildings which were erected out of funds provided by the Government. Therefore, let us put the Bill in its true perspective. Because the Government has not been successful in getting the Denominations to accept the abolition of the system of dual control of schools, which was put to them, Government has adopted the attitude of "This building is ours. We are going to take it away." That is the pattern, and I accept the Minister's view that this Bill has nothing to do with the abolition of dual control. It is therefore a negative attitude on the part of Government in bringing this Bill before the Council. I am inclined to accept the opinion of one hon. Member, that it is tantamount to blackmail.

Whose funds have been spent on these buildings? Were they the funds of this country? Have those buildings

been erected with funds provided entirely by this country, or has the Imperial Government contributed a portion of the money? Considerable grants of money have been made from time to time to this country and to other colonial territories from the Colonial Development and Welfare Fund on the understanding that a small portion of the amount required for a particular project is put up by the Government of the territory. Is it a fact that all of these school buildings have been erected mainly out of C.D. & W. funds? If that is a fact, has the Imperial Government given any indication of its agreement with the present policy of the Government with respect to these buildings in the erection of which C.D. & W. funds have been spent?

If Government has found it impossible to secure agreement with the Denominations on the type of control which it should have on the schools I think some other form of action should have been taken. If it is true that the Denominations were under the impression and were given guarantees that the school buildings erected by Government would have been put under their control, on the understanding that the land would be leased by them to Government at \$5 per year for 99 years, why is Government now breaking faith with the Churches concerned? Those Members who have spoken before me, and I think the Churches themselves have made the point, that on all occasions they have been told that the school buildings which were being erected from local as well as Imperial Government funds would remain under the control of the Denominations. If that is correct, why should this Government try to repudiate the assurance given by previous Governments? Why should it try to destroy the understanding and goodwill which has been built up over the years? If such an undertaking was given — and I have every reason to believe it was given — then Government should not pursue this Bill.

Government should realize that it is moral that a succeeding Government should endeavour to carry out in many respects the policy of the Government that preceded it. I say "in many respects", for there might be some respects in which the policy of the previous Government might have been against the majority of the people and in the interest of a small minority, and it might be necessary for the succeeding Government to alter what was done by its predecessor. It does not appear to me that it is so in this case, because not only Christians but people of all religious beliefs share in the benefits derived from those schools. In my childhood it was my good fortune and privilege to have attended schools where there were not only Christian but Hindu and Muslim pupils. They received from those schools education which made them men and women of stature and importance, and when I look across to the other side of the Table I realize that everyone in this Chamber, whether born in this country or not, has at some point of time received education through the Christian Church.

At the beginning the Christian Church was the only body which was interested in the education of the people of this country, and whether it was the education of slaves, as my friend, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, has just read to us — whether it was to encourage them in slavery or otherwise, it is a fact that they received education which has now been passed down from their day and generation unto us. Perhaps if other people in other fields were in this country as long as the Christians were, they too would have established schools for the education of children not only of their own faith but of other faiths, because we know that what drew parents and their children to certain schools was not the denominations but the teachers, some of whose names were household names in this country because of their ability.

It is not a crime committed by the Christian Churches when they started education in this country. We disagree with them in many things, and perhaps we disagree with them too in the manner in which they run their schools, but is that any reason for us to say that they have been doing these things which are evil, as has been said by one of the previous speakers? I do not agree with the suggestion that slaves were educated for the furtherance of slavery, because it was education which caused them to rebel against slavery. If I were not sent to school I would not have been able to stand up and defend what I consider to be a right cause. Let us therefore give credit where it is due. Let us admit that throughout the ages, as far as our country is concerned, our education has been largely and primarily provided by the Church.

I understand — and the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, has made the point — that when the Kingston Methodist school was being rebuilt the Church authorities were very careful to ensure that whatever Government proposed to do would not take away their rights as regards control of the school. And that guarantee was given the Methodist Church that on the erection of that building, the Church would have retained control and management of that school. That was not so long ago. Is that on paper? Could it be found in the Minutes of the meeting of the Governing Body and the Education Department? Are all these things untrue? If it is on the file of the Education Department that that assurance was given the Churches of this Colony, why should the Government want to destroy that assurance? Has Government no regard for assurances given; and if it has no regard for assurances given why should it expect that other people would have regard for agreements?

If the Church was given an undertaking that it would be paid lease for 99 years at \$5 per year then, and those leases were not executed, whose duty it was to see that the leases were intro-

[MR. JACKSON]

duced? If it was the Churches' and they did not do so, then it was Government's right to say: "Let us have the leases prepared. If it was the duty of the Government, then Government has blundered, in that it has not taken steps to prepare the leases for the land upon which the buildings are erected. Both parties, perhaps, are at fault. It was left to both of them to ensure that the leases were made. If the Government was at fault, then why should it now come to this Council and say: "The Churches did not prepare the leases for us".

Supposing the Churches, in defiance of the Government, were to say: "Since we have got the buildings on the understanding that we would control and manage the schools and you are going to take them away from us contrary to the agreement made between us, then the land is ours, take your buildings off the land", let us see what will be the position. The Churches, perhaps, can break their agreement, too, if they want to and they can the Government in a much more difficult position, for the Government would not be able, within a very short time, to find land upon which to erect buildings for the education of the children who attend those schools.

It is right that we, here, should criticize the policy of the Government. That is, if we do not agree with the policy. We do not agree with this policy which is being introduced here today because we believe if it is accepted by this Council, this Council would be doing an immoral act. While it is true we are supposed to make laws as we wish and as we think, we ought, also, to give consideration to what is moral, and if it is going to be felt and held as an act of immorality, then this Council and the Government ought to say that this Bill should no longer be proceeded with.

In spite of the Minister's determination to bring this Bill here this

afternoon; in spite of his knowledge of what has transpired between himself and the Church on the abolition of dual control, he ought to see that from his very speech, by which he opened the introduction of the Bill, he admitted that it has nothing to do with the dual control of schools. It has, as he said, to do with taking these schools and putting them under separate management, because the buildings belong to Government. Had this been done before he attempted to secure the abolition of dual control, then it would be a different thing; but to do it after he has failed to get the abolition of dual control, is a dangerous thing, and it is something he ought to consider and say: I shall advise my colleagues that the Bill ought to be withdrawn.

Mr. Beharry: I am not supporting this Bill. First of all, if we were to look at the education or the history of education in this country, it would be seen that it has a Christian history. Every Member of this Council, save the American lady sitting on the other side, has been the recipient of Christian education or education in a Christian school.

Mr. Speaker: I think I must have told you how Members are to be referred to in this Council.

Mr. Beharry: I apologize, Sir, should have said the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing. Mr. Speaker; what does this Bill seek to correct? What is wrong with the education or the educational system in our country today, a system, as I said, that has made history of our education. The Government, as has been pointed out rightly by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, is deliberately seeking to bring in a new system, a new social system, and this is just an excuse, a deliberate excuse I must say, to destroy religious teachings.

I warned the Muslims and Hindus of this country, today the sickle has fallen on the Christian bodies of this country. Why has it fallen on the

Christians? We have to separate them if we are to destroy religion. And the Christians have been deliberately selected because the Christians are the best organised in this country. If you destroy the Christians, it is easy to attack the other less organised religions.

I find myself in a different position than those Members who have spoken on this particular Bill. Several Members, speaking on this Bill, have been defending the various denominations to which they belong. Unfortunately, I defend no Christian faith. I am not a Christian. I speak on this as I see the issue facing my country. It has been said that these schools which the Minister intends to take over—I was tempted to say “confiscate”, because that is what the Bill should have had — are not new schools in a sense. They were there before. That is what you have to consider — whether Christians, Muslims or Hindus. All these schools are just replacements of schools that were already there. Government saw the necessity of increasing space which was badly needed and assisted the various denominations with the burden of building these schools.

Schools are not built with buttons. They cost large sums of money, and every one of these schools is to be taken over — every one of these schools that was originally built out of the pennies of the various denominations. And I want to warn the Muslims and Hindus that the hammer and sickle may fall on them next. I say this without fear of contradiction, that if these schools were owned by Hindus or Muslims this Government would not have introduced a Bill of this nature, because this Government draws its entire support from the Indian community of this country. A recent example of what I am saying right now has been this Government's instituted legislation zoning rice mills. This cuts right across the support of the present Government. They realized that they would have lost votes, because the

majority of the people planting rice are Indians, and we saw them removing that Bill because the votes must be retained and retained at all cost.

This Bill does not cut across their supporters, hence let the Bill be brought before the Legislature. Even Members sitting among the “Opposition” aspiring to political honours, aspiring to employment—some people obtain employment by getting into this Legislature. Their conscience tells them that what this Bill proposes to do will be wrong, but they have to support it because some of them need employment.

It has been argued that the salaries of the teachers are being paid by the taxpayers. That is also a basis of the argument. The Minister should have said that the schools built were replacements, but he did not say so. The next argument put forward which sounds very sympathetic to the ears of Muslims and Hindus is: “Why shouldn't we take away these schools?” The taxpayers pay the salaries of the teachers, therefore it is fair that we should employ teachers who are non-Christians. Muslims and Hindus are non-Christians and we must provide employment for you, because you are our supporters”. Employment should not be generated by taking away schools. This proves that the Government has failed to satisfy the employment needs of this country.

What has the Government done to provide employment for the people of this country? Thousands of children are leaving school daily who need employment. Is this the way Government proposes to find employment for them? Is Government going to employ our children by giving them jobs in the various schools? In order to satisfy its supporters this Government is going to take away Christian schools in order that non-Christians can obtain employment. I will never stand for this. It is the contributions from Christians that have built these schools. What is wrong with the Government making contributions in

[MR. BEHARRY]

the same way as the Christians? The Christians have made a contribution by building schools to make the people literate. What is wrong in Government paying the teachers in these schools? The Churches are doing what the Government should have done. The Government has failed the people of this country. It should have built schools to satisfy the needs of the people, but it should not take away the schools from religious denominations who are making an effort to satisfy the educational needs of this country. All true and good citizens have every right to assist, and as Christians they have done a good job.

What is wrong with Government paying the teachers? Imagine the idiocy of this Government saying that it is taxpayers' money that is used for paying teachers! Are Christians not taxpayers in this country? Can the Christians be charged with discrimination in these schools? These Christian Schools, run by Christian bodies, open their doors to non-Christians, Hindus and Muslims. Have they ever said that they do not want Muslims or Hindus in their schools? Then why should not the salaries of the teachers be paid by this Government?

The building of schools and the education of the children should never have been the responsibility of the Church. This is a poor country. Whenever the leader of the Majority Party opens his mouth, he talks about the starving people of this country. He knows that the people need employment. I say that the Government should have continued to adopt the policy of encouraging religious and social bodies to build schools, and it would have been relieved of the expenditure of large sums of money which could be used for providing alternative employment for people who need work.

The policy of this Government should have been to create enthusiasm on the part of the religious denominations and social organizations, so that

they would put their shoulders to the wheel and build more schools. So long as the schools will be open to any individual, irrespective of his religion, let us encourage the people to build more schools. The Government should pay the salaries of the teachers and be relieved of the great burden of providing schools for educating the people in this country. That is a realistic approach to the matter.

Some people do not know that there are two ways to spend money: the economical way, and the other way of wasting it. Some people will waste money, and others will spend it economically. Economical spending is also tied up with proper planning. I will not accept the excuse that because Government is paying the teachers, it has the right to take over these schools and make the necessary appointments or promotions in them.

Today I heard the Minister of Community Development and Education referring to the iniquities of the system of dual control. He said that an Anglican Headteacher will never be allowed to serve in a Catholic school as a Headteacher. But I still prefer the present system than to have a system whereby in Government schools you will not be allowed any promotion or any transfer from one school to another unless you are a member of the P.P.P. I prefer the present system to the system whereby top promotions will not be given unless a teacher can toe the Communist line, or can teach Communism or Marxism for that matter.

Of course the Minister has paid very little attention to the Teachers' Organization—he has no regard for them. His desire is to serve his party; his desire to serve his party is so great, that he did not take the Teachers' Association into consideration. How can you disassociate schools and teachers from schools? That is impossible. Some people are blind in their ideology.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, spoke about emotion and emotionalism. Who is more emotional than the hon. Nominated Member in his remarks? No rational arguments were put forward, but everything said by him was a fine display of emotionalism. Of course I excuse him for his actions, although he has accused other Members of emotionalism.

The Minister said that the British Guiana Teachers' Association has not agreed to the abolition of dual control of schools. The Minister of Community Development and Education has no knowledge of the theory of education; he is a jurist. What authority has he so far as education is concerned? He should have taken the advice of his education officers who are best qualified to advise him on education. I thought that the Minister would have taken their advice before introducing this Bill.

I was surprised when I heard the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, drawing the attention of this Council to the fact that a school at Beterverwagting cannot accommodate the children, and that it was necessary for the denomination to accommodate some of the children in a Church. [Mr. Rai: "A school at Plaisance."]

Mr. Speaker: think he referred to Plaisance.

Mr. Beharry: I thank you very much, Sir. The hon. Minister has also corrected me. I am not a Christian and I do not know very much about these Christian schools, other than what I have read academically. [An Hon. Member: "Then why are you talking so much? Who told you what to say?"]. It is merely a matter of principle that we are dealing with. Is it not touching to hear the hon. Nominated Member saying that Christians and non-Christian children had to be accommodated in a Church, because there is not suffi-

cient space in the school to educate them? What more does the Minister of Community Development and Education want regarding the contribution these people are making to education in this country?

I charge the Minister with not having sought the initiative to create the incentive for Churches to build schools for him. He could use some of the money which he has earmarked for making more lands available to people. The Government should concentrate more on finding employment for the people and the children who will soon be leaving school. These schools are turning out thousands of children every year, and the school population is greater than the adult population. What is the Government doing? [Mrs. Jagan: "We are no longer taking advice from you."] Another reason given by the Minister of Community Development and Education for taking over these schools, is that he wants to see an improvement in the educational system of the country. He did not elaborate on this point; he did not explain the matter—I do not know whether he wants me to assume what his party believes in, inasmuch as I know he does not believe in it.

I have not heard any arguments advanced by the Minister to show why the taking over of these schools from the Christian bodies will result in a better system of education for the children of this country. I cannot see that the taking over of schools by Government will improve the present system of education. The Minister has sent a letter, through the Director of Education, to the schools Government intends to take over, to tell the teachers employed by the denominations concerned that if they so desire they can continue to teach in those schools.

Mr. Speaker: You have a few minutes more. If you can conclude your remarks within that time you can go on.

Mr. Beharry: This is a two-hour attack, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: You will have to get permission.

Mr. Beharry: On a previous occasion the Government Members threw out a Motion to permit me to continue speaking. I do not mind if they do it again. The Minister said that this taking over of the schools will make for improved education. I have said that a letter was sent by the Director of Education giving the teachers of those schools the option to continue their service. What an injustice to the teachers who have served in those schools and served them well! If those teachers feel as strongly about the take-over as I do, it would mean unemployment for them. They have no alternative.

We would all like to see our country developed. Ninety per cent. of the Members of this Council speak about development every time they address this Council, because a large number of people need work. Why should Government continue to spend more money in the social sector when there is a growing need for more expenditure in the economic sector? As I have said over and over in this Legislature, the unemployment situation in this country, because of the bungling of this Government, will get worse every year. But I guess that next year we will see a small increase in employment after August, because the membership of the Legislature will be increased. I know that the People's Progressive Party will make a very great contribution towards relieving the unemployment situation.

One of the points made by the Minister to justify the taking over of certain schools is that since Mexico has done it, it is quite all right for British Guiana. When we were debating the Cuban timber deal it was argued by Government that if Nehru, of India, and Col. Nasser, of Egypt, could trade with communist countries, it was quite all right for Jagan to trade with Cuba, but I pointed out that, unlike the leaders of our Government, both Nehru and Nasser are against communism.

Mr. Speaker: I think your time is up. There will have to be a motion to enable you to continue.

Mr. Bowman: I move that the hon. Member be allowed to continue for another 15 minutes.

Mr. Campbell: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member can continue to speak for another 15 minutes, but not this afternoon, as I am going to take the Adjournment now.

The Chief Secretary: I move that Council adjourn until two o'clock tomorrow.

Council adjourned at 5.10 p.m. until 2 p.m. on Friday, 16th December, 1960.