

# SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana (Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)

Orders in Council, 1953 and 1956).

Friday, 23rd December, 1960

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. *ex officio*

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

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)
“ “	—Member for Western Essequibo (Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)
“ “ Ram Karran	—Member for Demerara-Essequibo (Minister of Communications and Works)
“ “ B. S. Rai	—Member for Central Demerara (Minister of Community Development and Education).
Mr. R. B. Gajraj	—Nominated Member
W. O. R. Kendall	—Member for New Amsterdam
R. C. Tello	—Nominated Member
“ L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.	—Member for Georgetown Central
“ 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. E. B. Beharry — Member for Eastern Demerara

Mr. F. Bowman — Member for Demerara River

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

The Clerk read prayers.

## MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 22nd December, 1960, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## ORDER OF THE DAY

## BILLS—SECOND READING

**GEORGETOWN (VALUATION AND RATING) (SPECIAL PROVISIONS) BILL**

**Mr. Speaker:** The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Rai) is to move the Second Reading of the following Bill:

A Bill intituled: "An Ordinance to authorise the Georgetown Town Council to prepare the Valuation List to come into force in 1961 and for other purposes incidental thereto or connected therewith."

**The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Rai):** Mr. Speaker, the Georgetown Town Council is required every 10 years to prepare a new Valuation List. There is power, however, under the Ordinance, to permit leave of this being extended for one year. The 10 years to which I have referred expired a year ago—last year—and an extension was given for one year.

There is also required, for rates and taxes, the draft Valuation List which is current at the time and that draft Valuation List should be confirmed before the rates and taxes are levied in accordance with that List.

The Georgetown Town Council said that it has not found it possible to comply with the requirements of the Ordinance because the Assessment Committee experienced difficulty in obtaining the services of qualified staff to carry out the work. Because the draft Valuation List has not been prepared within the time specified in the Ordinance,

it has not been possible for objections to the draft list to be lodged or appeals against decisions given on objections to be prosecuted. This has prevented the draft list from being confirmed so as to enable the new Valuation List to be brought into force for 1961.

Clause 3 provides for the preparation of the draft list and for its confirmation. Clause 4 preserves the right to lodge objections to the draft list and the right to appeal against decisions given on objections. Clause 5 seeks to provide for amendments to be made to the Valuation List where the assessed value of a lot has been altered as a result of a decision given on any objection or appeal. Clause 6 seeks to make provision for adjustments in payments to be made in cases where the assessed value of any lot has been altered.

Section 26 of the Ordinance provides that taxes and rate shall be assessed, levied, and raised on the assessed value set out in the Valuation List for the time being in force and this is required to be done in December of the previous year. The taxes and rate for 1961 should therefore be based on the valuation list now in force. The Georgetown Town Council has requested that the taxes and rate for 1961 should be based on the Valuation List to come into force in 1961 instead of the one which is now in force.

Clause 7 of the Bill seeks to provide accordingly.

Clause 8 seeks to empower the Council to assess, levy and raise the taxes and rate for the year 1961, within the time prescribed by subsection (1) of section 28 of the Principal Ordinance. The Council shall assess, levy and raise the said taxes and rate as soon as practicable thereafter, but not later than the 10th January, 1961.

I now beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to authorise the Georgetown Town Council to prepare the valuation list to come into force in 1961 and for other purposes incidental thereto or connected therewith."

**Mrs. Jagan:** I beg to second the Motion.

**Mr. Rai:** I was under the impression that seven days had elapsed between the Publication and Second Reading of the Bill, and I had taken the precaution to obtain a Certificate of Urgency from His Excellency the Governor in case the Bill was delayed. I understand that seven days have not elapsed. I wish to give this Certificate of Urgency to the Clerk, so that the Bill may be taken through all its stages at this meeting.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

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

#### COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Clauses 1 to 6 agreed to as printed.

Clause 7. *Taxes and rate to be assessed, levied and raised on assessed values in valuation list in force on the 1st January, 1961. Cap. 154.*

**Mr. Rai:** I beg to move an Amendment by the substitution of the word "Principal" for the words "Georgetown (Valuation and Rating)", appearing in the second line.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 7, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 8 agreed to as printed.

Council resumed.

**Mr. Rai:** I beg to report that the Bill has been considered in Committee and passed with one Amendment. I now wish to move that the Bill be read the Third time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time and passed.

#### MOTIONS

##### ORDER IN COUNCIL NO. 95 OF 1960

##### CONCENTRATES FOR USE IN THE MANUFACTURE OF STOCK FEED

**The Financial Secretary (Mr. D'Andrade):** I beg to move:

"That this Council in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 95 of 1960, which was made on the 24th day of November, 1960, and published in the Gazette on the 10th December, 1960."

Order in Council No. 95 of 1960 extends to manufacturers of stock feed the concession of duty free admission of raw materials and nutritional elements for the manufacture of stock meal which are imported in concentrated form to be mixed with local raw materials such as corn, rice, brand, padi, molasses and copra leaves to manufacture balance feed for animals.

A local Company has been established in the Colony to manufacture such feed. It is proposed to produce stock feed of comparable quality to that imported. The Company will have to compete with imported stock feed without having any special tariff.

**The Attorney-General (Mr. Austin):** I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

**CONTINUANCE OF RENT  
RESTRICTION ORDINANCE**

**The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing** (Mrs. Jagan): I beg to move the Motion standing in my name:

"Whereas the Rent Restriction Ordinance, Chapter 186, came into operation on the 8th day of November, 1941;

And Whereas section 33 of the said Ordinance, provides that the Ordinance shall continue in force up to and including the 31st day of December, 1951, but that, prior to the expiration thereof, the Legislative Council may, by resolution continue in operation for a further period of one year, and that thereafter may from time to time declare that the said Ordinance shall continue in operation:

And whereas the said Ordinance has been continued in operation until the 31st December, 1960;

And Whereas it is considered expedient that the said Ordinance shall be continued in operation for a further period of one year;

Now, Therefore, Be it resolved:

That the Rent Restriction Ordinance, Chapter, 186, shall continue in force for a period of one year up to and including the 31st day of December, 1961."

As Members will recall, this is the fourth occasion on which I have found it necessary to move the continuation of the Rent Restriction Ordinance. I have to report again that an acute housing shortage still exists in this country. Like many other countries, this Government finds it necessary to keep in operation the Rent Restriction Ordinance in order to protect tenants in buildings and on house lots throughout the country.

It is not necessary at this stage to remind hon. Members that if we did not have this legislation, perhaps, the situation might have been more acute. I would urge hon. Members to support this Motion, and to agree that the necessity still remains for keeping such legislation on our Statute Book

**Mr. Benn:** I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion affirmed.

**EDUCATION (AMENDMENT)  
BILL**

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

"An Ordinance to amend the Education Ordinance."

When the debate was adjourned on the last occasion the hon. Member for Western Berbice was speaking. He may continue now.

**Mr. Saffee:** When the adjournment was taken on the last occasion, I was making the point that the financial requirements to maintain the primary schools in this country had clearly become a burden which the denominational bodies were unable to carry. In the 1960 Estimates under the head Education — Primary Schools — Personal Emoluments — Salaries of Teachers — there is a provision for Aided Schools of \$4,393,556. Under the head Other Charges there is an item of \$173,500 for grants to aided schools, and under the same head there is an item "Special Sanitation Grants, \$17,350." There is also an item "Honoraria to Secretaries of Government Bodies, \$1,800." These items amount to a tremendous sum of money, and it is a fact that the Churches are not in a position to bear the cost of primary education in this country.

I would like to quote from a Memorandum entitled "British Guiana — Education" issued by the Education Department, at page 24:

"It is not a coincidence that these conditions are specially marked in a Colony in which church-owned schools so heavily preponderate, nor is it to the discredit of the Churches. They took

the initiative in providing schools for the people and bore much of the burden for many years; but their resources have not been sufficient to maintain their schools in proper repair, to extend and rebuild them when necessary, or to keep pace with modern ideas of school accommodation of the most simple kind."

It is quite evident, it is indisputable that the Churches are unable to find the money to pay teachers and to take care of the repair and maintenance of the schools. Since that is so this Government, while recognizing that the denominational bodies have done their part, feels that without prejudice and without ill-will, what is necessary at the moment is that it should take full control of some of the schools for the time being. As has been said by the Minister, all is not well as regards the employment and promotion of teachers under the denominational bodies. He also said that even some of the Churches were not prepared to accept teachers of the same Christian faith but of a different sect. That is not an accusation but a fact, and I would like to quote from the same Report on page 25, paragraph 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 clear from this Report that what the Minister has said is a fact — that all is not well as regards the employment and promotion of teachers by the denominational bodies. Many of the speakers on the other side of the Table

claim that the Church has done quite a lot for education in this country. That is a fact and we are grateful for it. It is also argued that while Government pays the teachers the denominational bodies furnish the school buildings. That is a reciprocal arrangement. The denominational bodies furnish the school buildings while Government pays the teachers and provides funds for the maintenance of the schools, at the same time allowing the denominational bodies to exercise control of the schools. The sum of money provided in the Estimates for Education runs into millions of dollars—money which is taken from the general revenue of the country which is contributed by Muslims, Hindus, Christians and people in all walks of life.

The present system of dual control of schools constitutes a great injustice to the inhabitants of this country. There should be equality of opportunity for teachers on the ground of merit and not religion. That is the point on which I think members on the other side have taken a one-sided view. I am appealing to them to consider the other side. Government proposes to take control of 51 of the schools which were built by Government, not the schools owned by the denominational bodies. Some Members have made the stupid assumption that Government is confiscating the denominational schools. I know that the denominational bodies are very much annoyed at this move by the Government, but it is not a matter about which anyone should be annoyed. It is in the interest of educational advancement, and we know that eventually the denominational bodies are going to adjust their thinking and welcome this step by the Government. So I feel, in this issue between the Church and the Government, they will see the truth and appreciate why it is necessary for Government to take control of the schools.

[MR. SAFFEE]

Several speakers, on the other side of the Table, castigated the Government for being communistic and so on, but this accusation of being communistic seems to me to be going out of date—out of tune—and I only hope that my friends on the other side of the Table will try to find reasonable arguments to criticize the Government and not harp on this old tune of Government being communistic. We have heard the same thing when the Land Bonds issue came up. We heard that the Government wants to “communize” the country. With the Motion relating to trade with Cuba, we heard the same thing; and with the Freehold and Leasehold Bill, we heard the same thing—that communism is at the back. I only hope that these hon. Members, who could only find this one tune to play, would be able to adjust their thoughts and see things in their proper perspective.

The entire world is changing rapidly. If we look carefully we are going to see that; and no castigation and no stupid argument can stop the movement to or spread of any ideology. Once people choose a particular way of life, nothing can stop it, and that is the situation in the world today. So my hon. Friends over there, who find it very convenient to say that the Government is dedicated to spread communism, should be able to look at things more realistically and sensibly and present more convincing arguments whenever any issue comes before this Council.

We have heard, as I have said, that Churches have done quite a lot for British Guiana. We know that the Churches built schools in this country, the primary objective being to foster and propagate religion—to educate people and channel them along a certain path so as to spread religion—and since the Churches have built schools with this one objective, the stronger

emphasis was on the propagation of religion. In other words, religion was the principal factor and education, in general, was a secondary factor. The purpose of building the schools, as I said, by these Churches, was to propagate religion and educate the people along certain lines of the Christian religion. Now, Government wants to change the whole emphasis to education. Government would like education to be spread more rapidly. There are quite a lot of things to be done for the advancement of education in this country, and Government can only do so with the control of schools.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, is not here, but he said the other day when he was making his contribution to the debate on this Bill, and I quote from the notes I made: “I see in this legislation that it is clearly vote-catching”. I am sorry he is not here, but I would like to tell him that the Commission of 1925 recommended in the Report of the Education Department, page 4:

“While fully acknowledging the great services which the Churches have rendered to education in the past, we are of opinion that the time has now arrived to initiate a bold and comprehensive policy which will replace the existing denominational schools by government or colonial schools.”

This Commission was comprised Sir Charles Major, Kt., Chief Justice, Mr. R. E. Brassington, Sir Gordon Woolford and many others; and the Minister said in his opening speech that there was the Royal Commission which came here in 1938 and recommended that it would be better for Government to take control of these schools. Mr. Hammond, in his Report, also recommended that. I would like to ask the hon. Member what was the objective of those who wrote the Report. Were they interested in votes? They wrote the same thing for the benefit of education in the country; but because the

Government has brought this Bill, my friend simply says that it is intended to catch votes. That is the wrong way to look at the issue.

He also pointed out that while he would not say that all was well with the system as operated, the way the Government was going about it was certainly wrong; they should have had things done around the table. From what I understood, there were several conferences and discussions on this question of Government taking over the control of these schools between the Minister and the denominational bodies; so this question that it should be done around the table, was already carried out. The hon. Member has misunderstood the whole position, because this question of discussion around the table was done months ago; now he is saying that Government is going about it in the wrong way. I see no point in his argument.

I would like to make one reference more to the point raised by Mr. Fredericks. He said the Bill prevented the Hindus and Muslims from building schools. I think that is dragging the whole debate out of its context. My friend has really missed the point. He has misinterpreted the purpose of this Bill; and it is rather regrettable that he has taken this stand. He has dragged the discussion down to a low level. It is a pity a man of his standing should drag the debate to such a low depth. He also said that the ultimate aim is to abolish religion.

What is the purpose of making such a statement? The trouble is, as I see it, that some of the Members of the "Opposition" find themselves unable to offer constructive criticism on Measures coming before this Council for consideration. They feel that the best thing to be done is to cast aspersions, to castigate the Government, to use all of their spite, venom and malice against the

Government so that the daily newspapers — I prefer to call them "daily rags"—would report what is being said in this Council. That is a very poor show, and the people who are prepared to oppose the Government must understand that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time.

**Mr. Ajodha Singh:** I beg to move that the speaker be given ten minutes more.

**Mr. Gajraj:** I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

**Mr. Saffee:** I was saying that some of the Members of the "Opposition" find themselves unable to offer constructive criticism against Measures brought here by the Government, and they resort to abuse, insults and unconvincing arguments. This does not contribute one way or another to the progress of this country, and the Members around this Table should endeavour to get on with the business of this Council. I hope they will learn that the role of the "Opposition" is not only to embarrass the Government, but to offer constructive criticism. We are still prepared to carry on, despite the rantings of some hon. Members.

I wish to conclude by making a few more points. One of the points raised by Mr. Jackson was that the Muslims and Hindus got their education from the Christians. That is an indisputable fact. Nevertheless, we have to accept it and live with it. I wish to remind the hon. Member that African, Hindu and Muslim slaves were brought into this country by the Christians and forced to work under sub-human conditions. We admit that they educated the Hindus and Muslims, but the hon. Member must admit everything. Mr. hon. Friend must have forgotten his history.

[MR. SAFFEE]

Another point made by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (he is not in his seat at the moment) was to the effect that "if you were to look at education, you would have to say that it is Christian history". I would like to remind him that the history of British Guiana indicates that the Churches came with the masters. That is the history of British Guiana. The Churches either came with, or shortly after the masters. It is a pity the hon. Member is not in his seat at the moment.

The hon. Member made another point, and I will quote from the notes I have made while he was speaking. He said: "If these schools were owned by Hindus or Muslims, this Government would not have introduced this Bill." What a display of ignorance and stupidity! This Bill has nothing to do with the Hindus and Muslims, but the hon. Member wants to castigate the Government. The "Opposition" is only capable of castigating the Government by abuse and insults, but it is not capable of producing constructive criticism. [Mr. Campbell: "You are doing the same thing now]. This Bill is not intended to introduce discrimination among the denominations. The "Opposition" does not have the interests of the people of British Guiana at heart. It must be remembered that some people cannot see things in their right perspective. We hope that they will learn from time to time.

The hon. Member went on to say that the P.P.P. backed down on the introduction of the Rice Mill Bill. I would like to remind him that we have passed legislation in this Council in favour of the entire community. We have voted in favour of the lease-hold system, and it is claimed that we have the greatest number of supporters in the countryside—people who own land. We have passed the Land Bonds Bill—that will also affect the people in the coun-

tryside who own land. We do not consider legislation because it affects Hindus, Muslims or P.P.P. supporters; we pass legislation in the interests of the people in this country. We want to see this country properly developed.

I wish to conclude by saying that this Bill was not brought here with the intention of discriminating against any denominational Bodies, or any Body for that matter. It was brought in the interest of the welfare and educational development of the people in this country. I, therefore, have very good reasons for supporting this Bill.

**Mr. Burnham:** Mr. Speaker, it was most interesting to hear the hon. Member for Western Berbice accusing the "Opposition" of offering no constructive criticism over the past three years. But some memories are short, some are inaccurate, and some people, perhaps, cannot understand what they hear.

For instance, in 1957 when I suggested to this Government during the Debate on the Estimates that there should be a Unit or Department to take care of the investigation of our resources—[Interruption.]—I see some hyenas in this Council. I was saying that there should be some investigation of our resources on a properly organized basis before embarking upon a Development Programme. I was told at the time, by a person who is now an Ex-Minister, that Government did not want bourgeois advisers. But, today, we see that the Leader of the Majority Party is talking about the necessity for an assessment of our resources—three years after I so advised.

The Majority Party is in the habit—[Interruption.]—at least I appreciate smiles rather than grins. That is why it is always so easy to get along with the Leader of the Majority Party rather than the Chairman. I was about to say that the hon. Member for Western Berbice seems to misunderstand what is to



be done in this Council. From time to time the "Opposition" in their wisdom may put forward counter-proposals or criticize something done by the Government. When a counter-proposal is put forward, it is rejected out of hand, and yet we hear from the hon. Member that nothing constructive comes from the "Opposition".

It is the democratic right of any Party in office to believe that whatever it does is in the interest of the country. That conceit is part of the system of Democratic Government. I do not quarrel with the Majority Party for saying that everything they have done is in the interest of the country. But they are certainly carrying their conceit beyond the democratic limit, when they do not allow others whose point of view is *bona fide* the conceit that their point of view is also in the best interest of the country.

On this particular Measure a great deal of heat has been generated. I must concede that it was not heat from one side, for heat appeared to come from both sides of the Council. In this Debate there has been a great deal of confusion; there has been a lot of cant and hypocrisy. The first bit of hypocrisy evidenced was the suave manner in which the Minister of Community Development and Education sought to jump on my bandwagon by alleging that, in his desire to abolish dual control, he was merely relating it to a policy which I had adumbrated over seven years ago. On this question I make no apologies. [Laughter.]

In 1953 I did say that I proposed to abolish dual control of schools by legislation. I am not afraid to admit what I have said in the past; nor am I ashamed to admit that, after careful thought, I have decided to change my approach to this problem. [Laughter.]

Now that we have heard that vulgar giggle, may I remind this Council that these P.P.P. political gymnasts won the last election with the main plank that the Rice Marketing Board should be made a co-operative, but they came here and voted against it. They promised the workers \$4.50 per day, but their leader said "Not a cent more" in 1959.

There can be no doubt that in spite of what people may attempt to say, in spite of the fact that every politician attempts to prove to his electorate that he has always been consistent, that politicians are the one group of men and women who from time to time adjust their minds and thoughts, and adjust and change their attitudes.

When this Government was passing the Land Bonds Bill its spokesman said "It is not we who started it, it is Sir Frank McDavid. It is his idea for the acquisition of lands not beneficially occupied." We have heard that the justification for the attitude of the Government on the question of dual control of schools can be found in the fact that in Mexico there is no religious teaching in the schools, and that the same applies to Puerto Rico. To my mind, apart from the fact that the Education Ordinance and the Regulations do not make religious teaching in the schools compulsory, it is not sufficient for us to say that because in Mexico and Puerto Rico there is no religious teaching in the schools, that the same thing is good for British Guiana.

The same may be said of some of the arguments from this side of the Table. Not because something is happening in certain Latin-American countries must we follow the pattern. It seems to me that on this particular question of what is happening in other countries both sides of the Council are arguing from false premises. The question of dual control of schools is an old one. We are grateful to the Minister for

[MR. BURNHAM]

doing a certain amount of research and reminding us of how many years ago the problem raised its head, and the difficulties which have presented themselves. I have no doubt that a system which has been in existence for over a century must have some very unsatisfactory features.

I am a son of a schoolmaster of a school which was under dual control. I know of the hymn singing and organ playing that teachers have to do to get promotion. I know that teachers have to conduct vespers if they are to remain in the good books of certain managers. I know of a recent instance in a certain school in which a third class untrained teacher was given preference to a first class trained applicant for some post. The hon. Minister is not being original when he discloses that there are certain disgusting and unsatisfactory features about the system of dual control of schools.

The British Guiana Teachers' Association some years ago was in favour of the abolition of dual control. It was so in favour in 1953 when I adumbrated my policy for the abolition of the system. Let us consider what is the attitude of the Teachers' Association now. Before we consider it, however, may I observe that it is necessary to consult the trade union of a group of workers, but the People's Progressive Party and its political gymnasts say at one time that it will consult a union provided that the union agreed with them, but when the union disagrees with them they send questionnaires to individual teachers within the union to see if they can persuade those individuals to change the point of view held by the union.

As far as I am aware at the moment, the Teachers' Association, through Mr. Williams, said a year or

two ago that something must be done. [Interruption.] The Minister will have an opportunity to reply, and his time will be unlimited. He need not be so nervous. The Teachers' Association and the denominations apparently came to some agreement that a system of Schools Control Committees would answer the problem. What was to be the constitution of those Schools Control Committees? As I understand it, they would have a Chairman from the denomination, a Member of the Legislative Council, a senior official of the Education Department, two nominees of the Governing Body, and a paid non-voting Secretary. One from outside may say that such a Committee is weighted in favour of the denomination, but that is what the B.G. Teachers' Association accepted—not under pressure so far as I am aware—and I understand that they were prepared to work that system, as they thought that the presence of a Member of the Legislature and of a senior official of the Education Department would ensure fairness in the appointment and promotion of teachers. We must not assume that such a Committee will not work satisfactorily; we have not tried the system yet. If we had tried the system and found that it failed to work, then we could have revamped the system and no doubt changed it.

What is the basic opposition of teachers to the system of dual control? I know it better than the Minister. I am the son of a teacher, and I was a teacher myself. I was also legal adviser to the Teachers' Association. Their basic objection to the system is that not always are teachers promoted on the basis of professional ability and moral integrity. That is their complaint, and it applies all round. When the Budget debate comes up I shall refer to certain departments where professional ability does not seem to be the criterion in the case of certain people, and I am going to ask the Minister why he has held up the appointment of the headmaster of Cane

Grove school for months, and why he has sanctioned the appointment of a head-teacher to Augsburg school in a matter of minutes? It is a case of six of one and half a dozen of the other. Who is the man slated for appointment to Cane Grove and approved by the Education Department, and who is the man for Augsburg school? Take the beam out of thine own eye before thou takest the mote out of thy brother's.

The Teachers' Association did object to the unfairness with respect to promotion under dual control, and they are absolutely right. It is time that teachers be promoted because of their ability and not because they are prepared to kowtow to one person or another. I am not vote-catching now. The educational system of this country is much too important for vote-catching around this Table, but I ask if that is the major complaint of the teachers, whether the only way to adjust it is, as the Minister says, to abolish dual control of schools entirely? This Government does not propose to abolish dual control in every phase. I think the Minister would be well advised to consult the Director of Education, because I am going to ask him later, while he is talking about the abolition of dual control, to tell us something about the Rama Krishna Dharmic Sabha school at Kitty which got a block grant last year and will get full Government aid next year. Let him ask his Director to give him the necessary information, if he has not yet ascertained it, as to why the Hindi school at Cove and John and the one at Reliance, Canje, were given grants when this Government says it wants to abolish dual control?

It seems to me that the contention of the religious denominations is not far off the point when they say that it would take an extraordinary amount of money to provide the managerial services which are at the moment provided by the denominations, and when we consider the fact that we do not have a

sufficient number of schools to take care of the children of school age and to give them a proper education, it seems to me that if you can remedy the faults of dual control without undertaking the management of the schools in all its aspects, it would be better to do that and give yourself elbow room for the erection of more schools, as, for instance, the Trinidad Government is doing at the moment.

This Government which talks about its solicitude for education and the building of schools, voted \$616,600 for primary school buildings, furnishings and equipment for 1960, but of that sum it had spent only \$89,708—less than half—up to the end of June. Instead of spending the money it has to do something constructive, Government is spending its time deciding, not so much to abolish dual control of schools but to take away schools from certain denominations.

The hon. Member for Western Berbice says it is not a question of division. If it is not a question of division, if you are consistent that you want to abolish dual control of schools, why are you still encouraging people like the Rama Krishna Dharmic Sabha. Of course, the connection between that particular school and a certain individual who I know was instrumental in the purchase of "Freedom House" was purely a coincidence. But, Mr. Speaker, what does this Bill really propose? It proposes to take over the responsibility of control and management of schools built entirely out of Government funds.

I am going to assume, because I do not have the knowledge which the hon. Member for New Amsterdam has, that it was perfectly true that it was public funds that were responsible for the 51 schools set out in the schedule and amendment thereto. We have heard the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, giving us a history of the undertakings of a previous Government with respect to Kingston Methodist School. The hon.

[MR. BURNHAM]

Member for Western Berbice, who has suddenly become the spokesman for his Government and his Party has not told us anything about that.

I remember that when I stood here and opposed this Government honouring an undertaking of a previous Government with respect to Mr. French-Mullen that the Elected Majority, ably supported by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, said that an agreement must be sacred and must be honoured. If you are honouring it with respect to Mr. French-Mullen, who left because he did not get the plum, certainly, if there was an agreement with the Methodist Body with respect to the Kingston school, tell me why it is not honoured? What principle are you going to violate?

I can see no principle being violated if an agreement by a previous Government with respect to the Methodist Schools were to be honoured; and I say this further: that if the expenses which will naturally follow from the implementation of this Bill were considered, any reasonable person would have gone ahead and built Government schools instead. No religious denomination would object to Government building schools. No religious organization would object to staffing the Government schools without any attention being paid to the religious persuasion of the teachers. That is what the Government of Trinidad is doing. Leave them with their schools and vote more money and build more schools. Instead, Government would not spend what it has.

In 1953, I drew up a memorandum recommending that each year five Guianese be sent away to do engineering courses. The Interim Government did nothing about it. What has the People's Progressive Party done?

**The Minister of Communications and Works** (Mr. Ram Karran): More than that!

**Mr. Burnham:** More than what?

You mean a few East German scholarships? As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, this Government says it is following my policy in one respect, and it ignores something else positive that I did. When we talked about training people for the take over of the Electricity Corporation, the Minister of Communications and Works told us about technical students. We want technologists, not technicians. Of course, the distinction would be difficult for the Minister to follow. That is why in 1953 I said: "Send at least five Guianese away every year so that after six years you will have five engineers coming back each year, including electrical engineers". Let me hear from them what courses they set out, apart from the East German scholarships which do not come out of Government funds? When I moved the Motion with respect to the training of Guianese, they sat there like mutes.

**The Minister of Trade and Industry**

(Dr. Jagan): Sir, to a point of order: Are we debating the training of Guianese?

**Mr. Burnham:** I am not surprised that the Minister of Trade and Industry —

**Mr. Speaker:** When these cross talks come across the Table and one Member or another answers, that is just the time when he gets 'off the rail'. If Members continue with these cross talks they will find at one time or other, they will get 'off the rail'.

**Mr. Burnham:** I am not surprised that the Minister feels I am outside the ambit of the taking away of the 51 schools. I remember that in 1953, I was writing memorandum after memorandum suggesting scholarship after scholarship. I was told, left to me I would spend too much money on education; and I know this is the view of the leader of the Majority Party.

**Mr. Speaker:** Who is he?

**Mr. Burnham:** The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry. His attitude is that scholarships are a waste of time. The most he will do is to lend money for people to study; therefore, he cannot appreciate an allusion to this wider subject. Instead of taking away 50 or 51 schools, let us have a proper educational programme. Let us have a proper programme for Guianization and let us not have such ignorance as a reply, that you are going to train Guianese at the Technical Institute to run the Electricity Corporation.

When I look at Section 32A which is to be enacted under this Bill, I can see that it points to two incidents of which I read in the Press with respect to the locking out of a headmaster by the Priest-in-Charge of the Moravian School. Let me observe, immediately, that in my opinion it was a piece of cheek on the part of the Minister to lock out the headmaster. Let me observe, whether you have dual control or whatever control, it was a piece of impudence to attempt to lock out the schoolmaster. But you do not have to seize 51 schools to remedy that. The Minister ought to know, under the Education Ordinance, Chapter 91, he has power to make Regulations, and Regulations such as envisaged in 32C can certainly be made under the Education Ordinance.

The only part of the Bill which seems to recommend itself to me, and I think it can be put elsewhere, is that which obviously seeks to prevent the Manager prohibiting people from going lawfully to the school or on the school land. It is most alarming that in these days a Manager should lock the doors of a school building. In my days it was the schoolmaster who had access and entry to the building. As I say, 32C can be embodied in a regulation, and all the more so since as it stands now, it does not have general operation. It only operates with respect to the 51 schools Government is to take over. This should be to all schools.

The second thing which I see this Bill sets out to do today is to end dual control with respect to 51 schools. We have heard the Minister bemoaning the fact that people who do not belong to one Christian sect cannot get promotion in a school which is controlled by another Christian sect.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time.

**Mr. Kendall:** I beg to move that the hon. Member be given half-hour more.

**Mr. Jackson:** I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

**Mr. Burnham:** We have heard the Minister say that Hindus and Muslims have a very difficult time. **[Mr. Rai:** "I never said that".] The Minister claims that he did not say that, but I am sure that my precis is accurate. **[Mr. Rai:** "Your paraphrase".] I prefer to say that my precis accurately sets out what he said. We are going to take away 51 schools which have been built from Government funds exclusively, and we are going to take over the control and management of them. It is my view that, at this stage of our country's history, we cannot afford to take over these schools with all of the expenses and responsibilities that go with the take-over. It is only my view that the system, as I shall suggest later, can be so revamped that the ills of which it has been rightly accused will no longer exist.

As I had reason to observe earlier, there is an inconsistency in the attitude of the Government on this question. It is not that the Minister has come here and said that it is Government's conviction that schools which are built out of Government funds must be run solely and exclusively by the Government.

[MR. BURNHAM]

The Minister says that dual control is not a good thing; it is a bad thing; it must be abolished and condemned. Is this not the epitome of stupidity? If you decide that the system is to be abolished, why encourage people to build schools? I have already illustrated how other schools which have been built have been given Government aid. In other words, while you are saying it is a bad system, you are still encouraging people to build schools and making available certain grants to them.

Although the Minister talks about the ills under which the teachers labour, he is still giving grants to certain schools. The hon. Member for Western Berbice says that the primary purpose of dual controlled schools is to convert rather than to educate children. The Minister says that he wants to abolish dual control of schools, but what he really wants to do is to get at the Christian schools. I say that without fear. What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. Why do they want to take over these 51 schools when the Rama Krishna Dharmic Sabha school in Kitty will be the recipient of a grant as from next year?

No wonder the Minister found himself embarrassed when he attended Speech Day at the Bishops' High School. It must be remembered that these things have to pass through the Education Committee. No wonder also that this Minister found it necessary to make remarks about the standard of the work in certain Secondary Schools to which grants-in-aid were given. He gave a grant-in-aid to Tagore Memorial School, and he knows the quality of the work he got from its pupils. Of course it may be said that English is not their native language and they are not supposed to get along well with this subject. What do you expect from that school? Why get up here and say that you are shocked and surprised at the results?

It seems to me that in dealing with this matter of dual control, we must first of all recognize the ills. As I have observed before, one of the disadvantages of the system is that some Governing Bodies are inclined to promote teachers who are prepared to do Church work. I know that when my father, who was a schoolmaster, could not keep evening service he used to get a rough time. I am a Methodist—the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, need not look at me, because I can call names. I know about Mr. Underwood. I know that if my father was unable to keep Evensong he was in trouble.

The job of teaching is a profession, and a teacher should not be appointed or promoted because he can do Church work. [Mr. Davis: "I agree with that".] Secondly, I have not put professional ability alone as the criterion; I put also, moral suitability. It is expected that one must be sure of the integrity, quality and moral fibre of an individual before putting him to teach and instruct young children at a most impressionable age. If you agree with that, how are you going to achieve it?

It must be remembered that apart from the fact that some religious or moral training is necessary in schools, there is the material consideration of the expense involved if Government were to take over all of these schools. The expense will be tremendous, and the money could be better spent in building new schools. [Mr. Rai: "You have to appoint Managers".] The Minister says *sotto voce* "You have to appoint Managers".

I understand that one criticism of dual control is that some of the Managers are religionists and not sufficiently competent to manage a school. If that is one of the criticisms and ills you desire to get rid of, then you will have to appoint Managers who are competent educationalists and not Party lackeys. What is the difference between the Parson who handles things, and the

layman whose only qualification is the fact that he is a lackey of the Government in power? You must look at the quality of the minds of the Managers, otherwise you will be going from one ill to another. If you are going to make all of these schools Government Schools the Management must be under the control of competent educationists—you cannot get competent people for 3 cents.

Therefore it seems to me that the tremendous expenses involved in taking over these schools at a time when we are so backward in our school building programme ought to be given serious consideration. We ought to see whether we cannot continue to enjoy the services of the Religious Bodies, while removing some of the grosser ills. I do not think the Government can say with justification that the quality of the work in dual control schools is poor, and that automatically the quality of the work in Government Schools will be of a higher order. As I see it, standards are set by the Government in the Education Ordinance and in the Education Regulations. If those standards are not observed, then the schools will no longer continue to be the recipients of grants. If standards have fallen, it is as much the fault of the Education Department as it is the fault of the Denominational Bodies.

I agree absolutely that in any system of education the final responsibility for standards must be in the hands of the Government. I have no compromise on that, but final responsibility for standards does not necessarily mean that non-Government agencies cannot participate in the management of the schools concerned. So far as the appointment of teachers is concerned, I feel that the Schools Control Committee system should be made to work. It has been accepted by the British Guiana Teachers' Association and by the Denominations. If it—[Mr. Rai: "Say what you mean".]

**Mr. Speaker:** It is difficult for me to hear during these interruptions.

**Mr. Burnham:** I was saying that if it is found in practice that this system does not ensure promotion on the basis of merit, then scrap the system or change it, but do not condemn it before you try it. When I first saw it my reaction was that there would be overwhelming representation for the denominations. If the B.G.T.A. feels that it will work, then let us try it. I feel that a member of the Government and the senior member of the education Department will ensure proper promotion. If the system does not work, we may have to embark on something like a Teachers' Commission in the same way as we have a Public Service Commission, where the criterion will be professional suitability and moral integrity. Let us try this system instead of rushing headlong and taking over the absolute control and management of these 51 schools, which will cost, for proper management, an extra amount of money.

Why not use the money for building better schools in remote areas in the country? The other day I saw a school in the Rupununi at Kato—my kitchen looks better than that. The accommodation for the teacher is atrocious; the sanitary conveniences are lower than rudimentary. Instead of taking away 51 schools, why doesn't Government take some of the money and improve the standards of some of these schools in the interest of education and other things you profess here. My contention is that the interest in education you profess here is different from the interest in education you express elsewhere. Furthermore, let us get a proper programme for the building of Government Schools.

Let us build as many Government schools as we can find material and money for. Let us accelerate the teachers' training courses at the Government Training College. Let us

[MR. BURNHAM]

have more trained teachers so that these Government schools can be staffed from the very beginning or at the earliest possible opportunity with competent teachers. If there still remains the complaint that a person's religious persuasion is more important than his professional ability, at least we will have sufficient schools in which such persons will find no difficulty of promotion. It is not that I for one moment condone religious persuasion as a criterion, because I do not feel that if taxpayers' money is used to upkeep schools, only people of a particular religious persuasion should be employed in those schools. But to point to one ill and condemn the entire system is illogical, and I would recommend to this Government to leave these 51 schools alone. Be strong and strict in your standards, ensure a system whereby promotion is not denied people because of their religious persuasion, and accelerate your building of schools instead of not spending the money which you have voted year by year.

This Bill is rightly criticized by some persons because it appears to be aimed only at certain religious faiths. In a community like ours is it reasonable, is it intelligent, is it in the national interest to put forward legislation which creates the impression on a large section of the community that it is being discriminated against? Let me concede for the sake of argument that in the Christian schools Muslim and Hindu teachers cannot get promotion. I heard the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, reel off some names. I do not know the names or the facts. He says one thing and the Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Saffee) says another. I am going to assume that Muslims and Hindus cannot get promotion as teachers in Christian schools, but what is the answer? Is the answer to take over these schools on the false argument that by so doing Hindu and Muslim

teachers can get promotion, but you do not worry about the Hindu and Muslim schools which, obviously, are going to carry out the same policy that you allege the Christian bodies are carrying out, because I would like to see the Christian teacher who is going to be appointed to the Rama Krishna Dharmic Sabha school at Kitty and get promotion there. That is still possible even when this Bill is passed, because it is not abolishing the control which the religious denominations will have over certain schools.

Therefore I would urge the Government not to unnecessarily create confusion in this country, because that is what it is going to do. It is going to set the Christians up against the Hindus and Muslims. Let us face the realities of the situation in British Guiana. Let us face the realities of the support which it is said the P.P.P. gets. Don't you see what is going to be the reaction of the Christians—that the P.P.P. is merely trying to squeeze the Christians in favour of their supporters? And no amount of persuasion is going to convince the Christians into believing that that is not so.

Since you say that your main object in bringing this Bill is to see that proper standards are kept, since you say that the main object is to see that a teacher's religious persuasion is not a stumbling-block so far as his promotion is concerned, let us reform the system and spend our energies in a better fashion. My suggestions may not be acceptable to the Government because, as I had reason to observe yesterday, the Government always complains that opposition Members do not make suggestions, but when you make suggestions there is a mulish opposition to every suggestion you make. In fact it is sometimes heart-rending and sometimes amusing that if you suggest the insertion of a comma from this side of the Table it is stubbornly fought with a lot of irrational explanations.



I would ask Government to reconsider its attitude on this question. The Christians will not be persuaded that you are not attempting to apply pressure. Let us have an impartial body to go into the question of appointments and promotions of teachers, otherwise all your efforts will be wasted, this country will be further divided, and you do not have to get anyone to instigate a division. The situation at the moment is complicated. It is one thing to talk about being interested in British Guiana as a nation and as a people, but political reality should impress upon you that if any act which you commit is going to create further division, create suspicion, it is an act which should be shunned, otherwise all your efforts, allegedly in the interest of the country, will be in vain. But if you want to divide the country it is your democratic right to do so. It is said that one of the rights in a Democracy is the right of the elected majority to ruin the country, and I am saying that if you persist with this measure as it is at the moment, you are threatening this country with deep dissension, division and ruin. It is a matter entirely for you. You can ignore; you can fail to heed the points of view of other persons. The blood will be upon your own shoulders.

I am opposed to this Bill—opposed because it does not tackle the problems of dual control of schools as set out by the Minister. I am opposed to it because it appears in the light of experience as discriminatory legislation; I am opposed because in certain instances it is a breach of faith, a breach of agreement made by your predecessors in office, and I hope that the Government will see some wisdom in reconsidering its point of view.

**The Minister of Natural Resources** (Mr. Benn): The hon. Member for Georgetown Central has reminded me of the tale of the horseman who jumped on his horse and advanced in all direc-

tions. In an effort to hide his ballet dancing, in an effort to throw a curtain over the fact that he has once again changed from a stand of which he was one of the foremost advocates, the hon. Member launched out in all directions and threw as much mud as he could, and as he is accustomed to. I had hoped that this debate would have taken the form of a debate on Dual Control and its importance to education, but except for one or two speeches it has been made to look like a religious controversy.

One or two Members have threatened that the abolition of dual control of schools or the taking over of 51 schools built out of Government funds will create riots and bloodshed. The hon. Member for Georgetown Central has just suggested what he believes will happen if this Bill goes through. This is the same hon. Member who is reported to have threatened shopkeepers of Buxton at a street-corner meeting, that he would destroy them, and said that they must leave the village if they did not intend to vote for him. He also threatened the Red Cross people that he was going to destroy them. The same hon. Member says that this Bill which has been introduced into this Council after due consideration and after due notice in the Manifesto of the People's Progressive Party, is aimed at dividing the people and causing all the evils that one can imagine through what he describes as discriminatory legislation.

I have been looking at this problem for some time, and I wish to say that among the stars in the crown of the Majority Party, this Bill is the brightest. No one who has examined the Development Programme, has looked around the countryside and seen improvements or has listened to and read the Governor's speech with the Annexure, can doubt that this country is facing a great change. No one can doubt that with this development there goes a desire for better education; for

[MR. BENN]

while economic development rests upon capital accumulation, mental development is also necessary for economic development. It is in this light that hon. Members of this Council should view this legislation.

The hon. Member for Georgetown Central exhibited some knowledge of the problem as it affects promotions. Of course, what he talks suggest that he speaks from little knowledge of what the problem is on the question of the appointment of teachers. His fulmination on the Schools Control Committee to one like myself who knows what is in the recommendations of the Committee that recommended a Control Committee, is evidence to me that the hon. Member does not know what a Schools Control Committee is or else he would not speak of it so. But we will come to that later on.

The hon. Minister was at pains to point out some of the problems of this dual control. Many Members said it is an attack on religion; that the Government is going to destroy Christianity. We are not going to destroy Christianity. If this Bill is intended to destroy Christianity, then those people who have gone before and advocated it, and the thousands of people who welcome it, would be misguided. But many Christians in Guiana, and non-Christians, welcome this step that the Government is now about to take.

I have a flair for Guiana's history. In 1939, The West Indian Royal Commission came to this country. The Teachers' Association, like many other organizations, went before that West Indian Royal Commission and made its proposals for the improvement of the social and economic standards of the people in this country. In a document produced by "The Daily Chronicle" — "The Royal Commission in British Guiana, 1939", under discussion, the Chair-

man assured the Christian bodies that any step that they (the Commission) thought of to remove dual control was not one intended to interfere with religion. Let me read, with your permission Sir, from page 25:

"THE CHAIRMAN: Certainly, the last thing I would suggest is to put religion out of schools, so please do not think that is in my mind."

The Chairman had assured the religious bodies because, you know, they are always afraid that somebody is going to destroy Christianity. Nobody wants to destroy Christianity. The Church is the last bastion against Christianity.

A Rev. Gentleman who went before that Commission discussing the question of dual control, said this, and I quote:

"REV. MR. BRYANT: When it comes to actual appointments in the schools, they are recommended by the manager to the Governing Body and by the Governing Body to the Department of Education."

That is what the Rev. Hawley Bryant told the Commission in 1939. Later on, however, when the Teachers' Association—the Trade Union as an hon. Member described it — went before the Commission, it pointed out what great injustice had been done. And, indeed, it was another illustrious son of Guiana, Mr. H. D. Durant, who said, and I quote:

"MR DURANT: Yes, sir, as a rule, and especially as regards Headteachers. It is very, very difficult for the Headteacher of one denomination to obtain employment as such in another denomination."

He was replying to a question from the Chairman. So the parson said one thing and the teachers said another thing. This was in 1939. But some Members say that times have changed; why not give the Schools Control Committee a chance to work; the problems you talk of do not exist today; people should come and go freely into the

schools. Let me refer to three or four cases with which I was concerned when I had the good fortune to be Minister of Community Development and Education. In one case, I copied the letter which a young lady by the name of Miss Inez Moonasar, wrote to the Education Department. Sir, I would like, with your permission, to read certain portions of the letter dated 18th October, 1956:

"On Friday 21st my brother went to the Head Teacher and along with the other boy Nizamudeen Khan who passed the exam too, he sent them with a note to the Manager, Mr. N. Lalljee. The Manager was not at home and the note was left. In the afternoon my brother and the other boy went back to Rev. Lalljee and they were told to see the Head teacher, as he had a talk with him already on the matter. Mr. Proffitt told my brother that the Manager said he understands that he was not a Christian. Mr. Proffitt advised my brother to bring along a relative to speak to the Manager. Next morning Saturday 22nd inst., I went to the Vicarage and heard that the Manager had left for Orealla. He returned on Monday 24th inst. I went again on Tuesday 25th inst. and he was not in. I went back on Wednesday morning 26th inst with my brother and finally met him.

Rev. Lalljee told me that my brother was not a Christian, and he cannot get a job as a teacher on those grounds."

I would not bore this hon. Council by reading the whole letter which is easily available, but I wish to read another portion:

"I told the priest—Rev. Lalljee that my brother was prepared to leave the Lutheran Church, and be converted to the Anglican Church, and he did not answer. I must mention this Sir, that Miss Clothilde Yhap who is a staunch Roman Catholic member, has just joined the staff of Skeldon Anglican School (3.9.56).

We are very poor people Sir, and we make great sacrifices to give our brother as much Education as we can afford. My father died over two years ago, and my Mother has a stroke. I am a seamstress, and I am doing every-thing possible to assist my little brother."

This was an appeal to a Christian denomination by a young lady whose brother could not get a job because they thought he was not a Christian, and when they found out he was a Christian, then he was not the type of Christian they wanted. This is one case.

I shall refer to another case. This is the case, Sir, of Mr. Asgar Ali, who made application for the Headteachership of the Canadian Mission School at Maria's Pleasure, Wakenaam.

Mr. Asgar Ali, who was appointed a Senior Assistant on January 1, 1947, is a Class I trained teacher and he left the Training College in 1944. The person who was appointed in preference to him was Mr. Joseph Dookhan, who was appointed Senior Assistant in 1948, although he was at the College at the same time as the Class I trained teacher, Mr. Asgar Ali. In addition he is older—nearly two years older—than Mr. Dookhan. The Director of Education told the Governing Body of the Canadian Mission School it was wrong for them to appoint Mr. Dookhan over the head of Mr. Asgar Ali.

The Rev. Elder and Rev. Reoch said they had been completely satisfied with Mr. Asgar Ali as a teacher and as a person. They said, also, that they thought him sufficiently capable and highly trained, and trusted him enough to take the job; but they said it was impossible to appoint him as a head-teacher as he was a non-Christian. This is the case of Mr. Asgar Ali.

Then, there was the case of Miss Gibbons. I believe that in the Appropriation Bill debate of 1958 I had the cause to extract a portion of a letter from the Bishop of Georgetown to the Director of Education on this matter. Miss Gibbons had been teaching for 30 years. Miss Gibbons had been in the Roman Catholic School in Charlestown for most of the 30 years. Miss Gibbons, when the appointment for

[MR. BENN]

deputy headteachership was to be made, who had taught for most of her 30 years in the Roman Catholic School, made application for the appointment. Miss Gibbons was an Anglican, and she was not given the job. The Director of Education took up the matter with the Governing Body. I wish to quote from the Budget Debate of the 30th January, 1958. I refer to column 555 of the *Hansard* which contains a portion of a letter from the Bishop of Georgetown to the Education Department on this matter. It states:

"Though her qualifications are high and her experience long, it must be borne in mind that there is one qualification which she lacks which is possessed by the other applicants—for not being a . . . she is not able to undertake . . . Religious Instruction in the School."

At the height of her professional career she was told that, in spite of her ability and professional qualifications, she could not get promotion. Is this the system hon. Members is defending?

Mr. Burnham: "Are" not "is".

Mr. Kendall: He was the Minister of Community Development and Education.

Mr. Benn: I am grateful to the hon. Member for Georgetown Central for his grammatical correction. Is this the system hon. Members are defending? There are other points to which I would like to draw the attention of hon. Members, because the question of dual control has been bandied all over the country and given different interpretations by hon. Members. Some of them have castigated the Government on its attempt to assume the control of 51 schools which have been built by us, the Government. Some people have said that we are out to bring religion to an end in this country.

The hon. Member for Georgetown Central mentioned the Dual Controls Agreement, and a few other Members also referred to it. I say, without fear of contradiction, that very few of the hon. Members on the other side of the Table have read the Dual Controls Agreement. No legislation was ever made for this so-called agreement; no Government attempted to put it into practice, because of the fact that every Government since 1945 felt that it was impracticable for the Agreement to work. As a matter of fact the Religious Bodies placed a different interpretation on the Dual Controls Agreement from that of the Education Authorities and Government.

In a letter to the Bishop of Georgetown, a former Director of Education, Mr. Clough, drew attention to the fact that there was a difference in the interpretation. The Bishop of Georgetown said that the least the Government could do "as a *quid pro quo*" is to give the schools to the denominations. The Religious Bodies said that their understanding was that they should be able to admit their own children into the schools. We thought that all children were God's children. Christian children are God's children. But, perhaps, according to the cleric, the children of Muslims and Hindus are not God's children; the children of Roman Catholics are God's children, but Anglicans, Presbyterians and Jordanites, etc., are not God's children.

Some hon. Members suggested that the Government was wrong in not giving effect to a decision taken by a previous Government. Ask the Minister of Education in 1953 what has happened to his legislation regarding the Education Committee? It was thrown aside in 1953 when the Government had its Constitution taken away. Some Members say that Muslims and Hindus should build schools —[Mr. Burnham: "The legislation was not drafted at the time, but you would

not know about that.”]— and employ their own teachers. Others suggest that we should allow everybody to build schools all over the place in order to solve the problem of overcrowding. They want Hindus to build their own schools and employ their own teachers, but we do not want to encourage that type of rivalry.

I would like to quote from page 58 of the Report of the Wilson-Snell Commission. Referring to this question of rivalry in dual control of schools it states:

“The position is not improved by the rivalry of the churches, which has led to the creation of large numbers of schools which are redundant to local requirements and which they cannot afford to maintain in a decent condition.” On this the Commission record the opinion that “the dissipation of educational energy over a large number of small, insanitary and ill-equipped and inadequately-staffed schools, will continue in a greater or less degree so long as the State relies upon competing denominations to provide schools for the people.”

An hon. Member mentioned the Education Code says no one can put up a school less than one mile away. Everybody knows that a mile is not a far distance. But let me give you an instance, and it is not intended to detract or suggest that the people who want to build primary schools should not do so. At the Helena Canadian Mission School, the headmistress is an Indian; at the Mahaica Scots School, a different denomination, the headmaster is a Negro, it has been found that, because the district is predominantly an Indian district, many Indian students were leaving Mahaica School and going to the Canadian Mission School.

My hon. Friend the Member for Georgetown Central referred to a school at Adelphi-Canje—

**Mr. Burnham:** I said “Reliance”.

**Mr. Benn:** He has his information mixed up as usual; the school was built by a Religious Body. I will leave that matter for the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education to deal with. The hon. Member for Georgetown Central is a bit uncomfortable at the moment. Grants have been given to the Lutheran Schools, Anglican Schools and others which have been built since this Government has been in office. The hon. Member mentioned the Hindu Schools because he wants to put a racial twist to the Bill. The Lutheran School in the housing scheme was recently built, and it was given a grant; the Lutheran School at Mara has been given a grant during this Government's term of office, so why mention the Indian School at Kitty? The hon. Member cannot escape from the racialism that is so much a part of him. There is the case of the problem of rivalry between the Lutheran School at Mara which has been able to accommodate more students who may have left the Mara Scots School.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time.

**Dr. Jagan:** I beg to move that the minister be given another half-hour.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

**Mr. Benn:** I was saying, why mention the Hindu Schools? Why bring in racialism in this Council, and then say that we want to divide the people? It is the Members on the other side of the Table who are trying to do that. They say that the Churches have spent their money in building schools. That may be true, but I want to take hon. Members' attention back to 1932 when the Appropriation Bill was discussed. An extract from the debate has been published in the “Thunder” of August 27, 1960. I quote:

[MR. BENN]

"The 1932 returns which are at hand, disclose that the Anglican body received £1,747, 14. 2. in addition to Capital Grants in Government Bonds valuing nearly £73,000. The Church of Scotland £467 10. 0., plus £18,000 in Government Bonds. The Roman Catholic Church £381. 11. 0. plus a capital sum of £24 in Government Bonds. The Methodist Church £318 15. 0. in addition to £16,000 in capital grants."

In addition denominational grants for schools and other purposes.

If the Churches were building all of those schools from their money, what were they doing with these grants and large sums of money in Government Bonds? In addition that very year, the Appropriation Ordinance, 1932, shows that Government spent £65,835 in running 178 schools with an enrolment of 4,972 children. Where is all the money that the religious bodies were spending on education? I am not saying that they have not spent money, but I will show how some of it was spent. I suggest that hon. Members should go along the Essequibo coast and see where the Church buildings are. What did the religious bodies do with the large sums of money provided by Guianese taxpayers for educational purposes? Do not suggest that they built those schools entirely out of their own funds.

The hon. Member referred to the Teachers' Association and asked why Government did not consult that "trade union." I say let the Association hold a plebiscite among teachers and ask them if they want dual control to continue. Because some of the teachers in Georgetown are against the Majority Party, they are opposed today to what they recommend in 1953. What they fought for in 1953 they say they are against today. The hon. Member for Georgetown Central says that there is no harm in change, just as the wind blows a weathercock. I say they have changed

for political reasons—because they feel that it would be a credit to the Majority Party which is part of the Government today. There are other motives among other teachers who are afraid of their denominations. Many of them have been told not to reply to the circular which was sent by the Minister of Education. If I understand rightly they were asked to say whether they wanted to work with Government or to remain with the religious denominations.

If a teacher is attached to a Governing Body which has six schools he is likely to get promotion as a headteacher faster than if he were in a Governing Body with 100 schools, because the line is longer and there is greater competition. That is the reason why some of the teachers have behaved in this way. One hon. Member suggested that this is Christian country. That is the type of behaviour that terrifies other people who are not Christians. Let us say that British Guiana has a large number of Christians, but we must admit that there are larger numbers of Hindus and Muslims in British Guiana. The same hon. Member suggested an independent Commission—an independent Commission for what? The Committee that recommended the establishment of Schools Control Committees was an independent Committee, but many of its members were parsons. Is it therefore surprising that in the composition of the suggested Schools Control Committees the Churches would have the greater say? Of course Government pays the piper and the Churches want to call the tune.

There is a long list of schools which the denominations have built since 1945, but I desire to bring to the notice of the Council cases of stubbornness on the part of some denominations. Unfortunately the Hopetown Anglican school was blown down in 1958. The Government suggested that in view of the

fact that there was a shortage of funds, and in view of the fact that the school did not accommodate so many children, that the Congregational school building at Hoptown should take all the children of the district, and the Government could withdraw the grant given to the Hoptown Anglican school. There was a big hue and cry and a delegation to the Minister, and finally when Government decided not to rebuild the Hoptown Anglican school the Church authorities said they would put up their own school.

This brings me to another case in which a Methodist school on the Essequibo Coast fell into disrepair, and the Education Department was able to bring sufficient pressure to bear on the Methodist authorities to allow their children to go to the Anglican school. What do the religious denominations do with their maintenance grants? Ask the Vicar of St. James-the-Less who is now Vicar of Christ Church, how he maintained St. James-the-Less. The denominations collect maintenance grants for their schools and use the money to rebuild one school. That was done in the case of the Hoptown school. This type of morality is very good for young children!

This sort of thing happens all over the country. Look at St. Mary's School, Brickdam, a beautiful building, but look at some of the others. The maintenance grants from some schools are used to maintain other schools of the particular denomination which are in the limelight. The Camp Street and Main Street atmosphere must be kept up. I expect to hear the hon. Member reply to these points which I am raising. One or two Members have said that the Government is dishonest in bringing forward this Bill. Did we not indicate it when we fought the election? Is it that some Members do not expect us to do what we say if we can reasonably do it? What did we say? We said that all schools built out of Government funds would be controlled by Government, and arrangements would be made for religious in-

struction to be given in those schools whenever parents desired it. Because we have followed our manifesto we are said to be dishonest. I read somewhere that an honest politician is one who, when he is bought, will stay bought. We of the Majority Party are not that "honest". I regard the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman) and the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Beharry) as being like the comedians, Laurel and Hardy. Some Members' political morality is of the type I have mentioned. They are bought and will stay bought. The P.P.P. is out of that; it says what it will do. What type of morality do some Members want — the type which sells Government telephones, Crown lands, and houses in the Housing Scheme? No, that is not our type of political morality.

Some hon. Members have said that the P.P.P. is opposed to denominational control of schools for ideological reasons. Some people have no ideology. I think the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Kendall), who was once Mayor of New Amsterdam, told a gathering of young people "We are not like those people who have ideologies." Possibly there are a lot of people in the "Opposition" who do not have ideologies. But whenever a Government which is dedicated to protect the majority of the population against the minority of the opulent, attempts to do anything, as the hon. Member for Western Berbice (Mr. Saffee) suggests, names are called. With your permission, Sir, I would like to go back a little into history, and to quote from a book entitled "The Enemy Forgotten", by Gilbert Green, which was written in 1957. Green referred to the remarks of an economist who supported the slave-owners and reviled those who were fighting against slavery. This is how he expressed his sentiments to the slave-owners in 1857. I quote from page 301 of the book:

"We warn the North that every one of the leading abolitionists is agitating the negro slavery question merely as a means to attain their ulterior ends... a

[MR. BENN]

surrender to Socialism and Communism—to no private property, no church, no law, to free love, free lands, free women and free children.”

This is 1857. They had been saying it over and over again. We have been accustomed to that record.

**Mr. Speaker :** Time.

ADJOURNMENT

**The Chief Secretary :** I beg to move that Council adjourn to Wednesday next at two o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** Council is now adjourned to Wednesday, 28th December, 1960, at two o'clock in the afternoon.

Members will see from the Minutes, proposals for sitting late on Wednesday night.

SEASON'S GREETINGS

We will not be meeting before Christmas, therefore, I take the opportunity to wish Members a very happy and peaceful Christmas and a brighter New Year.

*Council adjourned at 5.07 p.m.*