

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana
Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)
Order in Council, 1953.)

WEDNESDAY, 23RD MARCH, 1955

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT:

His Hon. the Speaker, Sir Eustace
Gordon Woolford, O.B.E., Q.C.

Ex-Officio Members:—

The Hon. the Attorney General,
Mr. F. W. Holder, C.M.G., Q.C.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,
Mr. W. O. Fraser, O.B.E.

Nominated Members of Executive Council:—

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid,
C.M.G., C.B.E. (Member for Agriculture,
Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Mem-
ber for Labour, Health and Housing).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Mem-
ber for Communications and Works).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E.
(Member for Local Government, Social
Welfare and Co-operative Develop-
ment).

The Hon. G. H. Smellie.

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj

The Hon. R. C. Tello.

Nominated Officials:—

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

Nominated Unofficials:—

Mr. T. Lee.

Mr. W. A. Phang.

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

Mr. W. A. Macnie, C.M.G., O.B.E.

Mr. C. A. Carter.

Mr. E. F. Correia.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb.

Mr. H. Rahaman.

Miss Gertie H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dey.

Dr. H. A. Fraser.

Lt. Col. E. J. Haywood, M.B.E., T.D.

Mr. R. B. Jailal.

Mr. Sugrim Singh.

Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. I. Crum Ewing.

Assistant Clerk of the Legislature—

Mr. E. V. Viapree (acting).

Absent:—

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,
Mr. F. D. Jakeway, O.B.E.—Indisposed.

Mr. W. J. Raatgever, C.B.E. De-
puty Speaker—Indisposed.

The Speaker read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Tuesday, 22nd March, 1955, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

MEMBERS ABSENT

The Attorney General (Mr. Holder): The Chief Secretary is unable to attend today. He is indisposed.

Mr. Speaker: The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Raatgever) is indisposed and will be unable to be in his seat today. Mr. Macnie may or may not be able to attend before the debate is finished this afternoon.

REPETITION OF PREVIOUS SPEAKERS' REMARKS

In connection with the debate itself, I would like to mention that I think it would be better if, in some way or other, hon. Members who have not yet contributed would avoid undue repetition of the remarks made by other Members with which they are in agreement. I do not think there is any necessity to emphasize certain views that are more or less held in common by Members. I do ask this with great respect in order to shorten the debate.

Items 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 in the Order of the day will be deferred.

INACCURATE PRESS REPORTS

Mr. Correia: Sir, before the Order of the Day I would like to draw your attention to an inaccurate statement in today's "Daily Argosy". But before I do so, I would like to say that my sympathy goes out to the reporters in the Press corner because, I maintain, they are at a disadvantage since the acoustics of this Chamber are at a disadvantage, and even the Official Re-

porters. I am recommending, Sir, that steps be taken to get Government engineers or Radio Demerara to see if something can be done to help the reporters in their arduous task.

In regard to the inaccuracy, if it were a small one I would have probably overlooked it, but the fact is that it changes up completely the meaning of something I said yesterday. On page 8, column 4, the "Argosy" says I maintained that—

"Collectively we will be able to enter big bargaining. The shipping rates, I maintain, are killing our industry"

I meant the timber industry. The report goes on—

"Only timber can be shipped from British Guiana as that can stand the high rate."

I emphatically said that only greenheart can be shipped from this country on account of the great demand for it and the high prices the exporters get for it, but that the cheaper timber cannot compete with other timber of like quality from other parts of the world. I would like the statement to be corrected, because it completely changes the sense of what I said.

Mr. Speaker: It is sometimes said that the blame lies with the "printer's devil" or the sub-editor. But I would ask that those words be included in the hon. Member's remarks. Is any representative of the Argosy" here?

Mr. Cummings: (Member for Labour, Health and Housing): Sir, before you speak to the representatives, may I add—

Mr. Speaker: I am not speaking to them: I am just finding out if they are here. (*Turning to the Press representatives*) You have heard what Mr. Correia has said

Mr. Cummings: There are so many inaccuracies and omissions in my speech that it would serve no useful purpose to

refer to them at all. But I would like to say for the record, that the inaccuracies were perpetrated by that newspaper.

Mr. Speaker: I think we shall have to ask the hon. Member for Communications and Works, to see what can be done to improve the acoustics within the Council Chamber.

Mr. Kendall: Would you like to make an observation that it should be done?

Mr. Speaker: I have said much about the matter, from time to time. I have spoken to the Postmaster General himself.

Mr. Kendall: I would like to get a Minute from you.

Mr. Speaker: It is a question of lack of hearing aids, if I may say so.

Mr. Kendall: I will see about it, Sir.

BAD CONDITION OF EAST COAST ROAD

Dr. Fraser: I desire to draw the Council's attention to the condition of the public road between Georgetown on the one side and Rosignol—Blairmont on the other side. I travelled over the road this morning, and I will say that it is in an extremely shocking condition. There is no material at the side of the road to repair it, although I saw in one of last Sunday's newspaper that granite will be taken up there—the Berbice end. I saw about three small truck-loads of granite which were intended to repair about 50 miles of the roadway which is in an extremely bad condition. Last year we were told in Finance Committee that a new road would be started from the first of this year, but up to now there is no sign of this, and if the erosion continues, the road will become extremely difficult to be used within the next few weeks.

Mr. Sugrim Singh : I have had some complaints from the bus owners in this area, Your Honour, and I am told that if conditions continue they would have to come off the road entirely, as the same road forms part of the Mahaicony branch road. The road was extended so as to serve De Hoop, but if the rain continues for another week or so the bus service would have to be held up. I understand that some effort is being made to resort to the hire of private lorries, but they can hardly stand up to the work on that road. I hope something will be done to relieve this situation, especially for the benefit of people residing in the West Coast Berbice area.

Mr. Jialal: I want to say something about this matter. I know that efforts are being made right now to alleviate this position. The P.W.D. has made certain efforts, and if the officer concerned is given a free hand we might be able to tide over the pressing difficulty shortly. However, I shall draw the attention of the hon. Member to the fact that stone is being supplied for the Government stock pile right now, but the people concerned are not being given the facilities they should have. I feel that they should be given priority because of certain difficulties existing at present. I know that trucks went into the Public Works yard at 6.30 o'clock this morning, but never left until 10.30 o'clock. I wish to recommend to the hon. Member that the services of that yard should be put on an every-day basis until conditions are somewhat better. There are no transport facilities available for speeding up the work, and we are going to have to work however we can in order to assist. I would like to know that every effort will be made to give priority to the vehicles concerned, in order that the present difficulties might be solved satisfactorily.

Mr. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works): In the first place I would like to thank the last speaker for the observations he has made; I will surely give them careful consideration. As regards the first two speakers, I myself have had the misfortune of travelling over the road every week, and I know what conditions are like on it. I must say that I am very worried over this road, and I have asked my technical advisers to do everything possible to improve the situation. It is true that the number of trucks working on the road at present is very small. I have been told that arrangements are being made to haul the stone by river, and a few pontoons will be built from Ruimveldt to the Corentyne in order to assist in relieving the situation. I can assure hon. Members that I am doing everything possible to improve the situation when we can get the necessary trucks on the road.

Mr. Speaker: Is there any question of there being no Government funds?

The Financial Secretary: Not as far as I am aware, Sir.

Mr. Kendall: I am glad for the observation made by the hon. the Financial Secretary.

BRITISH CARIBBEAN FEDERATION

Council resumed the debate on the following motion by the Rev. Mr. Bobb:

"That this Council, having noted the steps which are being taken by other Caribbean Governments and by Her Majesty's Government towards the creation of a British Caribbean Federation, and the statement of the Secretary of State for the Colonies in Parliament to the effect that the constitutional instruments will provide that British Guiana and other territories which might care to do so will be quite free to join the Federation, is of

the opinion that British Guiana should join the Federation, and that the question of this country's participation therein should be re-examined.

This Council further prays His Excellency the Governor to take such steps as he may deem fit to keep British Guiana in close touch with the action now proceeding towards the setting up of the Federation, and to ascertain the state of public opinion in this country towards participation in the Federation."

The Financial Secretary: Sir, this debate has now entered its seventh day and I think that so much has been said on the subject that I would be surprised if anything new can be added. I have not risen to speak in advocacy of Federation. I think that has already been more effectively done than I could pretend to be able to do. What I propose to speak on is the question asked by the hon. Mr. Sugrim Singh—"What is Federation, and what are the benefits to be derived from Federation?"

Before I get down to this aspect of the subject I join in congratulating the mover of the motion for the very able manner in which he presented it to the Council. I do not think I can pay him any more deserving tribute than when I say that if I were not in favour of Federation, in rising to speak on the matter I would have been constrained to admit, as Agrippa admitted to Paul when he was in prison before him "Almost thou persuadest me to be a christian!" And I think my hon. friend, being a member of the Cloth, will appreciate the sincerity of the compliment.

Notwithstanding, Sir, that the motion before the Council merely seeks an opinion on Federation, I agree that it is a matter of far-reaching and transcending importance. I think that both the mover of the motion on the positive side, and Mr. Sugrim Singh, on the more negative side, have done this Colony a signal service in the way in which they have focussed public

attention on the important matter of Federation. They have done more than that. They have paved the way for the most able exposition of the case for this Colony joining the West Indian Federation I have ever been privileged to listen to. I refer to the speeches of the hon. Member for Agriculture (Sir Frank McDavid) and the hon. Member for Health and Housing (Mr. Cummings).

The Member for Agriculture told us that this Colony is now engaged in a wide range of regional co-operation, and that in any Federation there must be surrender of power. Sir, I would add that this surrender of power has already taken place in so far as we are concerned in the field of currency, and that surrender has been so smooth, so effective, that Members are not even aware of it. I am a member of the Currency Board and I cannot say that I am conscious at any time of being dominated by my colleagues on the Board. So that if this Colony enters into Federation I do not think we have any cause to fear being dominated, as has been suggested.

I agree that Federation is not new. It nevertheless represents the unknown, and I think it is true to say that the human mind shrinks from and fears the unknown. Listening to some hon. Members who have spoken, it would seem to me that this Council as a whole is not as fully seized of all the facts for and against Federation, as it might be, and in this circumstance there has not been as objective and dispassionate an examination of the matter as would divest the mind of natural prejudice.

To support his case Mr. Singh has flown to the refuge of statistics. He has quoted authorities on Federation. I would submit that what Federation is, is not as important as what it would mean to us. Capt. Smellie, in ending his speech in favour of Federation, quoted from Julius Caesar. He quoted what

Brutus said to Cassius—"There is a tide in the affairs of men....."—I agree that Federation could be like a tide, but I say too that it could, in our case, be like the ever-widening concentric circles that grow from a pebble cast into the still smoothness of a pond, which move ever outwards until they embrace the confines of the pond. I say that the benefits that would flow from Federation could be like these expanding concentric circles.

Before I get down to discussing the question of the benefits that will accrue from Federation I should like to say that I cannot more completely agree with my hon. friend, Mr. Sugrim Singh, when he says that if Federation is to succeed it must be hypothecated on the free movement of goods in the area. By the same token then, I say that Federation with the British West Indies will offer assured markets on a silver salver to the rice industry of this Colony. It can do even more than this; it can afford this Colony a real opportunity to become what it has long aspired to be, but what it has not yet succeeded in being, that is the granary of the British West Indies. I ask my friend whether assured markets are not worth us anything? I am not referring to the 40,000 or 50,000 tons of rice which we ship annually; I am referring to four or five times that quantity. I would ask the hon. Member whether he is aware that our continental friends, Dutch Guiana and Brazil, are themselves engaged in the development of their rice industry? I ask him where, if not the British West Indies, are we to look for markets?

But the advantages of Federation will not be confined to the rice industry. Federation offers to the timber industry of this Colony the same thing—assured markets. I submit that with assured markets it is only left to the genius of our captains of that industry to produce their timber and other products

[The Financial Secretary]

according to the conventional and traditional needs of the market, in order to exploit it fully.

I have dealt with two industries which are already established and are geared for big expansion, but again I say that the benefits of Federation do not stop here. I submit that it is quite reasonable to believe that under Federation we would see the emergence of a great paper industry. It is an industry which we have often thought about, but it is something that has not yet come to pass. When we were engaged in our economic planning this Colony invited the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development to help us in that planning. The Bank sent a Mission to this Colony who reported that they could not in the foreseeable future discern any evidence of major or large-scale industrialisation in British Guiana, and they gave reasons for their opinion. They said that we did not have the market needed. We did not have the raw material, nor did we have cheap power. I am submitting that Federation will provide a market for a paper industry.

With regard to the raw material, I suggest that with about three-quarters of the whole area of this Colony covered by virgin forests, we have such material, and alongside of it are our rivers with their hydro-electric potential. I referred to this in December last in my Budget Statement. I say that under Federation it is easy to visualise the emergence of a great paper industry. Paper is short in world supply; most of it comes from outside the Empire, and it is a fact that as the standard of living of a community rises so does its consumer demand for paper rise. It seems to me easy to visualise then that under Federation the capital to develop such an industry would be forthcoming, and all the other advantages would very quickly emerge.

The hon. Mr. Sugrim Singh, in the course of his attack on Federation, said that the West Indian Islands were looking at our empty space and wanted to federate with us in order to dump their surplus populations in British Guiana. I cannot conceive that a responsible Federal Government would do such a thing. I cannot conceive that they would send ships to those Colonies where there are surplus populations, and that the authorities in those Colonies would tell their surplus people to get aboard the ships, and that when those ships arrive here the Captains would run down their gang planks and say to their human cargo "Ashore". Instead, I conceive that what would happen is that the Federal Government would appoint its own representatives and invite H.M. Government to appoint their representatives. The U.S. Government would be asked to appoint advisers, and that this body would meet and formulate a planned system of immigration which would be so complete that it would visualise the end from the beginning.

I think that the question of the surplus population of the West Indies has reached a point of importance where it would have to be dealt with at a very high level, and if this transpires we would see, I am sure, the early implementation of our major water control schemes which mean so much to us, but which this Colony is quite unable to undertake from its present resources. After those schemes have been implemented I can visualise a tremendous inflow of private capital for basic development. I can see that further money would have to be found for the building of roads, bridges, houses and the like, and I would say that the benefits that could flow from a planned immigration, such as I have indicated, would be even greater than the aggregation of benefits that would accrue from the expanding industries to which I have referred.

I must admit that Federation will also have its birth pains and its growing pains, but those pains will be common not only to British Guiana but to all the other territories. As I see it, Federation will offer a real challenge to our manufacturing industries and also to the rice industry of both Trinidad and Jamaica who are trying to establish self-sufficiency in their rice production. I submit that there must be rivalry in industry, but if our industries are properly organized and administered there should be no cause to fear competition. In any case competition would flow from the commercial end and it does not seem to be a matter which the Federal Government would want to control. I feel that we should all welcome healthy competition, but if industries are inefficient and not properly managed then, whether it be in a Federation or otherwise, we must expect the law of the survival of the fittest to operate.

I think that in my turn I should ask one question. The question which I would like to ask hon. Members is this: Can we afford to keep out of Federation? If the answer is in the affirmative, and if to that answer is appended the suggestion that we have a continental destiny and therefore we can stand alone, I would say that a continental destiny is merely a catch phrase. It is a snare and a delusion, and those who would seek to hitch the star of this Colony and the future of its people to a catch phrase as nebulous as "continental destiny" would be merely condemning this Colony and its people to the shallows and the miseries referred to by my hon. friend, Mr. Smellie, at the end of his speech. Federation, as I see it, is for us a great political necessity, because gone are the days when small communities of people, small Colonies and even small principalities, can stand on their own. By pressure of world events we have seen big nations coming to-

gether and banding themselves into blocs, either for the protection of themselves militarily or in a commercial sense. Therefore I say that small communities would be as great a menace to themselves as to their metropolitan countries. I say that Federation is a stern economic fact, and it is one which cannot be settled by an appeal to the emotions or to sentiment.

Speaking on the amendment which has been moved by the hon. Mr. Luckhoo I would say that I am sorry he has seen the necessity for such an amendment. I think it would be quite wrong for this Council to even consider its acceptance, because I think it is quite imperative that in a matter like this we should go forward and show our belief in Federation. To merely say that this Council agrees to re-examine the question when other authorities in this Colony have expressed their opinion in favour of Federation, would be to make this Council look somewhat silly.

There is one other point I would like to make. I can see a strong similarity between our position in regard to Federation and the stand we took in the Inter-island Steamship Service inaugurated earlier this year. When that service was proposed in 1953 this Government was asked whether it would join in the service. We replied that we were not interested, but in 1954, shortly after I assumed the portfolio of Industry and Commerce, Government reversed that decision. The matter was dealt with at the eighth meeting of the Regional Economic Committee, to which this Government sent representatives.

Our representatives played a decisive part in the deliberations of that meeting. They completely rehabilitated the influence of this Council in the councils of the Regional Economic Committee, and when that Agreement was signed this Colony was one of the participating Colonies in the steamship service. I say I can see, from what happened in the

[The Financial Secretary]

Inter-Island Shipping Service, history in so far as Federation is concerned repeating itself. I consider that what took place at that meeting was a great piece of statesmanship, and every Member sitting around this table was responsible for that decision.

I say that the functions of this Council are still those of leadership and guidance. I am quite sure that the manner in which we make our decision on this question of Federation will rebound inside and outside this country with a new meaning. I say that history can repeat itself despite what has been said; that it is possible for us to go in on the ground floor, if it is the will of the people of this country that we should enter into a Federation with the West Indian Colonies. I do not wish to repeat what other Members have said, but I strongly commend to Members of this Council support of the motion which has been moved.

Mr. Kendall (Member for Communications and Works): Sir, you have already intimated that Members should not repeat themselves in this debate, and I am finding it more difficult to add my contribution. As I sat here and listened to my colleagues, they have really presented a very good case for and against Federation. I think we can all agree that we have had a most stimulating and thoughtful discussion on this question. Everyone in this Council knows my views on the subject, and I do not think I have any desire to take up too much of your time in adding my small quota to this discussion. Like a few of my colleagues, this is the fourth occasion on which I have had an opportunity in this Chamber to say what I think about Federation, and I am happy to observe that time has not changed my views at all. As a matter of fact, I am fortified in my belief and the utterances I made then, and I am satisfied that the time is now that British Guiana should enter into political fed-

eration with the Islands of the British West Indies. The previous speakers have given points for and against the motion so ably moved by my hon. friend, Rev. Mr. Bobb, and I think it should form the basis upon which the public can express their views if they so desire.

For over seven years we have been playing with this subject of Political Federation, although we have accepted all other aspects of Closer Union. I am happy to say we are the third largest contributor towards that end. I think in our Estimates for 1955 we have agreed to support Closer Union and Federation to the extent of nearly half a million dollars in various contributions. Our reason for not accepting Federation, I am persuaded to believe, is due to an intense fear of human beings like ourselves, our West Indian neighbours, who through their militancy and their more sincere love for their country, have shown to the world their capacity for leadership. If it is our wish that we should advance politically—those people who always talk about political advancement—I think, Sir, now is the time to show our desire by joining in the Federation, so that our political advancement can be more assured. Recent events have taken us back many years, and I am certain that unless we federate we will not be able to take our rightful place in the councils of the world.

The Opposition, Sir, has made it one of its strongest points that we should not federate because, if we federate, we would have so many people coming into this country, thereby increasing unemployment which is creating some concern at the moment. I would like, Sir, to throw out a challenge to certain individuals, especially those in this Chamber, because they are men of affluence. I would like to know at what time in their public life have they ever considered

seriously the means whereby they can reduce this unemployment in a tangible manner? The Islands they criticize—Trinidad and Jamaica, and some of the other Islands but especially Trinidad and Jamaica—have public-spirited men who have become rich from the support of the public, and who have been able to throw back some of their profit into worthwhile minor industries, whereby the people are gainfully employed, and avenues are created, so that the money which otherwise would go out for consumer goods is circulated within the region.

I am persuaded to believe, Sir, that a handful of those very people within 24 hours can produce about half a million dollars and start some industry that can employ people. There is no need to be talking about what should be done for this great place that is regarded as having a continental destiny, and the people who can do something would not do it. I think it was Mr. Bustamante who made the statement some time ago that created much resentment in this country—that some of the leaders of thought here are shopkeepers who live on invoices. However crude that statement was, it is true. There are too many unenterprising people here who are unwilling to show their faith in this country. The time has come when, if we want outside capital, if we want people interested in putting money into the country, we too must show some faith in the country. The January issue of the "Caribbean Times" indicates what is being done in Jamaica today. They are creating a good many minor industries, and it is gratifying to note that it is said that most of those industries are kept up mainly through local investors being used to organise them.

In this Interim Government I was made the Chairman of a Committee to consider the advisability of the manu-

facture of leather locally. I am sorry to state publicly that after the first meeting I did not see the wisdom of calling another meeting, because most of the members were not enamoured with the idea of having leather manufactured here. Although we have over 400,000 people here and most of the raw materials can be got here, it was felt it would entail risk, a risk which investors would not have as the Banks would give the necessary accommodation. And so that is that. But in Jamaica, it is stated in this booklet, 14,000 pairs of footwear were being manufactured each week. In 1953 the factory's output exceeded 300,000 pairs of shoes, nearly double that of the highest previous year, 11,500 pairs of women and children's shoes, and 2,500 pairs of men's shoes. The production of men's shoes at that time was expanding rapidly and it is expected that the total for 1954 would be considerably higher than the 1953 figure, mainly because of the increase in the number of men's shoes made. That is just one aspect of the industrial expansion in Jamaica. In this book, copies of which Members have, they will see that other minor industries have been established in order to assist the people to find gainful employment.

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. Member say whether the leather was from local tanneries?

Mr. Kendall: As you know, Sir, I have experience in this line, and I can say I am satisfied that the leather is manufactured in Jamaica and is of very good quality. Not only is the leather converted into bags, but into garments, footwear and other items necessary in any civilised country. We have our cattle and our bark, but as I said before, the risk of spending money to provide gainful employment would not be taken by those very people who talk about unemployment and say that its existence is one of the reasons why British Guiana should not federate.

[Mr. Kendall]

There was another Member (Mr. Macnie) who spoke of unemployment. I am sorry he is not in his seat now. When he was speaking about it I wondered whether he was thinking that the closing down by his organisation of three sugar estates within a short time would help to reduce unemployment. People should not just sit and talk about their fears; it is also well that they should consider what should be done to reduce those fears.

You have said, Sir, that we should try not to repeat ourselves, but I can remember there were two aspects of Federation arising from the Rance Report which were not touched on by supporters of the motion, and I would like to deal with them now. The first deals with the proposal that 25 per cent. of Customs revenues should go to assist the working of the Federal Government. That figure was reduced to 15 per cent. at the London Conference, and it is said that it will be further investigated. Members of the Opposition wilfully forgot to tell the Council and the public that that 25 per cent. or 15 per cent. is based on imported articles. If those Members who talk about 'continental destiny' for this country, of its great potentialities, of the \$44 million that is to be spent on development, feel that the time would not come when this country would be self-sufficient and would be able through its development programmes, to produce articles which are being consumed in large quantities here, then I say all we can do, as the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, said, is to regard British Guiana as a dumping ground for the products of other countries.

When he was talking about dumping he was thinking about human resources, but I am thinking of goods that will come here because we fail to make British Guiana the country it should be. We have the possibilities for crea-

ting minor industries. The late Mr. G. O. Case submitted schemes in this respect, but the people who should go into them did not find them worth their while. Those schemes were taken up by the Islands, and today they are being industrialised in a diversified manner. If we continue to think in terms of remaining a primary producer whereby the things we produce and export will depend largely upon the world markets, then I say we are doing nothing. This is the time when we should try to diversify our economy for in doing this we would provide more opportunities for people to be gainfully employed.

All the agricultural schemes will not draw all the unemployed back to the land. The greatest unemployment is among the middle class youth who have gained academic qualifications, who must remain in the urban areas, and who cannot all be absorbed by Government or the mercantile community. They are the people who should be looked after, and they are the only people who can be absorbed if this country is prepared to diversify its economy and manufacture goods that can be produced here. If we produce more of the goods we consume, then this contribution from our Customs revenues which is being talked of as a disadvantage in participating in political Federation, will be reduced. It is solely based on imported articles.

There is another fear in this country that if we entered into political Federation we would lose some of the powers we now have. But Resolution 1 of the Montego Bay Conference states:

"...this Conference, recognising the desirability of a political federation of the British Caribbean territories, accepts the principle of a federation in which each constituent unit retains complete control over all matters except those specifically assigned to the federal government."

The Federal Government, in other words, will only have what you give to it.

Also, there were certain items peculiar to British Guiana which were not put either on the Concurrent Legislative List or the Exclusive Legislative List, and I hope that when Members of the Opposition put forward something again they will put not only the aspect of a paragraph that suits them but also the other side, so that the public will have a clear idea of what Federation really is. Paragraph 22 of the Report of the Standing Closer Association Committee says:

“One point perhaps merits clarification and emphasis, as it sometimes appear that there is doubt and misgiving about it. Under Federation, except in respect of the powers which are explicitly assigned to it, the Federal Government is in no sense ‘over’ the territorial Governments, and their actions are not subject to Federal sanction or review. The territories will keep all their powers except in so far as they specifically surrender them.”

Mr. Sugrim Singh: Will the hon. Member read a little further?

Mr. Kendall: I will leave the hon. Member to read it when he has an opportunity to do so.

The hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo, who is not here, asked certain questions, and one of them was: “Are we capable of expressing an opinion?” The hon. Member for Labour, Health and Housing gave his views on that point, and I agree with him. His Excellency the Governor, after giving the matter careful consideration and thought, endeavoured to create a Legislative Council with a cross-section of public opinion of this country not subsversive to law and order, and I think we are capable of expressing an opinion. Then the hon. Mr. Luckhoo went on to ask: “What is the value, and what is the force of such an opinion, when expressed?” Well, I think that by our expression of opinion one way or the other, the public would have a basis on which to arrive at some conclusion. I am confident that in time the views expressed here would

give the public a basis on which to decide whether political Federation is good for British Guana. Mr. Luckhoo’s last question was: “Aught we to express an opinion now,” I say, “Yes.” For a long time we have been fooling around this matter of Federation, and our indecision has done us more harm than good.

Think of this country, with its potentials—and I admit we have great potentials — and its men who have the capacity and the calibre to stand up against any of the West Indian leaders, and yet unable to decide one way or the other whether it is good for us to participate in something which has been accepted as good, progressive, and, I think, necessary.

I think our indecision since 1948 has been based on the fear that in the proposed set-up Bustamante, Gomes, Bradshaw and Adams would be the first leaders to be in charge of the Federal Government. Because of this it was felt that British Guiana should participate in all aspects of Federation except political Federation. That was very weak on our part, and because of our indecision we are placed in a position where we are unable to bargain effectively to get what we should have in any Federal set-up with the other British Caribbean Colonies.

I think the views we express now, and the goodwill we have in the West Indies would assist us in getting in on the ground floor, and in getting the number of seats we would like to have in the Federal Legislature.

I would like to make this observation. We have businessmen here, and they know more about company law and limited liability companies than I, but I think it is true that if one person has 10 shares and another person five shares, the person with five shares cannot get the same dividend as the person with 10 shares. There is no question

[Mr. Kendall]

whether British Guiana has contributed more than Trinidad or Jamaica to a federal set-up so far. In all our contributions to the various schemes and organisations we have never endeavoured at any time to say, "Because of our continental destiny, let us put more money." But when it comes to the question of seats in the Federal Legislature we say: "We should get the same number of seats as the others." That is not right. When our population increases and our contributions increase, then we would have a right to demand more seats, because seats in the proposed Federal Legislature will not be static. If it is said by the Opposition that the number of seats is based on population, then I would point out that our population is increasing and we can make a demand for more seats.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: To a point of correction. The 'opposition' as far as I know, has never said that the allocation of seats was based on population.

Mr. Speaker: Reference was made to Australia as the pattern for the structure, and that there it is based on population in some States.

Mr. Kendall: In regard to what you have just said, Sir, I would like to read from page 9 of the Standing Closer Association Committee Report:

"Our proposals represent no copy of any existing constitution, but what we consider to be the best adaptation to the needs, aspirations and circumstances of this region of all the devices and expedients of which we have been able to inform ourselves. We do not recommend any provision because it is found in any particular constitution but because we believe it to be the best for this region."

By this I take it that the Constitution, as framed, is not based solely on the Australian pattern, but if there is something in the Australian Constitution which suits this country I do not

think the framers are wrong in having it included.

I do not think I would like to say much more, because some of the points I had in mind have been already covered by previous speakers, and I always obey the ruling of the Chair. I have no desire to question your ruling Sir, but I am glad my hon. friend, Mr. Lee, is here, because his presence has reminded me of certain observations I made, and I do not like to say anything in one's absence. I desire to recall that the hon. Member attempted to observe that the reason why this Council considered the establishment of a West Indian nationhood essential at the moment, was the desire to create a "black empire" in these parts. For the hon. Mr. Lee's benefit I should like to say that there is nothing wrong in that, or nothing that this Government or anybody else can do to prevent it. Such an empire existed from time immemorial, and today we are not waiting on the West Indies to create it; it is being created where it should be created, and that is in Africa.

I am very sorry that a debate of such a nature as this has descended to such a low level, because of the personal views of certain Members who are forgetting the broader issues. There is no future progress for this Colony unless it can produce the kind of leaders we want — men who would be broad enough in their views to think objectively, and not subject their views to the particular community they represent.

I want to thank you, Sir, for your indulgence, and if it becomes necessary I will indicate any further views I have on this motion when the amendment is put.

Mr. Speaker: I should like to make one observation with reference to some remarks I addressed to Members who have spoken. I did not mean that they

could not speak, but I suggested that they should not repeat what others had already said. I myself cannot stop a Member who is desirous of speaking, but I know where I have the power. I can prevent any Member from re-introducing other people's argument.

Mr. Kendall : I think your observation is very timely, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: I understand that the hon. Mr. Farnum gave way to Mr. Ramphal.

Mr. Farnum: I would not mind going on now, Sir.

Mr. Ramphal : I would not be here tomorrow afternoon. I am very doubtful whether I will be here.

Mr. Speaker : I think the hon. Mr. Farnum will give way in the circumstances.

Mr. Ramphal: Mr. Speaker, I am very glad for the opportunity to speak on a motion which, perhaps, is the most important motion that will come before this Council for a very long time. Except for those times when I had to be officially out of the Chamber, I have listened to all the speeches, and I crave leave of the Council to make a departure from the habit of patting people on the back. I think that for a year and four months we have gone on patting one another on the back, so much so that it has become practically a custom of the Council. I think the time has come when we must have forthright and forcible speeches on matters coming before this Council.

For a very long time I have laid a certain fundamental basis for myself on which I consider public affairs should be dealt with. Cardinal Wolsley, at the moment when he was being displaced, gave very great advice to Cromwell when he said: 'Let all thou aimest at be thy country's, thy

God's and truth's." It is with this objective that I am going to approach this most important subject — the interest of my country, the interest of the God whom I serve, and the interest of truth.

The hon. Member who had filibustered for three days, ended his famous (may I say panegyric) speech by referring to "Paradise Lost". Indeed, we shall have lost paradise if we do not enter into Federation. (*applause*). And is it mere chance that he ended his speech with the famous quotation: "Better to reign in hell than serve in heaven" ? Those words, Sir, are the words of Satan, in "Paradise Lost".

Mr. Sugrim Singh: To a point of correction, Sir. It is unfair to make this statement. The hon. Member must put it in its proper context.

Mr. Ramphal: From my point of view it was definite, coming out in a most iniquitous statement that paradise would be lost if we joined the Federation. He said it would be better to reign in hell. May I ask this question: Better for whom ? Better for the leaders, better for those who will reign,—not for those who serve ? And I intend to serve my country in my small position. I intend to speak about the people who serve and not those who intend to reign. It is class interest which has been motivating the Opposition.

The hon. Member asked us to keep an open mind. Well I am not as young as he, and I have thought so long on this question that I cannot afford to spend any more time having an open mind, so far as this question is concerned. My mind is absolutely made up, and I am afraid I cannot indulge him in the hope that I can deal with the matter with an open mind. But even if I did have an open mind, after hearing the hon. Member for Wakenaam" my mind would have been completely closed.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I rise to a point of correction. There is no "Member for Wakenaam" in this Council.

Mr. Ramphal: I know the hon. Member prefers to be called the "Unofficial Member for Wakenaam." I could have no open mind after that. Hon. Members heard the hon. Mr. Correia say that after he heard Mr. Sugrim Singh's speech he made up his mind completely.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: That is not admissible evidence.

Mr. Ramphal: The hon. Member is unduly sensitive, to borrow his own phrase. The point is that if you try to get the gist of his speech, or the meat of it, as he would like to say, you will find that it was all in defence of a particular class or group.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I must object to that statement, and I am surprised at it, coming from a once ardent anti-federationist, but today he is the Commissioner of Labour. I never referred to class at all.

Mr. Speaker: I must ask hon. Members to respect each other's views and feelings as far as possible.

Mr. Ramphal: I respect the dignity of this Council, and I submit that my criticism was neither unfair nor unjust.

Mr. Speaker: I did not say it was. I do not so consider it.

Mr. Ramphal: I am surprised that the hon. Member has become so sensitive at such an early stage. I wonder what will happen at a later stage. I have only just begun. The Opposition did not stop there. They were so strong in their denial of the right of Members to speak that they tried to kill the debate at the very start, and but for Your Honour's very timely intervention we might not have had an opportunity to discuss this question. They

even went further and proposed an amendment to the motion, with which I shall deal in time. That amendment was meant to do nothing more than indefinitely postpone our decision on this important question.

May I say that all I have said so far was more or less to prepare the ground and the mind of my hon. friend for more to come. But he need not be scared about that. He treated me kindly and I shall not be less generous this afternoon. However, I wish to clear away misconception before I begin. I did not think the hon. Member would have come out so plainly as he did only a short while ago when he suggested that because I was a Government officer I was bound to express my opinion in a particular direction. It has been said that this is a Government motion but, so far as I am aware, it is a motion moved by the Rev. Mr. Bobb. I know no more about it than any other Member who heard the hon. Member propose the motion to this Council. Whether the hon. Member has suddenly gone into the heart of Government and therefore has been able to bring forward his motion I cannot divine, and I am not prepared even to think about it, because I believe he, like myself, has thought very seriously about this matter and has brought it forward. But for the fact that I am a Government officer I might have brought a similar motion forward more than a month ago.

I want to clear that misconception—that I am under any direction by anybody at all as to how I should vote, or how I should address my mind in this particular matter. I think it is a travesty for any Member to suggest that Government has asked anyone of us to vote in a particular way, and I challenge anyone to say that I am untrue in that statement. I therefore want once and for all to clear away the

misconception that Members sit here at the behest of Government, and must accept the dictates of Government; that they come here and more or less speak to dictation and sign on the dotted line when it is necessary. I regret that the Opposition's case was so weak that it had to descend to abuse. I am personally maligned outside for not only seeking a job for myself but for someone near and dear to me. That is the depth to which the Opposition has descended in this particular matter.

Mr. Lee: I rise to a point of correction. As far as I have heard, none of us did that.

Mr. Ramphal: I wish to say that that remark is being made out of this Council, and a great deal of information is being passed around. They cannot come into the open and fight this matter out, or fight it without prejudice or without descending to abuse. I merely mention it in order to remove once and for all the wicked lie that is being circulated—that some of us are under the direction of the Government. I have never had any dictation from Government, and if Government should ever dictate how I should vote in this Council I should ask to be relieved of my seat. That is the mind with which I come to this Council, and that is the way I shall deal with any matter which comes before this Council.

I am grateful to hear from the Government Information Services that they will give full coverage to this debate, because I believe it is necessary that the people who have finally to make up their minds on this important question should know exactly what Federation means; what advantages we stand to gain from Federation, and what the leaders mean who want to keep them out of Federation.

In this Council the question of the competency of this Legislature to dis-

cuss this matter has been raised time and again; it has been raised outside in the newspapers, and it is being carried into the districts. I am very glad to see that two leading Members of the Opposition have not allied themselves to that particular point of view. I refer to Mr. Sugrim Singh and Mr. Luckhoo, who did not accept the idea that as a Legislature we are not competent, legally and constitutionally, to deal with this matter. I will not pursue the point very much, because in this Council we have the hon. the Attorney General who is an expert on this subject, and I know he has already indicated that this Legislature is competent, legally and constitutionally, to deal with the matter. Your Honour has ruled in the matter, but I expect that the Attorney General will deal with it in more detail in a legal way, and not in the general manner in which I am dealing with it. The people of the country must know that this Council is legally and constitutionally in order in debating this matter.

Indeed I go even further. I feel that we can dispose of it. It appears to me that the objection comes with very bad grace out of the mouths of hon. Members who were Members of the Upper House of the last Legislature, and who were there as a result of nomination. As such they were able to frustrate (Mind you, I would have done the same thing) the wishes of the House of Assembly. Does it not now come with very bad grace from the mouths of those very hon. Members who say that nominated Members, because they do not have a mandate from the people, are unable to make a decision on this matter? I am sorry my friend, Mr. Raatgever, is not in his seat, for if he were here I would have read to the Council his evidence before the Waddington Constitution Commission, in which he said that the people who were doing the most work in the Legislative Council, and speaking up for the people

[Mr. Ramphal]

of the Colony, were the nominated Members. I would have reminded the hon. Member of that statement, but he is not here.

Mr. Speaker: If he had been here, from what were you going to read — from a newspaper?

Mr. Ramphal: I would have read from the official report. As he is not here I merely mention it, but I can tell the Council that I showed him what he said and he said he adhered to what he said then. But the case for the Opposition seems to be a little more deep-rooted. My friend here reminds me that in the last Legislature, in which he was very popular, he and the hon. Mr. Macnie were nominated Members, and they spoke, I believe, in the interest of the people, if not for the people. That is why I say that it comes with very bad grace indeed from the mouths of those particular Members.

Mr. Speaker: That is capable of some argument. When the hon. the Deputy Speaker referred to his being a nominated Member, and claimed that the nominated Members of that Legislature were as useful as the elected Members, he was referring to a properly constituted Legislature under the existing Constitution. The word "nominated" in that sense would not apply to the membership of this Council, which is entirely nominated. So that if the hon. Member does have an argument with the Deputy Speaker he will have to bear that in mind.

Mr. Ramphal: I submit that this nominated Legislature is no less legally constituted than any other Legislature.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member does not appreciate what I have said. The word "nominated" in the sense in which the Deputy Speaker used the expression is nominated *vis-a-vis* elected.

The hon. Member should not, I think, compare the position of a nominated Member in this wholly nominated Council with that of a nominated Member in a Legislature of elected and nominated Members.

Mr. Ramphal: I shall certainly bear that in mind, and I also bear in mind that a nominated Member is one who has not got a mandate from the people. I do respect Your Honour's view and I accept it. But I wish to admit that there is some force in the argument of the Opposition, if they say our "interimness" is the basis of their opposition,—but not that we are nominated Members. But the fact that we are interim, if that is the point they make, we are willing to concede to them.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: Who are "we"?

Mr. Ramphal: I have been asked "Who are we", and rightly so. Those of us who stand for progress and for Federation. I shall deal with the point of "interimness" in just a moment. I wish before we go much further to refer to a remark made in this Council as to our "marking time," as if we were soldiers marking time under a command which the hon. Member not far from me (Lt. Col. Haywood) usually gives. This is a misconception which is being nurtured not only in this Council but outside, and it is said there that "marking time" really means that we should do nothing at all. The thing is so illogical, so absurd that one does not expect a reply to such a point, but that is being said just the same. I want to say that "marking time" only means that constitutionally we shall remain at a certain point until we shall have worked our passage back into the normal constitutional stream of evolution.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: A caretaker government!

Mr. Ramphal : We are a caretaker government; what is wrong in that ?

It does not mean that we are going to stand still; we are going to carry on; we are spending millions of dollars and committing the future generations of this country to millions and millions of dollars. We are, perhaps, going into schemes which, if they prove a failure, would be a millstone around the necks of generation to come. We hope, however, that our efforts will be such as will make this land a better land for our children in the days to come. Because we are but a tentative Government, we are not going to stand still and mark time.

The hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo, referred to the fact that nobody paid attention to what is expressed in this Council. I hope that on serious reflection he will be prepared to revise that opinion. I could hardly believe my ears when I heard that coming from his lips. I shall not deal with that any longer, but for the moment I wish to refer to the histrionic speech which led off the attack. I want to make this point—

Mr. Speaker: Better leave those lawyers alone!

Mr. Sugrim Singh. The hon. Member is a lawyer himself.

Mr. Ramphal: You will notice the thrusts and counter-thrusts. Standing here I can enjoy the joke that is taking place between the lawyers. I think it is one of the features of the profession, that one can say things sometimes without meaning what is said. A great deal of what was said by the first speaker for the Opposition can be written off on that score. He had carried out his brief to the fullest, and having done that he had discharged his duty. But, Sir, I am going to make this point. If we agree to the principle of Federation, it would be in conformity with the views of the people. I am making that very strongly as a statement,

and I am saying it to the hon. Member again, that if we, as a Legislature, were to agree in principle to Federation we would be acting in conformity with the wishes of the people.

I am sorry the hon. Member, Mr. Raatgever, is not here, because I think he wanted to reply to Sir Frank Mc David on this first point—that when the 1952 Legislature met and discussed this question it was the only time that the federal principle really came before the Council. As a matter of fact it was when that amendment by Dr. Jagan was moved, and when eight Electives voted for the eleven, comprising Unofficials and Electives, voted against. I will not deal with that, as Sir Frank has dealt with it very fully. The Officials did not vote, and the eleven who voted against constituted eight Nominated Unofficial and three Elected Members. Sir Frank deduces from that, that if we take the people's representatives as expressing a mandate from the people, we had it then expressed that the people were in favour of Federation.

I want to go beyond that and to say that when the elections were held in 1953 the People's Progressive Party, from whom I have no mandate, had as one of the fundamentals of their platform the Federation of British Guiana with the West Indies with Dominion status. In other words, they went to the electorate with Federation and the people returned them. I would not try to recall the figures which the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, has already given, but the people returned them with a majority. Was that not acceptance of Federation in principle? In 1951—1952 the Members spoke in this Council, and in 1953 the people spoke and gave their mandate. The hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, was a member of that Party, and I believe he was one of those who laid the early platform of that Party. He may correct me if I am wrong.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I wish to correct that. The slogan before they got in was "Dominion status immediately."

Mr. Speaker: I do not think the hon. Member need pursue that. I mentioned before the debate resumed, that if we are to conclude these contributions by Members, then I think we ought to take into consideration remarks made by previous speakers. Some criticism has been made on that before, and it would be repetition, as the Council has heard more than one reference to the P.P.P. manifesto. Is there anything to be gained by that? I do not think so. I would be glad if hon. Members, like Mr. Sugrim Singh, would not interrupt other Members more than is necessary by interjecting *sotto voce*.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I was personally referred to.

Mr. Speaker: I would be very pleased if the hon. Member, in the limited time at his disposal, would give us his views as fully as possible, and not refer to what he heard.

Mr. Ramphal: I quite agree with you, Mr. Speaker, but frankly I cannot consider any point I have not heard, nor am I prepared to concede a point which I believe by repeating it I would emphasize it. Otherwise I am in agreement with what Your Honour says.

Mr. Speaker: I think you are entitled to give your opinion as to what you think the people are thinking at the present time.

Mr. Ramphal: I shall not labour that point any further. I want to say that the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, was a member of that particular Party and maybe he had taken part in laying the foundation of the Party's platform and, therefore, should know

that Federation was approved in principle. If he had come out and told me that it was a hoax I would not only be willing to take his word but I would draw further conclusions which would be inimical to his own interest. I merely said he was a member of the Party, and so was the hon. Member, Mr. Lee. I do not think, however, that Mr. Lee remained long enough to enter into that particular field.

Mr. Lee: I do not like the hon. Member mentioning my name with respect to my being in any Party, unless he was himself a member of that Party.

Mr. Speaker: We are not interested in the membership of that particular Party.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I am sorry to rise, but may I be permitted to say that I had resigned from that Party before that manifesto was printed. This country knows it. I had absolutely nothing to do with any manifesto of that Party, as months before that I resigned from that Party.

Mr. Ramphal: I am very glad for that statement, because I shall now come to the fact that there is another Party, the United Democratic Party. I believe the hon. Member, Miss Collins, has already referred to the fact, and that Federation is a plank of their platform. It is in their manifesto. I am quite sure the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, is a member of that Party.

Mr. Speaker: I must ask the hon. Member to discontinue his reference to all this. I may say that a manifesto is not a proper term to apply to anything that has been written or issued by the United Democratic Party. A manifesto is something that immediately precedes an election—a statement of policy. That is not the position with the U.D.P. I must ask the hon. Mem-

ber to leave out the political references, and not disfigure what may be a very useful contribution to the debate. I cannot allow him to do so. It is not *apropos* the motion.

Mr. Ramphal: The course to which I was directing my aim is that if we decide on Federation we would not be false to the people of the country, and as a matter of fact we would be expressing their wish.

Mr. Speaker: Do not bring in anything about the U.D.P. and manifesto.

Mr. Ramphal: Sir, I am willing to abide by any decision you make, even though you forget, Sir, that the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, was allowed to bring in every kind of argument. But I am not craving that indulgence; our case does not need it.

Mr. Sugrim Singh: Sir, I am surprised at the hon. Member.

Mr. Ramphal: The hon. Member is violently sensitive, and he has already begun to show it. It is only a quarter of the references intended to be made to his own matter. People of standing who have opposed Federation in the past have now said they made a mistake. The hon. Member, Mr. Smellie, was manly enough to come here and say "I did say such and such a thing at such and such a time, but with the passage of time I have changed my mind". I have put that in my own words, and that is what I expect a gentleman to do. Sir Federick Seaford who went to Montego Bay, and who returned and declared his opposition to it, has come back to this country now and said "I am in favour of Federation." The Chamber of Commerce has now come out in favour of Federation. It represents people too, and a good cross-

section of the community. My good friend, the hon. Member, Mr. Macnie, read and paraphrased a statement from the B.G. Sugar Producers Association, and I am sure he will not tell hon. Members that the Sugar Producers Association does not represent a great deal of people, and a great deal of interest.

All these things point to the fact that even if we took a decision on Federation we could not be doing violence to, or anything contrary to the wishes of the people. The people gave a mandate to a Party and placed their representatives in the House, and some of the biggest organisations have now come out very fully and very strongly in favour of Federation. What withholds us, then? I will say this, Sir. We are withheld by international reactionaries, we are withheld by intercolonial reactionaries, and we are withheld by local reactionaries, and the only reason why we in this Council are not going forward into Federation is our inherent love for democratic procedure, our "interimness," and our feeling that we should first seek the wishes of the people themselves.

There are some Members around this table who, may not like the word "reactionary", but I use it in the best sense. When my colleague, the hon. Member, Mr. Luckhoo, was speaking—and I told him this — I could not help writing down the words "Fabius Maximus" for my memory went back to the great general in Rome who was nicknamed the *cunctator*—the "delayer." That is exactly the picture I gathered from that very oratorical, histrionic and dramatic speech by the hon. Member, the sum total of which was "we should delay it as long as we can". The trouble with our country is that it has suffered from indecision—yes, indecision like Hamlet's.

This matter was discussed in 1945, in your time, Sir—and what happened ?

[Mr. Ramphal]

It was postponed. In 1948, again; and what happened? It was postponed. In 1951 and in 1952,—and we sent observers. That was all.

Mr. Speaker: Would the hon. Member, for historical reasons, say whether other territories did not postpone it?

Mr. Ramphal: The question is not what they did then, but what they are doing now. What are we doing now? Where is British Guiana in the whole set-up? I agree that Barbados, up to a little while ago, had not accepted Federation fully. But how long are we going to keep deferring this decision? Like Hamlet, we shall have a tragedy and like Mr. Sugrim Singh, we shall have "Paradise Lost."

Mr. Sugrim Singh: I am sorry to rise again, but I never said we were losing "paradise".

Mr. Ramphal: I am mindful that when I refer to the past I am treading on very delicate ground, but I shall not deal with it more than to say that for 10 years we have delayed and we cannot, we will not allow procrastination any longer; but we shall vote on this motion. One Member (Mr. Macnie) said we must not plane against the knots lest we split the wood. What the hon. Member would have us do is to put down the wood and let wood ants and termites destroy it completely. It is against this kind of delay, this kind of procrastination, this kind of indecision that I sound my voice this day. I think the time has come to act now. We cannot put it off any further. We must act now.

I shall now proceed to deal with two basic objections which are being taken to the people outside this Council—to people in the districts. I am taking the opportunity to deal with them now, even though I may not be fortunate

enough to get into the newspapers like some Members of the "Opposition."

Mr. Sugrim Singh: Have I canvassed for it?

Mr. Ramphal: Those who have ears to hear what is happening outside will say it is true. They raise it at high level and they raise it at low level. At high level they are suspicious of Britain's motives in giving us Federation. They suspect that Britain wants to unload her burdens on the Colonies, and that Britain can no longer carry her financial burdens. I can quote paper upon paper to show that that is untrue. May I Sir, refer to a statement by Mr. A. Creech Jones which puts it clearly? It is on page 8 of "Part 2: Proceedings" of the Conference on the Closer Association of the B.W.I. Colonies.

"There is no suggestion that His Majesty's Government should withdraw its aid, that it should cease to make available the central services which at the moment it is busily creating under the 1945 Colonial Development and Welfare Act since March 1946, apart from the monies spent under the 1940 Act up to March, 1946."

That is a clear, unequivocal statement. I would refer also to a statement made by the Secretary of State for the Colonies which was published in the "Daily Chronicle" of the 16th of May, 1953 as part of a communique released after the London Conference:

"Secondly, subject to the approval of Parliament, Her Majesty's Government would make available to the Federation in the first ten years, grants intended to cover the budget deficits of those units which in spite of their best efforts would not pay their way."

It goes on to say:

"Finally, Her Majesty's Government would be willing, subject to the submission of prepared schemes, to invite Parliament to make a grant of up to £500,000 towards the capital cost of establishing the Federal Headquarters."

I do not want to burden this Council with a recitation of these facts, but I feel that it should be made known to the people, chapter and verse, that Her Majesty's Government is not using Federation as a means of unloading her financial responsibilities to these Colonies.

Now, there is another charge they lay, and that is that Federation is a ruse to avoid further advance to self-government. The logic of that is so bad that it is difficult to advance argument against it. They are saying that the British Government is offering Federation to the West Indies because they do not want the West Indies ever to get Dominion status, but want instead a perpetuation of colonialism. Some go so far as to say, they prefer imperialism, and that is why they say British Guiana should keep out of Federation. I can quote again, chapter and verse, on this particular matter. We have the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Mr. Lyttelton, saying that what they are after is leading the Colonies to full self-government and to Dominion status.

Mr. Lee: May I ask the hon. Member to state what is the deficit of the minor Colonies?

Mr. Ramphal: I think the hon. Member has had every opportunity to find that out for himself as I have, and I do not think it is for me to refer him to it. I have been a teacher for a long time. My friend (Mr. Sugrim Singh) even prefers to refer to me in the more romantic term—"an ex-pedagogue." As such, I never do a thing for a boy which he can do for himself.

Mr. Lee: I have read it, and that is why I am against Federation.

Mr. Ramphal: I said I would quote from Mr. Lyttelton's statement. At the opening of the London conference he made a statement and, among other things, he said—this is what is reported

in the "Daily Gleaner" of Jamaica on the 20th of April, 1953:

"Changes of Government here involve no changes of attitude or policy towards the question of West Indian federation. If we are agreed as the results of this conference that federation provides the means by which the British West Indies can travel most hopefully and most speedily towards economic strength and ultimately responsible self-Government, Her Majesty's Government will most readily accept that decision, and will do whatever they can to give successful effect to it."

That was as late as 1953. And if these assurances are not enough, let us look at what is happening in the various parts of the Commonwealth, and see if a political pattern is not present. Not so long ago India and Pakistan were made sovereign nations, also Ceylon; and Burma was allowed to go out of the orbit of the Commonwealth. And what is more—look at the evolution in the Gold Coast and Nigeria. Soon these countries may be taking their true and sovereign places by the side of the other Members of the Commonwealth. Can there still be room for suspicion?

I trust I have said enough to remove all suspicions of Britain's motives. Indeed, Britain is now motivated by the best intentions—to satisfy West Indian aspirations for full citizenship in our Commonwealth.

I said there were suspicions. Now I wish to consider certain fears, and they are many. First, there is the fear of immigration of West Indians into Guiana. Indeed it has been most mercilessly referred to as "dumping" by my hon. friends of the "Opposition" in this matter. Dumping—yes dumping — as if human beings were freight and cargo.

But let us look at this fear dispassionately. Is it a genuine fear? I think it is; but as the hon. Sir Frank McDavid has dealt with it fully I shall

[Mr Ramphal]

only content myself with repeating that this fear is not confined to British Guiana. Other Colonies too have their fears, and that was the reason for the meeting in Trinidad. The results are now well known. They were somewhat unexpected in certain quarters; but the results of the meeting stand as a sample of West Indian statesmanship.

And while we are on this point I wonder if my friends who have chosen to speak of "dumping," remember for how long we have been exporting sugar boilers to the West Indies. And these sugar boilers have carefully preserved their secrets and therefore their jobs. Small as this traffic is, there has been an outward movement from us.

Let us however examine this fear of "dumping" in another way. I wish to ask this Council this simple question: Is there any fear of an invasion now, or in the near future? We see hundreds of West Indians winging their way to the United Kingdom. Would they turn their course towards us? And if not, what is keeping them out? Why are the Jamaicans not coming here instead of going to the United Kingdom? The reason is because they have the opportunity of being employed at much higher rates than British Guiana can offer. I cannot envisage their coming here in the same way. For this reason, it is an unreasonable fear, an unnecessary fear, which has entered the minds of those opposed to Federation.

And this brings me to ask this question: I would like to know who has told the residents of Block II, Corentyne, that the West Indian immigrants will come and take away their lands? This is the kind of abuse and subtle propaganda which is being heard. The unsuspecting and unsuspecting people are being told that their rights would be given away in a Federation.

Do you wonder that these people should have some fear? I am not saying that the remarks emanated from this Council, but I am only showing that some people are descending to a low level when speaking of Federation—a Federation which is inevitable.

Let me come back to my examination of this fear of dumping. Again, I would ask a question: Is there now, at this time, any legal barrier that keeps the West Indians from emigrating into British Guiana? I know of no legal barricades. Yet they do not come in droves; they do not dump themselves on us. What cause have we to suggest that Federation would change this course?

And now, let me ask that other question:—Would they come when our Development Programme gets into its stride? Indeed, I expect so, but not in the numbers that go to Britain, or not in numbers that would constitute dumping. And it is because of things like this that the Trinidad conference was held. The results are a happy compromise and solution, and our people need have no fears on this score. Let me therefore take this opportunity once more to reassure the people of the falsity of this fear that has been planted in their minds—that West Indians would be brought in to take away their lands.

The second fear to which I wish to refer is the fear that British Guiana would be relegated to minority status in a Federation. We were only allocated six seats because of the representatives we sent.

Mr. Lee: The hon. Member, Mr. Ramphal, has not drawn a difference between a representative and an observer. British Guiana had only sent observers to the Conference in question.

Mr. Ramphal: I would like to know why those observers did not ask

for ten more seats instead of the one more they demanded under the threat of walking out.

Mr. Gajraj : May I ask Your Honour whether a Member speaking can repeat what another Member has already said?

Mr. Speaker: I made it quite clear. I said most plainly that I could not prevent a Member repeating what another had said. I said it twice in the course of this debate but I asked Members to avoid doing so unnecessarily.

Mr. Ramphal: Your Honour knows how much I respect the Chair. It is my personal desire to be respectful to the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: I also respect other people's opinions, even though I may not agree with them.

Mr. Ramphal: I wish to say that on the question of the allocation of seats and the reduction of this Colony to a minority status, the Opposition has made a great point about the predominance of Jamaica and Trinidad. I would ask the simple question: are they not in a predominant position now? That was more or less the question, the answer to which the hon. Mr. Kendall gave only a short while ago. Let us be fair. Whether we look at it from the point of view of population, production or national income, those two Colonies are far in advance of our own country. I am no less a patriot than any other Member, but facts stare us in the face. We must look at things in reality. If Jamaica and Trinidad are above us and hold dominant positions, and we are so sensitive, can't we find consolation in the fact that we are above Barbados and the other small islands? I personally do not obtain any great satisfaction from that, for in any conglomeration of people, any getting together of this kind, some will be better off and others less well off.

One hon. Member spoke about block voting. This was dealt with very severely by some Members. Why should we presume that a party system may not develop? It may appear that a party system is far away, but Members used to say that in 1952, and in 1953 there was a full-fledged party system in operation in this Colony. A party system may evolve very quickly, with the emergence of leaders of the type of Mr. Manley in the West Indies. I can see that a party system in West Indian politics is bound to arise and come into quick prominence.

I want to go a little further than that. Why should we presume that the leaders of the other Colonies would join together against British Guiana? Is that not contrary to all we know? British Guiana and Barbados, to take a simple example, have always kept together like brothers, with Trinidad and ourselves more or less at variance. Just as we can presume evil, why can't we presume good? Why should not the people of these Colonies come together for good—not against anybody, but for everybody? That is the principle I want to put to the Opposition—not to impute unkind motives to other people but assume that they will do the right thing, because we shall be putting into the Federal Legislature people of standing, people of quality.

I want to know from the Opposition whether this fear of our minority status is not more deep-rooted than the fears to which I have referred. The hon. Mr. Lee has himself referred to that fear, and the hon. Mr. Kendall has dealt with it. The hon. Mr. Lee said he returned to this Colony an anti-federationist because somebody at the Conference said that they wanted to create a "Black Dominion." He also said that in his constituency he did not get the support of a black voter at the last election, and that the people voted on a racial basis. There were Indian and African candidates besides the hon.

[Mr. Ramphal]

Member, so that if they vote on a racial basis how did the hon. Member win? If Indians voted for the Indian candidate, and Africans for the African candidate, who voted for Mr. Lee? It is beyond my comprehension.

May I just say on this, that the hon. Member brought into this Council one of the dirtiest things that could ever be brought here. If it were a fact I would say "Let us face the skeleton in the cupboard." But it is not a fact. The last election was not fought on race. Dr. Singh was the Indian idol for many years, but in a constituency which was largely Indian, who defeated him? Did the people there vote race? On the East Coast of Demerara there was an Indian candidate. How did Sydney King win in a largely Indian electorate? Yet it is said that the people were racial! I think it is a travesty—something which should be denied with all the vehemence we have—to say that our people are acting racially.

I want to come back to the question before us and ask: Is this fear not more deeply rooted than it appears on the surface? The hon. Mr. Lee seems to have put his finger on it when he remarked that we were prepared to have Whitehall rule but we are not prepared to have West Indian rule. That was pulling the skeleton out of the cupboard, and I want to face it very quickly, and very squarely. In 1937, when I was returning from a voyage abroad, my ship called at Martinique. I went into a cafe and sat talking with a Frenchman who could speak English. In the course of our conversation he asked me: "Have you seen our Governor?" I said I had not, and he said: "We have a Governor named Eboue. He passed through your country a short while ago." I said I had a recollection that he passed through my country but I had not seen him.

Then instinctively I said to him "How do you like a *Negro* Governor?" His reply to me I shall never forget: "What's wrong with that? He is a Frenchman." That moment I saw the light—I was enlightened; I learnt that no longer should we put any premium on the colour of a man's skin. I therefore cannot entertain this complex.

I would ask Members of the Opposition, what is this fear? Is it deep down, more than appears on the surface? I have no doubt whatever that my country would hold its own in any Federation, but I do say that we will never be higher than we count ourselves. I do ask hon. Members to feel that we can rise to a position of equality, and God forbid me to seek a position of dominance! I want to be free and equal with the others. I do not want to dominate any of my West Indian brethren, and I am in full agreement with the hon. Mr. Luckhoo when he says: "Let us demand more seats in the Federal Legislature." I say let us demand them, not to get dominance but to obtain a position of equality. I feel that there has been no time more opportune than this. If we make the proper approach and demand we shall get what we want. We are as much complementary to the West Indians as they are to us. We can get the number of seats commensurate with our request for equality, but I feel (and I say this with all earnestness) that if we demanded that the Federal capital be established in British Guiana we could get it. Yes, we can have the Federal Capital in B.G. I am very glad to hear Mr. Carter agreeing with me on that point. I repeat my conviction—we can have the Federal capital here if we press for it.

The reason is simple: the future of the West Indies is in this country. Some little while ago Sir Frank McDavid challenged me to make a statement in open Council which I had made in Finance Committee. I said then that the West Indies had a "continental des-

tiny"; it was not a continental destiny for British Guiana. I feel that the future of the West Indies lies in this country, and that it would be to the advantage of the West Indies if the Federal Capital were established in British Guiana. Grenada has been selected as the temporary place of sojourn for the Capital, but if we make a timely and proper demand I feel sure the West Indian Colonies will respect our view. There is the University College of the West Indies in Jamaica, and the Imperial College of Tropical Agriculture in Trinidad. What clearer reason is required than for us to want and to get the Federal Capital of the Caribbean established in British Guiana? I throw that out to my hon. friends. Let us not seek dominance—but equality, and let us seek to have the Federal Capital established here. I am positive that if the hon. Mr. Sugrim Singh could be assured of this all his fears would be allayed, and he would be as convinced a federationist as I am today. But it will take some time; he has other briefs.

There is a third fear, and that is a fear to which I want to refer in great detail. I am sorry if I keep the Council longer than I expect to. This particular matter is of very great importance, and I wish I could speak as feelingly on it as I do feel inwardly. That fear is that a minority status would be given to the Indian community. Now I want to face that problem absolutely squarely. It is something we must not escape. It is not as easy as the hon. Member for Labour, Health and Housing said; "Let them take the next boat." In a country where large numbers of people of different races are living together, we have to find some way to satisfy one another. We have to find some way to appreciate one another's feelings.

Mr. Cummings (Member for Labour, Health and Housing): To a point of order! I think I have been misunderstood by the hon. Member. My

recollection of what I said is that if there were people who felt that one particular race should be dominant, then those people, if they were not happy here, should take ships and go elsewhere where they would be happy.

Mr. Ramphal : That is correct. That is what I want to convey. It is not domination—

Mr. Cummings: I just want the hon. Member to be clear about it.

Mr. Ramphal: You see, Sir, I fight on all sides.

Mr. Sugrim Singh : He was an anti-federationist before.

Mr. Ramphal: I never was. I do not stoop to that kind of prevarication to make my point. I wish to repeat, that in a multi-racial community we must try to appreciate one another's views and one another's fears and, if possible, to allay those fears in order that there should be a homogeneous community. Let us look at that trouble squarely. Let us look at this problem of the Indian people's fear quite squarely, and see whether there is any just ground or reason why they should fear our entering the Federation. If their fears are founded, then what should we do to remove those fears? Possibly we may find those fears are unfounded and unnecessary and, perhaps, amplified, but we should examine them before coming to any conclusion.

Now, the newspapers continue to speak of East Indians doing this or that. I do not regard the word "East", and I never did for the last 30 years. But whenever anything disparaging occurs they say: "An East Indian man was apprehended" and the like. What does it tend to do? It tends to isolate that community as if it were different from the rest. These are hard things, but they must stand examination.

[Mr. Ramphal]

Look at the Robertson Report and see that infamous paragraph. I thought the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, would have brought it out, but he did not choose to do so. He avoided this question as much as possible. I am bringing it out, because it is a phase—

Mr. Sugrim Singh: May I rise to a point of correction?

Mr. Ramphal: I am not giving way. I am saying that there are some fears in the minds of the Indian community, and one of the points I was making was that there was a paragraph—paragraph 24—at page 15 of what is commonly called the Robertson Report, which says :

“Guianese of African extraction were not afraid to tell us that many Indians in British Guiana looked forward to the day when British Guiana would be a part not of the British Commonwealth but of an East Indian Empire.”

Mr. Speaker (to Mr. Sugrim Singh): What is your point about? What do you object to?

Mr. Sugrim Singh: My point is, that I clearly referred to the Robertson Report, but I did not read from it. I was developing my argument that the aim of all federation is to have one nation. I never at any time discussed the question of race throughout the whole of my speech, because my view is that we cannot avoid the operation of a sociological principle, and there must be a natural merging of the different peoples. It may be long but it is bound to come about.

Mr. Speaker: (to Mr. Ramphal) You may go on.

Mr. Ramphal: I say that the inclusion of a remark like that has had a bad effect on the East Indian community, and I was very happy to see that all races in the Colony joined to give the lie direct to that particular statement

But it is nevertheless a fact that it has made a very deep gash in the Indian body politic of this country.—

Not so long ago a group of people from the Conservative Party in the United Kingdom was supposed to come down to these parts to investigate the Indian community of Trinidad and British Guiana. Very happily again that was assailed left, right and centre in the West Indies, and as a result we have had a statement from the very people concerned that they did not mean it in the way it was understood in the West Indies. Again it is not what was said, it is the effect I am looking at.

Again, not very long ago—within my lifetime and within the memory of every hon. Member of this Council—the Indian community was looked upon as a sub-strata community in British Guiana, but they have risen largely by their own industry and by the sympathy and assistance of the other communities, to a position of equality in this country. It is sad that the fear has come into their minds that they would lose their newly found equality in this country in a Federation. It is a fear that must be understood and must be answered. I feel that that fear is absolutely unfounded. The people who should have a fear of that kind may be the Portuguese, Chinese or Europeans, because they are the ones who are so hopelessly in the minority. The East Indian people should not be allowed to continue in this fear, and rejection ought to be their natural reaction to the idea that they would be lost in a West Indian Federation.

I feel that the Indian community is caught in a dilemma, and the dilemma is this: The Indian Government, through its representative, (I refer to the High Commissioner) has stated, from the appointment of the very first High Commissioner, that India desires the Indian community in British Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica and elsewhere in the West Indies to integrate themselves into

the Colonies in which they live, and be good Guianese or good Trinidadians, or good Jamaicans, or whatever they may be. They are told that by the Indian Government representatives. The people do not doubt them and, therefore, they cannot look to India. Where must they then look? Yet they are being told by our local politicians and others that they must keep out of the proposed Federation.

That is the dilemma in which the Indian people of this Colony, from Essequibo to Corentyne, find themselves today. They are told that they are going to lose their racial identity. That is what is being told to them, and they are made to feel so. I am very glad that the President of the Hindu Maha Sabha, the religious organization of our Hindu community, the hon. Member, Mr. Sugrim Singh, has said that sociologically time will remove all barriers of race, and I cannot agree with him more. It is inevitable. It is hard to tell some of the older people, the diehards, that these things are bound to come about, and that in the long distant future there will not be Indians, Europeans, Chinese, Portuguese, Africans in this part of the world, but one people.

In the transformation which is taking place in the West Indies, who is asking anybody to lose his identity? We are not asking anybody to do that. All we are asking is that good Indians should be good West Indians, a good Chinese to be a good West Indian, a good European to be a good West Indian, a good Portuguese to be a good West Indian, a good African to be a good West Indian. There appears to be some confusion of thought, and that is why I would like to point out that there is a difference between a nation and a race. A nation is a political organisation; a race is an ethnological condition. A man is born into his race but he may be put into the society of a political organization or nation. He can remove himself from

a nation but he cannot remove himself from the race into which he is born. No one asks the African or the Indian communities to transfer their racial rights. Last week, I think, every Irishman in the U.S.A. must have celebrated St. Patrick's Day, and I think every Irishman in this Colony, or wherever he was on that day, did so. We all may know that wherever an American goes he celebrates his National Day. In the same way we all should know that we would not lose our identity in a Federation. What has happened out of my time does not distress me very much, provided we do what is right in my time. I will not do anything that will mar the future of this country.

They have told the Indian community that they would also lose their culture. That is something no one can stop. Indian culture is something that is lost to Western culture. There is no Indian in this Colony who can tell me to the contrary—that he still has his Indian culture paramount. I wish the Indian people to know that if they ignore these mis-statements they can stem the tide of delusion which is taking place. No one wishes to transform anyone's culture with another, but the forces at work are inevitable, inexorable. We move to a world culture, whether we like it or not.

This seems to be a most convenient time for me to stop, Sir. Again, they say to the people, "You will lose your religion." Of all things good and holy; of all things untrue, how can they lose their religion? If a man wants to follow a certain religion, how can we take it away from him? The Indian people have been here for over a hundred years and they have not lost their faith in Hinduism or Islam. Very few have become Christians. If they want to retain their religion there is nothing in Federation to stop them. It was to my chagrin that I saw a statement from the Islamic Association on this matter. The Presi-

[Mr. Ramphal]

dent of the Islamic Association is my friend, and I think I can speak to him in an even greater capacity than that. But when he declared his Association's attitude I wondered: is not Islam itself one of the greatest brotherhoods of man? And is not brotherhood of man its foundation? Can it be possible that people of the faith of Islam are afraid to mix with people of a different colour? Or is Islam now confined to a particular group of people? I must confess that this particular opposition is not understood by me.

I see someone in this Council who can speak with more authority on this

subject than I can and I shall leave it at this point hoping that he will not forget to deal with it.

I do not know how much more time you will allow me this afternoon, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Are you prepared to finish your speech in a few minutes?

Mr. Ramphal: No, Sir. As I see it, I shall be about half an hour or more.

Mr. Speaker: Well, in that case the Council is adjourned to 2 p.m. tomorrow.