

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 11th January, 1961

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. D. M. Hedges

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

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

} *ex officio*

The Honourable **Dr. C. B. Jagan**

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

” ” **B. H. Benn**

— *Member for Essequibo River*
(Minister of Natural Resources)

” ” **Janet Jagan**

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

Ram Karra

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

” **B. S. Rai**

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

Mr. **R. B. G jraj**

— *Nominated Member*

” **W. O. R. Kendall**

— *Member for New Amsterdam*

” **R. C. Tello**

— *Nominated Member*

” **F. Bowman**

— *Member for Demerara River*

” **S. Campbell**

— *Member for North Western District*

” **A. L. Jackson**

— *Member for Georgetown North*

” **S. M. Saffee**

— *Member for Western Berbice*

” **Ajodha Singh**

— *Member for Berbice River*

” **Jai Narine Singh**

— *Member for Georgetown South*

” **R. E. Davis**

— *Nominated Member*

” **A. M. Fredericks**

— *Nominated Member*

” **H. J. M. Hubbard**

— *Nominated Member.*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

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

ABSENT :

Mr. L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.—Member for Georgetown Central

Mr. E. B. Beharry — Member for Eastern Demerara

Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E. — on leave.

The Clerk read prayers,

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, 6th January, 1961, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

INTRODUCTION OF BILL

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn): I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the Drainage and Irrigation (Declaration of Area) Bill, 1961.

ORDER OF THE DAY

BILL—FIRST READING

The following Bill was read the first time:

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the declaration of the Cane Grove Drainage and Irrigation area, the vesting of certain lands and works in the Drainage and Irrigation Board and for purposes connected with the matters aforesaid."

CHRISTIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
(INCORPORATION) BILL

Mr. Davis: I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to repeal and re-enact the Christian Catholic Church (Incorporation) Ordinance."

This Christian organization has between 2,500 and 3,000 followers scattered all over the Colony, and to the best of my knowledge and belief it is doing excellent work. There are about six ministers; several catechists; seven church buildings and three day schools, Government aided schools, which are to be found at Bartica, in Essequibo and at No. 36, Corentyne. There are also about 22 preaching stations.

Under Chapter 226 the Superintendent of the Christian Catholic Church in British Guiana and his successors in office are constituted a body corporate. This Bill seeks to repeal Chapter 226, and, in

place of the body thereby incorporated, to incorporate the General Overseer of the Church in the United States of America, the Superintendent and the Field Supervisor of the Church in British Guiana and one other person appointed locally, under the name of the Board of Trustees of the Christian Catholic Church in British Guiana. I commend the Bill to the Council.

Mr. Gajraj: I have much pleasure in seconding the Motion. I would like to say that, when the parties concerned first wished to have a private Bill introduced into this Legislature, I was approached by the minister and some others, and I agreed to pilot the Bill through the Council. But at the time when the petition was to be read I was acting for you, Mr. Speaker, therefore I am very grateful to my friend, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, who agreed to substitute for me in this respect.

It will be recalled that Mr. Davis stressed that this is a Christian church. I would like to remind the Council that I am a Muslim, yet I have every pleasure—indeed I consider it a privilege to be associated with the introduction and the passage of this measure. I lay stress on this because we have heard in this Council not so long ago statements made by hon. Members that there was fear that there would be a sort of religious war in this country.

I, personally, see no need for it—absolutely none whatever. For years we have been living together in amity and concord, and when it is remembered that true religion is what we all believe in, that we should not let the various sectarian differences stand in the way of our being comradesly and happy with each other and carrying on the Lord's work properly, I think that if permitted to function as in the past, there is absolutely no fear of any such thing happening in British Guiana.

As a matter of fact my own religion teaches tolerance, not only by man to man but also tolerance with others' religious

views, and we go further and say that with tolerance we must give assistance and cooperation to all who believe in God. So it is that with a great amount of pleasure and, indeed, privilege I second the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

COUNCIL I COMMITTEE

Council resolved itself into Committee to consider the Bill Clause by Clause.

Clause 1.—*Short title.*

Mr. Davis: I move that "1961" be substituted for "1960" in the title to the Bill.

Agreed to.

Clause 1, as amended, put and agreed to.

Clause 2.—*Interpretation.*

Mr. Davis: Mr. Chairman in the third paragraph the word "Executive" is spelt wrongly. An extra "u" seemed to have crept into it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 2 passed as amended.

Clauses 3 to 13 passed as printed.

Schedule passed as printed.

Council resumed.

Mr. Davis: Mr. Speaker, I beg to report that the Bill has been considered in Committee and passed with Amendments, and I move that it be read the Third time.

Mr. Gajraj: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time and passed.

EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mr. Speaker: Council will resume the debate on the Motion for the Second Reading of the following Bill:

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

The last time when the Second Reading of this Bill was being debated, the hon. Minister of Natural Resources was addressing Council. He did not complete his address. He may do so now if he so desires.

Mr. Benn: Mr. Speaker, when we concluded discussion on this Bill on the last occasion, I was trying to point out that the hon. Members who were opposed to this Bill, principally because of political reasons, had again brought in the silly argument of communism. I quoted from a book entitled "Enemy Forgotten" to show that this is no new attitude; that even during the American Civil War the economists, who were fighting and supporting the South, attacked the abolitionists because they were said to be in favour of communism; because they wanted to surrender to socialism and communism—no private property, no church, no free land and a lot of things. We are hearing the same things today; so this is nothing new, and we can bear hearing them.

Perhaps, it would be good if I refresh hon. Members' minds of one or two of the points, very rapidly, which I had covered. I pointed out how the hon. Member for Georgetown Central had changed his stand once again. I should like, with your permission, to quote from the "inglorious" document—the White Paper of October, 1953, when the Constitution was suspended. Among the very few things that were written in this White Paper, I should like to read what is true.

Mr. Speaker: Would you please, if you do not mind, if you are quoting from some document, quote the page and paragraph, because the Official Reporters have been finding it difficult to get references so as to have them incorporated in the *Hansard*. After you have quoted, you may pass the book over to the Official Reporters, if you do not mind. That applies to all hon. Members.

Mr. Benn: I am quoting from Page 17, paragraph 36:

"In an official broadcast, the Minister for Education said his intention was to remove churches from their present participation in the educational system of the country and to revise the curriculum and textbooks of schools "to give them the true Guianese Socialist and realistic outlook" .

I end my quotation. Now, this is what the hon. Member, who was Minister of Education, had said and was pursuing; and this is what he is recorded to have said and done. I only mentioned this, in passing, for those who say that he was only doing this because he was pressed into service by the Party which was then in office.

Then, I mentioned and read letters and documents from teachers and parents who had been discriminated against in this system of dual control. I believe I mentioned Inez Moonasar, Mr. Asgar Ali, Miss Gibbons; and I believe the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education will tell the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, more in detail about the case of Mr. Seecharan whom he mentioned.

I pointed out how the hon. Member for Georgetown Central did not discuss, very carefully in this Council, what were the details of the dual control agreement, and how it would be nonsensical to suggest that a Committee, which was described as an independent commission, should work out a new agreement for settling this whole problem of dual control.

Then I came to a very important point, because some people argued: "Let the Hindus and Muslims build their own

schools". I pointed out the difficulties that would cause; I mentioned the cases of two schools at Mahaica—the Mahaica C.M. School and, I think, the Belmont Scots School—and I referred to the attitude of the British Guiana Teachers' Association and said that the reasons why it has changed were merely political; and, perhaps, when the Minister of Education speaks—he is more knowledgeable on these matters—he would point out how, very recently, the Chairman of a meeting of the Teachers' Association, commenting on the White Paper presented this Council, dealt with the problem of dual control and said there will be some need for a reorganization.

I then mentioned the question of the headteachership of the Anglican School of St. Michael at Johanna Cecelia, how the Christian bodies have been for sometime, misusing the grants given to them for the maintenance of several schools.

One main point that hon. Members have been talking about is this question of teachers. I would like to point out, as I go on, another problem that this question of dual control causes. As Minister of Education, I had to deal with it in certain areas in this Colony, Bartica for instance. There is difficulty in getting trained teachers to stay there to do their work. It has happened on more than one occasion that when a teacher is sent to an area where he does not like to stay he makes every effort to apply to another Governing Body for a position in another school, changes his religion and gets a job in another school. This has happened on more than one occasion, especially in relation to trained teachers who have been stationed at Bartica. The difficulty is not merely due to the shortage of trained teachers, but the unwillingness of teachers to remain in certain areas which do not have the bright lights of the City of Georgetown.

Therefore, it seems to me as though the Religious Bodies have collaborated with them on more than one occasion, in

order to get a transfer from a District where they do not want to stay. On every occasion both the Education Department and the people in the areas have drawn these matters to the attention of the Governing Body. We are asked, "Why not build more schools?" The question of dual control is not merely a question of building schools.

The purpose of this Bill is to overcome some of our difficulties and, indeed, the Bill has not gone far enough to remove the whole cancer of dual control. The hon. Member for Georgetown Central suggested that, perhaps, there was need for a Teachers' Service Commission. That is one of the main things to which the Church Bodies are objecting. They want to have their own teachers in their schools; they do not want anybody who does not belong to their denomination to be appointed as Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher in their schools. Therefore setting up a Teachers' Service Commission would have run into the same difficulty as this Bill is having today. Perhaps, if the hon. Member had realized that he would not have made such a suggestion.

I notice that an hon. Member tabled a question regarding C.D. & W. Grants for building schools. In other words, he thinks C.D. & W. Grants are not Government money and, therefore, we should allow Church Bodies to hold on to the schools and do as they like. When the C.D. & W. Grants were allocated there was nothing to indicate that Government must build schools and give them to Religious Bodies.

If the hon. Member, who dilated on the Motion to discuss the Development Estimates, would cast his mind back to the history of C.D. & W. Grants, he would realize how the Grants were brought about. It seems to me that the hon. Member for Demerara River wants to forget what he has learnt in the past. The C.D. & W. money is money which was taken from the Colonies in the past. Up to today British

as well as Metropolitan countries are taking money from the Colonies in various ways. The money given back to the Colonies by way of C.D. & W. Grants does not amount to more than 6d per head in the Colonies. They took coffee, sugar, cocoa, rubber, and tin from Malaya—they robbed the people—and that is how the money is made up. Let not the hon. Member forget what he has learnt in his more sober days.

I shall not be much longer, but I would like to refer to one point some hon. Members are trying to make: that the Majority Party wants to destroy religion; burn down Churches and that it is going to put an end to religion. They have mentioned the question of morality, and I have thrown back to them the question as to whether the attitude of the Church in relation to the appointment and promotion of teachers is something right, proper and just, and I have asked them to point out the morality in it.

Hon. Members, as usual, will continue attacking the P.P.P., the Majority Party in the Government, and the only thing we can do on this side of the Table is to reply to their attacks. Do not tell us that we are such devils that we are going to bring hell and damnation to destroy this country! The Church itself—I am speaking of an historical fact—has not had a wonderful history, contrary to what the hon. Member for Demerara River said when he was talking about the crusades. The Church has not had a wonderful history in the past. What is the reason for all this talk about morality, and the Government wanting to destroy religion?

I would like hon. Members to cast their minds back to 1939 and thereafter to see the part the Church played in supporting Fascism as well as supporting the destruction of the legitimate Government of Abyssinia. I do not want to mention these things, because they are unpalatable truths. But if they "knock" me, I will "nock" them back.

[MR. BENN]

With your permission, Sir, I should like to quote from a book entitled "The Catholic Church against the Twentieth Century." It is written by Avro Manhattan. On page 28 the book shows the disgraceful attitude of the Church in Italy. I quote:

"And the Head of the Catholic Church in England went so far as to state:—

"To speak plainly, the existing Fascist rule, in many respects unjust . . . prevents worse injustice, and if Fascism, which in principle I do not approve, goes under, nothing can save the country from chaos. God's cause goes under with it.

The book quotes it from the Catholic *Times* of October 18, 1935.

Perhaps I should quote from the same page what was said by the Archbishop of Toronto after having celebrated Mass on a submarine. I quote:

"The war against Ethiopia should be considered as a holy war, a crusade," because the Italian victory would "open Ethiopia, a country of infidels and schismatics, to the expansion of the Catholic Faith."

Do you want anything else? Do you still speak of morality? Do not accuse us of immorality and wanting to destroy the Church!

I happen to be the Chairman of the P.P.P. The Party does not consist merely of people who want Independence; it does not consist merely of businessmen, local capitalists and people of different political outlook, but it also consists of people of different religious beliefs and outlook. Within the ranks of the P.P.P. are Hindus, Muslims, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Methodists and many sincere people. It is not the intention of the P.P.P. to interfere with the legitimacy of people's worship.

Sir, we proposed and supported the insertion into the forthcoming Constitution

of British Guiana a clause to protect the freedom of religion. I would like those who use the word "Godless" and who speak of the Majority Party wanting to destroy religion to remember these things. What those who attack us are afraid of is not the destruction of religion; it is the destruction of certain privileges in British Guiana. What we are doing now, and what we shall do hereafter will move against all privileges in British Guiana as the followers of Joshua moved against the walls of Jericho.

This Bill is an important landmark in the history of this country. It is one of the brightest stars in the crown of the P.P.P., the Majority Party in this Government. I urge hon. Members to reflect: to see the good in it and remember the old biblical saying: "Agree with thine adversary quickly whilst thou art on the way." Who are our adversaries? Those who are opposing this Bill. This Bill has not been introduced because we want to destroy religion, but because we want to see justice and fairplay in this country. We ask hon. Members not to blind themselves to reason, but to cast their minds back to what has been said about this problem of dual control in the past.

We wish hon. Members to think of the future of this country, and to realize that the success of education depends on the best man being appointed for the job in any one of our schools irrespective of his religion. If Members realize that, then we will be able to tackle this very serious problem of education. You can educate children under a tree; the most important thing is the teacher. I ask hon. Members to think of these things and to support the Bill.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I am not as strong as I usually am, Sir, but this is a Bill on which I feel I should make some contribution. I wish to say that I shall not decry or derogate from the past service the Church has rendered to this community by educating the sons and daughters of

British Guiana, but let us look at the reality of the situation. Only two days ago I read that the Reverend Goodall said: "The time has come when the Church must move with the citizens and with revolutionary thoughts and ideas. If the Church does not move and remain static it will be left behind." That has been proved to be a true state of affairs not only in this country but throughout the world. Only when the Church of a particular parish, or a particular group of people moves abreast will one find the Church is alive.

I think it was the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, who mentioned that the Church came to this country with the Bible to keep the people subjugated forever under the British Imperial system. They came here with the Bible in their hands so as to allow those who are ruling us to suck the last drop of blood out of us. That is how they came here according to John Smith's letter when he was appointed a Minister of religion in this country in the days of slavery.

The Church and those who are advocating the cause of the Church are shouting today that it is communism which is responsible for the new thought which has come into being for the control of the schools by Government through legislation. But let me for the benefit of the Churches read from a Sessional Paper which was presented to the Legislative Council in 1942 by the then Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies. I refer to Sessional Paper No. 11 of 1942. memorandum on Education in British Guiana, and I propose to read from various passages. For the moment I shall read from paragraph 12 on page 26. This is what the Comptroller's adviser, Mr. Hammond, says in paragraph 12 of his Memorandum which deals with the dual control of schools:

"There are good reasons for advocating a government school system in British Guiana. The 1931 census shows 42% of the population as East Indian and 38% as non-Christian. So long as the Churches

are the chief providers of school buildings, there is justification for paying grants for holding school in them and for retaining to the Churches a considerable measure of control in the appointment of teachers. But to pay from public funds for the reconditioning, extension and rebuilding of inadequate and sometimes ruinous school buildings, and still to retain the control of particular Churches, would be to make an unjustifiable discrimination against a large section of the population which does not belong to these Churches and to sow the seeds of an unending controversy. On the other hand, to make grants to all religious bodies indiscriminately may well split the country in a generation; and the schools, instead of healing a breach will have made one, for at present East Indian parents send their children to the common schools and cases of withdrawal under the 'conscience clause' are rare. As far as can be seen, the only practical alternative to ownership by trustees who are under final public control is ultimate ownership by the Government."

I propose, at a later stage, to deal at greater length with this very important document which was presented to the Legislature in 1942. At that time there was not the faintest suggestion of communism, but in British Guiana today, 18 years after, we hear of it from the top of the churches, from the pulpits and from many voices in the Legislative Council, that the motivating force is communism. What utter nonsense! What consciences have men and women? How many of them observe the principle "Love thy neighbour as thyself"? Our country has been subjugated and living under the tremendous pressure of imperialism under the Christian system. That is how we are living.

I heard the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Beharry) suggesting that the Christian Social Council should get the Christian and non-Christian organizations to band themselves together and march in protest against the Bill. I say let the Christian Churches get together and let us band ourselves to fight for independence for British Guiana. Let them preach it from the pulpits and instruct their teachers to tell the children in school about it.

[MR. JAI NARINE SINGH]

Then I will say that the Church is moving truly in the spirit of the nation. They have come from far off lands to teach us how to live. Are we still the savages so many of them in Europe and Britain think we are? Perhaps they think we are still walking about without any clothes.

In many countries the Church has been in the vanguard fighting for the liberty of the nation and the freedom of the people. Even in South Africa where the majority of the people are still under subjugation by the Government the Church has been fighting for the freedom of the people. But what has happened in British Guiana? We have not had the slightest move by the Church in that direction. They did everything possible to keep us subjugated in 1953. The head of the Protestant religion in this country took part in the action to keep the people of this country down, and became a part of the Interim Legislature — part of the oppression of this country, moving against the people's rights, and today we are being asked to preserve the rights of the Church as against the people. That is how I view the matter.

Religion is a sacred matter which governs the soul of man. There is one God, one people and one world. God did not say He was going to make man and made a priest, then a labourer. Abraham Lincoln said he loved the common man because God made so many of them. The Almighty practises no discrimination, and that is how we should view this matter. I am a Hindu, but I probably love the Christian religion as much as I love my own. I have the greatest respect for the Christian religion, but I cannot support the Church in its desire to control the schools in this country as it has done all these years.

I feel that the Government has taken the proper step in moving in the way it has. I am a product of a denominational school, but I would not like to relate my experience. It is not always in the best interests of all to speak of one's personal

experience at school. I have had good times and I have had some very hard times, but I have succeeded in spite of the difficulties which I encountered.

I consider it very important that I should read at some length from the Sessional Paper which I referred to earlier. In paragraph 8 of this Report on Education the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies says:

"I am aware there may be some delay in the completion of the full building programme because of the arrangements which require to be made in regard to the dual control of schools. Mr. Hammond, in his memorandum, B.G.E.7, has submitted proposals for the establishment of School Trusts to which buildings and the land occupied would be transferred. The response by the several denominations to these proposals, as far as British Guiana is concerned, has not been, up to the present, favourable, but some of the denominations, with modifications in the proposals, might, I gather, be prepared to accept them. The fact has to be faced, however, that the denominations who at present own the greater proportion of school buildings are definitely not in favour of the School Trusts proposal. The only alternative, as far as I can see at present, having regard to the composition of the population in British Guiana, is the adoption of a policy of Government schools. . . ."

In paragraph 18, Sir Frank Stockdale says:

"In conclusion, I would desire to emphasize that, in my opinion, the solution of many of the economic and social problems of British Guiana will only be found if there is an active development of improved educational services designed to fit more effectively the rising generations for the places they will fill in the general advancement of the Colony."

That is what the Educational Adviser to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies said in his opening memorandum. So much has been said in this debate that it is really surprising that the advocates of the continuance of the system of dual control do not realize that the argument can be used in just the opposite way in that those who

were saying that this attempt by Government to control these schools was to "communize" the young children, will also hold good on the other side.

Here were dual controlled schools, controlled by the Ministers of Religion teaching to roughly 40 per cent. non-Christians — innocent children whose fathers and forefathers did not have any religion, but who were innocent slaves — put into the hand of the Christian religion with or without the consent of their parents. But can't we ask what is the main purpose of the schools? Is the main purpose of the schools to teach religion, or to teach the necessary alphabet and give the children learning? If it is to teach religion, then most certainly schools must be kept under dual control; but if it is for the purpose of inculcating morality or good precepts in the youngsters who attend the schools, then certainly they must be put into the hands of the Government.

As I understand it, the 51 schools, now being said to be brought under the control of the Government, had been built completely by the public funds of this Colony, plus, all the teachers are being paid from public funds and the Government is paying rents to the Churches for the lands on which the schools stand. The bridges, erections and water tanks are all owned by the Government. What is the interest of the Churches in controlling the schools? The purpose of the Churches is to teach their religion, and I am sure the Government is not against the Church building more churches today; therefore, the children should go and be taught Christianity in the Christian Church. That is not a difficult matter at all. That is how I view the matter.

There has been, for a large number of years, a grouse. Or, if I may put it this way, the Hindus and Muslims were kept out from becoming teachers in the schools, and if they become teachers they can only hope to be underlings or not far from that. Apart from that, teachers in the dual con-

trolled schools do not only teach at school; the headteacher, above all, has to teach religion at Sunday school. He does not receive any pay for his extra work, but he is assured of the support of the Church. It is the Government who pays the teachers, and I feel they should not be obligated to the Managers or Churches for doing any extra work other than what they are being paid for — that is, for teaching in the schools.

Of course, a lot of fuss was made about Imperial grants — C.D. & W. grants — which went to the schools, and that in any attempt to take these schools over, the Colonial Government should have a say. But I have just been reading what the C.D. & W. people had been saying. They have said that the policy of Government-owned schools is the answer to stop the split in the national upsurge in British Guiana; that if we do not have Government schools, the people of British Guiana would be split — and this was said since 1942 by, I think, Sir Frank Stockdale, who was then Educational Adviser to the Comptroller for Development and Welfare in the West Indies.

But Mr. Hammond, in his Report, did not stop at the point where I have read. I shall read a little further, so that my friends will be able to be properly informed as to how the Imperialist Government and its agents in British Guiana have been thinking. I should like to read what they have said at page 24 of the same report, paragraph 4:

"4. Apart from lack of money in the past, there are evident difficulties in the grant of the public money for the improvement of the property of the Churches. No public authority is likely to be permitted by the legislature to spend as liberally on church property as on public property. The tendency in general is entirely the other way. Even were more liberal grants-in-aid given to Churches for school buildings, the experience cannot be overlooked of Jamaica and Trinidad where increased grants have not solved the basic problem.

[MR. JAI NARINE SINGH]

Paragraph 6 states:

"It is sometimes said that Church schools are not private property and are already held in trust. But in the opposition which arises, for example, in a system of church schools, to the consolidation of schools in the public interest, it is not easy to see a spirit of trusteeship for the public, for otherwise denominational differences would be composed by an over-riding desire to retain a school to the churches, in preference to the alternative of a government school."

Paragraph 7 states :

"The effect of sectarian jealousies, moreover, is not confined to questions of the consolidation of schools. One minister in British Guiana gave as his opinion "that for peaceful progress there could be no other solution than a completely government system." Those chiefly concerned will be best able to judge of the truth of this statement.

8. Denominational control affects not only the property but the teachers. In British Guiana they are appointed by the Governing Bodies with the approval of the Director, and with the requirement of previous investigation by the Education Committee in case of dismissal or cancellation of certificate. Governing Bodies try to get head teachers of their denomination and, if possible assistant teachers also. The field of selection and promotion of teachers tends therefore to be restricted to their denomination and varies with the number of schools owned by the Church to which the teacher belongs. A non-Christian has little chance of appointment as an assistant teacher and no chance of appointment as a head teacher. It is represented also that teachers may be required as a condition of appointment to undertake church duties as well as school duties, and that religious instruction is limited to that of the denomination concerned; and it is alleged that teachers who accept employment outside their denomination find later that their chances of promotion within are poor.

9. The West Indian Royal Commission recommended (Cmd.6174, page 12. (1)) that "in schools at present managed by the Denominations, if salaries are paid by the Government, complete control in staff matters should be assumed by the Government.

10. The two questions, the ownership of buildings and the control of teachers were put before a meeting of representatives of the Governing Bodies during my recent visit to British Guiana, and the suggestions were made to them which are outlined in Appendix I. Replies have been received from all but two of the Governing Bodies. A desire to co-operate is evident in some quarters and useful suggestions are made, but the replies are, on the whole, unfavourable . . ."

I think the hon. Minister, 18 years after what took place in 1942, also had several conferences, as far as I gather from his opening address, with the Christian Social Council and the various Church Bodies, but he found, all in all he could not persuade them as to the step to be taken in this direction. To continue my quotation:

"... the principal objections being:

(a) that the local Manager will have more duties and responsibilities without compensatory control of the teachers.

(b) that the road is open to alienation of the property without compensation to the Church. (This rests on a misconception. It was suggested that the land should be transferred or leased only when rebuilding became necessary at government expense, and payment for the transfer or lease of land was not excluded)."

(c) that the Churches were not consulted by the Royal Commission in respect of the control of teachers and therefore cannot accept either their recommendation or the means now proposed for putting it into effect."

Mr. Gajraj: I beg to move that the hon. Member be given another 30 minutes.

Mr. Davis: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Paragraph 11 reads as follows:

"Against these objections there should be remembered the benefit that will accrue to the children by putting the school on

full maintenance instead of an "aided" basis, and the greater measure of co-operation that will be possible between the Government and the Churches in the service of the children. To make the interest of the children the overriding aim will be the best road to a composition satisfactory to all parties."

Paragraph 12 states:

"There are good reasons for advocating a government school system in British Guiana. The 1931 census shows 42% of the population as East Indian and 38% as non-Christian. So long as the Churches are the chief providers of school buildings, there is justification for paying grants for holding school in them and for retaining to the churches a considerable measure of control in the appointment of teachers. But to pay from public funds for the reconditioning, extension and rebuilding of inadequate and sometimes ruinous school buildings, and still to retain the control of particular Churches, would be to make an unjustifiable discrimination against a large section of the population which does not belong to these Churches and to sow the seeds of an unending controversy. On the other hand to make grants to all religious bodies indiscriminately may well split the country in a generation; and the schools instead of healing a breach will have made one. For at present East Indian parents send their children to the common schools and cases of withdrawal under the "conscience clause" are rare. As far as can be seen, the only practical alternative to ownership by trustees who are under final public control is ultimate ownership by the Government."

Paragraph 17 states:

"There are, however, as everyone who has had to deal with it knows, grave disadvantages in the dual control of schools. To minimize them it is desirable and in the circumstances of British Guiana it is essential, that the Government should have not only a voice, but in the last resort a deciding voice in the control of the buildings and of the teaching personnel."

I have already referred to Appendix I on page 27, but I desire to read a few more paragraphs —

"10. In cases where the complete rebuilding is necessary of a school on church or trust-owned land, it is suggested that the land should be transferred or leased

to the Government, and that the disposal of the school should lie in the discretion of the Government which might assign it to the Trust concerned or maintain it as a Government school. The effect of this would be that the working efficiency of the plan as a means of co-operation between the Churches and the Government would be subject to revision in each case as rebuilding became necessary."

"13. The West India Royal Commission recommended (Cmd. 6174 p. 12) that "in schools at present managed by the Denominations, if salaries are paid by the Government, complete control in staff matters should be resumed by the Government".

These are the main points I desire to make regarding the recommendations by Mr. Hammond in 1942 which appeared in a Sessional Paper.

It is now 18 years after the recommendations have been made that this Government has come forward very feebly—the Government has not gone far enough—to imply what had been suggested not by a Communist country, but by people who were sent here by the Imperial Powers of Great Britain. Sir Frank Stockdale, Comptroller for Development and Welfare, suggested in 1942 that there should be complete control of schools by the Government instead of this system of dual control. I do not think the Government has gone far enough in this matter.

I believe that some unkind remarks have been made regarding the Chief Secretary, the Financial Secretary and the Attorney-General. It was said that "they are stooges"—

Mr. Speaker: That is not correct; that word was banned here long ago, and no one has used it since.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I think the word "lackey" was used. Words were used to the effect that they were made tools in the hands of the Government. These gentlemen represent the British Crown—the very Crown which in 1942 laid down the principle which this Government is now advocating. This Government is carrying out the views of the people who were sent here.

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Dual control of schools has been responsible to a large extent for more people not joining the teaching profession. As a result many Hindus and Muslims have not taken up the teaching profession, because they do not have a chance. Many persons of the Christian denomination do not join the teaching profession, because they do not have a chance when there is a limited number of schools owned by their denominations.

There are not enough teachers in our schools today. How are we to fill this gap if we do not attract Guianese, irrespective of their religion, to this profession. Guianese must take their stand by this nation — a nation that is becoming independent in a few years. That is how the problem has to be solved, and Government will have to control the schools in this country.

The Churches must be allowed to carry on their affairs as they have done in the past. If it is necessary for the State to support them, I would be the first to agree to that. But, certainly, we will not support them in inculcating into the minds of innocent children something that does not belong to them. I do think the Minister of Natural Resources has cited some of the cases in which that was done.

This Bill has had so many red herrings drawn across the trail that it is certainly of a very interesting nature. We have had an attack on Communism; the word "Independence" has been mentioned; the Rice Mill Bill and all sorts of things have been brought into this debate. It is true that the Government did not proceed with the Rice Mill Bill, but the Government probably was wise and, after due consideration, decided that it was not the best thing to do. Who moved the Rice Mill Bill? Why was it moved? Who were the people behind the Bill? Was the industry going to be hampered? A lot has been said about Independence. Do you hear the Ministers of Religion preaching about Independence in their pulpits?

Mr. Speaker: Do not let us go off to a debate on Independence now. Keep to the point, and do not anticipate anything.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: Coming back to this issue, I want to say that this is a cosmopolitan community, so far as religion is concerned. I think about 50 per cent. of the people in this country who are non-Christians and taxpayers are entitled to have fairplay, justice and equal treatment with those in another religion and in another way of life. It would be unfair and unkind to them, as it has been for a long time, to continue to have dual control of schools supported from public funds.

This is our country, and we must mould it in accordance with the circumstances prevailing here. Whether this system prevails in Trinidad, or some small Colonial territory should be no concern of ours. The U.S.A. has no dual control of schools. I do not think there can be any truthful charge that this Bill is an attack on religion, because what I have read from the Sessional Papers disproves that argument. In 1942 the Imperial Power of Great Britain sent down their representatives to go into this matter, and the Bill is in keeping with their recommendations.

I have heard that this is going to affect the economy of our country. In 1942 Sir Frank Stockdale said in his Report that unless we did this it would affect our economy. Now I find that the advocates against this Bill are saying that it is going to affect our economy the day we take over these schools. Let there be a spirit of nationalism, and we shall overcome all our difficulties; let there be a get together in the interests of British Guiana, and let no sect or group of Churches, or any religion divide us. Let every man be entitled to carry on his own religion as he likes.

I may say that the Hindus came to this country under a great disadvantage. My father and mother were recruited in

India on the understanding that they did not know to read or write. If you were a priest or the son of a priest, or you said you were a Brahmin or that you could read and write, you were not recruited. Those who came here as immigrants on the understanding that they could not read or write told an untruth to the recruiting officers. The result was that they were able to carry on their religion which was never in conflict with any other religion in this country. They have lived in harmony with the other races. What we want is a continuance of the harmony when independence comes. People cannot force religion down the throats of other people. Religion is something sacred and is not only taught in school but in the home.

I think we should allow the Government to take care of the instruction which the children are supposed to receive in the schools under its control. I must support the Government in the stand it has taken. I think this should have been done long ago, and those who accuse Members of the Government of being hypocrites are probably hypocrites themselves, because they have not dared to face up to the truth and the realities of the situation in British Guiana. The great God who has created man knows no bounds, no class, colour or creed. God made man, but he did not make him with a religion. But He hoped that with the brains He gave man he would know how to live with his fellow men.

Mr. Gajraj: At first I had not intended to speak on this measure, but after having listened over a period of days to the remarks of most of the hon. Members of this Council, and in particular having heard one hon. Member charge that this Bill is communist inspired, and that those on this side of the Table who will support it need their prayers and their sympathies, I have felt it incumbent on me to take part in this debate so as to make it clear where I stand, and possibly offset the very untruthful remarks to which I will refer.

I am supporting the measure. I am a Muslim. I believe in God. My religion to me is as dear as my life itself, therefore he who suggests that support of this measure can only come from people who are communist inspired or are communists, must feel ashamed of himself after listening to this forthright statement of mine. I am no communist. As I said earlier, my religion teaches me to be tolerant to others, therefore I must be tolerant of the views that human beings like myself may possess. But being tolerant of such views does not indicate the acceptance of those views by me.

The question at issue is whether the continuance of this system of dual control of our primary schools is good for us in this country. That, as I see it, is the main point for us to consider, and I will not traverse the many paths which my hon. Friend, the Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh), has done. I will merely say that over the last 35 years, as was pointed out by the Minister of Education in moving the Second Reading of the Bill, there have been several impartial persons — Commissions and individuals — who have considered the matter, and whose reports have been unequivocally in favour of the substitution of Government control of elementary schools for denominational control.

It therefore pains me to have placed on record in the course of this debate the baseless charge that communism or a communist inspired force is behind this measure, for if such be the truth then we must ask ourselves whether Lord Moyne and his Commissioners were communists or communist inspired; whether Sir Charles Major and his Commission were communists or communist inspired; whether Mr. Hammond, the Educational Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, was a communist or communist inspired, or whether Mr. J. I. Ramphal, who has just retired as Commissioner of

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Labour, was or is a communist or communist inspired. For looking at some of my old files I find that in the magazine *Indian Opinion* of the 27th May, 1938, the following appears:

"Mr. J. I. Ramphal moved: Dr. M. Seeraj seconded, and it was

'Resolved that this Conference supports the recommendation of the Education Commission of 1924, and requests Government to accelerate the policy of Government schools in place of denominational ones.'

Mr. Ramphal, in moving the Resolution, said that the 1924 Education Commission had decided unanimously in favour of Government schools as against denominational ones. They were in favour of Government schools because non-Christian teachers find it very difficult to find ready employment in denominational schools."

It was on the occasion of a conference of the British Guiana East Indian Association, and at that time the Association had as members of its Executive Committee Christian Indians like Mr. J.I. Ramphal, the late Mr. J. A. Luckhoo, Mr. E. A. Adams, Town Clerk, the late Dr. M. Seeraj, and many others. I say that if the charge of communism were valid we must ask ourselves whether this staunch churchman, a member of the Canadian Mission Church, could be charged with being a communist or communist inspired.

My friend, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, made reference to the fact that he was a product of a denominational school, and he was very kind to state that he and I attended that primary school together. I confirm his statement. We both attended St. Thomas' Scots School under the head-teachership of the late Mr. Dan Sharples, and I want to pay a tribute to men like Mr. Sharples, Mr. Maskell, Mr. Ramsay and his sister, Miss Ramsay, Miss Duke, Miss Clarke and Miss DeWeever. Those were the teachers we had at St. Thomas'

School in those days, and they were devoted teachers—devoted to the task of teaching the children placed in their charge, irrespective of their religious background.

I say this as a tribute to the individuals rather than to the system, that because of the strength of character of the late Mr. Dan Sharples religious instruction was not forced upon any of the children who came from the homes of non-Christians. I wish to God that in these days we had more bands of devoted teachers like them, because their names have become household words in the history of education in this country. I personally, would like to suggest that when the Minister of Education is naming another Government school that it be named after the late Mr. Dan Sharples.

I listened to the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman) when he said that this Bill was aimed at the Christian religion. I, naturally, cannot agree with him on that score. He went on to say that it was somewhat similar to the attack of the Muslims on the Holy Land in the days of Saladin. History books have been written by various people, and in many cases the history provided by a particular historian carries the flavour of his own particular beliefs and thoughts. I, myself, have read in English history books of Saladin and his people fighting the Christians in Jerusalem; but, as a Muslim, I have also read my own history of the same incident, which is not the same.

The man the Christians referred to as Saladin really is the Emperor Salah-uddin; and, also, he was engaged in defending Jerusalem at that time. Nevertheless, he was a man imbued with such sense of justice and fair play, that it is recorded in history that during one of the battles when he learnt that Richard "Coeur-de-Lion" of England had been injured, he (Salah-ud-din) donned the garb of a medicine man (a doctor) then

moved to the scene — because people who were doctors were allowed free access on either side — went among the Christians, banded King Richard's wounds and, because of his special knowledge, was able to treat him and nurse him back to recovery. That shows the character of the Muslim people. These are the things which, of course, we fail to find in English history books. But that strikes at the foundation of humanity because it shows the goodness that lies in the hearts of people who are not Christians.

In this country — there can be no gainsaying the fact — over the century, people who have not accepted Christianity and have maintained, through the example in their own homes the teachings of their parents and their traditions, their traditional religions, have been looked upon as being a sort of second-class religionists. One can understand it because resulting from the rebellion of the slaves and the death of the martyr Smith, about the middle of the nineteenth century, the owners of the slaves, who were also, of course, Members of the Legislature of the day, passed resolutions out in the streets and in this Council agreeing to pay a stipend to certain ecclesiastical ministers recruited, not from the London Missionary Society because they considered that since the Rev. John Smith and men like him came from the London Missionary Society they must find ecclesiastical people who, more easily, can fit in with the view of the planters of those days. And so it was in 1848, I think, that we began to have this association of State and the Christian Churches.

There is a volume, which is not easily obtainable in these days, but there is one in the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society's library, entitled "The Demerara Martyr", Memoirs of Rev. John Smith, written and edited by the Rev. Edwin A. Wallbridge, and that was in the year 1848. It is from that volume that I have made certain copies quoting page as well.

Mr. Speaker : Can you get the volume for the Official Reporters?

Mr. Gajraj: This [holding up copy in hand] will be available to the Official Reporters and, of course, if there is any fear that the transcription is inaccurate, it can be verified. On page 213 of that Book, it reads:

"The Missionary system", said the Editor of the Colonist, the organ of the slaveholders, a few days after Mr. Smith's death, "in fact, is undermining the institutions, and endangering the political existence of the Colonies. It is most unfortunate for the cause of the planters that they did not speak out in time. They did not say as they ought to have said, to the first advocate of missions and education — 'We shall not tolerate your plans till you prove to us that they are safe and necessary—we shall not suffer you to enlighten our slaves, who are by law our property, till you can demonstrate, that when they are made religious and knowing, they will still continue to be our slaves. We have no desire to treat the Africans with undue rigour, but we cannot be ignorant that our power over them can exist only so long as WE are more highly educated and enlightened. We are few—they are many—and if their moral qualities, or education, be allowed to be made equal, it follows that the power of government, or the right of government, which is the same thing, will be determined by the amount of physical force'. If the planters had spoken thus, they would have stated stubborn truths, they would have used arguments which entitled them to be secured against all pecuniary risk, before a sermon was preached, or a lesson taught on their property. But they did not think fit to do this. They too were infected by the cant of humanity; nothing would serve them but chapels and schools; and now when these chapels have done the very thing, which, in similar circumstances, they have ever done, some of the planters affect to be astonished."

Continuing, the planters said:

"We, therefore, deem it our sacred and bounden duty to ourselves and our dependants, to oppose and resist, by every authorized means, the establishment in this Colony, of sectaries of any description, and more particularly those of the

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London Missionary Society. It is therefore, resolved, that the Court of Policy be forthwith petitioned to expel all Missionaries from the Colony; and that a law be passed, prohibiting the admission of any Missionary preachers into this Colony, for the future."

To cut off all religious instruction from the negroes, was the cherished and openly avowed wish of the Colonists. "If we expect", said that mouthpiece, "to create a community of reading, moral, Church-going SLAVES, we are woefully mistaken. It is not the smallest matter of surprise that a negro slave, who has been taught that all men are equal in a religious point of view, should wish the same principle to prevail in politics."

To meet this very perplexing case—to afford the slaves the appearance at least of Christian teaching, without running the risk of making them so "religious and knowing", as to hasten their emancipation from bondage—it was proposed that the vacuum about to be caused by the compulsory banishment of the Missionaries, should be filled up by obtaining a sufficient supply of safe men,—of regularly ordained state-church clergymen.

It was resolved, therefore, to select and endow a particular order of clergy, whose position, as paid servants of the State, should be a security for their good behaviour. From their teaching, no danger could arise to their "domestic institutions", for they well know that ministers of this description, considering themselves as allies of the Government, must always fall in with the wishes of those in power, and that thus they would possess an army of spiritual janissaries or ecclesiastical police, admirably fitted for the accomplishment of any unjust and arbitrary design.

In accordance with this determination it was formally resolved at the great public meeting just alluded to:—"That we deem it our duty to urge, by every means in our power, the immediate adoption of measures for organization and adequate and effective system of religious instruction for our labouring population, by means of ministers of the established churches.

That we pledge ourselves, both collectively and individually, so far as our limited and impaired resources will admit, to make the necessary provision, for the

support of such establishment; relying on the sanction, countenance, and assistance of the Colonial Legislature, and of His Majesty's Government."

It goes on — very interesting, and I think I should read it out for the information of Members :

"That while this meeting earnestly recommend to the protection and assistance of His Majesty's Government and the Colonial Legislature, the religious institutions of the Established Churches already founded amongst us, it is further desirable and expedient, with a view to the adoption of a plan for general religious instruction, that the community should be distributed into three chief classes of persons, who, from principle, as well as from habit and education, are attached to as many different forms of worship, each of them enjoying in the mother-country the sanction of Government as a national church, viz: — the Dutch Reformed, the English Episcopal, and the Scotch Presbyterian—the first and last being the same in doctrine, government, and worship; and as this community includes many individuals of the Roman Catholic persuasion, it is just and proper that any general scheme for religious instruction should comprehend a provision for affording them an opportunity for the public exercise and profession of their religion."

That gives an indication as to how we move on from the days which many would like to forget. They are emblazoned with the paths of Guianese history. We move on from those days to the time when the Church and the State became associated with each other — the established Churches and the State. That lasted for a long number of years, but in 1836, the Colonies of Demerara and Essequibo had been divided into six parochial districts — three allotted to the Church of England and three to the Church of Scotland.

"In addition to these parish church establishments, a provision was afterwards made for a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church, and also for certain Roman Catholic priests."

From page 220 of the same book he states :

"In 1838, the Colony of British Guiana, was erected into an archdeaconry, and in 1842, it was constituted a bishopric by royal letters patent—the salary of the Lord Bishop, £2,000 per annum, being paid by a yearly grant from the House of Commons.

At the present time, there are twenty-four English Church clergymen, eleven presbyters of the residuary Church of Scotland, one Dutch Reformed minister, and eight Roman Catholic priests, (including a Roman Catholic bishop), alimanted at the expense of the Colonial revenues. To pay the stipends of these ecclesiastical officials, and to sustain the churches with which they are connected, for the year 1847, the sum of 119,797 dollars (£24,957. 14s. 2d.) was voted by the Combined Court, in addition to the 15,607 dollars (£3,521. 9s. 2d). voted for the schools connected with the State-paid and Wesleyan churches.

With two or three marked exceptions, the Established clergy of British Guiana have fulfilled one part of the vocation assigned to them—they have carefully abstained from making the people either too "knowing" or too "religious". They have not been distinguished as abounding in labours, as examples of holy living, or as preachers of sound doctrine. The Scottish ministers have been of the loose, moderate school; whilst with many of the Anglican clergy, including the Lord Bishop, the Puseyite heresy has found great favour."

I need not make any further quotations from that very memorable book written on an event which deals very vividly with the history of our country. But I merely refer to it to show that it was around about the middle of the nineteenth century when the Church became associated with the State, and that funds from the Colonial Revenues were paid out each year to cover the stipends of these gentlemen and the costs of running the schools which were set up to teach their religion.

It can be seen that the Church continued to enjoy the patronage of the peoples of this country through its Legislature; through its general revenue which was collected from all and sundry irrespective of their faiths or lack of

faith. I think it was in the 1930s when it was finally agreed that the Church should be disestablished from the State. The disestablishment of the Church from the State was not looked upon by the Church Authorities at the time as being in their interest, because a fair measure of income had been lost thereby.

I noticed quite recently that one of the Islands in the Caribbean, Barbados, has made a move to disestablish the Church from the State, and a howl has been raised by the Church Authorities to such an extent that a legal luminary of the Church had to be flown out from the United Kingdom to advise the Church Authorities in Barbados. That goes to show that even though it might be said that the Church has contributed considerably towards the education of the people in this country, it is conversely true also that the country has contributed considerably towards the continuance of the Christian Churches.

Mr. Speaker : Time.

Mr. Davis: I beg to move that the hon. Member be allowed to speak for another thirty minutes.

Mr. Fredericks: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to

Mr. Gajraj: The point I was making just before my time expired is that in the same way it can be argued that the Church has contributed considerably towards the education of the people in this country, it is conversely true also that the country has contributed considerably towards the continuance of the Christian Churches over a period of years. I do not say, of course, that either contribution was bad or wrong. I think in the circumstances of the time that it was very desirable, and a lot of good has resulted from it. We must understand, however, that we are not living in a static age.

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Friend the Member for South has referred to a statement made by the Reverend Mr. Goodall at a meeting at the Town Hall where he referred to the dynamics of the age as against the static rate of the people of this age.

Whilst some of the hon. Members either by statement or inference suggested that this measure is intended to benefit solely the non-Christians at the expense of the Christians, let me make it clear that during the years when the State was subsidizing the Christian Churches the State did not contribute one penny towards the assistance it might have given in a very small way to the maintenance of Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, or any other minority religions in British Guiana.

It is, of course, the case that the persons who were in authority at the time when there was this bond between the State and the Church — the members of the State were Christians, or called themselves Christians — were able to make arrangements to suit themselves. I do not blame them for it, no more than I blame the officers of the Christian Bodies for fighting this battle to the last ditch. I think they are right in doing so. In fighting this battle they are fighting to preserve the rights, interests, and privileges which they have enjoyed over a number of years, and to have expected less from them would be a misunderstanding of human nature. But in doing so I think that they do themselves a very poor turn when, instead of basing their attacks on arguments that can stand the light and reason of the day, they step out of their creases and, as we now find in this Council, attack other religions as well as the intentions of people, which really cannot be proved.

We have been told by independent, reputable, learned, intelligent men who have discussed this matter in the past that this system of Dual Control is bound to continue to create great friction and result in a diminution of the number of persons who will offer themselves for the teaching profession; it will create bottlenecks in certain Religious Bodies, because they do not have enough schools to be able to permit a large enough number of their own following to get all of the jobs in the schools. We have been told all of these things, and it has been urged that the answer to the problem would be to place all of the schools on one level under control by the State. How can we be charged with doing ill for education *per se*? It seems to me to be a very lopsided argument.

We have even had fleeting visits to this country by Heads of two of the Established Churches which are doing work amongst the people of British Guiana: The Methodist Denomination of which the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, is a member, and the Lutheran. We have had Dr. Fry as head of the Lutherans. I did not meet the gentleman myself, but I read in the newspapers that he said, after having had discussions with the Minister of Education and possibly other Ministers of the Government, he was satisfied that there was no intention to prevent Church Schools from continuing in British Guiana, but that he saw that if the Churches were to maintain their schools, then they must pay for the privilege of so doing.

In the case of the head of the Methodist Body — I think his name is Rev. Rogers — I recall having read in the newspapers that he said that dual control as a system must go eventually. But, as I understand it, his plea was that Government should go slowly in this matter. Here we have heads of these

Religious Bodies indicating in no uncertain terms that a change must be made in the system. One says "Go slowly"; the other says "We can maintain our Church Schools, but we must pay for it". When these things are told to us, it becomes absolutely clear that there is no intention whatsoever to deny the people of this country, or the Authorities of the Churches the right to teach religion to their followers.

Of course, many of these people are trying to fight very hard to maintain their freehold. I hold on to my religion as much as I hold on to my life, and I do not see in it any challenge to the teaching of one's religion. I was very much enthused to have listened to the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara. Unfortunately, he is not in his seat at the moment. It seems to be rather usual when one has to refer to a statement made by the hon. Member that he is not here to hear what one has to say in reply, but if he has the time he will read it in the *Hansard*. I heard him speak with such great fervour, urging the Ministers of the Christian Social Council and of the heads of the Christian bodies to go out and join forces with the Hindus and Muslims in order to let them understand what is communism.

Well, it is perhaps another way of indicating how "integration" may be applied, but it shows a complete lack of knowledge of the past. I did say earlier that, possibly because of the association of the Christian Church and the State, those people who have held religious views other than Christianity have been looked upon as belonging to second-class religion. As a matter of fact, reading from time to time statements made by the heads of Christian religions in this country one gets the impression that what is behind it all is the belief "that mine is the only real and true religion, and anyone else who says he has a religion that is not mine is only fooling

himself." I would be very pleased indeed if the hon. Member to whom I refer were able to use his undoubted ability and energy which sometimes we see overflowing in his speeches, to bring about a union of the various religions in this country.

We hear so often and we read just as often charges made that the forces of darkness and evil are overcoming this country. We read of pleas being made to the religious bodies to get together and instil into the minds of the people of this country the love of God, of Justice and of Truth. Yet the very people who are supposed to teach us these things by precept and example do not show so much of Christ. Religion as religion is based upon certain indestructible moral laws, and we find these laws translated into principles which are basic in every religion. But it is the frills which have grown up over the centuries here and there and translated into rituals — it is these things which divide the peoples of the world into various religious groups.

If we were to get the leaders of the Christian sects—I say "sects", advisedly, because I would like to think of Christianity as one, but it is divided into so many sections that I can only say that if we could get the leaders of the Christian sects to understand that there is a greater area of agreement between them in their religious concepts than there is disagreement, then that would be the first step to be taken by the Christians to come together. When they shall have done that they will find that most of the area of disagreement which they have found common to themselves is also common to the other great religions of the world, and it is only by a humble approach to this great and all-absorbing problem that I can see any hope for those who want to see the various religions getting together so as to be able to make a step in that direction, because

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the Almighty is the same whether He be worshipped from the teachings of Krishna, Muhammad, Moses, Solomon, Jesus or any of the prophets.

We get down to the basic concepts and we find that the teachings are the same, but it is we human beings who are grounded in pride who create and maintain these walls of division. Let us get these walls down and prepare a proper basic understanding, and we will be doing the greatest good for the world, from which to fight any fantastic ideas or doctrines, because we may be able to hand such a large section of humanity into true believers, and we may be able to sweep aside any doubtful ones who may arise.

During the life of this Legislature I have never referred to it, but as we are talking about these things let us understand it clearly. We still have the traditional association of Church and State in this very Council in the prayers that are read at the beginning of every session. I am not attacking prayers as such, but when one looks around one sees that 50 per cent. of the Council is non-Christian. I think we can have a prayer which would be in keeping with the religious thoughts of every one of us and yet do violence to the beliefs of none.

Over the years we have seen that on special occasions in this Council, the opening of the Council, the reception of a new Governor or saying farewell to one who is departing, many citizens are invited to come and join in our assembly. It was only a few years ago — I think it was in 1956 or 1957 — that through my instrumentality the names of two Muslim and Hindu priests were included in the list of invitees. Since then they have been regularly invited, but one finds that the heads of every Christian denomination would be seated in what we call our distinguished visitors gallery.

that is in the chairs behind those of Members of the Council, while the seats allocated to the Muslim and Hindu priests are behind the rail. Yet we speak of equality. We want to have things done properly.

When Sir Ralph Grey, our new Governor, arrived in British Guiana we received him here and then he went into the lobby where various persons were presented to him. Representatives of the Christian churches of British Guiana were included in the list of those persons to be presented. There was no Hindu priest or Muslim priest presented. I do not blame anyone for it. I say it is because of the traditional way in which things have been handled, but now that we have had it brought to our attention I feel sure that in the future we shall see changes. Those changes are necessary in this dynamic age. It has been so said recently, and we must not forget that changes are not happening in British Guiana alone but all over the world. Let us have all these changes made with orderly precision, proper thinking and with justice done to all, so that when we move on to the stage where we will be looking after our own affairs we will find things as we want them and not have to make any violent changes to satisfy the rights of the people as a whole.

I do not propose to speak much longer, but I would say this: that like many of the hon. Members on this side of the Table, I am not fully satisfied with this measure, but my dissatisfaction does not arise from being opposed to what it seeks to do. My dissatisfaction stems from the fact that it does not go far enough, and, if my closing words are to be an indictment of the members of the Government, I shall now charge them with having allowed themselves to step down from what was right in order to satisfy those persons who have the

right to fight for the established position which they have enjoyed for so many years. I do hope that the hon. Minister will bear that in mind, because let me merely say that this is not something of which I am proud. It could have been a better Bill. It would have been more satisfactory and there would have been more justice to the people as a whole, but not because it does not go far enough we should not support it. That being so I give it my full support.

Mr. Speaker : I do not know if any other member wishes to speak. There being no other speaker, the Mover of the Bill may now reply to the debate.

The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Rai) : I am very grateful to Members on the opposite side of the Table for having done much of the work which, normally, I would have been expected to do, answering so admirably and so ably the points sought to be raised by those Members who are in opposition to this measure. I think Members are quite correct in saying that this Bill does not go far enough — that in view of the argument which I myself have adduced in this Council, this Bill should have provided for the control of all primary schools in the country under a uniform system under the aegis of the Government.

I recall that when there was introduced into the Ceylon Parliament a measure to provide for a modified system of schools control in that country there was such a hue and cry by the Catholic body in that country that Parliament, which was then in recess, was recalled and the Bill withdrawn, but a new Bill was substituted to take full control of the schools in Ceylon.

I do not propose, however, to withdraw this Bill and introduce a Bill to provide, completely, for the control of

all schools in the country; but, I hope that from what hon. Members have said here and from the form in which the Bill has been put up and the efforts that have been made to secure agreement with the denominational bodies, that Members of this Council would be persuaded that this has been a very restrained and modified Bill.

Certain interesting points have emerged from this debate, and the most interesting of them has the *volte-face* which has been executed by my hon. and learned Friend, Mr. Burnham. Mr. Burnham said he was not ashamed to admit that in 1953 he advocated the abolition of dual control of schools. He said he is not ashamed and, probably, he is right because he has not given any reasons for objecting to what he advocated in 1953. In 1953 he not only proposed the abolition of dual control of schools, but it was authoritatively recorded, elsewhere, that he also proposed to re-write the textbooks in the schools along socialist lines.

I would like to quote, also, from *The Daily Chronicle* of 6th June, 1960, on the People's National Congress' annual congress at Anna Regina, Essequibo, when Mr. Burnham, Leader of the P.N.C., is reported as saying:

"On the question of control of schools, Mr. Burnham paid tribute to the role which the Church has historically played in education in British Guiana. He said the Church should continue to own its schools and be associated with education, lending to it certain important morals and ideas."

This, of course, is a change from what he said in 1953. But he went on further and said:

"However, the time has come when Government can play a more positive role in the appointment, promotions and dismissals of teachers—promotions to be based on moral liability on a person's competence as a teacher rather than adherence to any particular religion."

[MR. RAT]

Here, the hon. Member was contradicting himself. On the one hand, he said the Church Authorities should be allowed to control the schools; on the other hand he feels the Government must play a more positive role in the appointment and promotion of teachers which should be on the basis of merit. It is the essence of the denominational control of schools that the basis of promotion should be religious affiliation. This is the principle we are fighting today -- a principle whereby a person can get appointed in a school only if he is a member of that denomination. The Member said that teachers in the denominational schools can only get promotion if they are also members of that denomination. How can my hon. and learned Friend say, originally, in keeping with this statement, that the time has come when Government can play a more positive role in the appointment, promotions and dismissals of teachers -- promotion to be based on moral liability and on a person's competence as a teacher rather than adherence to any particular religion? This can only be brought about if the system of appointment and promotion of primary school teachers is changed from the present one.

In a letter published in *The Daily Chronicle*, sent to the Press by Fr. F. C. Fenn, S.J. and dated 7th August, he said:

Sir,

In your report of a P.P.P. meeting held on Tuesday, Mr. Burnham is stated to have said (on the question of denominational schools) that "at the conference with the Ministers of all denominations during 1953, it was agreed that each denomination should send a representative to the schools to give religious instructions according to each denomination."

I was present at that meeting, and I can state without fear of contradiction that no such "agreement" was arrived at. Mr. Burnham had said that it was the inten-

tion of his Government to take over all the primary schools, (the question of ownership he passed over), and he suggested that Ministers might be allowed to visit the schools, after the proposed take over, to give religious instructions.

There was certainly no agreement, either on the confiscation of schools (for that is what it would have amounted to) or on Mr. Burnham's suggestion with regard to religious instruction. Apart from being unacceptable that suggestion was entirely unrealistic; for your readers can imagine the confusion that would have been caused by "representatives of each denomination" going to instruct groups of children in a school."

This is what Fr. Fenn reports that the Minister of Education proposed. What does the present Minister of Education propose to do as regards religious instructions?

I have said that religious instructions would continue to be given in every school. I proposed that denominational instructions of the type which is now being given in denominational schools shall be exclusively given by teachers belonging to that denomination. Where is the objection to such a system? Religious instructions would be continued. There would be no disturbance so far as existing teachers are concerned. Teachers are going to be paid their full salaries. Secular instructions would be given. I see no change except that the Church Authorities would not be able to control the appointment and promotion of teachers. That is all that is going to happen. And why do they wish to appoint the teachers, except that they wish to use the schools for Church purposes and, as one Minister of Religion the Rev. Magahee, has said, they want to proselytize the children in the schools. This is not the place to proselytize children. This should be done in the Churches, the Sunday schools or in the highways and byways. Even the Archbishop who condemns politicians holding meetings near his home is now going to the Bourda Green. He is going in the highways and byways as the former Christian Teachers did.

The provision of education is a question for the State. It is a secular matter and it is not a matter which falls under the jurisdiction of the Church. What theological or philosophical basis is there for opposition to this Bill? Jesus said: "Give unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's," and this is the basis for the separation of the Church and State. This is supported by St. Gregory, St. Augustine, St. Paul and all the others of the Church — that there should be a separation in the functions of Church and State. It is only in this way that the autonomy of the Church can be respected and preserved. It is the Fathers of the Church who said that they must yield obedience to the civil power in secular matters; and only yesterday I read in *The Daily Chronicle* of someone from the World Council of Churches saying to resist not the necessary and inevitable. Why do they resist the changes that are necessary and inevitable? These changes have taken place. In other parts of the world the Church is yielding obedience to the civil authority in secular matters. This is a matter of civil jurisdiction; and the churchmen are going against an injunction of their own selves when they seek out the civil power.

Everyone admits the contribution made by the Church; but the explanation has also to be given of the circumstances under which that contribution was made. It is an historical fact that the Churches were paid by the British Government and, literally, by the local Government, to keep the people of this country as slaves, both intellectually and mentally. The Roman Catholics received money; the Anglicans received money and the Congregationalists also received money. I have been doing some more research — —

Mr. Speaker : Congregationalists! Are you sure?

Mr. Speaker : Yes, Sir. By the end of the second decade of the nineteenth century, money was provided by the

State for Church purposes; the Church of England, the Roman Catholics and the Church of Scotland all received money; and from 1834 they received aid from the local Government to build schools and to give secular teaching in the schools, also.

In the year 1859, an Ordinance was passed providing for the salaries of the Anglican and Scots Clergy to be paid by Government and for annual grants to be given to the Roman Catholic Church and to Dissenting Churches including the Methodist Church. This Ordinance was renewed from time to time. Ordinance No. 19 of 1868 made provision for Government to guarantee loans for the erection of parsonage houses. It also provided a small annual grant for the repairs to these houses. Grants were made for places of religious worship and to provide furniture, and rentals were paid where churches had not yet been erected. Why had all this been done? It is said that great fears were entertained of the behaviour of the people after the slaves were liberated, and so, in their education, stress was to be laid on the spiritual side. The labouring classes were to be taught not only the three R's, but thrift and industry and honesty, to recognize their place in society and to give due respect to their superiors. If this was not done, it was said, there would be not only indolence and degradation but crime and riot and a relapse into barbarism.

This is the history of the Church in British Guiana. Slavery was not incompatible with Christianity, said the Rev. Mortier, a leading Methodist Minister of the nineteenth century. He also said that slaves were not fit for the institution of marriage. Yet so many people speak of the proud record of the Church.

Around 1850 there was a struggle in this country regarding the question of whether schools should continue to be

[Mr. RAI]

denominational, or should be Government schools. The advocates of denominational schools said:

"We wish to see them trained (ex-slaves) in the knowledge of their moral and social duties—taught practically to love honesty, sobriety, reverence to authority, and Christian respect for all whom providence has placed in a superior condition

We could see the effect of school discipline in the breaking down of that false independence which teaches them to disregard the diversities of rank and condition of life imposed for wise purposes, and while they shun servility we would keep them equally far from the assumption of a false equality. They should learn that idleness is a crime against a higher law as well as an infraction of the social duty, and that the commandment which tells them to keep holy the seventh day is equally explicit in requiring them to labour during the sixth: that industry is honourable before God and man and consequently, none should feel ashamed to earn his maintenance by the sweat of his brow, but rather in acknowledging that he was one of those who "stand all the day idle".

This is exactly what the advocates of dual control are repeating today, but they are using modern language.

In 1850 the Governor, Henry Barkly, Esq., appointed the following Commission to consider the matter:

- Mr. A. D. V. Gon Netscher, Member of the Court of Policy—Chairman.
- Mr. George Dennis, Inspector of Schools
- Mr. William Davidson.
- Mr. Daniel Blair, Surgeon-General.
- Mr. W. B. Pollard, Financial Accountant (acting).

This is what appeared in their Report:

"The question of the mode of education to be pursued in the various schools has engaged the serious attention of your Commissioners. Upon mature reflection and consulting the prejudices of the different Christian communions in the Colony, they would not imperil the success of a general scheme of education by insisting upon religious instruction within

the walls of the school room. Except the reading of the Lord's Prayer every morning at opening it seems to them that education should be purely secular.

They took the view that education should be purely secular.

It is proposed today that religious instruction should continue in denominational schools, but in 1850 the Commissioners appointed by the Governor said that it should not be given in schools. We have travelled very far since then. I have already recounted the various arguments they have put forward. It seems that the time is ripe, and something should be done in this matter.

No argument has been adduced by those who oppose this Bill to justify the wicked discrimination which is being practised by the Christian Denominations. Why is it that they discriminate among themselves? Where is the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God that they speak of? Why do the Anglicans discriminate against the Catholics, the Lutherans against the Westlevians and so on?

Although we suggested to the denominations the appointment of a single Schools Control Committee whereby teachers would be interchangeable among their own denominations for the purpose of appointment and promotion, it was rejected by them. His Grace the Archbishop says it is against Canon Law to do so. The Roman Catholic Bishop of Georgetown says it will interfere with the very good relation they have with their teachers. I asked them whether they would agree to a common syllabus for religious teaching in schools? They said it was not possible. They are unable to agree on fundamental basic things, and they are unable to agree among themselves.

While they profess to condemn racial apartheid in South Africa, they are practising religious apartheid in the schools in British Guiana. These are

the people who are in charge of the educational system in primary schools in this country. They stand exposed before this Council and public opinion of this country. They have been enjoying a privileged position for so many years that they continue to resist necessary changes.

Some people have tried to make this a religious issue. This is not a religious issue. Some people have tried to make this a racial issue. This is not a racial issue. People have sought to make charges against me personally. Some say that I am a non-Christian, and that is why I am against Christian schools. My hon. and learned Friend, Mr. Burnham, says that I am trying to get at the Christian Churches. Was he trying to get at the Christian Churches in 1953? Was Sir Charles Mayor, a Chief Justice, trying to get at the Churches? Was Mr. Hammond or the Commissioners appointed in 1850 trying to get at the Churches? Those people were members of the Christian religion.

The hon. Member for New Amsterdam suggested that I was pursuing a vendetta. Who recommended the abolition of dual control in 1953? I have only recommended the take-over of 51 schools. I have indicated the basic difficulties of the present system. One of the principal defects is that the most qualified and experienced teachers do not always get the promotion they deserve.

When the Teachers' Training College was started in 1928, there was a competitive examination for places in the College. I am sorry the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, is not here, because I am going to refer to a teacher he knows very well. I am told that Mr. Scecharran came first in the entrance examination. After two years of instruction he gained first place in the first batch of teachers at the College, but up to this day he is only a senior assistant teacher in a Scots school. He has served faithfully and well; I have seen his

personal record, and there is nothing against his character or his work. The only reason why he has not been given promotion is due to his religion. He is a Hindu, but he could very well, for that matter, have been a Mohammedan, or a member of some other religious denomination other than the one in which he is now employed—a Scots Body. Is this not a shame on the educational system of this country, that a teacher who came first in an examination at the Teachers' Training College so many years ago has not yet been appointed as a headteacher of a school? His contemporaries are Education Officers in the Education Department, but he is only a senior assistant teacher. Juniors have gone far ahead of him, and it is to the credit of other teachers that they have brought this case to my notice. I am happy to tell the Council that remedial steps are being taken in this matter.

I am very sorry to find that my hon. Friend the Member for Georgetown Central has deserted or abandoned his own case. To use his own words, "he has done so very shamelessly." It grieves me because I feel that education—he agrees with me in this—in an under-developed country is a most important service to be provided by the Government. We have been asked in a general way to build more schools. As my hon. Colleague the Minister of Natural Resources pointed out, it is not merely a question of constructing school buildings. Building more schools would not prevent Church Bodies from withholding promotion from teachers who do not belong to their denominations. We want to stop Religious Denominations from practising this type of discrimination. In other words, we are trying to reform the educational system in this country and not merely to build more schools.

It is true that the Archbishop said to me: "Why don't you build more Government schools and employ only non-Christians?" Imagine a responsible gentleman in that position suggest-

[Mr. Rai]

ing that a Minister of the Government should take public funds, build more schools and exclude Christian teachers from them! I told him there and then that, as a Minister of the Government, I could not take public funds, build schools and discriminate against other people because of their religious faiths. That is exactly what the people and the Minister of Education are complaining about. He did not press the matter any further. Those are some of the suggestions from time to time.

It has been suggested that we should build more schools and leave the Denominations with what they have. Is there not something wrong when some people advocate that we should leave the present system as it is, but that we should now build more schools? The hon. Member for Georgetown Central sought to make out that I was assisting Hindu schools by giving them grants, while I was trying to introduce a system to bring about a reformation in the present system of dual control of schools which affected Christian schools.

There are only two Hindu Primary Schools in the country: one at Reliance, and the other at Cove and John. These schools were granted aid in 1959 before the policy was adumbrated. These schools were put up from private funds and not Government funds. The school at Reliance has a Roman Catholic as its headteacher. It is not true to suggest that since this policy has been adumbrated I have given grants to any non-Christian schools, or that any school has been included in this list be-

cause it is not a Hindu school. I would be happy to learn of any school built with public funds which is not on the list, so that I can put it in the schedule. There are no Mohammedan primary schools in this country. My hon. Friend's charges are therefore incorrect.

The hon. Member for Georgetown Central mentioned a Hindu school at Kitty known as the Rama Krishna Dharmic Sabha. This school has not yet been paid its grant. It was approved last year by the Education Committee of which His Grace the Archbishop and the Bishop of Georgetown are members. The Governing Body of this school has given an undertaking in writing that, whenever Government embarks on a policy to take over schools, the organization would be prepared to hand over the school, and submit it to the control of the Government.

This Society was running a Nursery school from 1956 — the year before the Government assumed office — and it was promised that if it were to enlarge the Nursery school to a full-fledged primary school it would be given a grant.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker : I think we will have to take the adjournment now. I take it that you have more to say.

Mr. Rai : Yes, Sir.

Mr. Speaker : Council is now adjourned until tomorrow, the 12th of January, at two o'clock in the afternoon.