

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Thursday, 27th April, 1961

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

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

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

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

} *ex officio*

The Honourable Dr. C. B. Jagan	— <i>Member for Eastern Berbice</i> (Minister of Trade and Industry)
„ B. H. Benn	— <i>Member for Essequibo River</i> (Minister of Natural Resources)
„ „ Janet Jagan	— <i>Member for Western Essequibo</i> (Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)
„ Ram Karran	— <i>Member for Demerara-Essequibo</i> (Minister of Communications and Works)
„ B. S. Rai	— <i>Member for Central Demerara</i> (Minister of Community Development and Education).
Mr. W. O. R. Kendall	— <i>Member for New Amsterdam</i>
„ R. C. Tello	— <i>Nominated Member</i>
„ F. Bowman	— <i>Member for Demerara River</i>
„ L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.	— <i>Member for Georgetown Central</i>
„ A. L. Jackson	— <i>Member for Georgetown North</i>
„ S. M. Saffee	— <i>Member for Western Berbice</i>
„ Ajodha Singh	— <i>Member for Berbice River</i>
„ R. E. Davis	— <i>Nominated Member</i>
„ A. M. Fredericks	— <i>Nominated Member</i>
„ H. J. M. Hubbard	— <i>Nominated Member.</i>

Mr. E. V. Viapree—Clerk of the Legislature, (acting)

Mr. V. S. Charan—Assistant Clerk of the Legislature, (acting).

ABSENT :

Mr. S. Campbell—Member for North Western District

Mr. Jai Narine Singh—Member for Georgetown South

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

Mr. R. B. Gajraj —Nominated Member

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 Wednesday, 26th April, 1961, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

LEAVE TO MEMBER

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, has asked to be excused from today's meeting.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

The Financial Secretary (Mr. D'Andrade): Sir, I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the

Tax (Amendment No. 2) Bill.

The Attorney-General (Mr. Austin): Sir, I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the

Foreign Judgments (Reciprocal Enforcement) Bill.

ORDER OF THE DAY

BILLS — FIRST READING

The following Bills were read the First time:

(i) A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Tax Ordinance."

(ii) A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to make provision for the enforcement in British Guiana of judgments given in foreign countries which accord reciprocal treatment to judgements given in British Guiana, for facilitating the enforcement in foreign countries of judgements given in British Guiana, and for purposes connected therewith."

MOTIONS

EXEMPTION FROM DUTY OF ACADEMIC DRESS

The Financial Secretary: Sir, I beg to move:

"Be it resolved: That this Council in terms of Section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 102 of 1960, which was

made on the 21st day of December, 1960, and published in the Gazette on the 4th of February, 1961."

Item 50d, part III of the First Schedule to the Customs Ordinance provides that uniforms imported by members of the Civil Service for their own use, as required by Colonial Regulations, and the robes of the Legislature, Judicial and Legal Services, shall be exempt from duty. The purpose of this Order in Council is to extend a similar concession in respect of robes, gowns and other academic dress of any university, educational institution or professional body approved by the Director of Education, imported by a graduate or member of such university, institution or body for his personal use.

The Attorney-General: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

DUTY-FREE IMPORTS OF U.C.W.I. SUPPLIES

The Financial Secretary: Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Council in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 13 of 1961, which was made on the 14th day of February, 1961, and published in the Gazette on the 4th of March, 1961".

The purpose of the Order in Council now before Council is to extend, in respect of imports by the Extra-mural Department of the University College of the West Indies, the concession of duty-free imports of equipment and supplies. A similar concession is extended by the Governments of The West Indies; and there is a parallel concession in our Customs Ordinance in respect of imports by educational institutions approved by the Director of Education.

The Attorney-General: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

INCREASED DUTY ON COFFEE

The Financial Secretary: Sir, I beg to move:

"That this Council in terms of section 9 of the Customs Ordinance, Chapter 309, confirms Order in Council No. 15 of 1961, which was made on the 15th day of March, 1961, and published in the Gazette on the 18th of March, 1961."

The purpose of the Order in Council now before Council is to increase the rate of duty on ground coffee, roasted coffee beans and coffee extracts from 8 per cent. preferential and 16 per cent. general to 30 per cent. preferential and 38 per cent. general. The object of the increase is to give reasonable protection to the local coffee industry. The present low rates of duty are quite inadequate for this purpose. The imports of coffee at present, mainly in the form of extracts and essences, total nearly \$½ million a year. The increase in the duty now proposed will increase the retail price of coffee extracts and essences by something like 10 per cent.

The Attorney-General: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

EXTENSION OF RICE FARMERS ORDINANCE

Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Natural Resources to move the following Motion:

"Whereas by virtue of section 59 of the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1956, the said Ordinance will expire on the last day of April, 1961;

And whereas it is provided in the said section 59 that the Legislative Council may, prior to expiration of the Ordinance, by resolution declare that the Ordinance shall continue in force for such period as may be specified in the resolution;

And whereas it is expedient that the aforesaid Ordinance should continue in force for a further period of five years;

Now, therefore, be it resolved: that the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1956, shall continue in force for a further period of five years up to and including the 30th April, 1966."

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn): Sir, Section 59 of the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, 1956, provides that the Ordinance shall continue in force to the 30th April, 1961. As it now stands, it has been found that several provisions of this Ordinance need amending, and the Government has been working consistently with a view to amending and improving this Ordinance where necessary. It has been found, however, that it is not possible to conclude the arrangement for amending this Ordinance, and, since the life of the Ordinance ends in a few days from now, it has been found necessary to approach this Council to ask for the life of the Ordinance to be extended for another five years.

The Motion before Council seeks to give effect to the Government's desire to have the Ordinance extended to five years until the Amendments to the Ordinance are carried through.

I beg to move that Council approve the Motion.

The Attorney-General: I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

STATUE TO THE LATE MR. H. N. CRITCHLOW

Mr. Speaker: Council will now resume the debate on the following Motion:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that Government should erect a statue to the great pioneer of labour, the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, and that the statue be placed at Bourda Green."

[MR. SPEAKER]

Members are aware of the two Amendments which have been proposed. The Minister of Trade and Industry was about to speak when the adjournment was taken yesterday. He may do so now if he so desires.

The Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan): Sir, I did not think it was necessary for me to speak on this occasion, but because certain speakers gave the impression that we who represent the Majority Party were opposed to the idea of giving recognition, I think that it is my duty to say a few words on this Motion.

I rise, Sir, particularly because the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow was associated with trade unionism or was the founder of trade unionism, and because it is being said both in this country and outside, day in and day out, that the People's Progressive Party is out to destroy the Trade Union Movement. Insinuations, therefore, are floating high and wide that because we are opposed to the Trade Union Movement we do not want to give recognition to this son of Guiana—this patriot who was the founder of trade unionism in our country.

Then we hear, also, that because Mr. Critchlow was not a member of the P.P.P. we are refusing to honour him by erecting his statue. In fact, when one listens to the speeches, one gets the impression that we are being charged with sabotaging this Motion. Let me say here and now that we had always recognized the great work which was done by this great leader of the working class. We continue to do so, and in our writings and speeches at the street corners, we continue to make reference to his contribution to the working class struggles in this country.

It is surprising, therefore, to hear suggestions that we want to sabotage this effort to do something to commemorate

his memory. It is even more surprising because some people who today proclaim his name and pretend to be labour leaders—these so-called champions—would, I am afraid if Mr. Critchlow were to return and to take on the same role which he did when he started, be afraid to join him and march with him. Such is the situation in our country today—those who collaborate with the enemies of the working class dare accuse us and, instead, say that we do not want to do honour to this famous son of Guiana.

Critchlow was a rebel and a revolutionary in his time. He was persecuted; he was hounded and all sorts of things were meted out to him. It is all well and good, as I said, Sir, for people to sing his praise. We sing it, too, but it is a tragedy that those who sing his praise today do not follow in his footsteps but, instead, do everything to hold back the movement for political independence and social and economic emancipation for this country.

Only yesterday I was asked about the United Nations' petition which was forwarded on the question of independence. I refused to answer. How dare some of those same people who sabotaged the effort of this country to get independence come out and ask us about the petition to the United Nations for independence? What right do they have when everything they did contributed to the fact that British Guiana will not be free in August when every country, hither and thither, is going to be independent?

Mr. Speaker: Are we not going out of the realm of the particular Motion?

Dr. Jagan: I noticed the newspapers made mention of it today, so I thought of giving an explanation to it. However, Sir, I will take your advice and say that we would like those who shout, today, Mr. Critchlow's praise not only to build statues to him but to really live up to the ideals which he represented and for which he fought. And, indeed, to

fight as hard and as courageously as he fought for them. Whether it should be a monument, a tabloid or trade union hall, such matters should be decided later.

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing has already indicated in her speech that Government has given recognition to Mr. Critchlow. I understand that a street was named after him, and a Government boat was named after him. Why do we have to follow the imperialist tradition by building statues?

I think the Amendment which is proposed by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, should be supported because it will give the Government a wide choice when this matter is examined fully. What we are interested in is something which is going to be a memorial—something good and substantial. As I have already said we need some form of memorial.

Yesterday the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing pointed out that a memorial in the form of a plaque has been put up in St. George's, Grenada, in honour of the memory of the late Mr. T. A. Marryshow who, as we all know, is an old stalwart in the trade union and political fields and is regarded by many as the father of the West Indies Federation. If the Grenadians as well as West Indians think that a plaque is a suitable memorial for an illustrious son as Mr. Marryshow, why is it that we have to say that it must necessarily be a statue for Mr. Critchlow?

I understand that because we have voiced some criticism about this matter, arguments have been adduced to the effect that we are opposed to the idea of doing honour to the memory of this great man. I do not think that this is an occasion on which we should quarrel. If we cannot unite on anything else, at least, we should unite on doing honour to the memory of this great Guianese. What form it should take should be decided after a detailed examination is made, and I can assure you that if

Government finds that a statue is the best thing it will certainly go ahead and implement whatever has been decided as the best thing.

Mr. Burnham (replying): Sir, perhaps it is best for me to deal first with the Amendment which was moved by the hon. Member for Georgetown South. It is a little difficult to imagine what motivated him when he proposed the Amendment, for however much one may say or claim that Mr. Ayube Mohammed Edun was a stalwart of the trade union movement; even if the hon. Member for Georgetown South forgets his wonted criticism of the gentleman and the union which he founded and, at least, wants to pay him some tribute, I cannot under any circumstances understand what that has to do with the erection of a memorial for Mr. Critchlow.

It is a question of comparing a general with a private and, if the hon. Member thought that Mr. Edun deserved a tribute, he might have thought of it before this Motion was introduced. I will not credit him with any unsavoury or ulterior motives, I shall merely say that I am happy to find that even his seconder has sought safety in flight and no longer supports this preposterous, impossible and ill-conceived Amendment. What are we going to do with Mr. Edun's statue at Bourda Green? That is not the scene of his glories, if glories there were.

May I pass now to the other contributions which have been made to this debate. There is one interesting bit of information which did not and could not escape me, and it came from the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, when he informed us that when the trade union movement originally considered the erection of a statue for Mr. Critchlow, the Secretary of the British Guiana Trade Union Congress went to Bookers' Public Relations Officer and asked for a contribution.

[MR. BURNHAM]

It is no wonder that those of us who are in the Trade Union Movement so frequently find ourselves the butts of insults; it is no wonder that the Minister of Communications and Works spoke with apparent justification some time ago about the beer-guzzling T.U.C. How on earth can the labour movement, if it wants to pay tribute to its founder, if it wants to pay tribute to one of the outstanding leaders, go to the "Leviathan Bookers" to ask them for money to put up a statue for a man like Mr. Critchlow? I thought that since that bit of information did not escape me that I should attract it to the attention of the Members of this Council who might have been absent when it was given.

And now for the second Amendment, the creature of the Majority Party, by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard.

Mr. Speaker: The Amendment was moved by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard.

Mr. Burnham: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am not attempting to disclose the party loyalties of the hon. Member. I am entitled to say that it was moved by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, and is a creature of the Majority Party.

Mr. Hubbard: Mr. Speaker, I submit that the hon. Member is not entitled to say so.

Mr. Burnham: Until the Majority Party wins the next election, I am entitled to hold my opinion. The Amendment which, in my opinion, is a creature of the Majority Party and which was moved by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, is interesting — interesting because for once we find the Nominated Member confessing that he does not know what should be done. He talks about a college or institute of biology; he

says he is not sure what is going to or should be done; he confesses his vacuity, but he is going to oppose the substantive Motion.

Reference has already been made to the fact that the naming of a school of biology after Mr. Critchlow may be a fine tribute — a tribute which could be paid to Mr. Critchlow in addition to something which epitomizes his career and gives the public a ready opportunity of recognizing the field in which he was foremost, but that cannot be the main or first tribute that should be paid to Mr. Critchlow. I am not unaware of the fact that since this Motion was tabled the late Mr. Critchlow has had a boat named after him, next he will have a jeep and a bus, and before they scrap the railway, a railway engine will be named after him.

The Minister of Trade and Industry spoke rather feelingly on the virtues of Mr. Critchlow; he said he was a fighter. I agree with that, and I am happy that the hon. Minister has changed his view of Mr. Critchlow — a view which I knew he held in 1953 and 1954 of Mr. Critchlow, but somehow or other there occurs to me a line which is to be found somewhere either in the Bible or in Shakespeare: "Me thinks he doth protest too much". I, the Mover of the Motion, never blamed the Majority Party; I never suggested that they did not want to pay tribute to Mr. Critchlow. I am reminded also of what Bernard Shaw once said: "Whenever my guests proclaim their honesty I look at my silver".

The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry, who recovered his tongue today, tells us that a statue is in the imperialist tradition. I am not an expert in these matters, but I seem to remember that there is a statue to Toussaint L'Ouverture in Haiti, and he was one of the first successful leaders against the imperialist system. I seem to remember also that there is a statue of Lenin in

Moscow, and I seem to remember that there is a statue of Nkrumah in Accra. No doubt he thinks statues are in the imperialist tradition, but such tortuous reasoning, such transparent sophistry cannot hide the fact that it is the intention of the Majority Party not to accept this Motion in the form in which it has been presented to this Council. To come forward with the specious excuse about statues being in the imperialist tradition — why then are there statues in other countries in honour of men who have fought against imperialism? That sort of claptrap and nonsense can only delude the unwary and ignorant.

The fact of the matter as I see it now — previously I had accused no one — is that it is the intention of this Government, the Majority Party, not to erect a statue to Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, but, fortunately, I will see that a statue is erected to Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow on Bourda Green. Every country has its heroes; every country has its great men. We were told some nonsense about a plaque erected to Marryshow. Why did the Minister of Trade and Industry not tell us about the statue to Cipriani in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad? This is what is called a careful selection of material to bolster up a case which has no substance whatsoever. I have sat on the same bench with the Minister of Trade and Industry. I know his philosophy: that if you can at all help it, do not allow any Motion by a Member of the Opposition to succeed. If he and his Party thought so highly about Critchlow it is strange that although they have been here for four years they have done nothing about it, but as soon as someone brings a Motion they have a searching of mind. All we have heard from them is that "it cannot be done as you say." They quote Marryshow but forget about Cipriani.

If you agree that Critchlow was a great man, why not let us use public funds to erect a statue to him which all

may see? Let his statue bestride the Bourda Green like the Colossus he was. There are other forms of tribute we can pay. When we have a Labour College in Guiana we can call it Critchlow College. That can be a fitting tribute in addition to the statue. To show how meandering their minds are, they are suggesting Critchlow Scholarships. Would that be a permanent memorial? In any case a country like this must not think in terms of scholarships. It must start thinking at this period in terms of giving free education to all, so that there would not be any more scholarships. There may be medals for distinction.

I am disgusted. They do not know what they will do, but they know that what other people think is wrong. A milk and water Amendment has been moved by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, but knowing how slowly this Government moves, I am sure that by the 21st of August nothing will be done anyway.

Mr. Speaker: In order to refresh Members' memories, I shall read the Motion and the Amendments. The Motion reads:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that Government should erect a statue to the great pioneer of labour, the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, and that the statue be placed at Bourda Green."

The first Amendment by the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh) reads as follows:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that Government should erect statues to the great pioneers of labour, the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow and Ayube Mohammed Edun, and that the statues be placed at Bourda Green."

The second Amendment by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, reads:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that Government should establish a memorial to the great pioneer of labour, the later Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow."

[MR. SPEAKER]

I shall, as customary, put the first Amendment (Mr. Jai Narine Singh's) first.

Amendment put, and negatived.

Mr. Speaker: I shall now put the second Amendment moved by Mr. Hubbard. Those in favour will please say "Aye", and as many as are of the contrary opinion will please say "No". From the voices it sounds about even. I think the "Noes" have it.

Mr. Hubbard: Division, please.

Council divided and voted as follows:

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Hubbard	Mr. Bowman
Mr. Ajodha Singh	Mr. Fredericks
Mr. Saffee	Mr. Tello
Mr. Rai	Mr. Jackson
Mr. Ram Karran	Mr. Burnham
Mrs. Jagan	Mr. Kendall.—6.
Mr. Benn	
Dr. Jagan	
The Financial Secretary	
The Attorney-General	
The Chief Secretary.—11.	

Mr. Speaker: I therefore declare the Amendment carried. The Motion is lost.

COMMUNITY CENTRES ON GOVERNMENT ESTATES

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move:

"Be it resolved: That this House recommends that Government immediately embark on a programme of building community centres on all Government Housing Estates."

There are a number of Government Housing Estates, especially in Greater Georgetown, but in none of those estates is there some place where the residents in the community can gather together for social, cultural or educational pur-

poses. In short there is no community centre on any of those estates, and in the majority of cases on the estates to which I refer one can hardly find any private building which can satisfactorily serve the purpose of a community centre. In fact, on those estates where the occupants are tenants of the Government very frequently, if there are any social functions or exercises, there are complaints that the Commissioner of Housing or his officers usually warn the persons in some cases, and in other cases threaten them with expulsion from the Housing Estate.

In many villages or village communities, one finds community centres. In some cases Government has given a portion or portions of the costs of erection and the local authorities have been responsible for the rest of the costs. In some cases the Government has erected the buildings on lands donated by the local authorities. It is significant that in all these communities where you find community centres, the people in the majority of cases are ratepayers and they have some type of local authority. In this case of the Government estates, there are no local authorities. There are many estates which come under Government's control, the rents for which are collected directly by Government offices; and it seems to me that Government should carry out the same policy towards these people as towards the persons who live in villages and country areas under local authorities.

If this Government is going to say that it is not in a position to embark immediately upon building centres on Government housing estates; if it says it does not have the money, may I suggest, Sir, that if it were to make the lands available in the various housing estates, that the residents of those estates will be prepared to contribute, by way of work and money, towards the building of these much needed community centres.

I do not know what we shall hear from the Government Benches, but, as I see it, even though I may be mistaken,

I can see no objection to having community centres; and I can see no difficulty about making a start because we are assured of the willingness of the people of these areas to make some contribution towards these institutions. In these circumstances, I beg to move "That this Council recommends that Government immediately embark on a programme of building community centres on all Government Housing Estates."

Mr. Kendall: I beg to second the Motion. [*Pause.*]

Question put; Council divided and voted as follows:-

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Bowman	Mr. Ajodha Singh
Mr. Jackson	Mr. Saffee
Mr. Burnham	Mr. Rai
Mr. Kendall — 4.	Mr. Ram Karran
	Mrs. Jagan
	Mr. Benn
	Mr. Jagan
	The Financial Secretary
	—8.

Motion negatived.

PROPOSED HOLIDAY FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS

Mr. Speaker: The Member for Georgetown Central, Mr. Burnham, to move the following Motion:

Be it resolved "That the day appointed for General Elections in 1961 be declared a Public Holiday with pay."

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Speaker, this Motion will also be short. I know, Sir, that usually there is a provision in the Representation of the People Ordinance from time to time that employers on Election Day, should be bound to give their employees reasonable time-off for them to exercise their votes; but still in many cases that provision does not completely remove the hardship which many employees find on Election Day—

a hardship which has, on many occasions from my knowledge, prevented these employees from exercising their franchise. For sometimes employees are employed at a point so far distant from the polling place or polling places where they have to cast their votes that it would mean their having the whole day off and, perhaps, more than a day to get to exercise their votes.

It seems to me, therefore, Sir, that in order to avoid the hardship imposed on the employees—and some will argue, imposed on the employer because the employer may well argue that the amount of time he will have to give to his employees would interfere with his production or sales—Government should introduce legislation whereby Election Day should be declared a public holiday.

If that were the case, then provision can be made for certain essential workers to vote by proxy; and all persons will be in a position to get to the polls and to exercise their franchise.

That is all I have to say on the Motion at the moment, Mr. Speaker, except to commend it to the Council.

Mr. Jackson: I beg to second the Motion.

The Chief Secretary : (Major Smith (ag.): Sir, the object which the Motion attempts to achieve is, undoubtedly, a very laudable one—the object being to ensure that as many people as possible would vote on polling day. But the Government is not convinced that that object would be achieved by declaring polling day a public holiday. Previous polling days have not been public holidays and there has been no case, of which we know, where persons who had wished to vote had not been given the opportunity to do so. Commerce and industry have always co-operated, fully, in making arrangements

[THE CHIEF SECRETARY]

for their employees to be released to cast their votes; and there is no indication that this would not happen on this occasion.

As a matter of fact, I think, in the case of this vital election, everyone will be doing all he or she possibly can to release his or her employees to vote on that day. Furthermore, there is this question that there may be considerable opposition from industry and commerce in that, like Government, there are a number of essential services which have to be maintained on that day, and if polling day is declared a public holiday, there will have to be additional wages bills and there may be protests from the employers themselves.

Then, again, it is traditional that a great many people on public holidays like to leave the areas in which they reside and go farther afield to have a day out, and on this very important occasion this may also occur and, therefore, will reduce the number of people who should be in their districts to vote.

It is anticipated that, as usual, the sale of liquor will be prohibited on polling day, but there is nothing to stop an individual from getting his supply the day before. Regrettable though it is, it is a fact that on a holiday more drinking takes place than on a normal day.

These Elections in August 1961 are so important and vital that it is inevitable that there will be a great deal of excitement and tension, and the view is that it will be far better if on that day the people were just going about their normal business of work rather than being on holiday, perhaps, imbibing freely, which may cause incidents which in turn may create a threat to law and order. In view of all these considerations, Government is opposing the suggestion that polling day be made a public holiday.

Mr. Jackson : Sir, the poorest of excuses against a Motion coming from this side of the Table has been given to this Motion, but if that were all it would not have been as bad as the amount of slander which has been expressed just now by the spokesman for the Government. The sale of liquor will be prohibited it is true, but nothing can stop the people from storing up liquor before the day of the Elections. Yet it is said that if they are given a holiday they may imbibe too freely and will obstruct law and order.

The Chief Secretary: I said there may possibly be such incidents.

Mr. Jackson : Whether it is possible or otherwise, it is implied that since the people can store up their liquor the day before the Elections, then nobody can stop them from imbibing freely on that day. Therefore no matter what attempt is made to minimize the observation, the fact remains that Government is saying that if polling day was made a holiday, the people would drink until they created a disruption of law and order in this country. The question of drinking liquor freely on a public holiday is a statement of fact, but it is rather unfortunate, in my view, that the Government should say that it will oppose this Motion because of something which is happening in some respects to a greater degree every day in our society. I should have thought that the Government would realize that our people are becoming much more alive to their political responsibilities than they were in my father and grand-father's day.

It would appear that the Government is not keeping abreast of the times, because, if the Government's spokesman was moving among the people as we do, he would have recognized the fact that the people have become more alive to their responsibilities today and of those for August 1961. That is the difference between the Government's spokesman and some of us on this side of the Table.

We move among the ordinary common people and we know that they have become more awakened and alive to their political responsibilities. I am sure that in the light of their awakened interest what the Government, through its spokesman, seems to anticipate will not take place. It is to be deplored that the Government should use that as an argument against the Motion.

Sir, the Mover of the Motion said that the people find it difficult to move up and down from one place to another; he did not accuse the employers of not granting time off to employees in order to permit them to cast their votes; he said that they granted time off, but there was a great amount of difficulty in moving about. Many people live in the country districts and work in Georgetown. They have to go to work in the morning in the normal way and then incur additional expenditure to go back to the Polling Station and return to work. It means that Government will be adding to the cost of the vote. Perhaps it does not matter much to the Government whether these people exercised their franchise or not. The intention is to see that everyone is given an opportunity to exercise his or her franchise. It is easy for those who reside in Georgetown and have to vote in Georgetown.

However the movement of workers is very great, and it seems to me that if this matter had been given full consideration Government would not have used such an argument against the Motion. Sir, what opposition can come from the Chamber of Commerce? It is true that they have time and again opposed proposals for making certain days public holidays, but this is one of the occasions that no one with a right approach to the problem should oppose making Polling Day a holiday. There is nothing as important to the country as when one has to cast one's vote for the election of the Government.

The Chamber of Commerce should not be opposed to this Motion, because we are told that they are crying out against what they are fearful about, and they should be the first people to agree to it. Has Government consulted the Chamber of Commerce to find out their attitude to this Motion? This Motion was tabled on the 21st December, 1960, and re-tabled in January this year. Has Government proceeded, as in the past, and consulted the Chamber of Commerce about the matter? If it has not, why? Why come here today and say that they may be opposed to making Polling Day a public holiday? Let us hear what views they have expressed on the matter.

When the workers asked for May Day to be made a public holiday, the Chamber of Commerce were consulted. Today Government has not consulted them, and we are told that they may oppose it. The democratic rights of the people should be maintained against the views of the Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Speaker, this is the most disappointing reply that one could ever receive from the Government bench with respect to the day of Elections. We anticipate many things, and we expect many things to happen contrary to our views, but we could never have thought that we could have heard such a childish excuse for opposing the Motion.

Mr. Bowman: In August this year the voting population of this country will be called upon to make the greatest decision—in fact the most important political decision in their lives. With this Election a new Constitution will be introduced; this Constitution gives us complete internal self-government. The representative who spoke on the Government's behalf said that commerce and industry have always given time off to their employees on Election Day. I agree with that, but how does that compare with what the Leader of the Majority Party said not very long ago?

[MR. BOWMAN]

If we take the argument so far as trade and industry are concerned, we will find that it is contrary to what the Leader of the Majority Party has said regarding imperialist's traditions.

Sir, if we on this side of the Table accept what has been said by the acting Chief Secretary, then we would be upholding the imperialist's traditions, but we are asking for a departure from such traditions. We want Election Day to be made a public holiday, and that will be a departure from the old procedure because it has never been done before.

The acting Chief Secretary said that commerce and industry give their employees time off on Election Day. I have seen commerce and industry giving their employees half-day holiday to go and see cricket which is far less important. I have seen International Cricket Teams coming here and the whole of Water Street was closed so that their employees could attend cricket. Are you going to tell me that seeing cricket is more important than taking the greatest political decision of our lives in this country? I would like the Elected Party in the Government to answer that question. It must be remembered that the decision we are going to take will decide whether this country will remain with the West or will go with the East—I refer to the Communist part. That is why it is important that everybody should be given a chance to vote.

Sir, it is quite true that some employers will be inclined to give time off to their workers, but others may not be inclined to do so. I know that some of them will put up barriers in the way of their employees who desire to vote, especially when they know that they want to vote for the people they do not want to win. That is a fact, and all those things must be taken into consideration. For that reason I propose to introduce

an Amendment which should be acceptable to the Government. I move that after the word "pay" at the end of the Motion there be inserted a comma, with the addition of the words "and that the time for voting be extended to eight o'clock in the evening." If the Government is not prepared to make polling day a public holiday it should at least agree to extend the time for voting. In that case sugar workers, for instance, would be able to work all day and still have time to exercise their vote. Extension of voting time by two hours would be a great facility to some workers, and I think Government should accept such an Amendment. I know that Government is opposed to the Motion, but at least it should agree to an extension of the time for voting to eight o'clock in the evening.

Mr. Tello: I beg to second the Amendment and I think both the Motion and the Amendment should commend themselves to the Council. Both have the same objective which is to enable all persons to exercise the franchise. The object behind the suggestion of a public holiday is to make voters free to go to the polls and save them the embarrassment of having to seek the permission of their employers. There are some people who refuse to be obligated to their employers by asking favours, and there are a lot of employers who are not approachable. As this Council has the power to do so, I think polling day should be declared a public holiday. Most unions are advocating paid holidays, and an election holiday with pay should not be considered such a great financial burden in the interest of the political future of this country.

I can see the wisdom in the suggestion of an extension of voting time. The doors of polling stations should be kept open as late as possible so that there can be no excuse by a voter for not casting his vote. When I saw the Motion I realized the object, and I consulted my friend who explained to me

his reason for suggesting an extension of the time for voting. I think the Mover of the Motion may be induced to accept the Amendment, and I hope the Council will accept the amended Motion.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to be perfectly clear as to what the Amendment is. I am not quite clear. I understood the Mover of the Amendment to say that he wanted at the end of the Motion the words "and that the time for voting be extended to eight o'clock in the evening." If those words are added to the Motion it would mean that the day appointed for the General Election in 1961 should be declared a public holiday, and that the time for voting should be extended to eight o'clock in the evening. I do not know whether the Mover of the Amendment means that on the day appointed for the General Election the time for voting should be extended to eight o'clock in the evening, or that the day be declared a public holiday and the time for voting extended to eight o'clock in the evening. I would like to know exactly what he intends.

Mr. Bowman: Seeing that the Government has indicated unwillingness to accept the Motion, I am suggesting that if it does not agree that polling day should be declared a public holiday Government should at least extend the time for voting to eight o'clock in the evening.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps it would be better if you would put your Amendment into writing. All I want to know is exactly what it is.

Mr. Bowman: I will try to make myself clear. I put it in that way because I am still hoping that the Government will accept the Motion as it stands.

Mr. Speaker: I cannot allow your Amendment to be seconded unless it is made quite clear.

Mr. Bowman: In view of the fact that Government has indicated its intention not to accept the Motion, I would ask that the words "be declared a public holiday with pay" be deleted, and the following words substituted: "and that the time for voting be extended to eight o'clock in the evening."

Mr. Speaker: That is what I was asking.

Mr. Bowman: I was still trying to force Government's hands.

Mr. Speaker: Then the Motion will read: "That on the day appointed for General Elections in 1961 the time for voting be extended to eight o'clock in the evening."

Mr. Bowman: That is correct, Sir.

Mr. Speaker: Is that what you seconded, Mr. Tello?

Mr. Tello: I prefer to consult the Mover of the Amendment.

Mr. Bowman: My seconder is suggesting that the Motion should remain as it is with the addition of the words I have moved. I agree to that.

Mr. Tello: I am seconding the Amendment for the addition of those words.

Mr. Speaker: I will read the Amendment as you wish it, and you will tell me if it is what you wish. It is, "That the day appointed for General Elections in 1961 be declared a public holiday with pay, and that the time for voting be extended to eight o'clock in the evening." Is that correct?

Mr. Bowman: Yes, Sir. That is it.

Mrs. Jagan: I am not certain while I listened to the Members on the other side of the Table discussing the Motion, whether I detected a certain lack of con-

[MRS. JAGAN]

confidence, a certain feeling of uncertainty in the air, a general feeling of insecurity about the Election. Instead of uncertainty there should be a feeling that all will be well, but when one listens to the words of the speakers one sees no justification for the Motion to make polling day a public holiday. May I quote the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) who tells us that the people are more alive to their political responsibilities than before. He also says that they are more alive to the interests of their country; that with August, 1961 coming they are more awakened to their political responsibilities. He said that over and over again, and I agree with him that the people are now more awakened to their political responsibilities, and with this awakening comes a very intense interest to participate in the political life of the community.

The actual physical act of going to the polling booth and filling a form and putting it into the ballot box — that is to the voter the fulfilment of his many years of interest in politics, and there are very few people, to my knowledge, who are really awakened and interested in the welfare of their country who will not go and vote on election day. I know that there are a few who may find difficulty through lack of transport to their polling areas, but those who are really keen will find the means and the ability to make the necessary sacrifice to go and vote, so that the political party they are supporting gets their votes. We have every confidence that people will come out in large numbers and exercise their franchise. We can see no need for a holiday to be proclaimed for that day, because we know that they are politically awakened.

The hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman) tells us that he is supporting the Motion for election day to be declared a public holiday because

we will have to make a most important decision on that day. I agree with him. We will have to make a very important political decision, and it is the duty of everyone to participate in the making of that very important decision. I have great confidence in the people of this country, and I have confidence that they will come out and exercise the franchise. Polling day does not have to be made a public holiday for them to exercise the franchise. Previous elections have shown that people have come out to exercise their votes, without the day being declared a holiday.

The hon. Member for Demerara River, in another vein, tells us now that we must have a departure from the old way. That, I found, rather unusual, coming from the lips of the hon. Member who does not seem to like any departure from any old way; and from what I observed from his talks and actions in this Council, he has consistently and persistently fought to maintain the old order of things.

He tells us that on this Election Day a great decision will be taken — whether this country should remain in the West or go to the East. He obviously feels that would be an issue. He tells us that that is the reason why it is terribly important that all must be able to vote on that day. He goes on to say there may be some employers who may not allow their employees to come out to vote on that day.

I understood the point of view from which the hon. Member was speaking, but knowing of his political affiliation and that he is a member of a political party which is obviously and mainly supported by the employer group, I cannot see why he will have any fear that the employers would be reluctant to allow their employees time to vote. From his way of looking at the situation, the only political group that would suffer is the political group which I represent —

and we have no fear. So that if the employers wish to prevent their employees from coming out and voting for us, we do want to say: "We are not afraid." The voters who want to see this country go ahead and expand will know how to vote; and it is from this feeling of confidence that the Majority Party — the Elected Members of the Government, at any rate — say we cannot see the need for declaring that day a public holiday.

I cannot help mentioning that, aside from those views I expressed, I sat patiently and I listened to the Mover of the Motion and those who spoke, yet I have not heard one sound argument put up in favour of having Election Day as a public holiday. Perhaps, we will hear of all the countries in the world where Election Day has been declared a public holiday. I have not heard of them, but I am willing to be convinced. Until I hear sound arguments put forward in support of the Motion and contrary to the debates so far, my view is, there is only one possible way one can vote as a result of the discussion and that is against the Motion.

Mr. Burnham (replying): There is, Mr. Speaker, a division in the ranks. The hon. the Chief Secretary, a colleague of the hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing, in opposing the Motion sought speciously and unconvincingly to argue that a holiday on polling day would be a bad thing. Says he, in the tradition of the old school: "There is likely to be considerable opposition from commerce and industry." I should have thought that the Chief Secretary would recognize that the paramountcy of commerce and industry has passed. These are not days when the Government should be or will be run by the Chamber of Commerce and those who own commerce and industry. As for me, I am surprised that someone who shares my Alma Mater should come forward with an argument like this. I

thought that our Alma Mater had produced persons with sufficient clarity of mind to recognize that considerable opposition from commerce and industry is not relevant consideration.

Commerce and industry in British Guiana, in a number of cases, will always oppose anything that looks new because they are made in the conservative way. Then the Chief Secretary showed great solicitude for those barons of commerce and industry and he referred to the fact that there may be arguments against additional wages bills. That is not a consideration of mine in the arguments against the Motion. Additional wages bills are but a small contribution to make to the ideal which I thought we ought to share — the ideal of giving the maximum and optimum opportunities to the voters to exercise their franchise.

Still in the old school, the hon. the Chief Secretary says: "People may leave their areas and districts as it is a holiday." It seems to me that it is to be assumed that the people are not sufficiently interested in exercising their franchise, if you believe they will leave their places of abode or residences to go picnicking or holidaying. I do not share the view that in these times — in these crucial days — there will be persons of that type. If there are, they will be definitely in the minority; and those are the persons who will never avail themselves of their right — and I would say, their duty — to exercise their franchise whether it is a holiday or not.

When the hon. the Chief Secretary remarked that additional liquor drinking is likely to take place on that day if it is a public holiday, I seem to remember a representative of the old order who is alleged to have said that all a certain ethnic group wanted was enough money to indulge in rum-drinking and cheap love-making. I think it is an insult to the people of British Guiana to suggest

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that if polling day were to be made a public holiday, they would increase their stores of alcohol mainly for the purpose of drinking on that day, rather than go and exercise their votes. I think it is an insult of the highest order; and knowing how this Government operates, I have no doubt that he is the spokesman for his Elected Colleagues. This marriage, indeed, is a strange one. But with a little bit more astuteness, the hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing sought to give us the other excuse for not accepting this Motion.

As I understand her wanderings — as I understand her remarks — what she tried to say was not that to have a holiday was bad, but that there is no need for a holiday. May I answer her arguments? If there is no need for a holiday in the opinion of the Elected Government, according to my understanding and logic — and I am not completely an infant in that field — that is no reason for opposing the Motion. The Chief Secretary, bold as his answer was, put forward a much more logical reason for opposition. He says: "It is going to be bad." I permit him freedom of speech and opinion if he thinks it is going to be bad in his heart and conscience. He is entitled to an opinion; but the little lady goes on to say, not that it is bad but that there is no need for it. That is only the opinion of a few; and if opinions are divided as to whether there is need for it or not, the obvious thing is to allow it to be, as long as it is not bad. Though I disagree with the hon. the Chief Secretary's reasoning, I can sense the logic in his reaction.

We understand there is some feeling of insecurity in the hearts of some, but it was not the People's National Congress that kept shouting that all the constituencies are gerrymandered. It was not the People's National Congress that wrote that it had a minority in 20

seats and if it does not win the elections there is going to be hell. There is no insecurity in this section of the Council. It is merely that we are motivated by the desire to see that everyone is given an opportunity to vote. We are told that there has not been a sound argument put forward, but who is the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing to judge the soundness of arguments? There is none so deaf as he or she who would not hear.

The hon. Chief Secretary said that the Government knows — and he speaks as the spokesman of the Government — of no occasion where employers had been unwilling to release their workers to go and vote, I know of several such instances — instances in the two General Elections in which I have been involved, and the law does not really provide a proper sanction. The law merely says that an employer will be liable to a penalty. What is the use of the penalty which is a punishment directed against the individual when it does not overcome the disadvantage which has been created by his breach of the law? Employers and businessmen have been known in the past to flout the law and calculate their ability to pay the fines provided by the law. There are several instances known.

In the second place, it is useless to say that even if there were instances there is a reasonable time prescribed by law, because that does not meet the case. The question that arises is: What is a reasonable time that should be permitted to a worker by an employer? Let us take this particular instance which I know of personally. A man is registered to vote in West Coast, Barbice. He is working at the Petrol Bulk Plant at Providence, and the employer gives him an extra hour as a reasonable time to go and vote.

In 1957 it was difficult to travel over the bad roads and today, thanks to this Government, it is even more preposterous to suggest that an extra hour

will permit a man to travel from Providence to his polling place in West Coast, Berbice, and return in time. The law does not say that if the employer fails to give reasonable time that the employee cannot be dismissed. The law prescribes a penalty on the employer who does not give the employee time off, and therefore when that man is out of a job there will be a lot of legal niceties to be discussed as to what is a reasonable time. What solace does that man have if, in going to vote, he loses his job?

There are many wage-earners who live far from their work-place. In fact the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing herself said that there may be a few who find difficulty, but it is to eliminate the possibility of this difficulty that we are asking that Election Day be made a holiday. We are not hoping, if this Motion were to be adopted, that the result of it would be to take to the polls people who are so apathetic and lethargic that they would not have gone unless it was a holiday. The purpose of this Motion is to enable those who want to go and who find great difficulty, and, in some cases if they are to retain their jobs, find it impossible to get to their polling places. We are not here to offer an opportunity to those who are not interested in casting their votes.

So far as I am concerned, those who are not interested are in the minority, and if you cannot persuade them by a proper canvass, if you cannot persuade them by your policy, you are not going to be able to persuade them by giving them a holiday, so I would like to put this matter straight. The purpose of this holiday is not a sort of gift to encourage those who are not really interested in the General Elections.

The difficulties that obtain are more in the case of paid workers than in the case of self-employed peasants. It is a real difficulty which I have seen in two

General Elections. Of course, the Motion is not going to be passed because the "little lady" says that there has been no sound reason advanced. It is interesting to hear that the reason they vote against this Motion is because no sound reason has been advanced. I happen to know that the Government decided to reject it before hearing the reason, so this gallery play about no sound reason being advanced does not fool me.

I am not really interested in the clash between two former friends and colleagues about East and West and who represents the employers. I am merely interested in seeing that every one is given an opportunity to exercise his vote with the minimum amount of inconvenience. I should like to see every one going to the polls without any difficulty or embarrassment so far as his work is concerned. That is the only motive behind my moving this Motion. Let me repeat that it is not the leader of the P.N.C. who wrote a friend in America to say that they had a minority in 20 constituencies.

Mr. Speaker : I shall read the substantive Motion:

"That the day appointed for General Elections in 1961 be declared a Public Holiday with pay."

An Amendment to that Motion has been moved to this effect: that the words "that the time for voting be extended until eight o'clock in the night", be added at the end after the word "pay". I am going to put the Amendment first, but I shall read the Amendment to you so that you may be properly apprised as to what it is:

"That the day appointed for General Elections in 1961 be declared a Public Holiday with pay, and that the time for voting be extended until eight o'clock in the night."

Question put, the Council divided and voted as follows:

For	Against
Mr. Bowman	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Tello	Mr. Davis
Mr. Jackson	Mr. Ajodha Singh
Mr. Burnham	Mr. Saffee
Mr. Kendall — 5.	Mr. Rai
	Mr. Ram Karran
	Mrs. Jagan
	Mr. Benn
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney-General
	The Chief Secretary — 11.

Mr. Speaker: The Amendment is lost. I shall now put the substantive Motion:

"That the day appointed for General Elections in 1961 be declared a Public Holiday with pay."

Question put, the Council divided and voted as follows:

For	Against
Mr. Bowman	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Tello	Mr. Davis
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Mr. Kendall — 5.	Mr. Rai
	Mr. Ram Karran
	Mrs. Jagan
	Mr. Benn
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney-General
	The Chief Secretary — 11.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the Motion lost.

IMPERSONATION AT GENERAL ELECTION

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move the following Motion standing in my name:

"Be it resolved that to prevent impersonating at the 1961 General Elections provisions be made for the indelible staining of the thumbs of voters who have voted."

I have some reason to believe, Mr. Speaker, that the chorus of "Noes" will not meet this particular Motion because

I find co-operation from the Attorney-General. But it is my duty to put forward the arguments in favour of this Motion. I do not think that any one of us will deny that he does not want impersonation at the General Elections. In various parts of the world one of the techniques used is the staining of the thumb or some finger of a person who has already voted.

There may be some opposition to this from some people who believe that it is *infra dig.* to have their fingers or thumbs stained, but I do not think that that opposition is sound, widespread, or will persist if the Government were prepared to accept the recommendation in this Motion. The type of stain I envisage is not one that will stay on for life, but one that will remain over the period of the Elections — for about 24 hours or thereabout — and can then be removed easily by one means or another after the period.

I hope that if this Motion is accepted we will be able to discover a stain or an ink which can last for at least 24 hours. I am aware of the fact that that alone does not and will not prevent impersonation or completely exclude chances of impersonation, but we have put our elections machinery in gear so late that another proposal which I had, I am sure, will not be accepted by the Government because it cannot be acted upon in time for the General Elections.

My idea is that every voter, after the final list is closed, should have a poll card with his or her picture on it. That would assist in eliminating impersonation, and it would give the polling or presiding officer or polling clerk as the case may be an opportunity of comparing the person who sets himself up as a voter with the person whose picture appears on the poll card. I had thought of that, but the Government took such a long time to decide on enumeration and what the day should be and then

shifted it — there was so much confusion that I do not think I should further embarrass it by asking for something which takes a great deal of efficiency and calls for a longer time to handle.

In the circumstances, Sir, we shall have to depend on one instrument only — the instrument of the staining of the thumb or a finger.

Mr. Jackson: Sir, I beg to second the Motion.

The Attorney-General: The Government cannot allow the hon. Member to get away with the suggestion that his bright idea of poll cards was thwarted because the Government was so late in starting to make arrangements for the forthcoming elections. That is absolute nonsense. The hon. Member could have brought up his points six months ago, because it was more than six months ago that the Government organized an Elections Working Party under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, which has been meeting regularly every week and continues to do so, to plan for the enumeration of voters and the organization of the actual elections. The Government welcomes suggestions, and it is quite wrong to give the impression that it is the Government that has prevented this idea from being ventilated. It is entirely the fault of the hon. Member in not having raised it before.

But my learned friend, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, is for once correct in saying that this Motion will not be met with a chorus of "Noes". The Government, in its wisdom, and before the hon. Member had raised the point about the staining of fingers, decided that it would be advisable to introduce this safeguard against plural voting. But it thought a little further than the hon. Member, that it may well be that one or more unfortunate people may not have thumbs to stain, or if they have thumbs they may be injured, and the staining of the fingers would be equally

effective. In a Bill which will shortly be introduced in this Council to amend the Representation of the Peoples Ordinance, 1957, to make provision for elections to the new Legislative Assembly and to adopt a number of proposals which have emerged from the experience of the 1957 elections, there will be provision for the staining of the fingers or thumbs of those who voted. The Government is already experimenting with indelible inks, and I may mention that if this ink is put under the nail or quick it is very difficult to get off. The Government also believes that as a result of the provision for the indelible inking of fingers of those who have voted, a deterrent effect will be produced which should go a long way to discourage people from attempting to vote more than once by illegal means.

The procedure in the polling booth will be that a voter who asks for a voting paper will be asked to submit his fingers for examination by the presiding officer or the assistant presiding officer, and if it is seen that he has not got any indelible ink on his fingers he will be given a ballot paper. On completing that ballot paper, and just before he places it into the ballot box, he must submit to having one of his fingers or a thumb marked with indelible ink, whereupon he can then place his ballot paper into the ballot box. There is also provision that if the voter has no hands, or is unfortunately disabled in such a way that he is unable to have any finger or thumb stained, he will not be deprived of his right to cast his vote.

If the hon. Member will agree to amend his Motion to provide that it should include fingers or thumbs the Government will be happy to go along with him and vote in favour of the Motion. I suggest that we should not limit the Motion to thumbs, but provide for the staining of fingers or thumbs.

Mr. Burnham: I am prepared to accept the Amendment to insert the word

[MR. BURNHAM]

"fingers", but in taking advantage of my right to reply I must —

Mr. Speaker: Does your seconder agree?

Mr. Burnham : Yes, Sir. In exercising my right to reply I want to thank the hon. the Attorney-General for introducing that spark of humour which has really enlivened the afternoon's proceedings which have been rather serious. We hear that the Government in its wisdom — the Attorney-General always drops his prefixes — had thought of this before and has other bright ideas. Far be it from me to throw back into his face the compliment of having a bright idea, but if the other bright idea had been suggested six months ago it would have been better. If this bright Government in its wisdom had brought up this Motion for debate six months ago when it was tabled, I may have had an opportunity to give it my bright idea, and it might have had time to have that bright idea executed.

We hear about a Working Party for the elections. I have not heard of it before: this Council has not been informed of it. It is so much like the Lands and Mines Working Party which does anything but work. How does this Government do its business? It sets up an Elections Working Party and informs no one. It does not publicize anything but it gets the Attorney-General, Sir Gallahad, to defend its omission by saying that there is a Working Party.

I am glad to see that Government is accepting this Motion, but I must say that it was tabled on the 21st of December and the Attorney-General ought to remember, or ought to know, that the question of poll cards with photographs was discussed with at least two Official Members of the Government by a certain hon. Member who represents

Georgetown Central (Mr. Burnham) more than six months ago, but of course that is unofficial. I thought the Attorney-General would have told us why there has been this delay in drafting the necessary legislation. I thought that by now we would have had a Bill to amend the Representation of the Peoples Ordinance before us. The Attorney-General always prefaces his remarks with the words "absolute nonsense." I just want to bring to his attention this fact, that since he has recognized that there may be some people without thumbs, he has just brought to my attention that there may be some people without fingers. Therefore he had better make provision for such persons when he is drafting the legislation, and I hope the drafting should take a shorter time than the drafting of legislation with respect to hire-purchase agreements.

The Attorney-General: I move that the word "fingers" be substituted for the word "thumbs" in the Motion.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, put and carried.

PROPOSED INCREASE OF GUIANA SCHOLARSHIP

Mr. Burnham : I beg to move:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that the number of Guiana Scholarships be increased from three to six."

For some years there was only one Guiana Scholarship awarded annually, and then that number was increased to two, and then to three. This Motion seeks to have that number increased to six immediately — not in the future; not next year, but immediately. If we are to make a reality of Independence, if we are to run our own affairs, if we are to build those new industries which so many of us talk about; if indeed we are to make Guiana a better place, I

shifted it — there was so much confusion that I do not think I should further embarrass it by asking for something which takes a great deal of efficiency and calls for a longer time to handle.

In the circumstances, Sir, we shall have to depend on one instrument only — the instrument of the staining of the thumb or a finger.

Mr. Jackson: Sir, I beg to second the Motion.

The Attorney-General: The Government cannot allow the hon. Member to get away with the suggestion that his bright idea of poll cards was thwarted because the Government was so late in starting to make arrangements for the forthcoming elections. That is absolute nonsense. The hon. Member could have brought up his points six months ago, because it was more than six months ago that the Government organized an Elections Working Party under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary, which has been meeting regularly every week and continues to do so, to plan for the enumeration of voters and the organization of the actual elections. The Government welcomes suggestions, and it is quite wrong to give the impression that it is the Government that has prevented this idea from being ventilated. It is entirely the fault of the hon. Member in not having raised it before.

But my learned friend, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, is for once correct in saying that this Motion will not be met with a chorus of "Noes". The Government, in its wisdom, and before the hon. Member had raised the point about the staining of fingers, decided that it would be advisable to introduce this safeguard against plural voting. But it thought a little further than the hon. Member, that it may well be that one or more unfortunate people may not have thumbs to stain, or if they have thumbs they may be injured, and the staining of the fingers would be equally

effective. In a Bill which will shortly be introduced in this Council to amend the Representation of the Peoples Ordinance, 1957, to make provision for elections to the new Legislative Assembly and to adopt a number of proposals which have emerged from the experience of the 1957 elections, there will be provision for the staining of the fingers or thumbs of those who voted. The Government is already experimenting with indelible inks, and I may mention that if this ink is put under the nail or quick it is very difficult to get off. The Government also believes that as a result of the provision for the indelible inking of fingers of those who have voted, a deterrent effect will be produced which should go a long way to discourage people from attempting to vote more than once by illegal means.

The procedure in the polling booth will be that a voter who asks for a voting paper will be asked to submit his fingers for examination by the presiding officer or the assistant presiding officer, and if it is seen that he has not got any indelible ink on his fingers he will be given a ballot paper. On completing that ballot paper, and just before he places it into the ballot box, he must submit to having one of his fingers or a thumb marked with indelible ink, whereupon he can then place his ballot paper into the ballot box. There is also provision that if the voter has no hands, or is unfortunately disabled in such a way that he is unable to have any finger or thumbs stained, he will not be deprived of his right to cast his vote.

If the hon. Member will agree to amend his Motion to provide that it should include fingers or thumbs the Government will be happy to go along with him and vote in favour of the Motion. I suggest that we should not limit the Motion to thumbs, but provide for the staining of fingers or thumbs.

Mr. Burnham: I am prepared to accept the Amendment to insert the word

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"fingers", but in taking advantage of my right to reply I must —

Mr. Speaker: Does your seconder agree?

Mr. Burnham: Yes, Sir. In exercising my right to reply I want to thank the hon. the Attorney-General for introducing that spark of humour which has really enlivened the afternoon's proceedings which have been rather serious. We hear that the Government in its wisdom — the Attorney-General always drops his prefixes — had thought of this before and has other bright ideas. Far be it from me to throw back into his face the compliment of having a bright idea, but if the other bright idea had been suggested six months ago it would have been better. If this bright Government in its wisdom had brought up this Motion for debate six months ago when it was tabled, I may have had an opportunity to give it my bright idea, and it might have had time to have that bright idea executed.

We hear about a Working Party for the elections. I have not heard of it before; this Council has not been informed of it. It is so much like the Lands and Mines Working Party which does anything but work. How does this Government do its business? It sets up an Elections Working Party and informs no one. It does not publicize anything but it gets the Attorney-General, Sir Gallahad, to defend its omission by saying that there is a Working Party.

I am glad to see that Government is accepting this Motion, but I must say that it was tabled on the 21st of December and the Attorney-General ought to remember, or ought to know, that the question of poll cards with photographs was discussed with at least two Official Members of the Government by a certain hon. Member who represents

Georgetown Central (Mr. Burnham) more than six months ago, but of course that is unofficial. I thought the Attorney-General would have told us why there has been this delay in drafting the necessary legislation. I thought that by now we would have had a Bill to amend the Representation of the Peoples Ordinance before us. The Attorney-General always prefaces his remarks with the words "absolute nonsense." I just want to bring to his attention this fact, that since he has recognized that there may be some people without thumbs, he has just brought to my attention that there may be some people without fingers. Therefore he had better make provision for such persons when he is drafting the legislation, and I hope the drafting should take a shorter time than the drafting of legislation with respect to hire-purchase agreements.

The Attorney-General: I move that the word "fingers" be substituted for the word "thumbs" in the Motion.

Amendment agreed to.

Motion, as amended, put and carried.

PROPOSED INCREASE OF GUIANA SCHOLARSHIP

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that the number of Guiana Scholarships be increased from three to six."

For some years there was only one Guiana Scholarship awarded annually, and then that number was increased to two, and then to three. This Motion seeks to have that number increased to six immediately — not in the future; not next year, but immediately. If we are to make a reality of Independence, if we are to run our own affairs, if we are to build those new industries which so many of us talk about; if indeed we are to make Guiana a better place, I

think it is conceded that we must get a larger number of trained persons. As I see it, the eventual aim should be to make available to all who are capable of taking advantage of it, courses in higher education in the various fields in which we need experts or expertise.

But, in the meantime, since this is a period of uncertainty, since we do not know what will happen shortly after August, let us, at least, try immediately to give effect to the principle which I hope we all accept—that is, we must have more trained Guianese. Three Guiana scholarships, at the moment, are totally inadequate. I know that in some quarters it is felt that the number is adequate because the Guiana scholarship, unlike other awards, carries with it no obligation on the part of the winner to return to Guiana. But it seems to me that we must not adopt that attitude.

I think I am quite right when I say that the majority of Guiana scholars have returned to Guiana, and I think I am right in saying that those who have not returned have not returned because, quite honestly, in their minds they did not see any opportunity for the use of their abilities and for their personal advancement. I should imagine, however, that in this time, this consideration will be of less force because now we are entering upon a new period and era. Many Guianese are prepared to return home, whether he is a Government scholar or has pursued his studies as a private student. But it is not those who have the means for going to institutions of higher learning that I am concerned about. I am concerned about those who do not have the means and, therefore, do not have the opportunity to develop their faculties which they, undoubtedly, have.

Speaking from my own experience, every year — I have experience of two

years — there are at least between six to a dozen persons who are just as good and have as much potential as the Guiana scholar himself or herself, but because of paucity of means, those persons do not get the opportunity to go to a university, and Guiana itself loses thereby. I feel that the least we can do right now is to increase the number of scholarships immediately.

I have been looking at the results of the Guiana Scholarships over the past three or four years and I find that, from my observation, apart from the scholarship, those who are capable of taking courses have increased and now I venture to say that they are between a dozen and 20. I know it will be difficult for Government to get the number of 20, immediately. That is why I have put forward the conservative figure of six. It should be a means of encouragement to those youths in secondary schools, and it should be a pointer to the time when we shall have free training and education at institutions of higher learning for all Guianese who have the ability and aptitude to take advantage of it.

I particularly stress the Guiana Scholarship and not, generally, all scholarships for this reason, that I am one of those who do not believe that it is the right thing to send away a student scholar to do a course and tie him down with a bond or contract to return. I do not think that you get the best results. I have known such persons return, so to speak, under duress and merely out of fear that their guarantors would lose money to the extent which they endorsed or guaranteed.

I feel that a Government like that which we should have in British Guiana should be able to find other incentives; should be able to encourage Guianese to return without compelling them to return. I know of individuals who have had to return and have left as soon as their periods had expired. I feel it

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should be a matter of persuasion rather than one of legal compulsion. That is why I specifically referred to the Guiana Scholarship.

I understand that there is a school of thought which does not support the idea of scholarships; and there is also a school of thought that argues that the most that should be done is to lend money to individuals who have the ability and aptitude so that they will come back and pay back the money lent to them. Closer proximity to the grocery or salt goods shop I do not see. It is despicable that individuals in our community should think that way today. It is the Government's duty to give higher education to those with ability to take advantage of it. This attitude of not giving scholarships but lending money shocks me; and I hope that I shall not hear it here this afternoon. I beg to move the Motion standing in my name.

Mr. Jackson : I beg to second the Motion.

The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Rai): Mr. Speaker, the Motion moved by the hon. Gentleman is very commendable in spirit in that he seeks to move a Motion to secure for this country a greater number of trained personnel to meet the increasing demands upon this emerging territory. But if this Motion were to be examined, I would say that the cause he is advocating will not be met by the acceptance or adoption of this Motion.

There are three Guiana Scholarships, he says, the number having been increased by one during the life of this Government; but would the addition of three Guiana Scholarships meet the need for trained personnel in this country? The answer is: 'No, the mere addition of three more Guiana Scholarships per year would not meet the demand for

more trained personnel in British Guiana.'

Originally, as far as I am aware, scholarships were started in order to enable the intellectually bright but financially deserving students to embark on higher education — persons who did not have the means to afford higher education. At the present time Government, through its Loan Scheme, is enabling every person in British Guiana, who has the necessary qualification for entering into a university, to take advantage of such opportunity. Under the present scheme, students from British Guiana are studying at various university centres in different parts of the world — in the United Kingdom, Canada, the U.C.W.I., India, Germany and, possibly, at other centres of learning abroad.

The student, as I said, must have the necessary qualification which entitles him for admission to a university, and if it is proved that he is deserving of financial help, that student gets all the financial assistance needed to enable him to proceed with his higher education overseas in order that he would be of service to himself after qualifying and returning to British Guiana and thus providing additional trained personnel who are needed today. In addition to that, this country spends no less than \$500,000 annually as its subvention to the U.C.W.I. to assist all students from British Guiana, who attend the U.C.W.I., in the payment of the expenses of that institution. Whether the students are there on scholarships or on loan, the Government assists all students at the U.C.W.I. to the extent of \$500,000 a year. So it is not quite true to say that this Government is really treating higher education on a commercial basis. Government is assisting all students to the extent of no less than \$500,000 in order to secure a university education at the college in Jamaica.

My hon. Friend says: 'Why bind the students to return to British Guiana?' Apart from the fact that Trinidad and

Jamaica also bind their students, the reason for assisting the students by giving this subvention to the U.C.W.I. and by giving loans to them, is to secure more trained personnel for British Guiana. And it has been found, through experience, that binding is necessary in order to give the students who do not have that good sense of responsibility, that urge with which to come back to British Guiana to serve their country and themselves.

One of the reasons for giving scholarships is to reward students who have scholastic ability and to mark them out as persons of distinction. There are three scholarships which are awarded annually to persons of such scholastic ability. My hon. Friend has been one of those: he was a winner of the Guiana Scholarship, and I am sure he would not want to cheapen this type of scholarship by increasing them to 30.

The hon. Member speaks of 12 to 20 scholarships, but the students to whom these scholarships should be awarded would not have had the same scholastic ability as the first three students who would be awarded such scholarships. There is not much more I would like to say, but I would add that the reason that prompted the hon. Member for Georgetown Central to move this Motion is to enable us to secure a larger amount of trained personnel in this country. I wish to say that more trained personnel can be provided for this country under the present scheme, because any student who has the scholastic ability to undergo training at a University is being assisted by the Government and given every opportunity to do so.

Before I take my seat, I should like to say that over the past three or four years the sum of over \$250,000 has been expended on assisting students in studying overseas, and the sum of \$125,000 has been voted this year to assist such students.

Mr. Burnham (*replying*): Sir, I find myself agreeing with the Minister of Community Development and Education when he says that three additional scholarships cannot meet the need for trained personnel. I was never so naive as to believe or think otherwise. I was merely suggesting an increase from 3 to 6 to give an indication to the public, especially those young men and women from secondary schools, of the direction in which the Government of the country was moving and its attitude towards education.

This sort of back-handed compliment about my being a Guiana Scholar is totally irrelevant. As a Guiana Scholar, I can say that in the majority of cases the winning of the Guiana Scholarship is a question of luck with the papers or the subjects which one takes. My information is that the number is much larger than three. Even if we want to perpetuate this snobbery about three Guiana Scholarships being exclusive and things which are awarded for outstanding academic ability or to distinguish a scholar: even if we want to keep this snobbery, the fact is that every year you have more than 3 persons of outstanding academic ability who will not get a scholarship because the number is insufficient and, therefore, I cannot see that an increase in the number will cheapen the scholarships.

The Minister of Community Development and Education asks whether I would like to know that the Guiana Scholarships are easier to get? I would say, yes. My idea is not to have a student going around saying that he is a Guiana Scholar. My idea is to give everyone, who has the ability, an opportunity of having the advantage of being trained at an institution of higher education. I have already mentioned in my opening remarks that this should be only the beginning of things, and by next year we should see a proper plan whereby there will be no question of winning a

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Guiana Scholarship; it will be a question of those who have the ability being given an opportunity not by way of loan, or a loan *cum* a contract to return and serve in this country for a period.

I am a little surprised to hear the Minister of Community Development and Education saying that students have to be bound to return by contract because it has been found that they do not have a full sense of responsibility. I think the shoe is on the other foot. Has Government shown its sense of responsibility to the students? Has Government given the students an opportunity of moving on? I know, for instance, that there are students who return here who are under no obligation to return. They were told by a previous Chief Secretary that there was room for them — I think he is now in Sarawak. I have known of Guianese who are qualified returning here and approaching the Minister who claims his inability to do anything to assist them. The fault is not with the students. It is very rare that you will find any Guianese who would prefer to stay out. That is not the general pattern — the general pattern is that they want to return home and work.

In the first place, Government gives very little or no advice as to the type of courses Guianese may take. In the second place, Government takes little or no hand in finding them jobs, posts or positions when they return qualified. This policy of giving students loans to enable them to qualify abroad is a vulgarising of education — a pattern similar to a poor man's shop or any other business. Why talk about the \$125,000 in loans? Government is no better than

the average businessman who wants for his money a contract *cum* interest and proof that the student will return.

To refer to Trinidad's binding persons to whom they lend money to go and study is to say nothing. Even if this vulgar system obtains in Trinidad, I will still be opposed to it. There is no automatic persuasion that comes to me because that is done in Trinidad. The Minister of Community Development and Education talks of Trinidad binding students to return, but he does not tell us that the statistics of the U.C.W.I. show that the average scholarships *per capita* in Trinidad is higher than that of British Guiana. [Mr. Ram Karran: "They have more money than British Guiana".] The Minister of "Humour" *alias* Minister of Communications and Works says that they have more money, but he does not tell us that Barbados has a higher number *per capita* than British Guiana. It would be interesting to hear the Minister say that British Guiana is not on par with Barbados. [Mr. Rai: "You are introducing new matter."]

The Minister of Community Development and Education, and would-be Speaker, is talking about introducing new matter. I am replying to his observation that in Trinidad students are bound, and I am saying that there are other morals that can be drawn from what is done in Trinidad. But if this Government does not want to increase the number of Guiana Scholarships there is nothing I can do about it.

If the Guiana Scholarship, according to the Minister, is to have some special value or distinction, who is the Minister to take that point of view? I am in the best position to say if anything is wrong about this so-called cheapening of the Scholarship.

Question put, the Council divided
and voted as follows:

Mr. Speaker: The Motion is lost.

ADJOURNMENT

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Bowman	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Davis	Mr. Ajodha Singh
Mr. Tello	Mr. Saffee
Mr. Jackson	Mr. Rai
Mr. Burnham	Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. Kendall — 6	Mrs. Jagan
	Mr. Benn
	Dr. Jagan
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney-General
	The Chief Secretary — 11

The Chief Secretary: Sir, I beg to move that we adjourn to a date to be fixed.

Mr. Speaker: This Council now adjourned to a date to be fixed.

Council adjourned accordingly, at

5 p.m.