

**THE**  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**  
**OFFICIAL REPORT**  
**[VOLUME 7]**  
**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL**  
**ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE**  
**CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Sitting**

**2 p.m.**

**Monday, 30<sup>th</sup> July, 1973**

**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**Speaker**

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. Sase Narain, J.P.

**Members of the Government - People's National Congress (49)**

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,  
Prime Minister

Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of  
National Development and Agriculture

**Senior Ministers (7)**

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,  
Minster of Works and Communications

\*The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,  
Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Justice

**(Absent)**

\*The Hon. H Green,  
Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

**(Absent)**

**\*Non-elected Ministers**

\*The Hon. H.O. Jack,  
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

\*The Hon. F.E. Hope,  
Minister of Finance

\*Dr. the Hon. K.F.S. King,  
Minister of Economic Development

\*The Hon. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,  
Minister of Housing

**(Absent)**

### **Ministers (5)**

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,  
Minister of Labour

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,  
Minister of Information and Culture

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,  
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs  
and Leader of the House

\*The Hon. Miss C.L. Baird,  
Minister of Education

\*Dr. the Hon. O. M. R. Harper,  
Minister of Health

### **Ministers of State (9)**

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,  
Minister of State for Agriculture

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,  
Minister of State – Regional  
(East Berbice/Corentyne)

The Hon. P. Duncan, J.P.,  
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

The Hon. C. A. Nascimento,  
Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister

### **\*Non-elected Ministers**

Mr. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.  
Minister of State – Regional (Essequibo  
Coast/West Demerara)

\*The Hon. C.V. Mingo,  
Minister of State for Home Affairs

\*The Hon. W. Haynes,  
Minister of State – Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro)

\*The Hon. A. Salim,  
Minister of State - Regional  
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)

\*The Hon. F. U. A. Carmichael,  
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

### **Parliamentary Secretaries (8)**

Mr. J.R. Thomas  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Housing

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works  
and Communications

Miss M.M. Ackman,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister,  
and Government Whip

Mr. E.L. Ambrose  
Parliamentary Secretary (Agriculture),  
Ministry of National Development and Agriculture

Mr. K. B. Bancroft,  
Parliamentary Secretary (Hinterland),  
Ministry of National Development and Agriculture

Mr. S. Prashad,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Co-operatives  
And National Mobilisation

Mr. J. P. Chowritmootoo,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education

**(Absent)**

### **\*Non-elected Ministers**

Mr. R. H. O. Corbin,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of  
Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

**(Absent)**

**Other Members (18)**

Mr. J.N. Aaron  
Mrs. L. M. Branco  
Mr. M. Corrica  
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler  
Miss J. Gill  
Mr. W. Hussain  
Miss S. Jaiserrisingh  
Mr. K. M. E. Jonas  
Mr. M. Nissar  
Dr. L. E. Ramsahoye  
Mr. J. G. Ramson  
Mrs. P. A. Rayman  
Mr. E. M. Stoby, J.P.  
Mr. S. H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.  
Mr. C. Sukul, J.P.  
Mr. H. A. Taylor  
Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman  
Mrs. L.E. Willems

**(Absent)**

**Members of the Opposition**

**Liberty Party (2)**

Dr. G. Kumar  
Mr. M. F. Singh, Deputy Speaker

**(Absent)**

**OFFICERS**

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F.A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M. B. Henry, **AMBIM.**

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National Assembly

2.15 – 2.25 p.m.

2.15 p.m.

## PRAYERS

## OATHS

*The oath of office was made and subscribed by Dr. the Hon. P.A. Reid,*

*Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development and Agriculture.*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member. Dr. Reid, may I on behalf of the other Members of Parliament and myself extend to you our sincere congratulations.

## PUBLIC BUSINESS

## MOTIONS

### CONFIRMATION OF TRAVEL VOUCHER TAX ORDER 1973 (No. 58)

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly in accordance with section 4 of the Travel Voucher Tax Act 1973 confirm the Travel Voucher Tax Order 1973 (No. 58), which was made on the 13th June, 1973, and published in the Official Gazette on the 14th of June, 1973. [**The Minister of Finance**]

**The Minister of Finance (Mr. Hope):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to move the Motion standing in my name that this National Assembly in accordance with section 4 of the Travel Voucher Tax Act 1973 confirm the Travel Voucher Tax Order 1973 (No. 58), which was made on the 13th of June, 1973, and published in the Official Gazette on the 14th of June, 1973.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

**SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER**

“Be it resolved that the paragraph(3) of Standing Order No. 46 be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed, at its sitting on the 30th of July, 1973, with the Second Reading and the remaining stages of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 1973.” [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Mr. Ramsaroop):**  
Mr. Speaker, I have indicated to you that it has become necessary to amend the motion in my name for the suspension of paragraph (3) of Standing Order No. 46.

It was contemplated, sir, under the original Motion tabled, that this Bill would have been taken through all its stages at this sitting.

I propose, sir, with your leave, to substitute the following:

“that paragraph (3) of Standing Order No. 46 be suspended to enable the Assembly to commence consideration of the Second Reading of the Constitution (Amendment) Bill 1973, at its sitting on the 30th of July, 1973.”

The reason, sir, for the motion being tabled in the first place is, I think, clear to all Members of the House, shortly before its dissolution, indicated to this Parliament and to the nation that, one week after the elections, legislation would be enacted to change the age of voting from 21 to 18 years.

Members will agree, sir, that such a commitment should be scrupulously honoured and it is in this vein and in the light that the Motion standing in my name has been introduced.

With those words, sir, I beg to move the substituted Motion and to ask for the support of this House.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question proposed. Hon. Member Mr. Singh.

**Mr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of this house has done us the courtesy on this occasion of giving us a reason for his Motion to suspend the Standing Order. But I should like to appeal to the Government, bearing in mind what happened during the life of the last Parliament, to desist from this habit of seeking a suspension of the Standing Order without a really very good reason.

The last Parliament was characterized by the frequency with which the Government sought suspension of the Standing Orders without assigning any reason at all therefore, Standing Orders are a set of rules. They are a set of rules to regulate the proceedings of this House. They were made to be observed.

It is true that there are rules which provide for suspension of the Standing Orders. But the use of these should be the exception rather than the rule. Too often in the past the use of them has been the rule rather than the exception.

A reason has been given today for the suspension of this Standing Order. In the circumstances, I do not agree that with that with a proper explanation this would not have been understood by the Nation. The hon. Prime Minister will keep his commitment. He has the power to do so. He has the two-thirds majority to do so. What is the difference of a few days to satisfy the requirements of Standing Order 46(3) that is, that no Bill shall be read a Second time before the expiration of seven clear days from the date of its publication.

I am sure the Nation would have understood why there was delay in the fulfillment of the Prime Minister's commitment. The reason would be the law of Parliament, which I think is overriding. The law of Parliament should be observed. If it is to be broken there must be a good reason for that. In my humble opinion there is not enough reason, there is no good reason for us to break the rule on this occasion.

**2.25 p.m.**

I would like to appeal to the Government now, for the future, that we must stick to the rules and if there is good reason why we are not to stick to the rules, then that reason must be told to us. Let us not repeat the performance of the last Parliament. Let us indeed stick to the rules, let us

work according to what is laid down, according to what is set to regulate the proceedings of Parliament. I hope that this my humble appeal would be acceded to by the Government.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion as circulated,*

*Standing Order suspended.*

### **BILL-SECOND READING**

#### **CONSTITUTION (AMENDMENT) BILL**

A Bill intituled:

“An Act to alter the Constitution in accordance with article 73 thereof for the purpose of reducing the age of majority for electoral and other purposes, and for abolishing appeals and references to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council.” [**The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources**]

**The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Mr. Jack):** I beg to move that the Bill intituled, Constitution (Amendment) Bill, be read a Second time.

As I stand to give some explanation with regard to the nature of this Bill and the reason why we have brought it at this time, I think that I should say at the outset that this is a simple matter, although it is a matter of extreme importance to the Government and to the country as a whole. It is true that one would like to adhere to the rules as much as possible but one must also look at the reason why rules are made. In this instant case, one would recognize that in general, the necessary time which is given for the elapse before a Bill of this kind could be read a Second time is for the purpose of allowing the Members of Parliament to study the implications of the measure. In this particular circumstance, I doubt that there can be anyone at this point of time who can claim to be unaware of the significance of the Bill now before this House, and of the determination of the Government to see through it. Furthermore, there are no particular complications about this matter. We have been over it again and again and with particular regard



to the first part of the Bill, that is, the measure with regard to the reduction of the voting age, we had a very extensive debate on it.

Mr. Speaker, you will recall that there was a very serious debate which took place concerning the question of voting at 18 and the question of majority at 18 and I propose to deal very shortly with the various approaches which one would have discerned from Members of the House, those on the Government side and those on the Opposition side. You will recall that there was a call for voting at 18. This call has been repeated time and again by various members of the Opposition who, in my view, had seen this merely, as they thought, as a means of strengthening their electoral chances.

It has been unfortunate feature of the politics of this country that due to the polarization which has taken place, largely as a result of the activities of certain politicians, who have seen the easiest way of retaining or commanding support as a call to ethnicity, a reliance upon race, that the whole question which surrounded the contemplation of what was to be done with the youth of Guyana was seen merely in terms of voting strength.

We in the People's National Congress considered this matter in greater depth. We did not think merely of voting and elections, but we thought of what it was necessary that we should do for the young people of this country, so that we could bring into fruition the hopes and aspirations of our youth, the people whom we have been telling from time that the country of Guyana depends upon them and their efforts. We looked to see whether it was not time for the youth of Guyana to be shouldered with the responsibility of adulthood, adulthood with all that this means. It was for this reason that the People's National Congress proposed not merely voting at 18 but majority at 18.

For some time there was a bleating of those who believed that because they had a built-in majority, we on this side of the House would never propose such a measure and, so long as had convinced themselves by their own protestations that this was the case, they were bold enough at every opportunity to challenge us to implement this measure. What had not been taken into account was the fact that we, over the years, have been working diligently to repair the

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damage done to the society of Guyana during the years 1962, 1963 and 1964. We have been making efforts truly to develop in this country a Guyanese identity, and while those who were thinking of their built-in majority went gaily on calling for voting at 18. We were noticing the signs of a change in this country, signs which pointed to the fact that, particularly with regard to the youth of Guyana, we were developing a common Guyanese identity.

Nevertheless, it is a fact we have not achieved the millennium, and we considered long and hard the consequences of this fundamental change which we had contemplated. It was not a matter lightly gone into but we were convinced that, in the circumstances of Guyana today, no progressive Government could take the youth of this country or, for the matter, could take the population of this country and produce any sufficient excuse for not giving the youth of Guyana the responsibility which their education and their political experience, particularly over the last 10 years, had made them fitted to exercise.

**2.35 p.m.**

You will recall, Mr. Speaker, that on the 28th May a Bill was introduced which would have given majority to our youths at the age of 18 and also would have allowed them to vote in the last election. It is now past history that although we succeeded with those measures which allowed for the reduction of the age of majority, with regard to the question of voting and the ability of our young people to sit in Parliament, we did not have the necessary two-thirds majority. And so it was that when the day of judgment came those who had shouted from the house-tops and those who had been pleading with us to take urgent measures to ensure that the youths of this country had the vote at 18, suddenly turned tail, ran away from their commitment and refused to support the Motion.

This was done, in my belief, because of the particular attitude of the Opposition which attitude seems to find something to their disadvantage in anything which is proposed from this side of the House. And once they had found that we were prepared to pass this bold measure they conceived some disadvantage to themselves and believed that there must have been some new magic that we had devised to turn what they had always considered an advantageous position for them into one of disadvantage.

As I say, this is now past history. But a commitment was made at that time, a commitment that at the earliest opportunity we would redress the wrong which was done to the youth of Guyana at the time of the voting on the question of the vote at 18. And it is for this reason that we have sought this, the earliest opportunity in keeping with that commitment, to bring this measure to the House.

There may be some argument to the effect that while the measure is in itself an admirable one it should not be proceeded with at this time unless there are other consequential changes in the Constitution and in our electoral arguments. Mr. Speaker, I think is a red herring and should be exposed for what it is.

Before the election there was the scurrilous accusation that somehow or the other the Government was going to get a special benefit from the votes of our young people. I say scurrilous because, on an objective assessment of the performance of the Government, one could have reasonably expected that the bulk of the young people of Guyana would have supported the Government. But this is not, I think, what was being peddled. What was being peddled was that there was some sort of machinery which was going to enable us to get an advantage and some members crowed and clapped themselves on the back as they contemplated how they had thwarted what they believed to have been our design.

The election is now over and the results are there for all to see. Those who thought, at that time, that the young people would have voted for us or that we would have got some special advantage are now looking for new excuses for their defeat at the polls. I do not think that there is anyone bold enough today to oppose majority at 18 or to oppose voting at 18. I recall that only last week we saw where the Trinidad Parliament has passed legislation giving majority at 18 and I recall reading the particular report suggesting that the question of voting at 18 is being favourably considered and legislation will be shortly passed to enable the young people of Trinidad and Tobago to vote at 18.

Looking further afield, I recall that the British Parliament had four years ago passed a Bill allowing the age of majority to be reduced to 18 and a recent Commission has recommended that the age of voting and the age for sitting in Parliament should also be reduced to 18.

You see therefore that this is a trend which one may find both in developed countries and in the developing countries as well. The youth today are not the youth of fifty or a hundred years ago. There is an acceleration of changes; the degree of participation which young people enjoy in affairs, both public and international, has never been enjoyed by them in recorded times before. And it seems that for this reason all of us must contemplate what would be the situation in countries like Guyana if the young people continue to be kept from the responsibilities which their experience entitles them to exercise.

We have been speaking at length about the responsibilities of youth in building our nation and at this time the Bill before the House proposes to free those people between the ages of 18 and 21 from the restrictions which impeded their progress up to now. There is a certain school of thought in Guyana which advocates the retention of the present position because it is felt that parents need to have a certain degree of control over their young people so as to ensure that they continue to remain in those ethnic pockets which history and past circumstances had placed their parents in.

Although this has not been raised by any of the opponents of the measure which we had proposed in May, I am convinced that it has played a large part in the opposition which some members have had to the question of majority at 18. It is significant that while there has been lot of explanation given why the Opposition did not support voting at 18, up to now there has been no explanation as to why the Opposition refused to support the clauses which would have allowed for majority at 18. None the things said about the election have any application at all to the question of majority at 18. The only sections which impinged upon election were 59 and 65 which dealt with voting at 18 and the qualification of a member of parliament.

**2.45 p.m.**

As I said, it is of special significance that none of them on the opposite side of the House thought of saying either “yes” or “no” with regard to the question of majority at 18, and to my mind that shows the failure on their part to have considered the question of the maturity of our youths in its totality. They had seen it, as I said, as an electoral question. They had not seen it has

a question in the further development of Guyana as a nation, and it may very well be that there are some of them who are still afraid of the new Guyanese identity which one can discern among our youths and for this reason they have sought various means of stemming the tide.

I am happy to say, as we all know now, that as a result of the last elections there will be no stemming of the tide and that we in the Government side have a sufficient voting strength to ensure that the pledges which we made to the youths of Guyana will now be fulfilled.

**[Applause]**

The other part of this Bill deals with the vexed question of the Privy Council. It is a sad thing in 1973, in an independent Guyana, there are still person who cling tenaciously to an outside court believing that somewhere across the seas there is a special type of justice which Guyanese are incapable of. Those persons, Mr. Speaker, refused to accept independence. I am minded to say that they have refused to accept freedom.

I recall an instance during the Civil War in America when some of the slaves fought on the side of their masters in the hope that they retain their slavery. Slavery can sometime be a comforting, though a demeaning and demoralising, condition. One does not have the adventure of freedom but one have the surety serfdom and those reactionaries in Guyana who have held on lovingly and tenaciously to the British “apron-strings” probably see in their Privy Council some link with the past, a link which they regretfully find is about to be broken.

But, let us look at the purpose of the Privy Council. It was an institution which had a relevance at the time of Empire. It was an institution which sought for a certain uniformity in administration. It was an institution which allowed the mother country, so to speak, to have the final word since she had the final power in the affairs of her colony. This institution never improved the luck of the colonial. It did not stop the injustices of South Africa; it did not stop the forced Labour in Rhodesia or the low wages; it did not stop the inhumanities in India. In fact, it had no effect whatever upon the well-being of the people in the colonies, and yet there are certain “brain-washed” people still in this day and age feel that there is some special merit in

retaining the Privy Council. As I say, the Privy Council was a creature of the Empire. It was a part of the cultural imperialism which has done so much damage over the years to the colonial personality, damage which, unhappily I must say, we have not yet completely required.

Those of us who spent some time looking at the international scene are amazed at the gullibility of some people in Guyana who believe that the judges across the waters are more sincere, more learned, more just and more impartial than the judges which we have in Guyana. I recall the time when we were to have our first Commissioner of Police and at that time it was said that we could not have a Guyanese Commissioner of Police since he would know too much about the local scene and could not be impartial, and that the whole of our police department would fall into disrepute if we had a Guyanese. Well, we have a Guyanese Commissioner of Police and, happy to say, we have survived.

And then there was an even greater hurdle- we were to have a Guyanese Chief Justice- and once again the colonial bleated and cried and said: "How could you get justice from a man who lives in a territory as small as this? He must come from abroad where he would know nobody and in that case he will dispense justice."

Those persons have never thought what an insult it has been to our judges to have had to sit silently by, since they were not allowed to go to the Press or the "soap-box", and have that type of remark made about them, made about their capacity and their honesty. However, we had, and we have, a Guyanese Chief Justice and a Guyanese Chancellor but, say these people, since we have not fallen under the waves: "This is only possible because we still have the Appeal Court." And although they can listen to the radio, read the Press and see the disclosures of corruption, incompetence and malpractices in many of those developed countries where they expected to find the acme of justice, yet these people still confidently shake their heads and believe that if only they can go to England some good person in England will do better for them than could be done in Guyana.

And then there was a question that we must have another court. I would conceive that if we had ten more courts all higher than the Appeal Court of Guyana and all higher, one after the other, that there is a likelihood that you may get ten different judgments. That would not be a

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reflection on any of the courts because the courts are human. It would merely mean that different men have addressed their minds to the problem and have come up with different answers. But to feel, as has been expressed, that whenever our court has been overruled by the Privy Council that what you have in fact was a better judgment is really to over-state the case. It does not necessarily mean that. In some cases it might be a better judgment; in some case it might be a worse judgment.

**2.55 p.m.**

What we have to consider, however, in the context of an Independent Guyana, is whether we can consider ourselves truly Independent while we need the assistance at the most important and vital part of our administration, the assistance of people abroad, people who are unacquainted with the conditions of life in Guyana, people who do not know our aspirations, people who do not know or are unaware of what we are trying to do, and where we are heading for. That we could possibly believe that these people would give us a better form of judgment than we could get from our own people, I say, is to express the absolute in the negation of oneself.

There is also another tactic which has been used in the past by those who went a court abroad. They say: “We will agree to the abolition of the Privy Council at such time as you have set up another court, perhaps a West Indian Court of Appeal.” For myself, if a West Indian Court of appeal were to be established in the context of the growing unity of the Caribbean region, in the context of the Caribbean Community, and in the context of the Common Market, I, for one, would be happy to see us making the fullest use of that court. But that would be taking a conscious decision with our Independence and not merely hanging on to an outmoded institution waiting like Micawber for something to turn up.

We have spoken at length in various quarters about self-reliance. We have spoken about developing the Guyanese consciousness. We have spoken about the need to re-orient our people so that they can make the greatest use of our Independence. It is an anachronism that in 1973 there should be persons clinging on to the Privy Council. Again, the attitude of the Government is well known. No secret has been made of the fact that we intend to remove appeals to the Privy

Council at the first possible opportunity. The legislation which seeks to do this is not complicated. All that is necessary is a commitment, an act of will, certain boldness for those timid folk who believe that Britain is there to protect them. If it is possible for them to muster up that amount of courage, then the rest of the Bill presents no greater difficulty for them.

The provisions with regard to voting at 18 seek to change the situation whereby a person who went to an educational institution was supposed to accept religious instructions if under age of 21 if his guardian so desires. We are reducing the age in every respect, where the age 21 appears in the Constitution, to 18 and it necessarily follows therefore, with regard to clause 2 of the Bill before this House, that the question of education, the question of property rights, the question of citizenship, all these questions will be governed by the new provision whereby a person at 18 can exercise the right where formerly he exercised the right at 21.

The two provisions of the greatest importance are the provisions with regard to voting at 18, which are to be found at article 59 and the question of sitting in Parliament to be found at article 65(2). This shortly is what this particular Bill seeks to do with regard to voting at 18 and the reduction of majority.

Coming now to the question of the Privy Council, sir, you will note that article 90 substitutes a tribunal in cases where the Privy Council exercised a jurisdiction formerly in matters pertaining to the disciplining of judges. Clause 4, which deals with article 92, abolishes the Privy Council, and all the consequential results that flow therefrom. We have also sought to save pending appeals and this is to be found in the renumbered clause 7 appearing on the Bill. Sir, you will note that we had circulated an amendment whereby we propose to delete clause 3 and the rest of the clauses would then be renumbered as a consequence of the deletion of clause 3. In fact, clause 3, which saw changes in article 71 we have reconsidered and found to be unnecessary, and for this reason we are deleting it.

That, Mr. Speaker, is shortly the intent and purpose of this Bill now before this House. It is to be hoped at this last stage that those who have stood steadfastly in the face of progress, but who now recognize that their slight effort cannot impede the progress any longer, may be



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persuaded to join the band of the future and assist in the progressive legislation which we have brought here today. Thank You. [**Applause**]

**3.05 p.m.**

*Question proposed.*

**Mr. Singh:** Mr. Speaker, when the question of the lowering of the majority age to 18 first came before Parliament, towards the end of the last Parliament, the United Force representatives in Parliament made it quite clear that the United Force believes in and accepts the principle of giving our young people the right to vote at 18, but it would not support voting at 18 in isolation where the results would be fraudulent and would not result in reflecting the will of the people including all of our 18-year-olds.

Mr. Speaker, I myself was not present for that debate. Unfortunately, I was on the Essequibo Coast campaigning at the time but, as regards the provision for lowering the majority age, quite separate and distinct from the lowering of the voting age to 18, my colleagues and myself had agreed that we had no objection whatsoever to those provisions. I am told that in Parliament, since those provisions were listed as part of the same Bill, it was felt that you could vote in favour of one and against another in the same Bill. That was why my colleagues abstained from voting on those provisions other than voting at 18.

I wish to reiterate that we accept, we believe in and we endorse the lowering of the majority age to 18 in addition to the lowering of the voting age to 18. But at the time, as we said with an imminent election we could not support voting at 18 in isolation. We pointed out the numerous complaints that had been received, that the time allowed for registration had been too short, that registration had been carried out by hand-picked P.N.C activities who registered only P.N.C. 18-years-old that, by and large, the 18-year-olds from the Opposition parties had been pushed around, had been told to come back and again and again there was procrastination which eventually resulted in the denial of registration.

We said, at the time, that the whole process of elections before, during and after the poll, was fraudulent and we pointed out that since 1968 the United Force has been demanding electoral reform to ensure free and fair elections. We pointed out that the United Force has been demanding the following: the restructuring of the Elections Commission to ensure an impartial Elections Commission, a new voters list supervised by an impartial Election Commission, an end to overseas and proxy voting and the counting of the ballots at the polling places.

We said that because of widespread irregularities in connection with the registration of the 18-year-old and the fact that our demands for electoral reform had not been met, we could not support the lowering of the voting age to 18 in isolation because the result would not represent the will of the people.

However, Mr. Speaker, now that there is no imminent election I have very great pleasure in supporting the provisions of the Bill to lower the age of voting to 18. But, at the same time, we say and we demand that our request for electoral reform must also be met in the immediate future by the Government. The Government must bring legislation to this House for electoral reform as demanded by us.

We have a very good way in which we can examine those demands. Let us examine them to see whether they are fair and reasonable demands in the light of and against the background of the last election. We have been saying all along that you cannot separate the two; voting at 18 and electoral reform should go hand in hand. If we are agreeing to one, we must continue in our demands for the others. We are agreeing to the one only because an election is not imminent, but we say that very shortly the Government must agree to our other demands.

Let us look at the first demand: the restructuring of the Elections Commission to ensure an impartial Elections Commission. Even though I have already done so before this honourable House, I would like to quote again the provision of the Constitution. I was at the Independence Conference with my hon. and learned Friends, with lawyers from the other side, the hon. Attorney-General, now the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the hon. Prime Minister and others. We hammered out a clause in this Constitution which at the time all of us agreed should take the elections machinery out of the hands of the politicians, out of the hands of the ruling party and

put it in what we thought at that time should be fairly safe, reasonable and impartial hands because of the composition of the Elections Commission. And these are the provisions in article 69 of the Constitution: “(1) The Elections Commission shall have such functions connected with or relating to the registration of electors or the conduct of elections as are conferred upon it by or under this Constitution or, subject thereto, any Act of Parliament; and, subject to the provisions of this Constitution, the Commission-

- (a) shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of electors and the administrative conduct of elections; and
- (b) shall issue such instructions and take such action as appear to it necessary or expedient to ensure impartiality, fairness and compliance with the provision of this Constitution or of any Act of Parliament on the part of persons exercising powers or performing duties connected with or relating to the matters aforesaid.”

**3.15 p.m.**

The important part is this:

“shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of electors and the administrative conduct of electors;”

and shall take such measures, as appear necessary, to ensure impartiality and fairness.

On several occasions before the last elections the Opposition parties went to the Elections Commission only to be told by one of their members that they had only administrative authority, they had no executive authority. In fact, one member went so far as to say that there was very little, if anything, to be done and he chided us, He said: “Why have you not given us the authority? You were in Parliament. You sat in Parliament. Parliament has not given us the authority to carry out our functions. We have no authority. What can we do?”

One of the points raised by us was that the provisions of Regulation 60 of the Election Regulations deal with the putting on of the seal on the ballot-box. We felt that there was need for

instructions to the Election Officers. We asked the Elections Commission to issue instructions to the Election Officers. We asked the Elections Commission to issue instructions that they should allow a sticking-paper tape to go around the box. We pressed for this. We felt that it was a fair and reasonable request and so in fact did the Commission fee, but again they said: “Gentlemen, we do not have the authority. We will have to refer to Mr. Butler.”

Indeed, eventually Mrs. Elinor DaSilva was told that she should go herself and see Mr. Butler. She did, and Mr. Butler, the Chief Election Officer, said: “By all means, go ahead, put on your seal but I will not attempt to define what a seal is. Put on your seal but if it is objected to as not being seal I am not making any pronouncement.” That was the stand of Mr. Butler. In fact when our polling agents attempted to put on that seal they were prevented from doing so. What is wrong with a seal like that, a little strip of paper put right around the box? Yet there was objection.

Indeed, my colleague, Mrs. Elinor DaSilva, was subjected to humiliating treatment. In one polling on the East Coast she put the seal on the box and after she done so Mr. Abdool Rahim, the Returning Officer, rushed upstairs with two riot squad policemen with bayonets drawn and the policemen in uniform shouted to Mrs. DaSilva: “Take your hands off the ballot-box.” And, while the policemen pointed bayonets at her, the Returning Officer snatched at the seal which she had just put on and tore it off. They tore off that little paper seal. Was this right and proper to do? Was it not a fair and reasonable request? There are people who can come forward and give evidence as to this incident. Should not the Elections Commission have had authority to instruct that this reasonable request be carried out? Why was it not allowed? I would not like to think, even though the evidence suggests to the contrary, that perhaps there was some ulterior motive why this was not allowed- that perhaps there was intention to tamper with the ballot-boxes.

Another request was for one person representing all the opposition parties to accompany the ballot-boxes from each polling station to the place of counting. Again the Elections Commission is supposed to ensure fairness and impartiality at election. The powers of the

Election Commissions are set out in the Constitution, but the Elections Commission failed, refused to rule on this request. Again we were referred-

**The Speaker:** Honourable Member Mr. Feilden Singh, I do not think that is an amendment to the Constitution. We are dealing with the voting at 18 as well as the abolition of appeals to the Privy Council.

**Mr. Singh:** Thank you, sir, but may I explain that our stand before had been that the voting at 18 must not be divorced from the provisions of the Constitution which should also be amended to ensure free, fair and impartial elections. The two are tied together. We said: “Not one without the other”. Now we are saying “yes” but we are saying not only that but also this: “They are tied together. It is relevant.” It is relevant and I am going on to show the reasonableness of this request against the background of the last elections. I am going to show that what we are suggesting should go with the voting at 18 is fair and reasonable.

**The Speaker:** You could perhaps move a Motion to that effect - to have the Constitution amended.

**Mr. Singh:** I will like to make my point since, as I said before, the two are tied together. I cannot speak on one without speaking on the other. There is a bond, an affinity, between them for they are all connected with free and fair elections, electoral process and electoral reform.

As I was saying, in respect of the request for one person from the Opposition parties to accompany the ballot-boxes, it was a fair and reasonable request. Could one person, could one fair man or woman oppose the security forces accompanying the ballot-boxes? Surely, it was a request which could have been granted.

If there were not enough personnel for the counting of the ballots at the polling place, could not the counting not have been done at a central spot in each one of the 38 districts? I do not believe that it is beyond the competence of our disciplinary forces in our independent, sovereign, Co-operative Republic to provide proper security for the counting of the ballots in each district. I think it was a fair request for the Elections Commission to grant. Let us remember that in 1964 this was done without any fuss at all. Is it that the disciplinary forces are

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**3.15 – 3.25 p.m.**

incompetent? Can they not do that? Do you mean to say that we may have to ask the British troops to come in and help us to repeat what took place in 1964. In 1964 it was done. Why cannot it now be done in our independent, sovereign, Co-operative Republic?

**3.25 p.m.**

Let us look at what in fact happened. The P.P.P., it is true, did have a plan to impede the exit of the ballot boxes by squatting. The Government stands on that excuse to spirit away the boxes to the G.D.P. compound, but the G.D.P. compound was within the security area. Why not take them to the counting places which were a short distance away within the security area. Why is it that those boxes did not appear at the counting places until between 12 and sometimes 24 hours after? If you can provide security at the G.D.P. compound within the security area, surely you can provide the same security at the counting places, which, again, were within the security area.

My contention is that those boxes should have been taken straight to the counting places, under guard, within the view of the public, the public meaning the representatives of the political parties who were entitled to be there. As election agent of the party, I was alarmed when after those boxes appeared in the counting places, there were reports of broken seals, visible signs of a tampering, and the contents of the boxes did not tally with the ballot paper account.

What about the second demand coupled with the lowering of the voting age to 18, that a new voters' list should be supervised by an impartial Elections Commission? I have read the specific provision of the Constitution. Let me touch on it again. It says that the Commission shall exercise general direction and supervision over the registration of elections. Did this happen? At the last two elections, this was not done. We all know this. Let us not kid ourselves. The Government would readily admit this, that the electoral lists were merely extracted from the National Registration Lists which were compiled by the Government, by the agents of the Government, some of whom were known party activists, and without any reference at all to the Elections Commission. This was contrary to the specific provisions of the Constitution. Subsequently, the lists were found to be teeming with election irregularities.

At the last election, I have evidence of dead people voting, of people out of the country voting by proxy, and by post. This is fraudulent and this was so bad that one person told me that on Election Day they were singing: “Back to back, belly to belly, we voted for Burnham, because we don't dead a' ready.” That is why we are demanding that a new voters' list be compiled and supervised, in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, by an impartial Elections Commission. Today, I have sent a Question to the Clerk of this honourable House asking the hon. Prime Minister when he would extend the powers of the Elections Commission as promised by him in his speech on the nationalisation of the Demerara Bauxite Company Limited in this House on 1st March, 1971. I have tabled other Questions in connection with elections.

Let us look now at our just and fair demand for an end to overseas and proxy voting. This is what we had demanded together with the lowering of the voting age, and I would add to this demand, an end to postal voting which was introduced at the last election. As regards the overseas voting, our policy has always been, no representation without taxation. Why should people who may never come to Guyana, or who may come to Guyana only on a visit, have a say in the choosing of our Government? We pay the taxes; we suffer the hardships, why should they help us decide what to essentially an internal matter? If we say: “Away with the Privy Council, it is something outside”, let us say; “Away with overseas voting, it is something outside.” Let us have the people of Guyana voting for their Government, not helped by anyone outside of Guyana who may never visit Guyana again.

In any case we have had the reports of Grenada television as regards the farcical result of overseas voting. How come the P.N.C. can get 29,643 votes out of 34,801, when the majority of the people who left this country left it because they were fed-up with both the P.P.P. and the P.N.C. administrations? What was so disturbing to me at the last elections also was the preferential way in which the Guyanese overseas were allowed to vote. If a Guyanese came on a visit here to Guyana, he was allowed to vote but the Guyanese going overseas on vacation was not allowed to vote.

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**3.25 – 3.35 p.m.**

I took this up with the Chairman of the Elections Commission and he agreed with me that under the existing law there was no provision whereby the Guyanese- and Sir Lionel Luckhoo was there- leaving Guyana to go overseas on vacation could vote in Guyana's election.

**3.35 p.m.**

Let me explain for the benefit of those who are not legally qualified.

He could not vote by proxy because of the provisions as regards proxy voting. Here is the proxy form. It was specifically provided that proxy voting was only for members of the Police Force, rural constable, transport and harbor personnel, candidate, elections officers and persons unable or unlikely by reason of blindness or other physical infirmity to travel to the polling place. In 1968 for a "good cause" they could have voted by proxy. So that "good cause" which was included in 1968 was taken out.

Let us look at postal voting. Postal voting is for someone resident in Guyana with an address in Guyana to which the ballot paper could be sent at a certain time and be marked by the person in Guyana at that address at the particular time and sent back to the Chief Election Officer. I myself went and spoke to the Chief Election Officer, Mr. Butler, about this matter and Mr. Butler agreed with me that neither postal voting nor proxy was applicable to the person leaving Guyana on vacation. Mr. Butler agreed with me that the person leaving Guyana on vacation could vote neither by proxy nor by postal voting. And anyone can check this with Mr. Butler; he said that and the forms are here.

The person leaving Guyana could not vote by proxy and the postal voting form stated: "Papers for voting shall be sent addressed to me". An address to which papers should be sent was put and the address had to be an address in Guyana not overseas. I am speaking on the advice of your Chief Elections Officer. Sir Donald Jackson and the Elections Commission agreed and the forms are here for all to see. Neither postal voting, which pre-supposes an address in Guyana at which the person must be to sign the ballot paper when he posts it back to the Chief Elections Officer, nor proxy voting was applicable.



We do not agree with signing out of the country and all that sort of things. Let the Hon. Member realize that the ballot paper had fixed times when they were sent out. If the person was leaving the country before that time and if the law said that this must go to an address in Guyana, that person would be out of the country when it went to that address and by the time you posted it from that address to the person overseas and it came back the time would have passed for putting the ballot paper in the box. The Chief Election Officer agreed with me on this. I shall not worry with the interruptions of the Hon. Member whose guile I know very well. We have been on the same platform on previous occasions so I am accustomed to his ranting and ravings.

What I thought was so terrible was the fact that Guyanese in Guyana going overseas were denied the vote. We saw advertisements in every newspaper saying that any Guyanese living overseas who was here in Guyana at the time should go to Mr. Butler so that he could vote. But the Guyanese in Guyana going overseas were denied; the Guyanese from overseas coming to Guyana were specifically catered for by special notices telling them to go to Mr. Butler. Is that fair?

I say that the postal voting must be abolished, Mr. Speaker, because there were so many irregularities in connection with postal voting. People who never applied for postal votes got envelopes. They brought them to me and complained that they never applied for postal voting and they did not vote. Because they did not agree with voting, they did not apply for the forms.

And not only that, I was there in the office of the Election Officer when the postal votes were being put into envelopes and I called this to the attention of the Chief Election Officer at that time. Envelopes were addressed to Mr. So and So, Bourda Post Office. There were a host of them ending with the address "Bourda Post Office". Mr. Butler looked at them. All it meant was that a P.N.C agent sitting at Bourda Post Office would collect all these envelopes switch the contents and post them back to the Chief Election Officer. Why does an envelope have to end up with the address "Bourda Post Office" and so many other post offices? I saw Nigg post office mentioned. Postal voting must go because there were far too many irregularities in connection with postal voting.

As regards proxy voting it is true that, legally, proxy voting was cut down to two. It is true that “good cause” was taken out of the provision for proxy voting but nevertheless we had evidence of hale and hearty persons being voted for by proxy. A good friend of mine, a doctor living in Church Street, went with his wife all the way to Lenora to vote because that was where they were registered, only to be told...

*The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Mr. Jack) rose.*

**The Speaker:** Hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. You are raising a point of order, I presume.

**Mr. Jack:** I really do not wish to interfere with the presentation of the member of the Opposition but there should be at least some semblance of relevance.

It was an unfortunate feature of the last Parliament that on every occasion when we had something of importance to discuss certain members thought that they should have a roving commission to talk on all manner of things. What my friend is trying to do is discuss the elections from the beginning to the end. That will take at least another six months.

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member Mr. Singh, will you please confine your remarks to the matter in hand. I have drawn your attention to this on at least two occasions. Now that it has been forcibly drawn to the attention of the whole House, I take it you will proceed with the Bill.

**Mr. Singh:** I was merely explaining the reason why we wanted the proposal that the provisions of the Constitution should be altered to hang in hand with the lowering of the voting age. I was giving the background to show that these were fair and reasonable demands against the background of what took place at the last elections.

But I will move on, Mr. Speaker. I will reiterate first that we demand electoral reforms. We demand the restructuring of the Elections Commission to ensure an impartial Elections Commission. We demand the new voters list supervised by an impartial Elections Commission. We demand an end to proxy, overseas and postal voting. We demand electoral reform.

As regards the provision of the Bill to abolish the Privy Council, the United Force stand has in the past been clearly stated on the matter. We agree that the abolition of the Privy Council is necessary but we say that it must be replaced by a Caribbean Court of Appeal.

At the present moment the citizens, in constitutional matters, and judges, in proceedings for removal, enjoy an additional right of appeal to the Privy Council. If you take that away you are derogating from their rights. You are denying them that extra opportunity. You are robbing them of that additional chance, that one additional hope. You are taking away something that they enjoy at the present moment, something from an additional court.

Why not a Caribbean Court of appeal? We have moved away from CARIFTA. We have moved to a Caribbean Common Market. Let us not take away appeals to the Privy Council and replace it with nothing. Let us replace it with a Caribbean Court of Appeal so that we would not cut down on the rights at present enjoyed by our citizens. Why the rush? The Government, fairly or unfairly, has a two-thirds majority. It can do what it wants at any time. Let us wait and have a Caribbean Court of Appeal.

Those great brilliant persons who pushed forward and succeeded in the Caribbean Common Market, is it not within their scope, is it beyond their ability to push also for a Caribbean Court of Appeal? I am sure it is not beyond their ability. They have succeeded in a Caribbean Common Market, they can succeed in a Caribbean Court. Therefore, I say, let us have a Caribbean Court of Appeal and not cut down on the right, that extra right, that one chance, that hope that the citizens at the present moment enjoy.

Finally, let me make my position abundantly clear so that there could be no confusion as seemed to have been the position on the last occasion. I am supporting the vote at 18 in this Bill but I am not supporting the abolition of appeals to the Privy Council because, as I said before, I want when the appeals to the Privy Council are abolished they should go to a Caribbean Court of Appeal. These two provisions are in one Bill. I am supporting one part of the Bill. I am voting against another part of the Bill. I am supporting the vote at 18. I am not supporting the abolition

of the Privy Council unless the appeals go to a Caribbean Court of Appeal. Therefore on the final voting on the Bill as a whole, I will be abstaining from voting.

**The Speaker:** Miss Jaiserrisingh.

**Miss Jaiserrisingh:** Mr. Speaker, it seemed as though the Opposition was trying to have a post-mortem on the dead, which it cannot bring back, for it is finished and done with. As regards reducing the majority to why youths denied this golden opportunity in the first place? The youths, were, in fact, really cheated out of this right. But we were supported and we showed the Opposition what we can do. It seems as though the Opposition is afraid of the performance of the youths at 18.

Guyana needs to be developed and the Development Plan can be put into effect only by the strong hands of the youths of this country.

Why were the youths deprived of the right to vote at 18? Youths work at 18 and enjoy the benefits that are within the reach of all working class people. Why not give them that others, 21 years of age and over, are enjoying? Why not give them the right to vote and reduce the age of majority?

These political destroyers were out to get at nothing. If my memory serves me right, they were the individuals who pressed at one time to have the voting age reduced and now this lackadaisical attitude that they have developed is surely a bad example for youths, who will have no confidence in these individuals.

Were we all perfect, Christ would not have come for the sinners to repent. He would have come only to the righteous. Therefore we must thank the youths who are going to vibrate to their rights; they will hasten to perform when they get this age of majority reduced. Then we will have to thank our “Moses” who was sent back to us to release the children of Israel from bondage one again. And we will have to thank that individual, the Hon. L.F.S. Burnham because the youths are going to vibrate into words and show their support fully and maturely.

The youths are mature at 18. They get married 18. Why not reduce the age of majority entirely? The youths need it. Since they can get married and do other things derived from their

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**3.45 – 3.55 p.m.**

rights get married and to do other things derived from their rights, why not make it legal for them to wed at that age?

This young nation has to develop and without the youths it cannot. If we expect our grandfathers to do the job, the youths will still have to lead them around. The age of majority must be reduced and we will show our capabilities because we have done so in the past. Had it not been for the Youth Corps, Guyana would not have built so many roads. They young nation has to develop and without the youths it cannot. If we expect our grandfathers to do the job, the youths will still have to lead them around. The age of majority must be reduced and we will show our capabilities because we have done so in the past. Had it not been for the Youth Corps, Guyana would not have built so many roads. They are the people behind so many projects. I support the Bill to reduce the age of majority to 18.

**3.55 p.m.**

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member, may I take this opportunity of congratulating you on your maiden speech. Very well done!

**[Applause]** Hon. Member Mr. Jonas.

**Mr. Jonas:** Mr. Speaker, it is because of the People's National Congress Government's recognition of the role the young people of this country must play, if the society is to achieve its goals that I have the privilege here this afternoon to support the Motion tabled in the name of the Hon. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, Mr. Jack. The P.N.C has a vibrant youth arm, and, in the past, this party's youths arm played a very important role in the political history of this country.

In so far as the People's National Congress is concerned, this party is not prepared to stifle or divert the aspirations of young people. The young people were not only involved at the political level, but evidence can be drawn to show where, in the tide of economic nationalism, the young people were in the forefront. I need not restate that 60 per cent of Guyana's population are young people and therefore for destiny of this country is in the hands of the youths. But, Mr. Speaker, if this Parliament follows the footsteps of the last Parliament in suppressing human

development and confidence, I think the name of this Parliament will go down as a reactionary Parliament.

During the life of the last Parliament, we witnessed the nationalization of the Demerara Bauxite Company. We witnessed the introduction of the External Trade Bureau, changing our constitutional status from one of Monarchy to Republic, progressive legislation to regulate our society in a certain direction. During the life of that Parliament, these characteristics were laid down, so that our behavior can be guided to the goals of co-operative socialism.

The last Parliament took one of the most reactionary political decisions and that was, to disenfranchise over 50,000 young people. I know that this Parliament will redress that wrong. When the People's National Congress went to the electorate, a return to office was obvious, but we told the people that there were certain constitutional restraints and if the framework of democracy is to work efficiently, if we are to be the proper custodians of the people's welfare, it is essential for us to have full control of the constitutional instrument. Undoubtedly, the number of seats reflects the people's support for the People's National Congress.

One of our main aims for this two-thirds, or the political breakthrough, was for the authority to ensure that at future elections, young people between the ages of 18 to 21 are allowed to vote. Today, undoubtedly, young people are economically conscious. In the schools, thrift societies are working efficiently. The young people are involved in agriculture and, you know, sir, out of agriculture we intend to achieve one of the three-fold national objectives. Your Honour, I can point to the settlement at Port Kaituma where Youth Corps graduates are now farming. Apart from this economic activity, you will realize that if Guyana's sovereignty is threatened from any outside power, the young people there will be prepared to defend our territorial integrity.

It is not only in the area of agriculture that the young people exercised a degree of responsibility, but we can look in the field of community development and self-help. I can quickly remind you, sir, of the construction of the Kwakwani- Ituni road. A considerable number of young people are involved on that project. The Campbellville health centre with the fire station there, it was a self-help project. Young people were in the vanguard. The national self-

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**3.55 – 4.05 p.m.**

help road project, which will link us with Brazil so we can have an economic take off, young people played a significant role in the construction of that road. At Guybau, most of the workers there are young people. Young people are in the vanguard. No wonder, sir, that concern made so much progress in so little time. It is because of the responsibility, it is because of the determination of the youths at Linden to be equipped so they can serve this sensitive concern with a degree of efficiency, All these are demonstrations of the patriotism of young people and, more so, their understanding of the political environment in which we are living.

Look at the organisation of Government. A young person can be employed from the age of 18 as a civil servant, therefore, in that sensitive machinery of Government, he is vested with the responsibility to carry out political decisions made here and at the executive forum, the Cabinet. The law enforcement agency: We have most of the members of the Police Force who are now young people. Undoubtedly they demonstrated the moral qualities that are required in that institution, but apart from that, many of them took time off to be involved in self-help projects.

I am quite certain Hon. Members are aware, that the young police in Rupununi, constructed the police station. The Guyana Youth Corps, they are in the course of completing a post office. All these communal buildings will contribute to the development of this country. The people's army, that institution is almost self-sufficient in terms of food production. We can take into consideration the other roles in terms of community development and involvement, rendering services to our less fortunate citizens. In this army, the young people, are in the majority.

**4.05 p.m.**

Therefore, you can see, sir, that young people are custodians of our political independence. I think it is totally absurd to deny young people the right to vote at 18.

The last major Opposition party in this Parliament, the People's Progressive Party, claimed to be socialist, but I am quite certain that the members of the P.P.P. cannot fool the intelligent youths of this country, because no one can claim to be socialist without recognition of

a democracy. In fact, socialism is a philosophy which cherishes the humanity of man. You cannot, after a man has made all these social contributions, deny him the right to vote. This is absurd and my political party that would embrace such an adverse political point of view could never lay moral claim to socialism.

Socialism, in so far as I see it, is a philosophy which could ensure a man the right to participate in his community and ensure that community's development.

It is on this score that the members of the People's National Congress do not speak the same social language as the members of the People's Progressive Party and the members of the conservative United Force. I understand from the Hon. Minister, Mr. Carrington, that it is now a "disunited" Force.

After pointing to all the areas of social activities in which the young people are involved, I would say that this Parliament ought to support the vote at 18. I believe that the young people of this country are intellectually mature. What is the qualification for exercising political sovereignty at elections? A basic understanding of the course which a society is taking, recognition of this and a contribution. You cannot, under any circumstance, divorce economics from politics since one influences the other.

Mr. Speaker, young people are not politically conscious. We know that when progressive decisions are being taken, international powers will try to pressure us and to subvert our independence. Basically conscious of this, the Young Socialist Movement, the leading organisation in this country, boasts a membership of over 20,000 young people. We have already had preliminary discussions with the Hon. Prime Minister in connection with a suggestion that he urge his non-Aligned colleagues in September to have a non-Aligned Youth Conference convened somewhere or the other so that we can sit down, not only to delve into economics, not only to see how the big powers are moving to pressure small nations which try to control their natural resources, but to have an insight into international politics.



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**4.05 – 4.10 p.m.**

This was stated by the attitude of Khrushchev when he marched his army into Poland and Brezhnev's invasion of Czechoslovakia, by Kennedy in the Bay of Pigs invasion in Cuba and also by Johnson's invasion of the Dominican Republic.

Young people on the international scene are striving for social justice and human equality. In so far as the young people of this country are concerned, since our performance at economic level is excellent, then it should be combined with our political efforts also. Therefore, I would like to urge Hon. Members to support this Bill when it is put to the House. I know that the people of this country gave the P.N.C. a mandate to change the Constitution and I know that even the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh will ensure that the P.N.C. dream is transformed into P.N.C. reality.

**[Applause]**

**The Speaker:** Hon. Member Mr. Jonas, may I congratulate you on your contribution.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Resolved,** "That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed." [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

**Adjourned according at 4.10 p.m.**

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