

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 9th November, 1960

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

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

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

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

} *ex officio*

The Honourable **Dr. C. E. Jagan**

—Member for Eastern Berbice
(Minister of Trade and Industry)

” ” **B. H. Benn**

—Member for Essequibo River
(Minister of Natural Resources)

” **Janet Jagan**

—Member for Western Essequibo
(Minister of Labour, Health and
Housing)

” **Ram Karran**

—Member for Demerara-Essequibo
(Minister of Communications and
Works)

B. S. Rai

—Member for Central Demerara
(Minister of Community Development
and Education).

Mr. **R. B. Gajraj**

—Nominated Member

W. O. R. Kendall

—Member for New Amsterdam

R. C. Tello

—Nominated Member

” **F. Bowman**

—Member for Demerara River

” **L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.**

—Member for Georgetown Central

” **S. Campbell**

—Member for North Western District

” **A. L. Jackson**

—Member for Georgetown North

” **E. B. Beharry**

—Member for Eastern Demerara

” **S. M. Saffee**

—Member for Western Berbice

” **Ajodha Singh**

—Member for Berbice River

” **Jai Narine Singh**

—Member for Georgetown South

” **R. E. Davis**

—Nominated Member

” **A. M. Fredericks**

—Nominated Member

” **H. J. M. Hubbard**

—Nominated Member.

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

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

ABSENT :

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

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, the 4th November, 1960, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

PAPERS LAID

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

Order in Council No. 89 of 1960 made under Section 8 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, on the 29th day of September, 1960, and published in the Gazette on the 29th of October, 1960.

GOVERNMENT NOTICES

MOTION

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

"Be it resolved: That this Council in terms of Section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 89 of 1960, which was made on the 29th day of September, 1960, and published in the Gazette on the 29th of October, 1960."

ORDER OF THE DAY

TIMBER CONCESSIONS TO CUBA

Mr. Speaker: Council will now resume consideration of the following Motion by the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman):

"Whereas the leader of the Majority Party of the Government, in a press interview on Friday, 10th June, stated that as a result of the recent visit of the Cuban delegation, Government was considering entering into a partnership with Cuba to exploit the timber resources of this Colony;

And whereas the majority of the inhabitants of this Colony are at present opposed to the idea in view of the present political situation in Cuba;

Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that Government should not enter into any negotiations with the present Cuban Government, Cuban Companies or individual Cubans for timber concessions in this Colony".

At the adjournment on the last occasion the Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) was speaking. He may now resume.

Mr. Jackson: At the concluding stage of my remarks on Friday last, I promised to deal as objectively as I could with the Motion before the Council. I have been reading the Motion again and I have come to the conclusion that its preamble is based upon the fact that some people in this Colony are dwelling in fear as to what the future of this country would be if certain things were to happen, and because of the fear which is passing through the minds of some people as I have interpreted in this preamble, this Motion has been brought. If it is true that there is fear in the minds of people, then what has caused that fear?

There has been a social revolution in Cuba, and Members of the Government who have spoken, including the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, on this side of the Table, have referred to the fact that there have been shootings and arrests in Cuba. They have also referred to the fact that there has been expropriation of property, and that many people have suffered as a result of the present policy of the Cuban Government. To any one unaccustomed to revolutions of that kind there must come the feeling that such a condition of social change should be avoided, if not resisted, and while it has been said here that revolutions are not exportable, the fact remains that ideas generate, and anyone unaccustomed to revolution of the nature to which I refer must feel somewhat chary in dealing with people who have brought about conditions of that kind in their own country.

The fact that a social change in Cuba was brought about by bloody revolution would in itself give rise to the fear which is now passing through the minds of the people of this country. What is causing increasing trouble at the moment are the several statements made by Ministers of the Government and

members of the Majority Party in power at the moment. For example, it has been reported that the Minister of Trade and Industry has described Fidel Castro as the present liberator of our day in these parts.

Since the liberation of Cuba by Castro is of the type that has brought about bloodshed and suffering in Cuba, then one can easily see why people are fearful of the transactions which might be made between this Government and Cuba. Some people fear that along with these transactions might come certain subversive activities.

I also have to refer to the statement made by the Minister of Natural Resources in this Chamber when he said that "It is easier to stop tomorrow than stop Communism". It is true that since then Dr. Jagan has on more than one occasion denied that his party is a Communist party. I would be willing to accept his statement, but how can I be sure of his denial that there is no Communism in his party when a Minister who is the Chairman of his party makes such a statement?

One must conclude that here is a political party which is accepting Communism as an inevitable instrument or institution, and its inevitability is something which must be accepted by the people of this country. This is a fatalistic attitude or approach to the problem; it is worse than if the party were a Communist party, for one who is fatalistic in one's approach to any aspect of life is one who will sit down with open arms and allow that condition to come into one's country. Anyone who believes something is inevitable will do nothing to resist it. It is giving people the impression that Communism is bound to come into the country. That is one of the reasons why people have exercised a certain amount of fear regarding the relationship between the Government of this country and the people in Cuba.

I say that there is fear, and if there is fear, then we should take steps to remove fear from the minds of the people as well as anything which might keep them living continuously in fear. With regard to the statement that Castro is the greatest liberator of the century, both Dr. Jagan and the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, have indicated their disagreement with the taking of lives in Cuba. They both said that they disagreed with arbitrary killings and shootings. If by their own expression of opinion some people express fear, then it is clear to me that the people have a certain amount of justification for the fear which they express. There should be no attempt whatsoever to show any annoyance because people have expressed that fear.

I remember having listened somewhat attentively to the Minister of Trade and Industry, and I recall his saying "Let those who suppress and keep down the masses remember these facts: justice will be meted out measure for measure". As I heard him speaking of measure for measure I recalled what was written by Shakespeare: "But man, proud man blessed by a little brief authority most ignorant of what he is most assured, his glassy essence like an angry ape plays such fantastic feats above heaven as make the angels weep". Which of us would have refrained from recalling the words I have just repeated?

In their entire contribution to the discussion on this Motion they pinned their faith in the Mosaic application of the theory: "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth". That is what they have expressed in this Council during the course of the debate. Because of the fact that some people have cast aside the Mosaic law so long ago, because some people have put aside measure for measure, because some people have recognized that man has been so stupid in his time to exercise measure for measure forgetting himself as a human being and putting himself in a definite power, those people have accepted a different concept of life.

[MR. JACKSON]

Nothing that I have said is intended to indicate that wrong should be condoned. Those who know me will understand that I do not agree that wrong should be condoned. I always make every effort to see that people who are wronged are given their rights, and that remedial measures are taken to improve the suffering of the people who are wronged. I do not subscribe in this generation to the measure for measure theory.

I have said that the Government and its Ministers have made statements which have generated fear in the hearts of the people. I also make the observation that when they do not make statements which generate fear, they remain in absolute silence while they move around and conduct the business of the Government. For example, this Council passed a Resolution which resulted in the appointment of a Committee to deal with the changes in our present Constitution. This Council appointed a delegation to go to London to discuss things and bring back decisions which would have been arrived at by that delegation and the Colonial Office. Although the delegation returned from London with results they have not reported to this Council, but they have carted their activities around the country. That is showing very scant respect to the Members of this Council from whom the delegation received their authority.

The Minister of Trade and Industry issued a statement on his activities on the 3rd September, 1960. In that statement he spoke of the result of his negotiations with respect to the deal with the Electric Company; of his visit to Cuba and of the promises and part negotiations which had been conducted by him during his absence from the Colony. This Council suffers from a lack of information, and the people have only scant opportunity of getting information.

While on the one hand they make statements to generate fear, on the other hand they remain in silence, and silence also generates fear to the same degree as the statements which they make time and time again. It will be seen, therefore, that some attempt has to be made to question the Government about its activities.

On Friday last the Minister of Trade and Industry told us that Cuba imports about \$23 million worth of timber products, while British Guiana exports around \$2 million and that it is possible to have an expanded trade with Cuba if certain negotiations become effective. I wonder whether the Government will tell us what is the rate of exchange at which all these transactions will be conducted? I wonder whether there will be an American rate of exchange on the Cuban market; whether there will be a sterling rate of exchange *vis-a-vis* our currency, or what rate of exchange would be used in carrying out these transactions?

We have been told that the money which will be spent by the Cuban Government will be, first of all, advanced as a loan to this country, and that we in turn will export our products to Cuba. But we have not yet heard anything as to what will be the value of the Cuban currency *vis-a-vis* our currency. It is clear, too, that this is being visualized by the Government as a Government to Government transaction, and one gets the impression from what has been released by the Minister of Trade and Industry that this country is going to enter into a partnership with the Cuban Government. Is it not right that we should know what should be the conditions of partnership into which we are going to enter?

This view is more strongly held because of the fact that the present Government has not indicated that in any of the talks with Cuba and the Cuban Government private individuals are going to take any active part in the

transactions. As a matter of fact it is impossible for private individuals to take any active part in these transactions, because of the nature of the Government of Cuba. In the Government of Cuba as it stands today, the Government is responsible for every department and every transaction whether it is trade, industry or otherwise. The Cuban Government controls the activities of every individual, every form of activity and so on. It is right to conclude that the transactions are going to be on a Government to Government basis or partnership, and we should have the right to know something about it.

On Friday afternoon the Minister of Trade and Industry referred to social justice and socialism. While he said he did not condone what was happening in Cuba, he did seek to give justification for what is happening to some people in that country.

I am not known to be an imperialist stooge. I am not known to be a communist stooge either. I challenge those who are accustomed to be calling people stooges to pin that one upon me with any satisfaction or justification; and I think since I have been sitting in this Council I speak as I assess the situation. This Council, in this year 1960 — as some people say, in the year of Our Lord — has been receiving large sums of money and services from the International Corporation Administration. And let me make it very clear: I have gone to the trouble to get this information. The amount received in the field of Agriculture, \$1,400,000; in the field of Industry and Mining, \$127,000; in Transportation, \$104,000; in Labour, \$68,000; in Health, \$19,000; Education, \$20,000; Public administration, \$17,500; Community Development, \$189,000; and Miscellaneous items, \$279,000—all totalling \$2,223,500. This amount has been received by this country through the International Corporation Administration. That does not take care of services.

The United States technicians who came to this country assigned to full-time programmes between 1956 and 1960, total 27; and those technicians who came to this country for short periods for special purposes, total 34. Guianese who have been trained in America by the I.C.A., which includes the U.S.I.S., are 30; so that that is another way in which this country has benefited from the International Corporation Administration. In addition to those to which I have referred, we have had biscuits and milk to the tune of more than \$179,000.

I made this comparative study because of the fact that whilst we have been hearing of the wickedness of some people and some countries and some individuals to justify what is happening in Cuba, we have not been told by the champions of the people that people ought to express gratitude to those who are their benefactors. At some point of time, even though we disagree with people, we ought to be grateful to them when they have helped us. I wish that this Council will note these facts so that we can judge for ourselves, and the people can judge for themselves, the difference between the people who malign other people for their attitude and approach to the problem as against those who run services and do good on the other hand. So that when we take the statement of the Minister of Trade and Industry on the expropriation of property, we ought also to examine whether our sympathy should not also lie with those people who had been made to suffer as a result of the Cuban policy.

The gesture of the Minister of Natural Resources that we should not be grateful to people, marks the lowest ebb of human attitude and human understanding and portrays a lack of culture, because when people are cultured they are willing and ready to acknowledge what is done for them by other people. It is part of the culture which we had been talking about over the past week,

[MR. JACKSON]

and I wish we see more culture from those who represent people in this country.

I have been trying to point out that while we, in this Colony, may acclaim the revolutions in Cuba, we should also see that the people who had been kind to us in one way or another, have some of our sympathy. [Interruption.] How often can we demonstrate a lack of breeding in this Council? How often do we demonstrate our shallowness? How often do we show that we have been dragged up and not brought up by proper training?

I have been trying to point out that this country of ours has been built upon a pattern which is void of the difficulties and effects of bloodshed; and as I said on Friday afternoon, those who obtain power by revolution would also lose that power by the same means. I trust that in spite of the statement about who is the greatest liberator of the age and of this area, we shall not be finding ourselves indulging in the type of revolution which has been found in Cuba very recently.

I have taken note, Mr. Speaker, of your nod signifying that I shall have to conclude my address, but I shall do as others before me have done.

Mr. Kendall: I beg to move that the hon. Member for Georgetown North be allowed an extension of half an hour.

Mr. Campbell: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put and agreed to.

Mr. Jackson: I shall refer to the Release made by the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry on the 3rd September, 1960, and I shall seek your permission to read very briefly from it:

"Cuba's imports of timber at the moment amount to about \$23m. per year. You will recall that I mentioned some time ago that we will be prepared to

consider sympathetically, firstly, the granting of a lease to the Cubans on the same terms and conditions as we grant leases to others, or secondly, to form a joint company with the Cubans."

That supports my statement just now that there is going to be a joint partnership between this country's Government and the Cuban Government. I quote:

"The Cuban Government, however, do not want to take advantage of either of these two proposals. They said quite frankly to me that these proposals smacked of imperialism. They did not want in any way to exploit our man-power or material resources. They were prepared to help as far as they could. They offered to make available over the next two years a loan to the equivalent of about \$8½m. This loan will be repayable over ten years after the project gets underway. The rate of interest will be 2% and payment will be made in timber products. Technical assistance will be provided, if we require it . . ."

That last phrase is the same thing which I think the mover of the Motion has had in mind — technical assistance. Does Cuba have large forest areas? Does Cuba grow her own timber so as to be able to offer us the assistance referred to in this release? If Cuba imports \$23 million worth of timber products every year, it is almost safe to conclude that she imports all her timber requirements; and if we are right in that conclusion, then we must ask the question: Where are these people, who are going to give us the technical assistance, to come from? We shall be told that they will come from Cuba. Whether they are Cubans in the fullest sense of the word is another matter.

We have got in this Release, several indications that the Cuban Government will give every help in other fields. For example: We are told of industrial complexes, and the industrial complexes to which the Minister referred were cited in Germany—whether it is East or West, one does not know. If the industrial complexes to which he has referred are

not found in Cuba, but in Germany, one ought to say that we are going to follow the pattern in Germany and we should know whether it is East or West.

We have been told that this agreement will also cover the purchase of rice. I trust that in spite of their annoyance and their contempt for people who have expressed fear; in spite of the utterances they have made—utterances which have driven fear into the hearts and minds of many people in this country—Members of the Government admitted last week that they themselves are not in agreement with the means by which Cuba has attained its present position—we shall find agreement in this Council. Perhaps some other more skilful Members on the Government side, who may speak after me, will try to justify the position that obtains in Cuba.

Having said all these things, and having listened to the Minister of Trade and Industry, the Minister of Communications and Works, and to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, who for the first time showed his political attachment when he spoke last Friday; having heard all these things it is hoped that Members of the Government will not brush aside the fears which other Members have expressed in this Council.

As the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh) has just come in, I would like to refer to some of the things he said. He remarked that those Members who have spoken in favour of the Motion have demonstrated a purely colonial mentality. He also made reference to the exploitation of our country. I do not know whether he referred to exploitation for good purposes or otherwise, because one can exploit a country to that country's advantage. I would be glad if he would enlighten me. He also remarked that yesterday's allies are today's enemies. The hon. Member speaks from experience because if we examined all the political parties repre-

sented in this Council today we would see that his experience ran from the People's Progressive Party to the People's National Congress and then to the Guianese Independence Movement. Yes, yesterday's allies are today's enemies. I hope he will not find any more enemies after he has left the G.I.M.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: The P.N.C. is part of the P.P.P.

Mr. Jackson: I submit that whether or not the P.P.P. was split in two parts there came a time when they adopted separate names, and my friend was a member of each party under the names which they adopted subsequently.

The hon. Member said that in Cuba there are people with large land holdings, and from his attitude he appeared to concur with what is happening in Cuba. I have been told that he owns some land on the West Coast of Demerara, and I only hope that when the time comes he will not have to squeal that we have a Government like that of Cuba which is anxious to expropriate the land he has.

The hon. Member says that there is a voluntary giving up of a portion of their wages by workers in Cuba. I challenge that statement because I think I know more about that than the hon. Member. I recall that in December, 1959, when Government employees were asking for more money the Minister of Trade and Industry, in a radio broadcast, said that instead of asking for more money Government employees should do as was being done in Cuba, where the workers had to contribute 5 per cent. of their wages to the Government's coffers. I happen to know that what was then intended as a temporary measure is now becoming a permanent measure, for that 5 per cent. has to be contributed to the State over a period of five years, and I can say that the first set of workers who had to pay part of their wages into the Government were the workers in the sugar industry.

[MR. JACKSON]

When it comes to freedom of the workers in Cuba I want to make it very clear that while it is true that the workers took part in the revolution in Cuba, giving their sweat, toil and blood, they hoped that at the end of the revolution they would have had better conditions than those which existed during the Batista regime. I know that they are not free to choose their own form of employment, and that their movement has now become an arm of the State. I have received a communication from Cuba asking for solidarity and action. It came to me in my capacity as President of one of the trade unions in this country, but it did not come from a President or Secretary of any of the organizations which once existed in Cuba. It came to me from an arm of State. So let us not talk of the freedom of the working class people in Cuba. I know about that. There is no difference today in Cuba between the State and the working class organizations, and that is the pattern which we find in all parts of the world where there are Governments like the present one in Cuba.

I wish to make this very clear lest it be felt that as one who speaks for one arm of the Labour Movement I have not taken the opportunity to nail the lie in that statement. I do so now so that our workers will recognize the fact that in a country like Cuba, with its present Government, the Trade Union Movement and the State are one. There is no line of demarcation, and the workers are subject to the dictates of the State. If they go to find employment on their own they commit an offence against the laws of Cuba and they are punished. [Interruption.] I have grown accustomed to displays of that nature which some Members are demonstrating in this Council, but nothing of that sort will prevent me from making my comments. I say without fear of contradiction that the workers' movement in Cuba has now become an arm of the State, and I know that in 1958 some of the leaders

of the Labour Movement who were champions of the revolution in Cuba, were removed from their offices after the revolution had been successfully concluded. Let us say it freely, so that the workers in this country and elsewhere may not be fooled by statements about the freedom of workers in Cuba to negotiate or to do as they like in support of any organization they have in Cuba.

I submit that the time has come when we must make it clear that since revolutions cannot be exported or imported, we must refer to what exists in that country where a revolution has recently taken place, hoping and praying that in the same way as those things cannot be imported, the freedom of the workers in this country shall remain as it is, even though we know that they suffer and live under very bad conditions. In my opinion it is better that our workers should have their present freedom to fight against those conditions under which they have lived for years, than to have the type of freedom which we have heard exists in Cuba at the present time.

I would like to move an Amendment and I am moving it because of what was said by the Minister of Trade and Industry during his contribution to the debate on Friday afternoon. He said that all transactions would be carried out on a commercial basis, and while I do not like the idea of this Government conducting the negotiations with the Cuban Government, I believe that Government would not refuse to accept the Amendment which I propose to move, and which I hope the hon. Mover will accept. I do not propose to touch the preamble to the Motion but merely to amend the resolution. I therefore move the following Amendment:

- (a) Insertion—(i) of the word "before" between the words "that" and "Government" in the first line;
- (ii) of the word "or" between the words "Government" and "Cuban" in the third line;

(iii) of the words "the terms and conditions of such concessions should be set out in a White Paper" at the end of the resolve clause.

(b) **Deletion**—(i) of the words "should not enter into any" in the first and second lines, and **substitution** therefor of the words "undertakes to enter into any final";

(ii) of the words "or individual Cubans" in the third line.

The Motion should read:

"That this Council recommends that before Government undertakes to enter into any final negotiations with the present Cuban Government or Cuban Companies for timber concession in this Colony the terms and conditions of such concessions should be set out in a White Paper".

That is my Amendment, Sir.

Mr. Kendall : I beg to second the Amendment.

Mr. Speaker: I think it is right for me to read the Amendment so that Members may know what it is. The Amendment suggests that, in the first line, between the words "that" and "Government" the word "before" should be inserted; that the words "should not enter into any" be deleted and the following words substituted therefor "undertakes to enter into any final"; that the word "or" should be inserted between the words "Government" and "Cuban" in the third line; that the words "or individual Cubans" should be deleted after the word "Companies" in the third line and, finally, that after the word "Colony" the following words should be inserted "terms and conditions of such concessions should be set out in a White Paper". The whole Amendment would then read—

"That this Council recommends that before Government undertakes to enter into any final negotiations with the present Cuban Government or Cuban Companies for timber concessions in this Colony the terms and conditions of such concessions should be set out in a White Paper".

Mr. Jackson : May I speak on the Amendment now?

Mr. Speaker : You should have included everything.

Mr. Bowman : I do not agree with the Amendment, and I do not accept it.

Mr. Speaker : Those Members who have spoken before you can now speak on the Amendment.

The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Rai) : With respect, I would like to say that the hon. Member's Amendment is not really an Amendment to the Motion, but is another Motion. The original Motion seeks to prevent Government from entering into any negotiations with Cuba for timber concessions, but this Amendment proposes that Government should enter into negotiations subject to certain conditions. I would respectfully suggest that this cannot be treated as an Amendment to the substantive Motion.

Mr. Speaker : Broadly speaking, if an amendment is a direct negative that principle is applied. If the Amendment directly negatives any motion, then the amendment would not be allowed. I am not convinced that this Amendment is a negative to the Motion as it stands. It does not say that they should enter into negotiations. It is something similar to the question that arose during the debate on Federation when Government moved a motion which I did not consider to be a negative one. I will allow the Amendment.

Mr. Davis : I rise to speak on the original Motion.

Mr. Speaker: The last question is the question to be debated. If it is necessary I will read the relevant Standing Order. I wish hon. Members would read their Standing Orders more regularly, because it would save me a great deal of trouble.

Mr. Davis: What I should have said, perhaps, is that my remarks would be directly addressed to the original Motion, because I have not given consideration to the Amendment that is now before the Council.

Mr. Speaker: Would you be convinced by reading from the Standing Orders or from May's? The debate will proceed on the last question, and that is my ruling.

Mr. Davis: I do not question your ruling at all.

Mr. Speaker: Well, proceed.

Mr. Davis: Very well, Sir. In this debate we have had very interesting and worthwhile contributions by Members of this Council. We have listened to a very strong and emotional speech by the hon. Member for South Georgetown; we have listened to what the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, called "the facts of life"; and we have also listened to the statement made by the Minister of Trade and Industry when he used certain platitudes to get over what is at the moment, perhaps, a very sticky question. I want to say that the attitude or behaviour of the Government is responsible for the trend of thinking and the expressions of opinion we have heard around this Table.

The Government had this project with Cuba in mind. I use the word "project" advisedly, because one has yet to make up one's mind whether it is to be considered as a commercial deal or a mere question of concessions. The Government says that it is an \$8½ million scheme of loans and concessions. It has sometimes been referred to as a joint partnership which is likely to take place with the Cuban Government which would re-orientate the timber industry.

There is also before a certain section of the Colony another project in which Cuba is interested, namely, rice, but this is in the nature of a straight

commercial undertaking. Cuba is or was interested in rice from British Guiana. My attitude to this whole question could be, perhaps, best demonstrated by the attitude of the Rice Marketing Board of which I happen to be a member. I will now quote from a Release issued by the Rice Marketing Board in connection with the possible sale of rice to Cuba. It states:

"It has been reported to the Board that certain misleading statements have been circulated recently in the rice producing districts, in connection with the possibility of marketing British Guiana rice in Cuba.

These statements, the Board understands, are to the effect that Cuba is prepared to buy British Guiana rice at very high prices (a price of \$38 per bag has apparently been mentioned) but that the Board is reluctant to take advantage of this attractive opportunity, and has only agreed to release 1,500 tons of rice for sale to Cuba.

The Board feels that rice producers should now be advised of the true facts, which are as follows:

1. Cuba's import requirements of rice total some 200,000 tons per annum. In the past most of this rice has been purchased from the United States of America, but for reasons which are well known to all, the Cuban Government is now seeking to purchase its requirements elsewhere.

2. The production of rice in British Guiana is increasing rapidly and the Board is naturally very keen on developing new markets for our increasing export surplus. In the circumstances the Board, far from being reluctant, is most anxious to sell some rice to Cuba.

3. Negotiations are, however, being handled by the Government of British Guiana on a direct Government-to-Government basis, and not by the Board.

4. The Board has notified Government (by letter dated 8th September, 1960) that we are prepared to offer up to 25,000 tons for shipment to Cuba during the current crop year. The price to be asked for this rice has been left for Government to decide.

5. Government has submitted an offer to the Government of Cuba but so far no sale has been effected."

Now, Sir, it was found necessary to make this Release because, as it states, members of the Government—the Majority Party—were making statements to the effect that the Board had refused to sell more than 1,500 tons of rice at \$38 per ton. That was far from the truth. In a letter, a copy of which I have here because of the fact that I am a member of the Board, dated 8th September to which reference was made in the Release and which is addressed to the Minister of Trade and Industry, the General Manager states:

“Sir,

Offer of Rice for Sale to Cuba

I refer to our telephone conversation of yesterday's date in the above connection.

As promised, I raised this matter with the Executive Committee of the Board at a meeting held shortly after our discussion. I informed the Committee that during your recent visit to Cuba you had had discussions with the Minister of Commerce and with the Head of the Banco Para El Comercio Exterior de Cuba, and that you were confident that this Department would be prepared to buy supplies of British Guiana rice at prices in excess of those currently applicable under the Regional Rice Agreement.”

The letter goes on to say this about the prices:

“I enclose, herewith, a schedule showing our current export prices converted into U.S. currency per bag of 100 lb. weight c.i.f. You will note that in our prices there is a differential of approximately 70c. U.S. per 100 lb. for every additional 10% of breakage content. If this differential is applied to the price paid by Cuba for U.S. “Century Patna” 4% rice, the equivalent price for our Super would be approximately \$9.30 U.S. per 100 lb. net c.i.f. Havana. If the Cuban Authorities are prepared to accept supplies of British Guiana rice at a price worked out in proportion to the U.S. price, therefore, it would appear that the appropriate equivalents for our three standard export qualities should be:—

| | | | |
|------------------|---|--------|----------------|
| “Super” | — | \$9.30 | U.S. per 100 |
| | | | lb. net c.i.f. |
| | | | Havana |
| “First Quality” | — | \$8.60 | do. |
| “Second Quality” | — | \$7.85 | do. |

In other words, this letter states, definitely, that the Minister of Trade and Industry is given the power to negotiate and fix the price which is equivalent to the price we are getting at the moment from the other West Indian market.

Mr. Speaker: That is a letter from whom to whom?

Mr. Davis: The Manager of the Rice Marketing Board to the Minister of Trade and Industry. But his concluding paragraph is also of importance:

“The Committee considers that you are the best person to know whether in quoting the Cuban Authorities at the present time we should submit prices at these levels, or if it would be advisable to quote at levels somewhere between these prices and the equivalents of our current export prices, and has accordingly suggested that this should be left in your hands.”

He also says this: that the Board was prepared to sell this rice for cash against a reputable letter of credit. I mention this particularly, so that this hon. Council would get an idea of the state of mind of the Board in an ordinary straight transaction.

Mr. Speaker: Is that last statement you made in the letter?

Mr. Davis: Which one?

Mr. Speaker: The one relating to “a reputable letter of credit”. I am not sure when you are reading or condensing.

Mr. Davis: No, Sir, Here is a case where Cuba wants rice. It wants 200,000 tons, and this Colony is quite prepared to make the sale on ordinary commercial terms, which should indicate to all and sundry that the Board was quite prepared and is quite prepared even now and at any time, I believe, to sell any person rice provided that they meet the ordinary requirements—the prices of ordinary day to day commercial transactions. But in this transaction of timber concession, here is a case where an

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amount of \$8½ million is to be loaned to this Government or to the Colony, interest to be computed at a stated figure of 2 per cent. and to be repaid in a certain manner 10 years after the commencement of the operation. Could this be considered as a normal commercial transaction? I would join with others who would say, it is not; and we require to be satisfied by hearing more about the negotiations.

It is stated that this concession is to be effected about the Manaka and Brakaria area. It is my knowledge that this area had some fairly worthwhile and strong growth of timber, but it is also my knowledge that this is an area that has been fairly heavily worked out during the past 20 or 30 years. I know of it because I had interest in a concern which operated in that area; and I speak with a certain amount of knowledge when I say that Bookers had worked their portion of that area, Mr. Sills had worked out a portion of that area and, I think, even my hon. Friend, here, Mr. Fredericks, has worked a portion of that area. So it has been an area that has been well worked. I concede that it has other things like bauxite and young greenheart in it, but for this large amount of money — \$8½ million — I think the country, and this Legislature in particular, has been scantily treated in not getting sufficient information or knowledge of what is Government's intention. Perhaps, if it were not for the Motion moved by the hon. Member for Demerara River, we may have heard even less about the whole project.

As I have already stated, I am completely in favour of trading with any country and with anybody — even with the devil, perhaps — but I do feel, and feel strongly, that we ought to have known more about the entire transaction — the entire concession — from the Government. If Government feels that it would not be in the best interest of the Colony to make a release on what the

transaction is, at the moment, and that it would be detrimental to the negotiation as such, Government should say so and give an undertaking that a statement would be made at a particular period before this transaction is completed. And that is what I am going to urge my friends on the other side of the Table to consider seriously because, speaking for myself, if I do not get some such undertaking from the Government, I shall be forced to support the Motion as amended. [Pause]

Mr. Speaker: As there is a lull, I may read, in order to clarify Members' minds, Standing Order 33, Sub-Order 7:

"Every Member shall confine his observations to the subject under consideration, and, where more than one question has been proposed, as by way of amendment, the debate must be relevant to the last question so proposed, until it has been disposed of."

While Members are making up their minds I may say that when an Amendment to a Motion has been allowed, for the purposes of debate it becomes an integral part of the Motion. If no other Member wishes to speak——

Mr. Gajraj: Mr. Speaker, this whole question of trade with Cuba is one which is fraught with a great deal of emotional thinking. We have had, during the course of this debate, a considerable number of statements made, some of them relevant to the issue, others quite irrelevant. But the question to which we must address our minds, shorn of all those various statements, is: should we or should we not trade with Cuba? I look at this whole question primarily as a businessman, and I was particularly pleased to have read — because I was not in my seat at the time — that from this side of the Table whence the Motion and the Amendment have originated, the statement was made that we should trade with anyone as long as the transaction would not be detrimental to us. That is the philosophy of every businessman,

when he is prepared to enter into any negotiations for trade with the direct object of making sure that the transaction is a profitable one. It would be foolish indeed if any individual or, as in this case, the Government of a country, were to embark upon negotiations which would not be in the interest of the country.

From the information we have had so far we can hardly say that we have got all the facts and the information necessary to assess whether the transaction would indeed be beneficial or otherwise. On the face of it and superficially it looks as if there could be brought about a situation which would be useful to this country. Members should realize that in the functioning of a democracy there is more than one arm of Government. We in this Council represent the Legislative arm of the Government. There is also an executive arm of the Government and certain subjects are expected to be left to the executive arm of the Government to deal with.

In this case if it is the Government that has been negotiating an agreement of some sort with the Government of Cuba, then it is only when information is made public and we are faced with a position in which we can say that ill has resulted from the arrangement, that we can honestly come into the Legislature and condemn the Government for it. If the executive arm of the Government were to take action of such a nature it is plain that not only would the Members of the Government receive condemnation from this Council but they would have to account for their actions to the country, and with August, 1961, not so far away, one can easily see that no Government would wish to embark upon a transaction inimical to the interests of the country, because the broom of disapproval would be sternly used against them when the elections come around.

Fear has been expressed about what the Cubans may do to our fair country.

As far as I understand it, the areas of the country to be worked by the Cubans are the forest areas. Members know very well that there are laws governing the area of our forests. It is suggested by those Members who wish to have nothing to do with Cuba, that the Government would make arrangements with that country which would be contrary to the laws of British Guiana. Were they to do that strong condemnation would be heaped upon their heads. I cannot but feel that a great deal of hysterical thought has been brought into play in considering this question of trade with Cuba.

The Motion quite definitely requests this Council to recommend to Government that they should not enter into negotiations with Cuba, while the Amendment, so far as I can remember from Your Honour's reading of it, suggests that this Council should have a White Paper setting out the proposals before Government went further. As far as my limited knowledge goes, the only time that one country bars its inhabitants from trading with another country is when it is at war with that country. Is it suggested that we are at war with Cuba, or that Cuba is at war with us, and because of that condition we should tell the Government not to negotiate or trade with Cuba?

I would like to remind hon. Members that there is a great deal of controversy and bad feeling between the Governments of the U.S.A. and Cuba, and quite recently the U.S.A. banned the export to Cuba of quite a number of products, except foodstuffs and medicines. But what has happened immediately afterwards? The other half of the North American Continent, the Dominion of Canada, a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, through its Prime Minister, made it clear to the world that that country was not concerned with the embargo that had been placed upon exports to Cuba by the U.S.A.—that indeed Canada was willing not merely to continue its normal trade with Cuba,

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but to expand it if necessary. Only this morning I read in the "Daily Chronicle" a report that some Americans were rather perturbed over a rumour, to which they gave some credence, that in order to dispose of some of Cuba's sugar which the U.S.A. will not be taking next year, an Anglo-Canadian group was making arrangements to market that sugar in the countries of Europe.

These things indicate very clearly that trade knows no barriers. As long as A has an article to sell and B is able to arrange to exchange money or something else for the article, trade can be done, and it could be done by people with altogether different ideological views; people using different currencies; people having, perhaps, different forms of culture, and whose outlook on the problem may not be the same. Trade is international, and that is why there is in existence the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, known throughout the world as G.A.T.T. whereby every effort is being made to bring about as much trade as is possible amongst all the signatories to that Agreement.

The day may shortly come, perhaps, when British Guiana in her own right, in order to protect the national currency, may find it necessary to use some form of restriction in trade with other countries, but purely because of balance of payments reasons. That happened in the United Kingdom after the last war. It is only recently that we have been able to get rid of those troubles. But I would like to impress upon Members of this Council that it is no use condemning something until you have proved that what has been done is wrong; it has failed; and its purpose is inimical to our interests and so forth. Let us get away from hysterics; let us be logical and practical.

If what the Minister of Trade and Industry has said is true: he said that Cubans were interested in a variety of

woods which are hardly used by our local people, because we have grown to believe that only greenheart is good wood. Quite a number of species are left to rot in the forest, and they have to be cleared away in order to make a pathway that will enable us to bring out the timber which is wanted by us.

If it is true that the Cubans are interested in a variety of woods, then it seems to me from a business point of view that we should go aggressively after the market in order to bring in the *quid pro quo* for the products of this country. We have to increase the value of our exports year after year, if the productivity of this country is to be able to continue to contribute money each year on the expanding need for development.

At the present moment we have a Development Programme of \$110 million, but I think we are all satisfied that this is merely scratching the surface. It will make our needs greater after we have spent the \$110 million on the proposed schemes because, so far as development is concerned, when we develop one step it opens the need for other steps. If we are to stand on our own feet we will have to increase our own productivity; bring in more money annually for our projects, and keep money in the country so as to be able to plough it back into industries.

I could not agree to a proposal which, on the face of it, would be considered objectively by people of commerce as being absurd. No doubt when the thought of this question arose in the minds of hon. Members they may have been motivated by the feeling that we may get ourselves involved in something which would be against our interests. But the more we think of this matter, the more we look at what it means to us, surely, it should strike us that we do not want to have the world laughing at us.

I was very interested in hearing the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, say that the Rice Marketing Board, of

which he is a member, gave the Minister of Trade and Industry the go-ahead to make negotiations for the sale of some of the Colony's rice. Let me say that the Cuban market has always been a very attractively priced market. Several years ago, before the Rice Marketing Board came into operation, the rice in British Guiana sold to Cuba generally fetched a higher price than the West Indies were capable of paying for it, not that they did not wish to pay the price, but because of their poor economy they could not afford to pay more.

I would accept that, subject to this country being able to supply the type of rice which the Cubans wish and subject, of course, to other considerations being to our advantage we should be able to sell them our rice. It is no use thinking that we can sell them their full requirements. We cannot do that because not only have we our prior commitments to the West Indies, but their total requirements are much in excess of our total production. If we can get a foothold in the Cuban market for rice and timber, as long as proper arrangements are made whereby the country does not suffer, then I would say by all means go ahead and trade with Cuba.

I recall that when I was on the Rice Marketing Board that we always kept projected before our mind's eye the problem of what we would do with the increasing production of rice in this country. We made a list of markets with the object of getting in touch with them with a view to gaining a foothold when we had the goods to deliver. Cuba was one of the names on the list. Haiti, San Domingo, the French Islands of the West Indies, Canada and the U.S.A. itself were also on the list, because although the Southern States of the U.S.A. produce a considerable quantity of rice, from previous experience, we have found that a particular type of thin, long-grain rice in British Guiana finds a very ready acceptance in the City of New York amongst the Puerto Ricans.

Let us go back to what is good for the Colony. I am sure hon. Members will agree that we should not embark upon any trade negotiations or any venture of any kind which would be detrimental to the country's interests, but until we are satisfied that it would be detrimental we should not stand in the way of negotiations being made and things of the kind. We must move along and do as much business as possible. Trade is something universal, and let us not close our eyes to the opportunities and benefits of trade simply because we want to be, as I said earlier, hysterical over matters of this kind.

Mr. Speaker: [after a long pause] Three minutes have elapsed.

Mr. Fredericks: Mr. Speaker, I take it that the Amendment is still before the Council.

Mr. Speaker: Three minutes have elapsed, and I will ask the Mover of the Motion to reply if he has anything to say. If hon. Members wish to speak on the Motion there is no need to sit for three, four or five minutes before doing so. If nobody else wishes to speak, I shall ask the Mover of the Motion to reply.

Mr. Fredericks: The substantive Motion before this Council is a very simple one. Like the character of its author it is devoid of any subterfuge or hidden meaning; it merely asks that this Council should not enter into negotiations with the Cuban Government, or Cuban Companies or individual Cubans for timber concessions. A re-statement of the contents of the Motion is necessary because of the elaborate and seemingly irrelevant issues that have been introduced into this debate on such a simple Motion.

I, like the other speakers, have been astonished at the torrent of emotionalism that this Motion has evoked. Some Members on this side of the Council have been accused of prejudice, bigotry and intolerance — harsh words to be used

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in any debate. They were also accused of aligning themselves with the forces of reaction and vested interests. But let us pause and analyse calmly and rationally what the substantive Motion intends to achieve. If a timber concession is granted to Cubans it means that they will be given *carte blanche*: free entry and egress in and out of this country, not only for their technicians, but also for their equipment. It would be unwise for such entry and egress to be permitted in the context of the present Governments of Cuba and British Guiana. It would probably spark revolution in this country.

The Motion does not prohibit normal business relationship with Cuba. Hon. Members on this side of the Council and those who are opposing the Motion have made references to Canada and Great Britain having profitable trade relationship with Cuba, and there is no reason why British Guiana should not trade profitably with Cuba. We have timber and other commodities to sell, and we should be able to trade with them on a cash basis in easily convertible currency. Nothing should stop us from doing that. But should we allow them entry into this Colony? Britain or Canada does not have to fear the Cuban Government, and they do not allow the Cubans to enter into their countries to start businesses. Why should we?

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard—

Mr. Burnham: To a point of order: I submit the speaker is not speaking to the last question, which is the Amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Proceed, please!

Mr. Fredericks: I was saying: My friend on my left, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, has said that business is business. I agree with that. He has said that doing business with a

murderer might be profitable business. I concede the point, but let him tell this Council whether he will permit a murderer to enter his garden and cultivate it for their mutual benefit? That is a horse of a different colour. Why should we offer Cuba an excuse for entering this country? If the Cubans so love British Guiana; if they so love Guianese, what is to prevent them purchasing timber from this country?

The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry has stood here and recited a long string of names of timber—names furnished by the Forestry Department—which the Cubans are going to exploit. Has he told us how much of each of the secondary species will be obtained in the area Government has in mind? He ought to know or be advised by the Forestry Department that none of the names of the timbers he has mentioned, with the possible exception of wallaba, can be obtained in any quantity in any one locality; and yet he has talked glibly of obtaining half of Cuba's total imports of timber of \$23 million! What wishful thinking and absolute nonsense!

As it stands today, British Guiana's greenheart can hardly compete with African hard woods. The price of greenheart today is at a new low. It is true that there is no substitute for greenheart for a particular type of work. Today, the value of greenheart piles in the United States of America, which is the largest purchaser of British Guiana's piles, is the lowest for the last 10 years. This country is now importing a sizeable quantity of American and Canadian soft woods. This is done for the simple reason that this country does not have suitable species comparable to those American and Canadian soft woods. Today, this country cannot even produce enough crabwood and cedar for its own uses!

The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry has said that local timbermen are not concerned with secondary species of

the forests; they are only interested in the expensive species. He should be advised by his Forestry Department that the cost of extraction of secondary timbers is extremely high so as to make it prohibitive to log.

Mr. Speaker: I take it that you are speaking against the Amendment?

Mr. Fredericks: Yes, Sir, In other words, they cannot compete with similar species from other countries. These facts are irrefutable, and the Minister of Trade and Industry should have apprised himself of these relevant facts. One must ask oneself: Wherefore this new-found love of Guianese by Cubans? Let the Minister of Trade and Industry or any of the other Ministers deny that two firms, at least, which have shipped their products to Cuba are still awaiting payment. Payment had been withheld although this matter was taken up with the recent Cuban Delegation. One of those companies is owned and controlled by a talented Guianese businessman. [**Mr. Burnham:** "Name!"] Do not worry about name. And it is pathetic that that company may shortly have to go out of existence because the Cubans failed to honour normal business transactions.

It is indeed significant that on the occasion when this Government has publicly announced its intention to consider the possibility of entering into a partnership to exploit the timber resources of this country, it should be with Cubans and not Guianese. The Ministers of this Government have publicly extolled the virtues of the leaders of the Cuban Revolution and have sung paeans regarding the "great liberator" Castro. Few of us could ever have believed that such misguided adulations would take the form of partnership with Cubans to the exclusion of Guianese themselves. It would appear that the end justifies the means.

The present Government is prepared to adopt any means possible to

align this country firmly behind the Soviet Bloc. It is dedicated to the proposition of the establishment of a communist form of Government in this country and is prepared to do so at all costs. As far as I am aware, the Government has never, at any time — and let it deny this — intimated that it would be willing to enter into partnership with local timber operators, and it was indeed a surprise to the industry to hear of the proposed partnership with the Cubans; moreso, when the Cubans have no prior experience of this type of work.

If we examine the record of the timber industry over the past few decades, we cannot fail to draw one inescapable conclusion, and that conclusion is — that no foreign individual or foreign companies can operate as efficiently, beneficially and competently as Guianese in the fields of logging and sawmilling.

With respect to the development of timber resources, we have not been given very specific facts about this proposed Cuban partnership — what it is supposed to accomplish, what are the terms and conditions, where are the areas, what are the benefits that will accrue, can the areas be better exploited by Cubans rather than by Guianese, have we proper surveys? All these facts, I submit, Guianese should be apprised of and be told before any direct pronouncement of partnership is made.

Only a few weeks ago we heard the Minister of Trade and Industry, in one of his radio broadcasts, tell of an expert who will be coming to evaluate our timber resources. It only shows that at the time the Government made the pronouncement, it did not have adequate data of the areas it proposed to give to the Cubans. One has to ask oneself whether this proposal is not merely a blind to cover a more sinister purpose. Suppose someone is engaged in a business and he contemplates entering into a partnership

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with someone else similarly engaged, for that merger to have a chance of survival, there are certain basic facts which must be known for the proposed business to have a reasonable chance of surviving. What are the assets of the respective businesses? What have been their policies in the past; what are their present policies? What chance does the proposed partnership have? All those facts must be analysed, and it is absolutely necessary before a partnership with Cuba is entered upon, that we should have some idea of the policy of the present Government of Cuba. Cuba has embarked upon a policy of expropriation of private and public companies, and the nationalization of Cuban properties.

There seems to be little doubt that the present Cuban Government is communist in outlook and is actively engaged in a policy of opposition to all religion. My friend on the other side sneers at that statement, but I would like to quote for his benefit from the "Catholic Standard."

Mr. Speaker: Does religion come into this?

Mr. Fredericks: I am just giving an idea of the policy of the present Cuban Government. I would like to quote from a statement by Archbishop Serantes who saved Fidel Castro when he was captured by the previous Government in an abortive coup.

Mr. Speaker: We are not talking about individuals but about a certain transaction.

Mr. Fredericks: I will not bother about the quotation. My friend the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) has elaborated on the point that there are no free trade unions in Cuba today, and that all the *bona fide* trade unions have gone underground. There is suppression of individual liberty, and the

only newspaper which is free from direct Government control is the "Habana". There are no free elections, and there will not be for a long time. It seems that in Cuba today there is a brutal communist dictatorship. Even Castro's friends who bore the brunt of battle with him and stood by him through thick and thin have had to run away. It appears that the only champions of Fidel Castro are dedicated communists who are outside of Cuba, and who are die-hard apologists of the Cuban revolution.

We should also take a very brief look at Cuba's economy which is also bound up with the idea of a partnership with Cuba. If we are to do business with someone we must have some idea of the credit-worthiness of that person. The Cuban economic boss, Che Guevera, has stated publicly over the radio that Cuba has very little cash left, and the point was made by other speakers that Cuba's economy is shaky. Guevera has said openly that Cuba's foreign exchange is down to a new low. Cuba is linking its economy with that of Russia, while British Guiana on the other hand is thinking of linking its economy with that of Cuba.

It is said that 70 per cent. of Cubans cannot read or write. The wages of sugar workers in Cuba are below those of their counterpart in this country, and often times they are being paid their wages in bonds which are redeemable only at the local agrarian stores. The Cuban peso has depreciated to about one-third of its original value, and there is every possibility that it will depreciate further. The Cubans themselves have no faith in their own economy. Why should we? Is that the type of country with which we should seek a partnership?

A Minister has stated that Cuba is not interested in exporting revolution, but he also said that Latin America has adopted the Cuban revolution as its own.

British Guiana is on the South American Continent. Let us not overlook the effect of what a partnership with Cuba is likely to have on capital which is considering entering this country. Nothing can scare away capital more than the threat of nationalization, and if we hero-worship the Cubans to the extent that we want them to help our economy, it may be that we may want to carry that hero-worship a bit further by adopting some of the methods Fidel Castro has adopted in relation to foreign companies operating there. Let us not be fooled by empty promises. No good can accrue to this country from any partnership with Cuba. Often in my life a Latin quotation, over two thousand years old, comes to my mind:

"In quorum manibus iniquitates sunt, dextera eorum repleta est muneribus."

In whose hands are iniquities their right hand is filled with gifts. Let this country beware of the gifts promised by the Cubans.

Mr. Tello: I should have been in a position to support the Amendment, because I have previously said that Government has been guilty of a grave omission in not putting up a White Paper on the subject. The Amendment presupposes that once a White Paper has been put before the Council Government would have blanket coverage to go ahead. It can be so interpreted. I cannot support the Amendment because I know that many of us are experts in interpreting these technicalities in our favour, and I would not be surprised if Government quickly submitted a sort of White Paper so as to have the right to go ahead with this nefarious transaction.

Fate was rather kind to me this afternoon because, when I listened to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, speaking with authority as a businessman,

I had to listen with some care, and I was beginning to wonder whether he has a greater right to the expression of his opinion because of his connection with commerce. But I say that fate has been kind to me because, shortly after him came an industrialist and businessman who disagreed with him. I would like to be enlightened on one point. I am sorry I did not hear the entire speech of the Minister of Trade and Industry, but from information I have received it would appear that British Guiana is the first country that has been invited to enter into this peculiar partnership with Cuba. We have not heard any reference to any similar business transaction with any other country. Why should British Guiana be chosen for this experiment? I want to ask why should British Guiana, which is looking forward to the quickest and shortest means of developing its economy, be chosen as the guinea pig for this new Castro idea?

If trade between Canada and Cuba fails and Canada loses a few million dollars I suppose Canada's economy would be able to stand it. But British Guiana is searching for trade; we are searching for quick development. I do not think that people who have been running a Government for four or five years can have as much experience as people who have been running Governments for several years. These are the people with limited knowledge and experience who are going to embark upon new ways of transacting international business. No wonder that around this Table so much suspicion regarding the ultimate objects of these transactions or tricky partnerships has been awakened!

I would have thought that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, would have been better qualified to speak on this matter. I thought that a businessman would have examined carefully the credit-worthiness and the capacity of the people with whom he proposed to trans-

[MR. TELLO]

act business before entering into an agreement. I would not doubt that they have well-established business houses in countries in the world which can afford to gamble when going in search of new avenues for business. I have no doubt that industrialists have done so throughout the history of commerce, but we cannot afford to gamble with our meagre resources.

I thought that Mr. Gajraj, as a businessman, would have advised us to wait and see how Cuba evolved out of the atmosphere of revolution — Cuba is still involved in revolution — so that we could be sure that we are dealing with people who can honour their commitments and are in a good position to trade with us. The advice that this Council has been given must be considered very carefully, so that Members will not be wrongly influenced. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, says that we should go out and look for business. I am just making this point because it clashes with what the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, says. He feels that it is dangerous to experiment with trade with Cuba when Cuba does not enjoy a good reputation for honouring its obligations. He has cited two cases where firms in this Colony and in Surinam have not been paid for their goods.

Mr. Fredericks: On a point of order. The point I made is that British Guiana should trade with Cuba in the same way as Great Britain and Canada. I am opposed to allowing the Cubans free entry into British Guiana.

Mr. Tello: I said that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, was not in favour of trading with Cuba. I said also that he agreed with me that several firms in this Colony have complained that their trade connections with Cuba so far have not received honourable

behaviour on the Cuban side of the transactions. I feel that if British Guiana enters into any transaction with Cuba as an experiment which turns out to be successful it will be a mere gamble. It is just like buying a sweepstake, but if we fail in our venture it will set back our economy and we will regret it.

I think there should be a condition that Government should not enter into negotiations with Cuba, or embark on something new until this Council has been presented with a White Paper setting out everything so that the records will be kept straight.

I would like to refer to a statement made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard. On Friday last he referred to —

Mr. Hubbard *rose*—

Mr. Speaker: He has not yet spoken on the Motion.

Mr. Hubbard: I was rising to draw Your Honour's attention to the fact that the hon. Member seems to be making a second speech. He spoke on the Motion last week.

Mr. Speaker: Maybe you think that I am not sufficiently alert. I can assure you that I am. He is speaking on the Amendment.

Mr. Tello: It was my intention to refer to what the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, said but on second thought I do not think it is worthy of consideration.

Mr. Bowman: [*after a long pause*] I am replying to what hon. Members have said, and nobody else will be able to speak after me.

Mr. Speaker: Just a moment. Did you hear what I have said a little while ago? I said that if no other Member wishes to speak, you would be the last to speak on the Motion. Do you object to that?

Mr. Bowman: No, Sir. That is exactly what I am saying. I want to say from the outset that even if this Amendment is accepted by this Council, personally, I am opposed to it because it states:

"That this Council recommends that before Government undertakes to enter into any final negotiations with the present Cuban Government or Cuban Companies for timber concessions in this Colony, the terms and conditions of such concessions should be set out in a White Paper."

My Motion specifically states:

"That this Council recommends that Government should not enter into any negotiations with the present Cuban Government, Cuban Companies or individual Cubans for timber concessions in this Colony."

The object of my Motion is to prevent our peaceful country from being enmeshed with Castro's Cuba. Cuba is the bridgehead for Communism on this continent. Cuba is a revolutionary Government; Castro's Government is seizing property and is shooting people without discretion. There are several collegians here — I have not been to college. However, you will observe that trade has been brought into this debate. Trade and concessions are two separate and distinct things. Where is the connection between trade and concessions?

My Motion mentioned something specific — it stated that we must not enter into negotiations for timber concessions. I believe that if the Cubans were to be given concessions, as my hon. Friend said a few minutes ago, they

would have free entry and egress out of this country. I say that guns and munitions will be brought into this country by the Cubans. That is the sole reason why this Government wants to give the Cubans concessions. I can read the minds of the Members of this Government, because I have worked with them and I know how they think. I am not speaking with water in my mouth; I know what I am talking about.

A Minister of this Government told the people last week that "if we can capture one-half of the Cuban timber market and import requirements (about \$14 million annually), we would have seven times the amount of our present export trade in timber." He was speaking of trade, but my Motion did not mention anything about trade. My Motion said that we must not negotiate, and that this Council should not agree to allow this Government to enter into any negotiations to give Cuba timber concessions.

I have heard Members talking about Cuba doing trade with Canada and England. The leaders of England and Canada are not avowed Marxists; they have not cheered Castro for what he is doing; they have not told the world that they regard Castro as the great liberator of this century and of this hemisphere. Hon. Members must bear these things in mind. Why is it that Castro suddenly became friendly with this country? Up to a certain part of this year there were no friends of Castro in this Government, although a few businessmen dealt with Cuba.

However, one Member of the "Opposition" who has been gallivanting among the Latin-American countries is the person who, I understand, made the introduction between the leader of this Government and Castro. Cuba is the connecting link between Russia and China, and Cuba will look after the spread of Communism in this continent.

[MR. BOWMAN]

The Movers said in their Amendment — I know that the Mover of the Amendment speaks for his Party, and I am connecting him with the rest of his Party in this Council. They are thinking in terms of allowing negotiations to go through provided the terms are good, but I say that we must not agree to any concessions.

This Motion was brought here since June. This is my brain-child. Unlike some of my former friends, who do not think for themselves, I am thinking for myself as everybody can see. Being the mover of the original Motion, I think — and if I am wrong I will bow to Your Honour's ruling — I should have the liberty to reply to all that was said in this Council.

Lord Holland, an English nobleman, was asked once to express his view on self-educated men and he expressed the view that self-educated men are peculiarly conceited and arrogant, and apt to look down upon the generality of mankind because of their being ignorant of how much other people know.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr Hubbard, made certain remarks last week which gave me the impression that he fits into the category of self-educated people because he had expressed certain impertinence and arrogance. [Mr. Benn: "You are wrong."] I am not wrong. He has exhibited a high degree of arrogance and I think he fits into the category to which Lord Holland referred. He said, in effect, that certain members of the Interim Government had supported Governor Savage in casting Guianese behind barbed wire. Why did not this gentleman identify himself with the P.P.P. during the crisis of 1953-54? Why only now has he thought fit to open his mouth as wide as possible and associate himself with this Party? Why

only now? Had he not the courage? He came in this Council as a Member unconnected to any Party. He had no party affiliation; but I knew, and I could have exposed him. [Laughter.]

Mr. Speaker: Let us deal with the Motion. If you are going to indulge in personalities, I shall have to refer you to the Standing Orders of this Council.

An hon. Member: It is a personal attack!

Mr. Bowman: I heard one of the Members over there say it is a personal attack, but it was not a personal attack he made last week on the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello. He called his name. I did not hear it was a personal attack.

Mr. Speaker: You are not to answer for me.

Mr. Bowman: I am speaking to the debate.

Mr. Speaker: Let me refer to the Rule of Debate by which you are bound — Standing Order 33, Sub-Order (9). You have a copy.

"No Member shall —

- (a) impute improper motives to any other Member;
- (b) make a personal charge against any other Member;
- (c) use offensive expressions;
- (d) indulge in personalities."

These are the Standing Orders which you have approved for your guidance in the Council and have been put into my hands as an aid to govern the debates here. Will you observe them, please?

Mr. Bowman: I have made notes of what was said by individual Members during the debate, and I intend to reply to them point after point. The Minister of Trade and Industry went on, during

the debate last week, to tell us that Castro's revolution is a genuine revolution. Whether or not it is genuine, the fact is we are not debating Castro's revolution. In my earlier remarks I made a statement which was handed down by the Organization of American States to prove that Castro is a man who cannot be relied upon, and I mentioned what is taking place there.

The Minister came here and told us that the revolution is a genuine one. He referred to Ernest Hemingway and said that Hemingway actually praised Castro for what he has done, and from what he has said, all things are going well. I asked the Minister what time the Report was written and he never answered. But what is Hemingway's political complexion? He is a fellow traveller. Hemingway is a communist, in other words. I am saying so without fear, and that is why Hemingway wrote the way in which he has written. The Minister also referred to Hubert Williams' article appearing in the "Guiana Graphic", but he failed to quote from a subsequent article in the "Guiana Graphic"—I cannot remember the date because I did not mark it, however, it was a day in last week.

If you only open your mouth and say anything against the Government you are "dumped" in gaol. That is what goes on in Cuba; and if we were to give those people the concessions which my former friends want to give them, they are going to be free to bring in munition and guns and technicians to train them to fight.

The Minister of Natural Resources, at a meeting held at Rosignol some months ago, mentioned the fact that the people should be armed. He cannot deny that. The Leader of the Government had also given his hearers the same impression, that there is need for a revolution and they should be armed. If we hear these things, must we who are peace-loving not have fear in our minds?

Must we sit with our mouths closed and allow them to bring in things to the detriment of the people? I want to remind this Council that the Minister has said over and over again that foreign capital would never solve the problems of this country, neither would it be the salvation of this country. May I ask if the Cuban loan is granted, what kind of capital would it be called? Would it not be considered foreign capital? Let them answer me.

Leaving the Minister of Trade and Industry, I want to reply to points made by the hon. Member for Georgetown South. I think he was the first person to have brought in trade into this argument. I fully agree that we should trade. Legitimate trade is good. I am not opposed to trade. What I said was that we must not give to the Cubans timber concessions because I know the danger there is in such concessions.

The hon. Member said that Cuba imports 200,000 tons of rice per year. I remember reading in a newspaper that the Rice Marketing Board was willing to sell 25,000 tons of rice to Cuba. I am not opposed to any negotiations for the sale of rice to Cuba, but what I am prepared to stand up against is any sort of barter. We are accustomed to the normal exchange of our goods for cash, and if we are to trade with Cuba they must pay cash, because I am quite sure that our rice farmers will not want to exchange their padi or rice for other goods; they will want cash. Our rice industry is expanding and there will be need for more markets. I would not be so stupid as to oppose a rice deal with Cuba, but it must be on a cash basis, otherwise there is going to be trouble in this country. Our rice farmers are going to demand cash; they will not exchange their rice for tobacco. Communist countries indulge in barter trade, but when they trade with countries outside their circle they have to deal in cash.

[MR. BOWMAN]

Another point I wish to bring to the attention of the Council is that during the last war the United States championed the entire hemisphere's cause against the Germans. Today the Castro Government of Cuba is at enmity with the U.S.A., and I am afraid that if British Guiana were to become too friendly with the Castro Government, especially in granting the sort of concessions proposed, it is reasonable to expect that the U.S.A. would be displeased, and in the event of war what would be our position? I know that the Government boasts of having friends with rockets, but this is a peaceful country. Perhaps they want to take us into the stream of revolution, but let me assure them that if there is a revolution in this country at any time many of them will not live to see it through.

I would like to direct my attention to the Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran) in order to refer to a few things he said. He made reference to slavery, etc., and remarked that the money being doled out to this country by Britain was blood money. I think I am more conversant with the slave trade than he is, but unlike him I feel that history is the evolutionary development of yester-year, and to have recourse to recriminations based on hate, based on account of the evils of the past, is un-Christian and ungodly, and cannot do us or our country any good. We must think in terms of making the best use of today and plan and work hard for tomorrow. Are we responsible for things that happened 300 years ago? There is no human being alive today who lived in those days. I say that rather than keep hate in our minds or foster hate among others, let us think in terms of the future. Let us plan and work hard to develop our country in the way it should be developed.

I had occasion last week to refer to the antics of the Government in demand-

ing independence now. The British Government has undertaken to give us independence. A specific date has not been fixed, it is true, but the principle has been accepted.

Mr. Speaker: The question of independence does not come into this debate. Did anybody refer to independence during this debate? I have no such recollection.

Mr. Bowman: Yes, Sir. The Member for Georgetown South —

Mr. Speaker: You do not have to bother about that. [Laughter]. Let us get on.

Mr. Bowman: I am replying point by point, Sir. I have made notes of what they said.

Mr. Speaker: In your reply you cannot refer to everything that was said. Is there any likelihood of your finishing this afternoon?

Mr. Bowman: Perhaps in about ten minutes. I am not really being given an opportunity —

Mr. Speaker: Would you like an adjournment now? Personally I would like to get rid of the Motion this afternoon, but if Members do not wish to do so they can come back here as many times as they wish. I am always here.

Mr. Bowman: I would prefer if you adjourn the Council until tomorrow, because I will be given a better chance to say what I want. I will take longer than ten minutes to complete my reply.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: Council is now adjourned until 2 p.m. on Thursday, 10th November, 1960.

Council adjourned accordingly, at 5.12 p.m.