

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT

(VOLUME I)

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
FIRST LEGISLATURE CONSTITUTED UNDER THE
BRITISH GUIANA (CONSTITUTION)
ORDER IN COUNCIL, 1961

21st Sitting

Wednesday, 11th April, 1962

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Present:

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. R. B. Gajraj.

*Members of the Government
People's Progressive Party
Ministers*

Dr. the Honourable C. B. Jagan	<i>—Premier and Minister of Development and Planning (Member for Corentyne—East)</i>
The Honourable B. H. Benn	<i>—Minister of Natural Resources (Member for Demerara Coast—West)</i>
The Honourable Ram Karran	<i>—Minister of Works and Hydraulics (Member for Mahaica)</i>
The Honourable B. S. Rai	<i>—Minister of Home Affairs (Member for Dem- erara Coast—East)</i>
The Honourable R. Chandisingh	<i>—Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Member for Lower Demerara River)</i>

Dr. the Honourable Charles Jacob, Jr. —*Minister of Finance (Member for Vreed-en-Hoop)*

Dr. the Honourable F. H. W. Ramsahoye—*Attorney-General (Member for Canals Polder)*

The Honourable E. M. G. Wilson —*Minister of Communications (Member for Boerasirie)*

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. G. Bowman — *Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources (Member for Corentyne Central)*

Mr. L. E. M. Mann —*Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics (Member for Mahaicony)*

Other Members

Mr. S. M. Saffee —*(Member for Berbice—West)*

Mr. G. L. Robertson —*(Member for Leonora)*

Mr. M. Bhagwan —*(Member for Essequibo Islands)*

Mr. J. B. Caldeira —*(Member for Pomeroon)*

Mr. V. Downer —*(Member for Berbice—East)*

Mr. M. Hamid —*(Member for Demerara—Central)*

Mr. D. C. Jagan —*(Member for Suddie)*

Mr. H. Lall —*(Member for Corentyne—West)*

Mr. M. Shakoore —*(Member for Corentyne River)*

Members Constituting the Minority

(i) *People's National Congress*

Mr. L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C. —*(Member for Ruimveldt)*

Mr. W. O. R. Kendall, Deputy Speaker —*(Member for New Amsterdam)*

Mr. J. Carter —*(Member for Werk-en-Rust)*

Mr. E. F. Correia —*(Member for Mazaruni-Potaro)*

Mr. N. J. Bissember —*(Member for Campbellville)*

Mr. W. A. Blair —*(Member for Berbice River)*

Mr. R. S. S. Hugh —*(Member for Georgetown—South)*

Mr. J. G. Joaquin —*(Member for Kitty)*

Mr. R. J. Jordan —*(Member for Upper Demerara River)*

Mr. C. A. Merriman —*(Member for La Penitence-Lodge)*

Mr. H. M. S. Wharton —*(Member for Abary)*

(ii) *United Force*

Mr. P. d'Aguiar —*(Member for Georgetown—Central)*

Mr. S. Campbell —*(Member for North West)*

Mr. R. E. Checks —*(Member for Georgetown—North).*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing—*Clerk of the Legislature*

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

ABSENT:

Mr. E. E. Melville—*on leave.*

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE
SPEAKER

VISIT OF TWO MEMBERS OF THE
HOUSE OF COMMONS

Mr. Speaker : I am sure that hon. Members would feel honoured at the presence today of two visitors who are Members of the British House of Commons, (Mrs. Eirene White and Miss Joan Vickers, M.B.E.) We have had, of course, visitors from the British House of Commons before but, I think, this is the first occasion on which these visitors are two lovely ladies. [*Applause.*] I am sure hon. Members will wish them a very happy stay in our midst, short though it will of necessity be.

LEAVE TO MEMBER

wish to announce also that leave has been granted to the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Natural Resources as from the 12th to the 27th April, as he will be away from the country on public business.

The hon. Member for Rupununi has been granted leave of absence from today until Friday, 13th April. He is out of the City.

THE SPEAKER'S REPLY TO
MR. d'AGUIAR'S LETTER

Hon. Members will recall that I had mentioned, at Monday's Sitting, the receipt of a letter from the hon. Member for Georgetown Central on the subject of my rulings on certain points of order which had been raised by himself and on one by the hon. Member for Ruimveldt. He wishes to have placed on record that, in his view, serious unconstitutional acts and irregularities took place on the 17th Sitting of the Assembly on Tuesday, 3rd April. Actually it was the 18th Sitting. As I explained on Monday, although I had my own opinion regarding the points questioned, I took the precaution to refer them to the hon. Attorney-General for his advice and com-

ments for, as you know, in this Assembly there is no provision for a Speaker's Counsel as there is in the British House of Commons.

2.15 p.m.

The opinion of the Honourable the Attorney-General has reinforced the views I have held on those questions, and as a result, the debate on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill was permitted to be resumed.

will now read into the records of this House the letter of the Honourable Member for Georgetown Central, and thereafter make reply to the points raised. The letter is dated 6th April, 1962, and is addressed to the Speaker, Legislative Assembly. It reads—

"Your Honour,

At the 17th Session of the Legislative Assembly, you rightly stated these were historic times; that actions taken now will set precedents for the future.

I have the deepest respect for your endeavours to expedite the business of the House and to conduct it with impartiality. But I believe that it is imperative that the strictest adherence to Constitutional Procedure, and to Standing Orders governing procedure be maintained.

I feel compelled to place on record that in my view serious unconstitutional acts and irregularities took place at the 17th Session, namely,

1. The Minister of Finance, Hon. C. R. Jacob was allowed, contrary to Rule 32(4) of the Standing Orders to speak twice on the same Motion.
2. After the right of the Hon. Minister of Finance to introduce new material into his statement was challenged by the Hon. Member for Ruimveldt, a Motion was initiated by you as Speaker. With respect, I contend that this was an irregularity without precedent.
3. The Appropriation Bill before the Legislative Assembly did not conform to requirements of Article 109 of the Constitution.

[MR. SPEAKER]

4. With regard to the Orders-in-Council Nos. 5 and 15 made under the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 109, Section 8, no submission of the Orders was made to the Legislative Assembly within the period of 21 days as required by Law, and therefore the Resolutions under Section 9 on the Order Paper purporting to approve the Orders should not have been on the Order Paper.

I would like to have my objection brought before Members of the Legislative Assembly and placed on record.

I wish to emphasise that I believe it essential that no further unconstitutional acts or irregularities be allowed and that all existing contraventions of the Constitution or Law be remedied.

I am advised that the proceedings in this Legislative Assembly can be challenged in a Court of Law and that if the Budget Appropriation Bill and Resolutions are proceeded with, they could be declared null and void.

Yours faithfully,
(Sgd.) P. S. D'AGUIAR."

As four points have been raised by the Honourable Member I shall deal with them *serialim*:—

Point 1 "The Minister of Finance, Honourable C. R. Jacob, was allowed, contrary to Rule 32(4) of the Standing Orders to speak twice on the same motion".

The Standing Order quoted by the hon. Member prescribes that no Member shall speak more than once on any question except—

- (a) in committee;
- (b) in explanation, clarification or elucidation; or
- (c) in the case of the mover of a substantive motion or the Member in charge of a bill, in reply.

Now let us examine the events within this Chamber on the 3rd April. They disclose the following:

- (i) No one had as yet spoken to the Motion for the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill.
- (ii) The hon. Minister of Finance specifically sought permission of the Speaker and Members to acquaint the House fully with the Government's modifications to the taxation proposals (as set out in the Budget).
- (iii) Members of the House had already been apprised of part of the modifications, *i.e.* the reductions of certain customs duties as are set out in Order No. 15. From the *Hansard* it is noted that the Minister opened his remarks by saying: "With your permission, Sir, and that of the House, I desire, before we proceed with the debate on the Second Reading..." (at this point he was interrupted).
- (iv) The request made, *i.e.* for permission of the Speaker and of the House, is in keeping with the established practice in this House. On this point it would be interesting to note what is written in *ERSKINE MAY'S PARLIAMENTARY PRACTICE*, 16th Edition, page 686 under the caption "Ancient Usage and the Standing Orders"—

"The Financial Procedure of the House of Commons is regulated to a certain extent by Standing Orders, but to a far greater extent on unformulated ancient usage"... "Ancient usage which survives a modern procedure is called practice, to distinguish it from that part of procedure which is based on Standing Orders."
- (v) At a later stage I addressed the House on the general principle and thereafter put the question for the decision of the House,

and that question was in keeping with the opening remarks of the Minister of Finance. The question in the Speaker's words taken from *Hansard* was "whether the House will permit the hon. Minister of Finance to indicate to us what modifications to the taxation proposals his Government has, according to his words, decided to accept."

I might add that it is reasonable to believe, and indeed I did believe, that Members would have wished to know what were Government's modifications to its original proposals, before they commenced their debate "confined to the financial and economic state of the country and the general principles of Government policy and administration" as set out in S.O. 62(2).

As each taxation proposal must be considered separately by the House, it was also reasonable to believe that Members would have wished to know as early as possible what changes were proposed, in order that they should give the most careful consideration to those proposals in the light of the changes.

The hon. Member for Ruimveldt suggested, and his view has been shared by others, that the hon. Minister of Finance could have been permitted to speak a second time if the Standing Orders had been suspended. I am well aware of the value and usefulness at times of the practice of the suspension of the Standing Orders, but it is my duty not merely to seek the easiest way out but also to safeguard the ancient rights and privileges of the House. To have allowed a second speech by the suspension of Standing Orders to a Minister of the Government would have created a very dangerous precedent, and for that reason alone hon. Members should agree that such a method must be avoided. In

parliamentary procedure the principle is well established that one cannot speak twice except—

- (a) In Committee;
- (b) In explanation of some material part of his speech which had been misrepresented; and
- (c) In reply in the case of the mover of a substantive motion.

That is very clearly set out in our Standing Order 32.

It is clear, therefore, that the intention is that no one should speak twice.

To adopt the ruse, therefore, of suspending the Order is to cut across an established principle, thereby creating a dangerous precedent. For whenever a Minister of Government, in future, should wish to speak twice, he would adopt this ruse.

Hon. Members should appreciate, therefore, that in all the circumstances it was necessary to lean on practice, which is ancient usage, rather than suspend Standing Orders. I am satisfied that the practice I followed was a correct one and that there was no irregularity to render the proceedings null and void.

Point 2 "After the right of the Hon. Minister of Finance to introduce new material in his statement was challenged by the Hon. Member for Ruimveldt, a motion was initiated by you as Speaker. With respect, I contend that this was an irregularity without precedent."

The hon. Member for Georgetown Central is mistaken in stating that a motion was initiated by the Speaker. As I have pointed out in the comments on his first point, I, as Speaker, in the light of what had gone before, merely asked the House to say whether or not the Minister should be permitted to indicate to the House the Government's modifications.

[MR. SPEAKER]

In my view, therefore, the whole matter hinged on whether the House as a body desired to hear the modifications or not. By vote the House decided in the affirmative.

Point 3 "The Appropriation Bill before the Legislative Assembly did not conform to requirements of Article 109 of the Constitution."

The Constitutional Instrument provides that the Minister . . . shall . . . introduce in the Legislative Assembly an appropriation Bill containing, under appropriate heads, for the several services required, the estimated aggregate sums which are proposed to be expended.

It is true that the Schedule to the Appropriation Bill, as presented, has neither the numbers against the Heads nor the sum to be appropriated for each Head.

This is a long-established practice in this House, and in the course of consideration of the Schedule the House deals with the Estimates which are laid at the same time as the Appropriation Bill is presented, and the final question put on each Head is that Head No. . . . be carried out in the Schedule at so many dollars. The reason for this is that in the course of consideration of the Estimates there are occasions when items are deleted or decreased, or on the acceptance of recommendation by the Government, increased, thereby making changes in the sums printed against each Head. Heads are sometimes deleted or new Heads inserted, or Heads may be removed from their positions in the Estimates and placed somewhere else. All of these things cause changes in the numbering of Heads and in totals. It is for this reason that the numbers and totals against Heads in the Schedule are omitted. In support of this, one has only to refer to Standing Order No. 66 which provides in paragraph 2

that "On consideration of the schedules each head of expenditure shall be considered with the appropriate Estimate, etc. etc.", and again in paragraph 4 of the same Standing Order it is provided that after consideration of the schedule has been concluded, the Chairman puts the question "that the schedule (as amended) stand part of the Bill."

I should also point out that in Standing Order No. 62, paras. (1) and (2), reference is made to the Appropriation Bill and the Estimates, and the only reasonable conclusion to be drawn from that is that the Bill and the Estimates are two parts of a single financial measure submitted for consideration by the House.

I am advised that the said Article of the Constitution is by no means mandatory but is only directory. The Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure laid before the House must be read in conjunction with the Appropriation Bill. Thereby the rights of Members of the Legislature to the details as well as aggregate sums proposed to be expended are complied with. In the circumstances I am of the firm opinion that there has been no breach of the requirements of Article 109 of the Constitution or of our own Standing Order 62 which would render the proceedings on the Appropriation Bill a nullity.

Point 4 "With regards to the Orders-in-Council Nos. 5 and 15, made under the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 109, Section 8, no submission of the Orders was made to the Legislative Assembly within the period of 21 days as required by Law, and therefore the Resolutions under Section 9 on the Order Paper purporting to approve the Orders should not have been on the Order Paper".

The facts are as follows:

- (a) Section 9 of Cap. 309 provides as follows:—

"Every order made under section 8 shall after four days and within twenty-one days from the date of its publication be submitted to the Legislative Council, and the Legislative Council may by resolution confirm, amend or revoke such order and upon publication of the resolution of the Legislative Council in the Gazette the resolution shall have effect and the order shall then expire. If the order be not submitted within the said period of twenty-one days to the Legislative Council for confirmation it shall *ipso facto* expire."

- (b) Order No. 5 was made on 30th January, 1962, and was laid by the Minister in the House when he presented his Budget on 31st January and copies were circulated to Members at that meeting. (Immediately following this act the debate on the Budget was deferred to 12th February). Notice of the motion for its confirmation was received by the Clerk of the Legislature on 12th February and was circulated to Members of the House in Notice Paper No. 21 dated 20th February. At a sitting on the 9th February the Minister of Finance announced that in view of the representations received on the Budget the Government had decided not to proceed on the 12th February, but instead on a date to be announced later. The motion for its confirmation, therefore, was not put on the Order Paper until the 3rd April, the date fixed for the resumption of the Budget debate, the reason being that Order No. 5 is a taxation proposal under the Budget and the proper place for its consideration is, in my view—
- (i) either before the Third Reading of the Appropriation Bill; or
- (ii) after the Appropriation Bill has been passed.
- (c) With regard to Order No. 15, this was one of the modifications of the Government in the light of repre-

sentations received subsequent to the presentation of the Budget on 31st January. It was made on the 21st day of February and submitted by the Minister of Finance to the Clerk of the Legislature on the 3rd March together with notice of a motion for its confirmation. The Clerk on the 7th March circulated to Members of the Legislative Assembly copies of the Order together with Notice Paper No. 23 dated 7th March in which was included the notice of motion by the Minister of Finance for confirmation of the Order. This Order, as I have pointed out, was one of the Government's modifications of its taxation proposals. In my view what is required by the law is that the document should be submitted to the Legislature after four days and within twenty-one days from the date of its first publication. I feel that this was fulfilled not only by its submission by the Minister of Finance to the Clerk on 3rd March, but was placed beyond all doubt by circulation of the document together with the Notice for its confirmation to Members on 7th March. Here again this was a modification of a taxation proposal and cannot rightly be considered by the House until the House has taken its decisions on the sums to be appropriated for the year.

The point which I believe the hon. Member relies on, is what is the interpretation and meaning of the word "submit" in the relevant section and at what point of time is submission made to the Legislature. I hold the view that submission to the Clerk of the Legislature in his official capacity is submission to the Legislature. Consideration of the Order in Council is a domestic matter and there is no period laid down in the Ordinance, Chapter 309, which limits the time for such consideration. In the circumstances my view is the same as I expressed during the meeting of the

[MR. SPEAKER]

Legislative Assembly on the 3rd April, *i.e.*, as long as the Order is submitted within the period of four days after and not later than twenty-one days from the date of its first publication, the conditions laid down by law are fulfilled, and the Order not only has the force of law from the date of its having been made but maintains that power until the Legislature has considered it and made its decision.

I should like to express my personal appreciation to the hon. Member for Georgetown Central for the confidence he has expressed in my endeavours to expedite the business of the House and to conduct it with impartiality. I also feel that the hon. Member should be encouraged to investigate as he has done in these cases the rulings and decisions taken in the House with the object of safeguarding not merely the rights of Members, but also the rights of the citizens of this country. It is most essential that our fundamental rights should be preserved and to this end, I am sure that he will have the support of all hon. Members and of citizens as a whole. However I regret that on this occasion, in my opinion, I cannot agree with his contentions.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

APPROPRIATION BILL

BUDGET DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: The Assembly will now resume the debate on the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current session of the Legislature."

When we suspended our sitting last night the hon. Member for Leonora (Mr. Robertson) was speaking. If he desires, there is still time to his credit, and he may now continue.

Mr. Robertson, (Leonora) At the adjournment last night I was about to make a few observations on the speech of the hon. Member for Upper Demerara River (Mr. Jordan). The hon. Member yesterday blew off a huge amount of hot air on the Budget, and went to such an extent that the hon. Member for Suddie (Mr. Derek Jagan) remarked that he was evidently the "Chancellor of the Exchequer" in the "shadow cabinet" of the P.N.C. The hon. Member criticized everything in the Budget Statement and gave me the impression that he was definitely the representative of Big Business. When these things happen one has no alternative but to think that there are individuals who are used by Big Business to get the working-class people to assist in pulling their chestnuts out of the fire.

Mr. Speaker: May I interrupt the hon. Member at this stage to say that hon. Members must realize that we are debating the Appropriation Bill, and while, of course, Members have a very wide and roving commission by virtue of the Standing Order which gives them an opportunity to speak on the general economic condition of the country and the policies of the Government, I am sure the hon. Member for Leonora, on reflection, will realize that the point he is trying to make does not come within the ambit of this debate. I have been trying since last night to draw the hon. Member's attention to the fact that instead of defending the policy of the Government he has been engaging in references to the honesty and other things of individual Members. Let us cut that out and stick to what is really and truly the interests of the country and the people. Deal with the business of Government. The business of the country is the thing we must bear in mind, and if we are to get on with it, let us cut out those expressions which do us no good.

Mr. Robertson: I am sorry, sir. The hon. Member went on to criticize Government's policy with respect to agriculture, with particular reference to the coconut and edible oil industries, and the loss incurred on the Milk Pasteurisation Plant. Of course the hon. Member has never bothered to pay strict attention to what the Government is really doing for the coconut industry, but I will not go into that because his criticisms were replied to by the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Saffee). But on the point made that Government is losing money on the Transport and Harbours Department and the Marketing Division of the Department of Agriculture, I would like to explain that there is no country in the world which does not lose money on certain utility services. If the hon. Member had tried to find out how many billions of dollars the U.S.A. loses on agriculture, or on agricultural marketing, he would not have made mention of the paltry pennies this Government loses in that direction. Such losses must take place in any country, especially in one that is moving forward.

They are really not losses, but subsidies. The Government guarantees to purchase from the farmers all of their surplus produce. The Produce Depot buys the farmers' surplus produce at guaranteed prices, and rather than allow the produce to spoil it in turn sells at a reduced price. There have been cases in which plantains were bought from the farmers at 4 cents per lb. This also has its benefits, because it helps the entire community as well as the working-class people.

2.45 p.m.

Further, it assists the farmer who finds himself in a position to give employment to people. If he did not have the depot where he could carry his surplus vegetables and get them sold, he would have to restrict his cultivation by planting less. In that case there would have been created a shortage in certain vegetables, and when that shortage was

created the consumers would have had to pay higher prices for the commodities from time to time. The Government depots are there, and the subsidies given to the different branches are serving a good purpose.

On several occasions in this House I have heard hon. Members criticizing the running of the Transport and Harbours Department and the railway. Some say that we should sell the railway to private enterprise; that we should scrap it and so on. If Government sells the railway, hundreds of people will be thrown out of employment.

Mr. Speaker: I do not recall any hon. Member saying that we should scrap the railway. If the hon. Member can remind me of any hon. Member who said so, he can draw my attention to it. He must not say that things have been mentioned in this House, when they have not been.

Mr. Robertson: That point was made by the other side.

Mr. Speaker: Mention was made of the losses suffered in the running of the Department, but nothing was said about scrapping the railway.

Mr. Robertson: Of course, when these losses incurred in running the railway are mentioned, some hon. Members go further and accuse the Government of incompetence and all sorts of things. These losses cannot be easily avoided. At one time it was mooted that the Government should sell the Transport Department to private enterprise. Today one can travel from Georgetown to New Amsterdam for \$2.11, but I am certain that if the railway was sold to private enterprise the owners would endeavour to make profits. Under these conditions, the only way it would be able to pay them is if they raised the fares. In that case the cost of living would immediately go up. It is Government's duty to keep down the cost of living, and it is necessary, therefore, to subsidize the Transport Department.

[MR. ROBERTSON]

When these public utilities show a loss it is not really a loss to the Government. The only way money is lost to the Government is when it is sent out of the country, but whatever is shown as a loss in running any of these Departments will remain in the country. The money is paid to the workers; they spend it over the counters, and the revenue comes back to the Government.

I observe that the Member for Campbellville made some very monstrous accusations.

Mr. Speaker: May we just try to get into the practice of using the description "Honourable" before the word "Member". Let us say the hon. Member for so and so.

Mr. Robertson: The hon. Member for Campbellville made some very monstrous accusations in his speech yesterday. One accusation was that when individuals go to the Grupo Del Conte Company for employment they are asked for their party cards, and if one is unable to show a party card one cannot get a job. That is not true. The card that is asked for of every individual who goes there for employment is the labour card. Hon.

will remember that only a few weeks ago there was a publication in the public to go to the various Stations on the West Coast in order to obtain their registration cards. The Del Conte Company will not employ anyone unless he produces a registration card, and that is the card the Company is asking for. The hon. Member knows full well that that is the type of card the people are asked to produce, but some people want to distort the facts. They do that all the time, and the aim is to discredit this Government.

The hon. Member went further and said that one of the things that is causing the public to lose confidence in the Gov-

ernment is due to the fact that this Government is friendly with and applauds Communist countries. He says that Members of the Government are always talking about India, but India does not applaud these countries and that is why India can get the support of the Western powers whereas British Guiana cannot get similar support.—[**Mr. Bissember:** "I did not say that."] — I would like to quote from a book for the benefit of the hon. Member as well as the House. The book is entitled: *How the Soviet Union Helps Economically Underdeveloped Countries*, and the author is P. Tretyakov. I will quote from page 24:

"...in India the Soviet Union is building a large iron and steel works with an output capacity of 1 million tons of steel a year. This plant is India's first iron and steel works and one of the largest in Asia."

On page 25 Prime Minister Nehru states:

"The construction of the Bhilai Iron and Steel Works is an example of India's co-operation with the Soviet Union. This co-operation is of great benefit to India not only for the construction of factories, but also for training new skilled workers, good scientists and technicians."

Yesterday the hon. Member told us that we are sending people to Cuba to be trained to come back here and work. On page 26 of this book we find this statement:

"Skilled personnel for India are trained also in the Soviet Union. In 1958 more than 500 Indian citizens were trained in the U.S.S.R., becoming qualified steel workers and returning home to work in the plant."

They did not become Communists. Further, on page 25 Mr. C. D. Dillon, then U.S. Under Secretary of State, in reporting to the Senate Committee on March 3, 1958, made this statement:

"He estimated that this plant alone will raise the present output of steel in India by 60 per cent and this will permit India to save as much as 80 million dollars of foreign exchange a year."

The hon. Member for Georgetown North in his speech last night mentioned that German technicians are here, and they are offering to give us factories. He said that he was wondering whether British Guiana would not be tied to Germany, if these factories are constructed over here. For the information of this House, I would like to quote what Professor P. C. Mahalanobis has said on page 28:

"Thus, Professor P. C. Mahalanobis, director of the State Statistical Institute of India, said the following concerning the conclusion of the agreement. "We are especially pleased with the new Soviet credit as it will enable India not only to obtain the needed machinery and other equipment, but will also make it possible to train Indian engineers and technicians, and in this matter the U.S.S.R., to all appearance, has the greatest experience among the countries of the world."

My reason for quoting from this book is due to the fact that we hear statements going around all the time that we want help from these people, and when we get it we will be tied to their skirtstrings.

3.00 p.m.

As the world knows, India is not tied to anyone. When India was searching the world for help, especially for the steel mill, these are the people who went to her assistance. After she got aid, England and the United States went and built a small mill, and not under the same conditions. There is one other quotation which I would like to make from this same book, on page 28. It states:

"To repay Soviet organizations their expenditures in carrying out the agreement, the Indian Government will supply the U.S.S.R. goods India regularly exports, or will pay by means of freely convertible currency, as are the terms of earlier agreements."

I think those are reasonable terms and conditions for any country to be given assistance under.

As I said, these enemies of the people use all kinds of methods to distort facts. They are saying that the Government has done nothing; that the Government is in a mess. Indeed, life itself confutes this. It is not hard to understand the indignation that these statements arouse in those who really know what is taking place in this country. Dishonesty in these individuals is getting them so blind that they cannot see the progress which, even our worst enemies grudgingly admit, is taking place.

I would like to know if the Opposition Members of this House would really say that this Government has done nothing for this country. I wonder if they do know or remember that today, there is an operation theatre attached to the maternity ward of the Georgetown Hospital through the efforts of this Government. There is an orthopaedic institution which this Government built because it was thinking of the health of the people of the country. We have had built a string of health centres throughout the country, and cottage hospitals. There are about five of them now.

Again, this Government has improved the pure water supplies for this country. I remember that in 1957 when there was only \$200,000 voted for pure water supply, the next year the Government, which is here now, increased that amount to \$700,000—\$¾ million. That shows the interest we are taking in the health of the people of the country. I remember hearing, in this very House, the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge criticize the Government's efforts with regard to cottage hospitals. Of course, it did not surprise me because I know that no Government in the world that takes care of the health of its people can ever be liked by the hon. Member for obvious reasons.

I do not think that these accusations that are levelled against this Government are justified. We are not deserving of them. What I feel should happen in this

[MR. ROBERTSON]

House if we want this country to get ahead—as we do—is that criticisms should be constructive. We are not against criticisms, but let them be constructive. This Government has shown the clearest understanding of our needs and conditions, and it has been most courageous and resolute in implementing policies for the benefit of the people. It has proved, again and again, that it has the determination necessary to fight both the external and the internal enemies of the people of Guiana.

I remember a statement made by some of the sugar workers in my Constituency. They put this question very succinctly in one short sentence when they said, "Without the P.P.P., there is no new Guiana." It is true. We want to go forward, not backward. We want democracy which the vast majority of the people can exercise. We want a decent life for all, not for just a few. We want a socialist democracy based on the common ownership of the means of production.

Mr. Merriman (La Penitence-Lodge): We have read of the vast differences in the ways in which men live throughout the world. We have read of the degrees of success of certain people, the limited few. We hear of the vast majority of people who are underfed, badly housed, with no proper system or mode of living, and we are listed among them. But whatever is the system of life, I am yet to find one sphere where there is not the hope for a better life, the desire for peace, and the desire for happiness.

We find ourselves in this country, for very many reasons, desiring peace and happiness and a better way of life, both physically and to satisfy our mental outlook. We find ourselves, because of our peculiar history, in a strange land though it is true most of us are claiming and demanding a new approach. As in the

United States of America, we are all aliens here although, today, we call this country our own. This is a strange coming-together, a strange working together, but there is hardly a man in British Guiana who is not looking for something better for today and for tomorrow.

We have our own special problems, separate and apart from those which we have in common with the rest of the world. We are seeking to solve them at our own cost. It is our job, in the days ahead, to have a full evaluation of our problems, our difficulties and our struggles. There are, no doubt, the will on all sides and the determination. Whether intelligence is there on all sides, I doubt. In fact, there is more evidence of its absence than its presence although there may be the will and the desire. I should just like to quote the words of Earl Parker Hanson in *A Writing on the Caribbean, its economy*. Series I, Volume IV. He was speaking about Puerto Rico and on page 191, he says:

"I confine my remarks to Puerto Rico in part because it is the Caribbean area I know best, and in part because it has in recent years begun to be world famous as a microcosm and a social laboratory for developmental trends.

While the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico is today outstanding among American societies for the effectiveness of its planned and integrated developmental programme, in which industry and public works are but component parts, the history of that great effort drives home a lesson which is of the utmost importance, especially to scholars. No matter what may be planned, no matter what care is taken to provide for contingencies and to integrate the various component parts and aspects of the programme, the quality, soundness, integration, and effectiveness of the resulting effort are always, at any one time, automatically regulated by the political climate and the quality of political leadership existing at that particular time."

3.15 p.m.

The position is no less true of Puerto Rico than it is of British Guiana today. What is our political climate? What is

the quality of our Government and the quality of the leadership of our Government? Our political leadership may be easily and readily evaluated by these documents we have before us, and correlated. It may be easily evaluated by this Budget which was presented to this Assembly for the first time by an elected representative of the people. It must be noted, because it is rather significant in the words prefacing the Budget Speech, that "the occasion is not without some historic importance", and at the same time one observed the histrionics associated with its historical importance.

Anyone who had the privilege of listening to the hon. Minister of Finance as he read his Budget Speech will recall the manner in which he referred to Members of the Opposition. One could see the venom with which he delivered his Budget, the contempt, the spite and scorn as he read what he believed was pointedly directed at the Opposition. When it is realized that the P.N.C. represents the bulk of the working-class people of this country, one can only interpret it as a display of contempt for the working-class people of British Guiana. It was therefore not surprising that the Budget had but a short time to live in its context and its original setting. It was doomed to die, doomed to be killed. This is no *post mortem*, as one hon. Member suggests on the other side of the Table. It is an embalming (Laughter). That document is something of the past and will never be resurrected. There is no place for it now. That is why we have the unusual spectacle of two Budgets to consider, and we know not yet what may be the third.

In paragraph 2 of his Budget Speech the hon. Minister says:

"No poor country like ours, however, can hope to lift itself up by its own bootstraps. It must seek help from external sources, mainly from the developed countries; but it must make sure that such aid is not used to create an economy which is slavishly complementary to, or merely an appendage of, that of the lead-

ing countries. We have to aim at the creation of an internally-balanced, diversified, self-sustaining economy."

We agree, but in order to achieve these aims we say that an essential ingredient is a nationalist atmosphere. If I may be allowed to quote myself, I would like to read an extract from *Hansard* of the 18th October, 1961:

"... We say the People's Progressive Party—the present Government and the Government over the past four years—has failed to create that atmosphere, that nationalist atmosphere in which we, without exception of colour, race, religion or creed, will be looking through one eye, as it were, to see one nation, one people, one destiny, and where our immediate approach to Independence, which would, of course, have political freedom and political stability, would be a reality. The Government has not created that atmosphere—nationalist and Guianese—where we will have economic emancipation and progress: where we will have social security."

We agree with the philosophy but we are alarmed at the unintelligent manner in which this P.P.P. Government hopes to achieve these great ideals. No one will dispute the right of the Government to call upon the people of this country to contribute towards its development and progress, but in the Budget proposals the ordinary working man was not being asked to tighten his belt, but to remove it altogether.

3.30 p.m.

There was a period of suspense, dissatisfaction, movement for better wages, and at the same time this Budget came on the scene. When it was not a tightening of the belt as a result of the already small pay-packet, another attempt was made to take away more from the ordinary wage-earner. What is most hypocritical about it is that the ordinary worker was told that the increase would be negligible, if any increase at all; that the Budget was not directed against the working — class man, but was an attempt to redistribute the wealth of the country in such a man-

[MR. MERRIMAN]

ner that the working man would not suffer. It was certainly a redistribution of things, but the one hardest hit was the working class man. It was necessary for him to pay more for food. About 95% of the articles in the groceries would have been affected, and it was not surprising to find that the workers in a certain category showed in no uncertain manner their opposition to the Budget.

The rejection of the Budget shows that the people have no confidence in this Government. They know that the Government is not doing things in their interest, and it is known that the strike which started on Monday by the ordinary and clerical workers was an expression of their dissatisfaction with the conditions which obtain in this country. The people were fed up with the hardships they were called upon to endure, and when they realized that it was not merely a tightening of the belt but that something more would be taken from the pay-packet they could not stand things any longer. The series of events which followed after the strike are clear indications that every type of wage-earner, from the white collar worker to the ordinary man in the street, was against the proposals in the Budget.

Everyone knows what is responsible for the modifications in the Budget. Permit me to quote from the hon. Minister of Finance's modified statement:

"As Honourable Members are aware, when the 1962 Budget was introduced on 31st January, the debate on the proposals was deferred until 12th February to allow adequate time for their consideration. These proposals of their nature could not be discussed with the interests likely to be affected by them in advance of their formal announcement. Announcement had to precede any such discussion. Since it was clear from subsequent developments that a still longer period was required for the expression of views on the revenue proposals and for adequate discussion of them, it was stated in the Legislative Assembly on 9th February that the debate scheduled for 12th February would be further postponed to a date to be announced."

It would have been illuminating if the Government could have told us, at least for the sake of record, what these subsequent developments were. The nature, intensity and the results of them would have been helpful to future historians.

It is surprising, in the light of these modifications, that Government has failed to mention something about "in the light of the demonstration against the proposals, or in the light of the opposition to the proposals in the Budget two months have elapsed before the proposals could be discussed." In this discussion, Government has failed to show the cause of the demonstration by the Opposition which has forced it to accept terms and conditions which, prior to the demonstration, the members of the Civil Service Association and the general public were asking it to accept. In the very near future some of those who were responsible for the damage done to the integrity and good name of the inhabitants of British Guiana will be disclosed.

3.40 p.m.

I am not in any doubt about it. And what is more surprising is that this Budget was forced on the Government because of the people's uprising and there is not a single word or statement about it. The Government has not had the honesty to say why it has modified the Budget.

There is an historic second document. The degree of its relationship to the first will be dealt with, but the fact is that a second document was presented, an event previously unknown in the practices of this Legislature, and the reason for it is that the people themselves demanded it. The merit will be dealt with at some time during this debate. As I said, what is alarming about it is the absence of a true democratic approach to resolving these issues and dealing with these questions. The Government showed complete and utter disregard for the labouring class, the wage earner and the salaried worker.

It showed utter disregard for negotiation and discussion with them so that they might resolve the differences which must exist between one class and another; one group and another, particularly between the governor and the governed. But there is always an intelligent, honest approach to resolving any difference.

What is not surprising is that immediately after the climax of February 16, one heard from the P.P.P., "workers unite". Every attempt was made to find a scapegoat here, there and everywhere. I am not attempting to judge or to lay blame anywhere, but anyone who was acquainted with the atmosphere at the time under review—between the presentation of the first Budget and the presentation of the modified Budget—would have seen that there was the need for the workers to unite. It was clearly seen that there was a division between the urban worker and the rural worker; there was clearly seen a sharp division between the individuals who are strongly identified with the more rural activities and those identified with urban activities, and if, by a strange coincidence, the two met somewhere within the area, there was bound to be conflict.

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Jordan. (Upper Demerara River): I beg to move that the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge be allowed a further 15 minutes.

Mr. Wharton (Abari) seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Merriman: I was saying that there was justification for that call, "workers unite" because there was a sharp conflict, and that conflict is seen in the Budget as it is prepared. One sees in it very clearly a discriminatory approach, and the treatment by the Government of the people, and the wage earner particularly — the working-class man of this country. One sees the strange truth,

After the original Budget, there came the modified Budget. The original Budget had its discrimination, and the modified Budget has its discrimination. I will illustrate it in this way. Take the field of housing. In that very stringent Budget in which the tightening of belts was demanded, what was earmarked for housing? On page 42 of the Development Estimates, you have a sum of \$1,938,794 estimated for 1962.

3.50 p.m.

Anyone who was associated with the Central Housing and Planning Authority, on which I have had the good fortune to serve for several years, will recall that Mr. Hickinbotham, a famous housing specialist, suggested to the Government that the immediate need in this country was for about 30,000 houses; that Government should build at least 2,000 houses every year, and private enterprise another 2,000 each year on a progressive basis. While the target was set at 30,000 houses we made it clear that it should be 50,000 houses over a period of four years. The present Government has a new planning scheme for housing and has built only about 3,000 houses for urban dwellers, while private enterprise has put up about 9,000 houses in the same period. There may be another 500 houses which were built by private individuals. But during the last three years nothing has been done by Government in the housing sector, although we are told that plans have been made for the construction of 200 houses. It is known that contracts have been offered for the building of 188 houses, but apart from that nothing has been done.

The hon. Member for Leonora (Mr. Robertson) said that Government had spent \$200,000 in the early years on pure water supply, and that the amount now allocated is \$700,000.

Mr. Robertson: To a point of correction! I said that in 1957 the

[MR. ROBERTSON]

estimate for pure water supply was \$200,000, and that in the following year it was increased to \$700,000.

Mr. Merriman: It is interesting to know why. The Municipality of Georgetown spends a considerable sum of money annually to maintain its pure water supply to the City and environs. I also know that the sugar industry spends a considerable sum to provide water for the sugar estates, and looks after its own drainage. Village authorities have been clamouring for years for substantial aid towards their pure water supply, and it would be interesting to know what help has been given to them by the Government over the last five years, and which villages have been so assisted. On the other hand a substantial quantity of water is supplied to the rice industry, for which it pays not one cent. No rice mill can operate without a supply of water. [A Member: "Shame"]. I am stating the facts. I have recently learnt that Government proposes to set up a Water Control Corporation, but one dreads the day, having regard to the cavalier manner in which this Government has treated long established institutions, when statutory power will be vested in such a Corporation.

I made this digression in view of the statement made by the hon. Member for Leonora. I shall now proceed to deal with some other aspects of the Budget.

Mr. Speaker: It is now four o'clock. I therefore suspend the sitting for half an hour.

4.45 p.m.

On resumption —

Mr. Merriman: On the adjournment I was dealing with housing. I said that no proper planning was done,

and I observed that the Budget had not taken into account this aspect of the problem. To my mind some extent of training should be given to the officers in that Department. The question of training officers is still a sore one as far as this Department is concerned. It will be necessary to have officers trained technically to maintain the services. For instance, in the housing scheme at Ruimveldt, we find that this Government has not created the climate for any degree of business premises, markets and so on, which are so necessary in these community areas. One looks forward to the implementation of such plans or programmes in the future.

4.50 p.m.

This Government is not silent on the fact that it will play a very positive part in the establishment of the essential requirements in these community areas. But even if the Government intends to do this in partnership with the citizens, nothing has been done by the Government either to create that partnership, or to do the work itself. At the Ruimveldt Industrial area, there are 15 or 20 plots for industrial activities. If I recall correctly, one building is up. Another is going up very slowly. There are a few signboards indicating what it is hoped will be done.

I turn now to the question of health, which revolves around the simple project of providing a new hospital. We have had a very odious comparison before — the cost of maintaining a dog as compared with what is allowed a man. But the Government seems more interested in providing a larger prison than it is mindful of providing a new hospital! In the 1960/64 Development Programme, it has earmarked \$300,000 for a prison. [Mr. Wilson: "For the looters!"] I have no doubt that you will have more looters if you have a bad Government.

The Government is more concerned with providing a larger prison, and in its Development Programme it has earmarked \$300,000. But on the question of the health of the community — and a hospital is as vital to community life as politics are — nothing is done. All types of excuses are made. To provide a new hospital will be a stimulus, an incentive, for maintaining good health and, perhaps, correcting bad health. You will be able to recruit the necessary staff. Specialists now are complaining about the conditions of work, and not the salary. Perhaps, the salary here is not as attractive as it is elsewhere, but there are many Guianese boys, trained abroad, who would like to return. However, because of the conditions obtaining at the hospitals, they are not coming. Those who are here are leaving. There is also a great exodus of nurses, and specialist posts remain vacant for a long time.

These are conditions which are disturbing to the Opposition. I have dealt with those conditions, and I shall not repeat them. Suffice it to say that it is scandalous for \$444,605 to be allocated in the Development Programme for the provision of health facilities, and, I repeat, \$300,000 for a larger prison.

4.55 p.m.

What appals one most is that this Government asks: where is the money to come from? I will not give Government the type of answer usually given to the ordinary businessman who may have to go into voluntary liquidation or forced liquidation. I will not give that answer, though it may be applicable. This Government talks about a redistribution of wealth, and in its own words it seeks to “change the old order” and establish a new order in which there will be equality. In paragraph 9 of his Budget Speech the Minister of Finance says:

“... Taxation must therefore not only be an efficient producer of revenue to finance public services and desirable

economic activity, but also serve the subsidiary purpose of redistributing wealth and income.”

But how one-sided and discriminatory this Government is. There is always a grouse against sugar, justifiably so, because it is a symbol of the old order and colonialism, and it is proposed that Big Business, which takes the wealth out of this country and in the past made very little contribution to its development, should be taxed more. Then there are the old established local businessmen who, for some reason, in partnership with those of the past, have been able to amass great wealth and use it for their own benefit, and very often against the interests of the masses of the community, against whom taxation should be levied. We agree with all that, but in the same context there are other businesses which are equally productive of profits, but Government turns the “Nelson eye”, for the obvious reason that those who operate them are supporters of the Government in power. Whatever certain people may say about the particular business I have in mind, one can see how productive it is.

5.00 p.m.

I am talking about the rice industry. It is no new industry because it has been here for about 30 to 60 years. It is well established, and it has been playing its part in the country's economy for a long time. The rice industry is dominated by one particular group in our community, and it is exclusively run by one particular race. However, criticism of the rice industry on my part is not based on racial prejudice. I am merely trying to give my views on things as they appear to me.

I have heard hon. Members on the other side of the Table saying that they pay no regard to the views of certain specialists who have visited this country.

[Mr. MERRIMAN]

It is true, however, that Miss O'Laughlin said that rice was a marginal crop, and she has been supported by other experts. I have heard that he who plants rice is playing with dice. When one sees those who are employed in the field and what they are getting out of it, one cannot help saying that there is racial prejudice or discrimination. We know that the people are money from the rice they produce.

Let us examine what is being dominated in this long established industry in our community.

Mr. Speaker : This will be a useful period for us to have a Motion for the hon. Member to continue.

Mr. Joaquin (Kitty) : beg to move that the hon. Member be an extension of 15 minutes.

Mr. Blair (Berbice River) seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Merriman: Let us examine the position of the rice industry. Government assists the rice farmer in his drainage and irrigation. Some time ago I referred to the question of pure water supply in some areas. Some areas are not ided with pure water supply, but the Government provides the rice farmer with everything he needs. [Mr. Wilson: "The villages are responsible."]

an excise tax on the of sugar, but what does rice contribute towards that? It is reported that rice made \$½ million in three months. It is known that they have spent about \$1 million out of their own and expansion, from? In order the country, one must tax the productive source. Let the rice farmers say that they are not and that the conditions at the moment The rice farmers are get-

ting all possible assistance, but the other industries in this country have to pay their way. Why can't all industries be given the same preference?

Let us look at the cost of one combine and the amount of money it can earn. A combine will cost thousands of dollars, but the gasoline is duty free and the cost of maintenance is considerably reduced. The tractors used in the rice industry are allowed to enter this country duty-free--[An hon. Member: "Hearses are also duty-free."]- We pass on that to all hon. Members. I address the hon. Member through you, sir.

Mr. Speaker: Do not reply to him now. Please pass on.

Mr. Merriman: When people cannot get fish in Georgetown they have to buy salt fish. There is a collector of dues for fish in the market, and the people have to pay him a certain amount for the Fisheries Department. The fisherman has to pay his dues in the market; he has to pay landing dues and so on. The fisherman contributes to the revenue directly and towards the cost of the Local Central Government. At page 4 of the Budget I see:

"10. In British Guiana we are relatively fortunate -- at least in relation to many independent countries of Latin America -- in that there is a well-run administration for levying and collecting a progressive tax on incomes and on inheritance. Unfortunately, similar tribute cannot be paid in respect of import and excise duties, but I give notice that maladministration and irregularities will no longer be tolerated in the Customs and Excise Departments, which is now responsible for about one-third of our total revenue. Our tax systems, nevertheless, from the point of view of fairness and equity, and of equal treatment of all citizens in relation to their true economic power or ability to pay, reveals very important gaps."

5.10 p.m.

I pointed out that therein lay a principle, and I am showing them the direction of the principle. I am sur-

prised to hear the condemnation of it and no attempt made to fill that gap. It is a strange thing. Where is the fairness? Where is the equity that this Government boasts about? Not only do the members of the Government boast about it at the street corners, but they have the temerity to document it when, in truth and in fact, there are such glaring examples of inequity in our community life.

I have given this one instance as a challenge to the Government to show the fairness, the equity and the equal treatment, when an ordinary fisherman is taxed a heavy tax and, in another field, very well established and providing a reasonable reward, there is absolutely no evidence of taxation and absolutely no attempt made to equalize.

Mr. Speaker : It would seem that at this stage the hon. Member is repeating himself.

Mr. Merriman: I am grateful to you, sir, for so reminding me. It reminds me, too, that I have to follow your direction and I shall do so. But it only indicates the extent to which the impression is made upon my mind and I am endeavouring to make the same impression upon the mind of the Government. If I am sure that it has made an indelible impression and that the situation will be remedied early, I shall not repeat it.

There is one other factor in this Budget that worries me. One of the primary channels through which pure articles of diet can be obtained has been heavily taxed. There has been increased taxation on milk, and the Government says that there is a reduction in the cost of that which is supplied to the community.

Mr. Speaker: Please let us have a Motion.

Mr. Joaquin: I beg to move that the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge be given an additional 15 minutes.

Mr. Blair seconded.

Mr. Merriman: I was referring to milk. There is a reduction by a penny in the cost of the milk supplied by the Milk Pasteurization Plant. That is generous. Can the Minister concerned tell me that this reduction of a penny is on milk that is pasteurized? Is it not a penny reduction on the same dirty, insanitary milk that is brought from the country and chilled? And yet, that which is pure and gives an assurance of protection and good health is taxed heavily!

The false security with which this Government masks its doings cannot be allowed to pass unnoticed, and the community must be alerted to the serious repercussions and reactions to these doings. It is a serious matter. A reduction of a penny on milk, but what kind of milk? Insanitary, dirty milk! I am repeating myself, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker : Your repetition may be allowed for emphasis.

Mr. Merriman: And veracity, Mr. Speaker. Yet there is an increase in the cost of the pure product. That is the type of thing which our Government is doing right now.

It seems as if I have come to the end of my contribution to this stage of the Bill, and I shall await another stage when I shall deal with other phases of the proposals. However, what I believe I have endeavoured to show you, sir, and this House, is that this Government has done very little in its proposals in the Budget for the workers and wage earners of the urban areas while, at the same time, everything is done for their counterparts in the country areas.

5.20 p.m.

There has been a total neglect and refusal of this Government to undertake projects which would benefit urban dwellers, particularly housing and an-

[MR. MERRIMAN]

cillary projects. Government has made no effort to deal with the question of health, particularly on the curative side, by the provision of hospitals of the required standard, properly equipped and manned by technically qualified staffs.

I have also endeavoured to show that while every effort is made to oppress the urban wage-earner by increasing his cost of living in the Budget proposals, the rural dwellers have been given every consideration by means of stimulating their mode of living, at the same time making absolutely no effort to tax their source of income. I have tried to show that this discrimination is quite calculated on the part of the Government, because of the support which it got from the rural areas.

Even in the case where there are efforts by the Government to reduce, or appear to reduce, the cost of a particular item which is more widely used by urban dwellers, Government's action is not only suspicious but bears evidence of being misleading and wicked, because the high standard of purity is not only not there but the public is not aware that it is not there. That is the seriousness of it. It is the general belief that once milk passes through a pasteurisation plant it is pasteurised milk, but without proper pasteurisation equipment it is just milk.

I have also endeavoured to show that instead of paying attention to the vital institutional requirements which would serve the urban areas, this Government is pursuing a course which will provoke honest people to commit acts of lawlessness. That is all I wish to say, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn): As agreed to by hon. Members of the Opposition yesterday, and as announced, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order No. 9 to enable the House to adjourn at this time (5.30 p.m.) until 8 p.m.

Motion put, and agreed to.

Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Speaker: I now suspend the sitting until 8 p.m.

8.25 p.m.

On resumption —

Mr. Speaker: When the sitting was suspended, the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge (Mr. Merriman) had just concluded his speech and the indication I have is that the hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing wishes to speak.

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mr. Chandisingh): Mr. Speaker, I trust that the hon. Members on the opposite side of the Table are by now sufficiently mellowed, a bit more open-minded, and less prejudiced with respect to some of the observations which have been made on the Budget.

This Budget that we are discussing has been described as historic. It is indeed historic in the context of British Guiana. Certainly, hon. Members on the opposite side have been able to add a certain twist to the word "historic" by virtue of the activities conducted outside of this Chamber. They have attempted to distort the essence of the Budget presented by the hon. Minister of Finance. They have attempted to describe the Budget as an attack on the working class. But I would like to say that those who say that this Budget was an attack on the working class have failed entirely to grasp the purport of the proposals.

In this respect, I think the hon. Members on the opposite side have done a disservice to the very working class they say they champion. Of course, if we examined the Budget, we must conclude that the money which was to be realized would be used in the interest, largely, of the working people of this country — people who might be described as the underprivileged, the have-nots. While it is true that we

asked all sections of the community to make a contribution to our national development and towards the solution of some of the problems with which we are faced, it is correct to say that the contribution which the working-class family, the lower-income family, was called upon to make was a very small measure of what those who were in a much better position to pay were called upon to contribute.

In the end, the Budget and the Development Programme were intended to improve the conditions of the underprivileged, not only as regards immediate needs, which everyone seems to recognize, but also with a view to the future well-being of the masses of this country. What can this money be spent on? Is it going to be spent on the erection of monuments, of show-pieces? Or is the money designed to improve some of the very conditions which hon. Members on the opposite side are now calling upon this Government to provide for the working people — employment, better medical facilities, houses, and all the other social facilities which are needed by the people in any community?

So I reiterate that the hon. Members on the opposite side have done a disservice to the working class, and to the working class in this city, when they attempted to stir them up against the very Government which has always been a friend of the working people. The purpose of the existence of this Government and the Party which constitutes it is to struggle in the interest of the underprivileged of this country.

8.30 p.m.

I must note that the hon. Member for Campbellville (Mr. Bissember) said that his party would be prepared to support a real "socialist" policy, but he could find nothing socialist about the policy or programme of the Government. When I recall the getting together between his socialist party and the party which is

recognized as the antagonist of the working people of this country, I could not avoid the impression that what the hon. Member perhaps meant was that his party was prepared to support a policy of National Socialism rather than Socialism. Everyone knows that National Socialism was the policy pursued by Hitler, and thereby we had the tyranny of Nazism.

While the hon. Member was speaking on the need for national unity and a Guianese consciousness I did not for one moment believe that he was trying to be humorous. But while listening to his call on the Government, in an air of injured innocence, to pursue a policy of developing national unity, I could not help but recall a skit I heard on the radio a few weeks ago by our worthy and noted comedian, Mr. Sam Chase. I do not recall the exact words he used, but to the best of my memory it went something like this:

"We, the looters of the City, in accordance with our belief in democratic principles, make this joint appeal to all Police search parties. We appeal to you to be less diligent in your efforts to deprive us of the essentials of life which we have acquired by so diligent efforts and by so much sacrifice." [Laughter.]

I could not help thinking about this skit when I heard the hon. Member for Campbellville appeal to the People's Progressive Party and the Government to initiate action and policies which would result in greater national unity. I think it was the same hon. Member who made reference to the fact that he who accuses thereby excuses [An hon. Member: "The other way around."] Thank you very much. He who excuses himself accuses himself. I would like to put it the other way around.

We have heard also of discrimination. We have heard it said that a certain firm was giving employment only to members of the People's Progressive Party. The hon. Member for Leonora (Mr. Robertson) touched on this during

[MR. CHANDISINGH]

his remarks, and, I think, quite correctly drew attention to the fact that the Employment Exchange sends persons to be interviewed on the basis of having a blue card.

When I hear of discrimination I am inclined to wonder why we do not hear from hon. Members on the opposite side of the discrimination, in my opinion, that seemed to take place on Black Friday in February this year, when it would appear to me that certain members of the community were singled out for attack, for arson and looting—those who were sympathisers with the People's Progressive Party, or who were believed to be sympathisers with the P.P.P. I have not heard of any reference to discrimination in that respect. The hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Checks) also referred to discrimination. Perhaps it is possible that he may not have known about this. Perhaps he was not awake on that day. [Laughter.]

We have also heard from hon. Members opposite of the fear that stalks the land today. Indeed there is fear in this country. As far as I can remember, and if I may, I daresay as far as my colleague, the hon. Member for Leonora can remember, there has always been fear in this country. There has been fear by the workers in this country; they have feared for their jobs. They have feared victimization in several fields of employment. They have feared because they have been at the mercy of the privileged sections in this community, and this fear has been in existence ever since we can remember. It is no good for hon. Members opposite to say that this is not true. We can go on any sugar estate and find that this fear exists. The hon. Member can ask several workers employed by firms in this City and he will find that there is fear. There is fear of victimization, of loss of work, and there is another type of fear that

8.45 p.m.

stalks this land. There is the fear held by workers who would be victimized if they do not march on the streets with placards denouncing and condemning this Government. It cannot be said that this fear does not exist. Workers have come and confided in me that their employers, during the strike, threatened them with dismissal if they did not go on strike and, furthermore, if they did not demonstrate in the streets as well as carry placards which had been prepared for them. These are the reactionary forces that we have to take into account. These are the forces that we want to see dispelled in this country.

There is, of course, another type of fear—the fear of those who have exploited the people of this country for ages; the privileged sections of this community are worried and there is fear because their position of privilege and power, by virtue of their economic position, will no longer stand them in good stead. That is the fear of the culprits who are guilty and whose consciences are worrying them. Those are some of the people who are trying to leave this country.

There is also a fear—a genuine fear—in the hearts of those people who own property; those people who have been affected by the arson and looting which took place in this country quite recently. That is a genuine fear, and it is no use telling the Government that it must endeavour to remove such fear. The solution to this type of fear is in the hands of the Opposition—[An hon. Member : “In the hands of the Government, too.”]—The Members of the Opposition could remove this fear tomorrow if they wished to, but some of them have no desire to do so. As we have already heard, some of them are trying to scare away those persons who were prepared to come to this country and invest their money. Therefore it is no secret as to where one should look for the source of these fears. They rest fully and squarely

on the shoulders of the Opposition who are now so piously trying to tell this Government that it should endeavour to build a spirit of nationalism and unity.

One hon. Member, in the same breath as he accused the Government of not acting in a proper manner, referred to "one people, one nation and one destiny."—**[Mr. Kendall:** "That does not mean anything.]—I would say that the people in this country are yet to realize to what extent certain people have misled them.

I should like to deal with one aspect of this Budget which, from a health standpoint, is a feather in Government's cap. The hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge (Mr. Merriman) spoke about the importation of milk. He was trying to tell us that the milk which is called pasteurized milk is not really pasteurized. I do not know from where he gets his information. Perhaps what he means is that the milk is not sterilized milk. If that is what he intended to say he should have said so. Pasteurized milk is different from sterilized milk. In any case the wholesomeness of the milk produced at the Milk Pasteurization Plant is beyond dispute.

I would like to take this question of milk in relation to the tax and the increased duty which has been placed on concentrates for non-alcoholic beverages. All persons who are interested in health will agree with the salubrious action on the part of the Government. The medical people state that, for the same amount of money one spends on a bottle of aerated drink, one could purchase a similar amount of milk and that the nutritional value in the milk would be many times over what one would get in a bottle of aerated drink.

If one buys a pint of milk for 13 cents or a half pint of milk for 7 cents, one would be able to get the nutriments that are required in one's daily diet. As a matter of fact I may say that an aerated drink is definitely injurious to children, and it interferes with their health. It is not good for adults, and it is harmful for

children. It is necessary, therefore, to impress on the minds of our people—particularly the working class as well as the people in the lower income group—that rather than purchasing aerated drinks they should spend the equivalent amount of money on wholesome food such as milk. This, as I have said, has been commented on by at least two experts in the field of medicine who have recently visited this country. They have praised the Government on the action taken to further subsidize milk and to increase the duty on concentrates used for making aerated drinks.

I also wish to comment on some of the remarks made by the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge on subjects under my portfolio. First of all, I will deal with housing. It seems to me as though certain hon. Members are repeating in this debate what was said in their speeches in the debate which took place on the Speech from the Throne. So far as I can see, the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge has added nothing new to this debate and has merely repeated the same criticisms he voiced on that occasion. He has tried to censure the Government for the amount of money allocated for housing. He told us that Mr. Hickinbotham who came to this country some years ago, said that there was a need for 30,000 houses in the City of Georgetown. He said that a recommendation had been made to the Government to build 2,000 houses a year, and that private enterprise should build another 2,000 houses, making a total of 4,000 houses a year.

It is very easy for anyone to get up anywhere and say that Government should do this and that. I can say that there is a need for 30,000 houses and, therefore, Government should build not only 2,000 houses a year, but 6,000 houses a year. Why say 2,000 houses only? I am not sure whether enough builders are available to do this. The hon. Members on the opposite side of the Table are in the peculiar position where they can select item by item, head by head,

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and say that Government should do this and that; then another Member of the Opposition can get up, take three other fields of activity and say that the Government is not doing enough for the people, and so they can go on. But the Members of the Opposition do not have the task of doing addition and subtraction. They do not have to add the cost of implementing their proposals, and to find the money to do all the things they have in mind.

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In this respect, one may say that the Opposition has no real responsibility to the people of this country. So it is quite easy for the Members to say that in every field of activity more money should be spent. I do not claim—in fact, I definitely disclaim—that I am an economist. But I think that it does not take very much for anyone to realize that in preparing a Development Programme, one has to take into account the level of a country's economy, the balance between the productive, the economic and social sectors of the economy. When this has been done, one has to approach the problem with some measure of responsibility.

The Government can spend all its resources on housing. We can spend, let us say, \$20 million in the next year or two to provide a sizeable number of houses. But where will this get our economy? We will be in the position of someone who is earning a small amount of money and who tries to acquire all the luxuries of life all at one time. This is something which I think hon. Members on the opposite side need to study a bit more carefully before they propose what is, for British Guiana, astronomical expenditure on certain sectors of the economy.

The hon. Member said that for the last three years nothing has been done in the housing sector. I must observe that the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge is in the habit of using extreme language. If he had said that the Government within

the last three years did something, but that, in his opinion, more should have been done, then one can discuss, one can reason. But when one hears a statement that nothing has been done, then I contend that this is not the basis for any reasoning or discussion.

He referred to 188 houses which are now on contract. Those houses should be completed within another few months. About 81 self-help houses were completed last year. Additional self-help groups have already started construction of their homes. During the course of this year, approximately 144 self-help houses will either be completed or work on them started. Work is also expected to start this year, on a further 288 house lots. So, I think it is quite clear that the hon. Member was not correct when he said that this Government had done nothing in this sector.

Of course, we would like to do much more in the field of housing, but when this Government makes a serious attempt to raise the finances necessary for carrying out these works, to raise the standard of living of people and to provide employment for the unemployed, hon. Members on the opposite side howl. Right now, we are giving active consideration to proposals by private concerns to build a large number of houses in the city. But in any such consideration, careful thought has to be given, as I indicated earlier, to the relative disadvantages of spending or tying up our resources in various fields of activity. And very careful consideration will be given to this aspect. It is, therefore, not true to say that this Government has been doing nothing in the field of housing. As a matter of fact, we have been exercising our energies to the utmost to see what can be done within the framework of our economic situation.

The hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge then essayed into the field of pure water. He did say that he had acquired considerable experience in housing by

virtue of his membership on the Central Housing and Planning Authority. I wish the hon. Member had made more use of the opportunity provided him in this body to acquire some more factual information.

With respect to pure water, this has been gone into before. I remember getting up here in October last year and replying to the selfsame statements made by the hon. Member. He said that the sugar industry spends a considerable sum of money to provide pure water supplies. He inferred thereby that Government, on its part, was not doing the same. I would like to point out to the hon. Member that the money which is used by the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund is the share of the money which belongs to the sugar workers in this country. When this money is used to provide pure water for workers in the sugar industry on the extra-nuclear sites, it is money to which the sugar workers are entitled. Thereby, Government is relieved of the duty of providing pure water in these areas, and the money which is spent is spent in other areas.— [Mr. Merriman: "Villages!"]

Yes, the villages. We have come back to the same tune that money has not been spent to assist villages to acquire pure water supplies and that they have been clamouring for help for years. Only yesterday I was looking at a list of about 20 Local Authorities which were in arrears in paying their rates for the maintenance of overhead tanks supplied by the Government.

At Buxton—What is Buxton? Is it a village, or is it something else? Perhaps, when the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge uses the term "village", he means something entirely different from what ordinary people like myself understand the word "village" to mean. However, I take it he means "local authority". At Buxton, we have just installed a new pump. Beterverwagting, another area, is about to get a new pump. Let us look at Bartica. This Government has already

spent approximately \$100,000 to provide a pure water system for Bartica and what is more, a further sum will have to be spent there.

There is a whole string of Local Authorities receiving assistance from the Government. I would ask the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge to recall how much money was provided by this Government by way of grant to New Amsterdam to assist in improving the pure water supply there. The hon. Member seems to have a short memory.

In the programme that will be put into operation this year—assuming that this programme is accepted—we intend to have new and efficient systems installed from the Rosignol area back to Weldaad on the west coast of Berbice, and in several other areas. But one of the problems which we are meeting now is the problem whereby several Local Authorities are unwilling or unable to meet the maintenance charges for pumps and pressurized systems which the Pure Water Supply Department is prepared to instal for them free of cost.

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They have to pay maintenance charges, and this is what they say they are finding difficulty to meet. So the Government is proposing to put forward legislation to create a Water Corporation. The hon. Member referred in sinister tones to this proposed Water Corporation. Apparently he knows nothing of what is actually proposed, nevertheless he feels confident in coming to this House and informing us that this Water Corporation is some sinister instrument of the Government to discriminate against some people. In fact the Water Corporation will be able to function in such a way as to quicken the provision of pure water throughout the length and breadth of this country.

As I said in the debate last October, this Government has as its intention the provision of a tap in every home, but this

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will take time. This will require a Water Corporation which can act on its own, and which will collect water rates and so on.

One of the other problems is that a more efficient system can be put into operation if a pressurized system is installed which could serve several authorities. There are local authorities now which are small, and which cannot afford to pay maintenance charges for running a pump to bring the water up and to distribute it in the mains. If we can get the Local Authorities to come together one system would be able to supply the needs of several Local Authorities thereby bringing the cost to the Local Authorities and the people in the areas down considerably.

The hon. Member brought in an atrocious charge that most of the amount on the estimates was used to supply rice mills with pure water. Does this stand to reason? Is the hon. Member serious when he makes this allegation? If this is the type of allegation which is to come before us I really cannot see how we are going to have any constructive debates in this House. He said that those were the facts. So far as I know, they may be facts turned on their heads. As a matter of fact many rice mills in this country do not have a pure water supply. Several millers are continually making representations to get taps installed in their mills, and many of them have not been able to do so. Can one imagine such large sums as \$700,000 on the average for the last four or five years, being spent by Government only to provide rice mills with pure water? In that case there must be thousands of rice mills in this country. I do not need to belabour this point.

I think it is a very good thing that the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge (Mr. Merriman) should take such a keen interest in the health of the people of this country. Although I would say that our

interests may not be identical, I think, perhaps, it may be said that our interests may be complementary. We have heard once more the charge about a new hospital. I would like to know if the hon. Member seriously believes that in our Development Programme we could take \$12 million and use it to build a new hospital in entire disregard of all the other things which have to be done. A new hospital in the City is very important; it is much needed, and as I said last year when I spoke on the subject, Government wants very much to be able to put up a new hospital, but it is unrealistic to expect any Government that does not want to go bankrupt, to spend \$12 million in one act out of a Development Budget of about \$21 million. This Government has tried and has been trying to raise money outside for a new hospital. Everyone knows of the efforts of the Premier in this respect.

Although a new hospital is desirable at this stage, the health services being run by the present hospital cannot be lightly brushed aside. More and more people are using the hospital; more and more people are showing confidence in the hospital facilities provided by Government. For the first nine months of last year a total of 20,551 patients were admitted, 64,988 out-patients were treated, and the number of patients treated at the Casualty Department was 65,214. There was a daily average of 801 in-patients at the hospital, and during that period the number of beds at the Georgetown Hospital was increased from 786 to 809.

I would like to mention one or two aspects of our health programme, of which we can be very proud. Only recently this country won the very distinguished award—the Dennis Geffen rose bowl. This award was given to British Guiana for three years. It was based on the progress which has been made in this country over the last two or three years in the field of infant and maternal health. As a

matter of fact, I understand that British Guiana might even have won the highest award, but that this award is not granted to Colonies. One has to be independent before one can get the highest award, and I daresay this is another reason why our country has to press on to Independence.

This Government is carrying out an Environmental Sanitation Programme, a programme which will improve sanitation in the rural areas. We will start in Esse-quiibo which has been called the "Cinderella County", and the people there will be provided with a new type of pit latrine. Schools all over this country in the rural areas will be provided with serviceable sanitary units, and many of them will also have flush toilets and facilities for hand washing. There is an integrated health programme which this Government has embarked upon in association with W.H.O. and U.N.I.C.E.F. This again is another milestone in the progress of health in British Guiana.

There are many countries in the world which cannot boast of the services that are provided in this country, a country as poor and with such a small population as ours. As a matter of fact, in several fields of health people are coming from overseas to see what is being done in British Guiana. In the interior, malaria campaign, for example, in the North West District, the medicated salt programme is being looked at with interest by health workers in the whole of Latin America. So that in many respects we can be proud that we have done very much over the last few years to improve the health of the people of this country. With the facilities that are provided we intend to move ever onward in the field of health.

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Ram Karran: I move that the hon. Minister be granted a further extension of 15 minutes to continue his speech.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Chandisingh: I do not intend to take up the full 15 minutes. As a matter of fact I was on the point of concluding. I could go on and on to give the House some idea of the achievements in the field of health over the last four or five years, but I think it is indicated in the Estimates which have been put forward, and by the Development Programme which has been put forward here, that this Government never unwilling to provide money to be spent in the interest of the health of the people.

9.30 p.m.

This Government will not stop providing things in the interest of the people of this country, but one must remember that one cannot provide a Utopia in any one section of community life to the detriment of other sectors which need to move forward simultaneously. As our productive sector of the economy expands we, as a country, will be in a position to provide ever-increasing facilities in the social sector.

It is this Government's intention, ultimately, to institute a National Health Service. Several steps in this direction have already been taken; 23 new Health Centres have been constructed during the past few years; Government has recently taken over the Skeldon Hospital from Bookers, and this Hospital is now serving a population of about 37,000 people in the Corentyne District.

Immediately after this Government took over the Hospital from Bookers, the number of beds was increased. There are now 50 beds in the Skeldon Hospital. The treatment available there includes certain types of surgery, treatment of out-patients as well as in-patients. In the days when the sugar estates were running the Hospital, it was mainly used for workmen's compensation cases. A few other people also received treatment there, but today the facilities at the Skeldon Hospital are available to the entire population from No. 47 Village to Crabwood

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Creek. Those are the latest steps taken by the Government in its activities which will, eventually, lead to a National Health Service in this country.

I think that I have dealt with the points raised by the hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge and, as I have said before, he has merely repeated what he said a few months ago. I hope, however, in the interest of fairplay and justice, that those hon. Members opposite, who endeavour to oppose and criticize the policies of the Government, will exercise more care and better judgment before raising matters in this House.

Mr. Joaquin: The hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing has made certain statements, which are not true, in an effort to defend his Government. First of all, he has definitely stated here that good milk is better than sweet drink. It is alleged that there is a lot of sour milk at the Milk Pasteurization Plant.

With regard to the question of water supply, I am sure the hon. Minister took certain proposals from the *New Road* of the P.N.C. because under the Head, Pure Water Supply, it is stated that "... the government intends that this pace should be maintained until the goal has been achieved of a water tap in every home." The Government is now thinking of having a pure water supply in every home in every village and, in fact, in every area where people are living. Therefore I am satisfied that the Government has taken this suggestion from the *New Road*.

I should like the hon. Minister to realize that there is no proper water supply at Plantation Bel Air, and that is the area where the hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics resides. In this area and Liliendaal the people have been forced to suffer undue hardships for a number of years, and it is only due to

the generosity of the proprietor who owns the Carib Hotel that some people are permitted to get water. Secondly, there is no water supply in the area of Nootenine adjoining Hope Estate. That is true, and I can bet anyone in this House that my statement is correct.

Mr. Speaker: There is a tax, of course, on betting, but betting is not permissible in this House.

Mr. Joaquin: In the Bagotville-La Grange area there is a pump which cost about \$30,000 and it is not in working order, so the Local Authority refused to pay because it is not getting satisfactory service. For the last two years the Bush Lot area has not been provided with a proper pure water supply, and it is known that there is an inadequate water supply in Golden Fleece, Essequibo. I would like this Government to make a special attempt to improve the water supply in these areas and make conditions better for the residents.

I cannot allow the hon. Minister to pull wool over the eyes of the working-class people by saying that the Government is representing them. If the Members of the Government were really representing the working-class people, in revising the Customs Tariff, they would have seen to it that the tax on Item No. 642—03 was much lower than 20% Preferential Tariff and 36% General Tariff. They are endeavouring at all times to see whether they can fool the working-class. They can fool some of the people some of the time, but not all the time.

The hon. Minister said that improvements have been made to the Hospital. It is sad to say that in the maternity ward there are at times two patients lying in the same bed, and the Government has not done anything to improve the condition. I hope the Government will do something about it. I am worried about how the Government

intends to implement the proposals in this Budget. At page 5 of the Revised Budget I see:

"Staffing will present difficulties and it will be necessary to depend to some extent on expert staff recruited temporarily from overseas."

I would like to ask the Government whether everybody is not paying direct or indirect taxation. The hon. Minister of Finance says that as a result of the modifications to the Budget, Government will have to reduce its Development Programme. At page 20, Subhead 1, of the Development Estimates, I observe a decrease of \$263,000. On pages 20 to 27 there is also a decrease of \$31,500, so what is the use of Government saying that the Development Programme will have to be reduced if the proposals in the Budget are not accepted? I, personally, and my party hope that the Government will be wise enough to make the necessary amendments in this Budget with a view to improving conditions.

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I would also like to find out from the Government what it has accomplished since 1955 under the Marshall Plan. As far as I can see, the achievements under the Marshall Plan can be written on the edge of a postage stamp. These are, first, the attempt by the Government to have Local Government elections under adult suffrage and, secondly, the transfer of responsibility for Local Authorities to a Minister.

But, in his report, Dr. Marshall stressed the importance of training. On page 41 of his report in May, 1955, he said:

"I am surprised that there is no regular teaching of public administration in British Guiana, and I suggest the Local Government Service Commission might well lead the way by setting up a school at which short courses would be given to the various grades of local government employees. The courses would cover central and local government, principles of administration, and kindred subjects.

The Commission would also see that those aspiring to technical positions e.g. engineers or social welfare workers are given access to suitable courses of training."

From the time I was associated with Local Government, I was never invited to any such training course.

There is another recommendation on page 44, sub-paragraph (e), regarding the payment of rates on Government properties. It states:

"(e) Rates on Government Properties. The Government should pay rates on all their properties in the same way as is done in Georgetown and New Amsterdam, and the "administrative" grants should be discontinued. I cannot see any logical justification for the Government to claim rate exemption. In England local authorities also rate themselves in respect of all their own property. This has an accounting advantage, for it assures that the accounts reflect the full cost of the various activities, a point of special importance if other persons or bodies are to be re-charged for any part of the cost of a service; e.g. the accounts of the New Amsterdam electricity undertaking should clearly include a charge for rates."

Dr. Marshall went further and, on page 78, in the summary of recommendations, this is what is stated in reference to Chapter VI—Local Government Service:

"A Local Government Service Commission should be established, employing a joint secretariat with the Public Service Commission.

Courses of training should be arranged for local government employees.

The establishment of Whitley Councils should be considered.

Pensions should be provided for local government officers on similar lines to those operating in the central service."

His recommendations on finance as contained in Chapter VII of the report and summarised on page 78 are as follows:

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"Government Grants should be used to stimulate and control local authorities.

Local authorities will need financial assistance in the initial stages of the new system.

Weak authorities will need special assistance.

The government should pay rates on all its properties."

What is worrying me is that since these recommendations were made by Dr. Marshall, they have not been put into effect, and they were made in May, 1955! In 1956, a team of specialists came to this country at very great cost to the taxpayers to implement the recommendations. I wish to quote from the Annual Report of the Commissioner of Local Government for 1960. On page 4, in the paragraph dealing with Local Government reform, it is stated:

"Steps were taken in 1956 to recruit the specialist staff required to formulate the new system of Local Government, and to work out its application to individual areas, as recommended in the 1955 Report by Dr. A. H. Marshall. By the end of 1957 all of the five Commissioners had been appointed, but in December, 1957, Dr. L. C. Hill, one of the Commissioners, relinquished his appointment. In March, 1958, Mr. J. H. Robinson, Financial Officer, was granted permission to terminate his Agreement."

I am laying on the Government the charge that since these recommendations were made by Dr. Marshall in 1955, it has done very little or nothing towards their implementation. Local Government is an important body, and the central Government should do everything possible to have these recommendations put into effect for the obvious reason that the Local Authorities are from time to time seeking assistance from it. But we find that when Local Authorities apply for loans they are charged at the commercial rate of interest.

Prior to 1958, they were charged a 4 per cent rate of interest, but since then the rate has been increased to 6

per cent. The burden of expenditure in Local Government areas is borne by small proprietors, most of whom enjoy a very low standard of living. Only 9 per cent of the overall expenses of the villages is borne by the central Government — about the lowest in the Commonwealth. Therefore, these Local Authorities do not get any grants from the central Government.

Apart from that, the villagers are made to pay a 5 per cent interest charge on arrears of rates. The fact that these rates are not paid on time is no fault of the ratepayers because, as we all know, the various estates in these villages have mechanized their forces and the ratepayers cannot pay their rates until they have earned their money. During the debate on the Motion I moved to have the villagers released from this levy on arrears of rates, my hon. Friend, the Member for Demerara Central (Mr. Hamid), said that those who paid on time would be penalized. But this is nonsense for the obvious reason that if a person pays once, he has not to pay a second time. [Mr. Hamid: "How much do you owe?"]

Mr. Speaker : Please allow the hon. Member for Kitty to continue his speech and let us not have personal questions like that.

Mr. Joaquin: I would also like to refer to a report in March, 1959, on the Organization and Maintenance of Public Works in British Guiana. I want to stress that my party advocates that there should be trained Guianese for these posts, but the Government seems to take very little notice of this. Instead, we see people being brought from abroad to hold posts which should really be held by Guianese.

The recommendations in this report were quite commendable to any Government which had the vision to know that some day or other after achieving internal self-government, we would gain

Independence. Therefore, if we have technically qualified Guianese to fill those posts, we will be in a happy position. I quote from the "Summary of Main Conclusions" on page 20.

- ... (a) Sea defences to be added to the responsibilities of the present Drainage and Irrigation Department.
- (b) The Public Works Department to be responsible for all other public works, including housing and educational buildings.
3. The professional and technical staffs of both departments are inadequate for the proper supervision of the works programme.
 4. The theoretical and practical training of Guianese professional and technical staffs is recommended for most urgent attention.
 5. It will be necessary, for a considerable number of years, to import staff to fill gaps now existing.
 6. Imported professional staff should have had some years of post full qualification experience so that they may lead and train inexperienced Guianese officers."

These recommendations were made as far back as 1955 and 1959, and, as far as I can see, the Government has not done anything about them although it has been in office since 1957. It is the duty of the Government to see that it trains Guianese personnel to fill those posts as early as possible. If the Government is preparing for Independence, it means only one thing: that these recommendations should be implemented.

Mr. Speaker : Hon. Members, this is perhaps a convenient time for me to mention that if you have no objection, I propose that we should sit until 10.30 p.m. tonight. You will recall that, in the course of our extra-mural activities, we have spent some time outside the Chamber which we should have spent in the Chamber itself. So it is

about right that we should add another half hour to our work this evening.

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Wilson) : The hon. Member for Abary (Mr. Wharton), in opening his speech, asked those of us on this side of the House what, in our present position, do we most desire, and he answered the question for us and said, "Independence". But we know that those on the other side are talking about Independence with their tongues in their cheeks. They say they want Independence but every time they say so, there are so many "buts" that the whole idea of Independence is destroyed and nullified.

I shall leave this question of Independence for a while and ask those on the other side in their present position what feeling should most dominate them. I would say "shame". [*Interruption from the Public Gallery.*]

Mr. Speaker: Order in the Public Gallery!

Mr. Wilson: I would say "shame" for the part they played in betraying the workers of this country; "shame" for the part they played in causing the good, decent citizens of the city of Georgetown, by the destruction of law and order, to descend to the level of beasts, committing arson, looting and the rest of it. Shame for the part they have played. It is the bigger side of the Opposition I am talking to.

10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: I think that Members should address the Chair.

Mr. Wilson: I am speaking to you, sir, [*Laughter.*] I say "shame" for the part they played in hugging in "marriage" with the exploiters of the workers. How did it come about? After the announcement of the Budget on the 31st January those who wished to ex-

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exploit the workers jacked up their prices far beyond the increased duties proposed in the Budget, and when this Government threatened to introduce price control and to gauge some of them, the bigger side of the Opposition ran to the rescue of the exploiters and caused a commotion in this City. It was on Thursday, 15th February, that we saw that great "marriage" ceremony, the leader of the United Force hugging the leader of the P.N.C. They should be ashamed to come back into this House and say they are criticizing this Government, and that they are speaking on behalf of the workers. Look at the destruction which they have caused in our fair City.

Mr. Speaker: Since we are going to have a Judicial Commission to investigate the disturbance on February 16, and since the Commission has not yet begun its work, it seems to me that we would be acting contrary to the normal procedure if we tried to lay blame, as the hon. Minister is endeavouring to do at this stage. I think I should ask him not to press that point. [*Cheers from the Gallery.*] If I hear one more cheer from the public gallery I will have it cleared for the rest of the night. Members of the public are allowed to come into this Legislative Chamber to listen to the debates. They are not to disturb the work of the Legislature, and they will be doing so whenever they raise their voices. They must assist us if they want to remain there.

Mr. Wilson: I have every respect for your ruling, sir, but if you will permit me to explain, I have been trying to show what happened after the first presentation of the Budget on January 31 to cause a modification of the Budget as now presented. So I think that in some measure what happened between the presentation of the two statements is somewhat relevant to our debate on the Budget.

Mr. Speaker: You may state certain things that occurred, but as to laying blame I do not think that is within our province at this stage.

Mr. Wilson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is not by design but by coincidence that now I will turn from one hon. Member, one fellow teacher to another fellow teacher, the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Cheeks). He opened his speech very nicely and gave certain headings of the objectives of taxation. When I heard him outline the points with regard to the need for taxation I thought of giving him 100 per cent. of marks, but he spoiled his paper miserably, as he went on to develop his point.—[**Mr. Burnham:** "Give him nought."]—I would give him minus.

Mr. Speaker: Is that the way papers are marked?

Mr. Wilson: The hon. Member outlined three very good principles or objectives of taxation, and I will quote what he said: "For the purpose of raising revenue, in order to bring about social readjustments, and for the protection of local industries and the like". I gave him 100 per cent. for outlining the three principles. Raising revenue for purposes of development — but they have opposed us, so we have had to withdraw many of our tax proposals, so there will be no more revenue, or very little revenue, to be raised to improve the condition of the people of this country.

It is in that respect I say that I am not so much annoyed with the United Force, because that is their part; they are exploiters, and they have to keep the people oppressed. But when we think about the part played by the P.N.C. in joining with them to cause the Budget, as first presented by the Government, to be so drastically modified as to put us in the position in which we will not have the amount of revenue to do all we intend to do for the people, I say the larger portion of the Opposition

should be ashamed of themselves. Social readjustment, yes. With what? By not having the revenue. How unrealistic? We had planned, if we had the opportunity of maintaining the Budget as we proposed — I heard a lot of good proposals made, yes, free secondary education. That is what you have robbed the people of this country of. Water supply — every home with a tap. Yes, but we need money and revenue to provide all those amenities you talk about, so that every person in this country should have piped water in his home. We heard somebody remark about these things being mentioned in the *New Road*. Which new road? I know of New Road at Vreed-en-Hoop. Is it the *New Road* which never saw the light of day?

Protection of industries — I am developing the points as I should have expected the hon. Member for Georgetown North to have done, and he would have got all the marks.

10.10 p.m.

Why did Government tax Nescafe? It was done to protect the local coffee industry. Why did Government tax imported furniture? It was done to protect local artisans and to enable them to have a better market as well as better prices for their skill. Some hon. Members do not want to see this sort of protection; they prefer to see all of our Budget proposals withdrawn and the people in this country deprived of the good conditions Government is offering them. This is a means of creating employment for a number of people in this country, and Government is trying to put a check on the increasing unemployment hon. Members are always talking about.

A tax has been put on imported milk. Why? In order to protect the local milk industry. At this point, I would like to make reference to what the hon. Member for La Penitence Lodge has said regarding pasteurized milk. He has criticized the pasteurized milk which

is produced in this country, and I have never heard anybody saying anything more ungrateful. The milk is produced in the rural areas, and most of it is sent to Georgetown. The hon. Member spoke about discrimination. Is there any discrimination in bringing milk from the rural areas to Georgetown? Ask any hon. Member who represents a constituency in the rural districts and he will tell you why things are brought from the rural areas to Georgetown? Government is doing these things because it is interested in the people who live in Georgetown. Government wants the people in Georgetown to have a lot of food and milk, so that they will not lack the necessary vitamins. It is said that there are vitamins in Banks Beer, but we want to educate the people in the true sense of nutrition, as well as about the nutritive value in milk.

I am ashamed to find that the hon. Member for La Penitence — Lodge is so backward in his knowledge of pasteurization. I know that he is supposed to have a certificate of the Royal Sanitary Institute, and I would have expected him to know the true meaning of pasteurization. I should have expected him to know that pasteurization comes from Louis Pasteur, the father of scientists who specialized in the killing of germs. I would have thought that the hon. Member would have known that when a commodity passes through the process of pasteurization the germs would be destroyed. I do not know what has happened to him since he has left the field of sanitation, and he must have forgotten all that he has learnt. Of course the hon. Member and some of his colleagues are scraping the bottom of the barrel in order to find something to criticize.

The hon. Member for Georgetown North said that a man who is earning \$15.40 per week would still have to pay income tax in the light of the modified Budget proposals. Never have I seen

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10.20 p.m.

a greater attempt on the part of hon. Members to deceive the people. If a man worked for \$15.40 a week for 52 weeks he would make something like \$800.80 in one year. What is he going to pay income tax on? He would merely be asked to pay 4.8c or 5c per year. Is he telling us that a man would not want to pay 5c a year? This is the sort of hypocrisy one gets from the Opposition! Would any administration waste Government's funds in order to collect 5c a year?

I do not remember which hon. Member was speaking on behalf of the *Daily Chronicle*, but one of them on the other side of the Table said that the Government was banning advertisements in the *Daily Chronicle*. Any schoolboy in this country knows that the *Daily Chronicle* is the political organ of a party and as such it should not be patronized by the Government.

Mr. Campbell : On a point of order. The hon. Minister is not addressing the Chair.

Mr. Speaker Your point is upheld.

Mr. Wilson: The hon. Member for North West wants me to watch the Chair at all times. I am addressing the Chair as well as the House.

Mr. Speaker: At least you should make sure that I am here.

Mr. Wilson: Others will soon say that we must put advertisements in the *New Nation*. These newspapers are political organs, and anyone who has been reading the *Daily Chronicle* for the past few months will know that it is a political organ. I challenge anybody to deny that. Look what has happened to a young lady because she did not demonstrate or carry a placard! She was dismissed.

Only last night an old friend of mine—a reporter with the *Chronicle*—told me: "Because they suspect our political affiliations, they have disbanded us, and I am not allowed to report for the *Chronicle* any more".

The hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Cheeks) also attempted to chastise this Government for laying down conditions with regard to private secondary schools, the emphasis being on the word "private" — private property. These schools, as they are administered at present, are nothing but the personal possessions and properties of the Principals. They would want us to subsidize them or pay all their expenses so that they will fill their pockets with money and become rich overnight. If we can be sure that the money spent in giving additional grants to these schools will mean better service to the children, we will be happy to spend such money.

What happened before these schools got grants? They used to charge \$12 and \$15 per term. But as soon as the Government started to give them grants, the fees were raised to \$25 and \$30. Let them doubt that. When they were getting no assistance, they charged \$12, \$15 and the like; when they were given a grant, they saw an opportunity to get rich, and the fees went up. Let those parents who have been sending their children to the schools before the aid was given and after tell you about this. They have had their experience about this and cannot be so easily fooled. If giving these grants had meant a lowering of fees, we would have been happy to continue giving them; but, because of what we see taking place, we had to stop them because it would be contrary to the true interest of Guiana to be filling the pockets of Principals without further benefit to the people's children.

The hon. Member for La Penitence — Lodge (Mr. Merriman) tried to criticize us for not building a larger hospital. We are interested in the health service. We put the emphasis on prevention and not on cure. He should know that because preventive medicine has been his line. Does he not know about preventive medicine by our schemes for rural sanitation, pure water supply and the like? The hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mr. Chandisingh) explained all that has been done and how the health of the people of this country has been improving. The infant mortality rate is dropping all the time.

The hon. Member also spoke about our building a larger prison. What is a prison for? In the past, a prison was just a place of punishment. We look upon those people who find themselves in difficulties with the law as social patients. They are not responsible for what has happened to them. The conditions of society brought about by the people who form the smaller arm of the Opposition are responsible for many of the criminals in this country and we feel that these people are patients. The prison is another kind of hospital where these people will be rehabilitated. If we get a bigger building, conditions will be so improved that once they go there, they will be so rehabilitated that they will find themselves in the normal flow of society.

We have been criticized for stirring up racial antagonisms. Was it the P.P.P. who began—I am not saying anybody did — but I am asking whether it was the P.P.P. and its supporters who began to burn certain shops in this city.

[Mr. Burnham: “Yes.”] [Laughter.] It just shows how barefaced they are. I read in a copy of *Booker News* an article where it was stated that the burning of the Booker buildings was not deliberate; the fire had spread from the other properties around. **[Mr. Campbell: “A Commission is coming!”]** I am telling you what I read in a newspaper.

We have heard a lot about the flight of capital and of people from the country. What else do they expect after their deeds of February 16? If your property is not safe — people come and take away your goods — what else do you expect? Let them ask themselves who is responsible for that. I shall take the warning from the Chair and not say who is responsible.

They say we are responsible for racial antagonisms. Let them remember the “broom campaign” when anyone who did not belong to a particular race was whipped and lashed. The hon. Member for Werk-en-Rust (Mr. Carter), after the 1957 Election, said he thanked God that the Burnham faction of the P.P.P. had not won the Election; but that it was the Jagan faction that had won. The same was said this time by all who were not in the P.N.C. They did not know what would have happened to them. They said that if the P.N.C. did not control the Police and they were whipped and lashed, they did not know what would have happened if it did.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker : Hon. Members, this seems a very appropriate time for us to adjourn. This Assembly now stands adjourned until 2 p.m. tomorrow.

Adjourned accordingly at 10.30 p.m.