

# SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 2nd February, 1961

The Council met at 2 p.m.

## PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. D. M. Hedges

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

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

} *ex officio*

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| The Honourable Dr. C. B. Jagan | — Member for Eastern Berbice<br>(Minister of Trade and Industry)                       |
| „ „ B. H. Benn                 | — Member for Essequibo River<br>(Minister of Natural Resources)                        |
| „ „ Janet Jagan                | — Member for Western Essequibo<br>(Minister of Labour, Health and<br>Housing)          |
| „ „ Ram Karan                  | — Member for Demerara-Essequibo<br>(Minister of Communications and<br>Works)           |
| „ „ B. S. Rai                  | — Member for Central Demerara<br>(Minister of Community Development<br>and Education). |
| Mr. R. B. Gajraj               | — Nominated Member   |
| „ W. O. R. Kendall             | — Member for New Amsterdam   |
| „ R. C. Tello                  | — Nominated Member   |
| „ F. Bowman                    | — Member for Demerara River  |
| „ L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.       | — Member for Georgetown Central  |
| „ A. L. Jackson                | — Member for Georgetown North  |
| „ E. B. Beharry                | — Member for Eastern Demerara  |
| „ 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   |
| „ A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.         | — Nominated Member.  |

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

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

## ABSENT :

Mr. S. Campbell, Member for North Western District — on leave.

The Clerk read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 26th January, 1961, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

#### ORAL ASKING AND ANSWERING OF QUESTIONS

##### CADETSHIP TRAINING SCHEME

**Mr. Burnham:** I beg to ask the hon. the Chief Secretary Question No. 7 standing in my name on the Order Paper: What has Government done about the Cadetship Training Scheme?

**The Chief Secretary:** The Administrative Cadet training scheme was commenced in 1955 and in addition the Government has since introduced schemes for the training of Cadet Police Officers, Cadet Inspectors of Taxes and a Cadet Auditor. Under these schemes nine Cadets have completed their training and have been appointed either as Administrative Assistants or Assistant Superintendents of Police. Fifteen Cadets are still receiving training and twelve candidates are about to be selected for training. The Cadet Scheme is working very satisfactorily.

**Mr. Burnham:** As a supplementary question, may I ask what are the qualifications for Cadets?

**The Chief Secretary:** In the case of Administrative Cadets the usual qualification is a university degree or its equivalent. There are cases where Cadets can appear before the Public Service Commission as direct entrants without a university degree. Perhaps I may go one stage further and say that whilst undergoing training, these Cadets are attached to Ministries for periods of approximately six months, and generally proceed to the United Kingdom for a course at one of the universities.

**Mr. Burnham:** As a further supplementary question, can the Chief Secretary tell us whether the salary given a

Cadet without a university degree is as high as that given to a university graduate?

**The Chief Secretary:** I am afraid I do not know.

##### TRAINING OF GUIANESE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

**Mr. Burnham:** I beg to ask the hon. the Chief Secretary Question No. 8 standing in my name on the Order Paper: What consultation has there been between Government and the authorities of the University College of the West Indies with a view to ensuring trained Guianese personnel for filling various posts in the Public Service?

**The Chief Secretary:** It has been agreed with the authorities of the University College of the West Indies that, on the publication of a Notice advertising a vacancy or vacancies, a copy should be sent to the Registrar of the University College who would bring the vacancy to the notice of suitably qualified Guianese students there. This procedure has been followed during the past two years. Copies of Notices are also sent to the Secretary of the British Guianese Students' Association at the College.

**Mr. Burnham:** As a supplementary question, will the Chief Secretary state whether Government informs the authorities of the U.C.W.I. of vacancies which are likely to arise, for which students there can pursue courses, as is done in the case of Jamaica by the Jamaican Government?

**The Chief Secretary:** Yes, Sir, notices of vacancies are sent to the U.C.W.I.

**Mr. Burnham:** As a further supplementary question, may I ask whether Government has not approached the U.C.W.I. indicating what vacancies are likely to arise in the future, so that Guianese students can pursue courses

with a view to filling those vacancies in the years to come, as is done by the Jamaican Government?

**The Chief Secretary:** I am not quite sure what the hon. Member means by "in the future", but we do notify the U.C.W.I. when vacancies arise with the object, if possible, of appointing qualified Guianese students into the Public Service here.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

#### COMPANIES (AMENDMENT) ORDINANCE

**Mr. Speaker:** The Minister of Trade and Industry is to move the Second Reading of the following Bill:

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

**The Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan):** Sir, this Bill before Council can be said to be long overdue. The Companies Ordinance, Chapter 328, is based on the Companies Ordinance, 1908, of the United Kingdom. I understand that since the 1908 enactment, there has been three revisions, finally culminating in the Companies Act of 1948 in the United Kingdom. Unfortunately, our law has not been brought up-to-date.

From time to time representations have been made and, indeed, it was thought that every effort should be made to have a comprehensive law along the lines of the 1948 Act in the United Kingdom, but it was felt that since it is necessary to have certain amendments which will bring the law up-to-date, it is proposed, at this time, to introduce such amendments. These have been gone into very carefully both by the Law Reform Committee and by the Sub-Committee of the Industrial Development Advisory Committee on the Co-ordination and Promotion of Industrial Activity in British Guiana. It is felt now

that there is a general spirit of development in the air, that we should bring, up-to-date, our Companies Ordinance to assist and safeguard those who wish to embark upon and take interest in industrial and commercial ventures.

Clause 2 of the Bill seeks to permit the alteration of the objects of a company. In the original Ordinance, Section 10 says that the alteration of the objects of a company could only take effect after confirmation by the Supreme Court. This, certainly, is a time-consuming exercise and, therefore, provision is made now, in Clause 2 of this Bill, to permit of such alteration to take place at a meeting; and for this alteration to become part of the objects of a company, within the specified time. However, within that time, provision is made for appeal to the Supreme Court by shareholders or debenture-holders of the company.

Clause 3 seeks to provide for conditions contained in a company's memorandum to be altered by special resolution if any of those conditions could lawfully have been contained in the articles of association of the company.

Clause 4 seeks to make provision for the establishment of a share premium account. It also seeks to make provision for shares to be issued at a discount and for redeemable preference shares to be issued by a company limited by shares if authorised by its articles of association.

Clauses 5 and 8 provide for the holding of the annual general meeting of a company and the filing of particulars with the Registrar. Variations are proposed here because it is found, from experience that, particularly in the first year after incorporation or soon thereafter, sometimes it is very difficult to have this general meeting and to file the relevant material with the Registrar; so

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provision is made here, now, to extend the time so that the company and the officials of the company can have ample time to call such a general meeting and to file such particulars.

Clause 11 of the Bill makes provision whereby the Supreme Court may order the calling of a meeting of a company either on its own motion or on the application of a director, or of a member entitled to vote, where it is impracticable to call or conduct a meeting of the company in the manner prescribed, and the Supreme Court may give any directions it may think expedient.

Clause 16 of the Bill seeks to make provision for the registration with the Registrar of the Supreme Court, of mortgages or charges existing on property which has been acquired by a company registered in British Guiana.

As I said, these amendments are merely meant to streamline the Ordinance and to take advantage of some of the more favourable aspects of the United Kingdom Act of 1948. As I pointed out at the beginning, these measures are long overdue; therefore, I have great pleasure, now, in moving the Second Reading of the Bill intitled an Ordinance to amend the Companies Ordinance.

**The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn):** I beg to second the Motion.

**Mr. Tasker:** Mr. Speaker. I do not think there is any argument about the need for this Bill. I only wish to say that it is an extremely ably drafted Bill, a Bill which is overdue, and a Bill which has obviously required a great deal of careful preparation. I commend Government for bringing it forward, and I think it is a great advance in our legislation.

**Mr. Hubbard:** I, too, warmly welcome this Bill. It is noteworthy for what

it sets out to do, and also for the fact that it is another commentary on the life of the circumlocution office. It is a piece of legislation which has been in the mills of the Government for, as far as I have been able to determine, no less than five years. It is one more reason why I keep on reiterating the necessity of our streamlining procedure, so that we get things out of the mills far quicker than we are able to do now.

Five years is a long time for anything, particularly when, as I understand, the original approach in connection with the proposal to amend the Companies Ordinance came with a draft of proposed amendments. But I realize that what has come out is far more comprehensive than the original suggestions, and I would like to commend the legal officers for the care and attention that they have given to this matter.

I just want, again, to say how much we are in need of dissolving the circumlocution office with its principle of how not to do, and of substituting some new system with the principle of how to do, quickly.

On the Bill itself: There is just one thing that is disturbing my mind. We are at the beginning of a period which might be likened to the days of Britain's early companies' days which ended up in the South Sea Bubble. The difficulties of Timber Development, Limited, in recent times, I think, should warn us that legislation for companies should adequately protect the members of the companies, that is to say, the shareholders; and I refer in this connection particularly to those provisions which prescribe punitive measures against officials of a company who, knowingly and wilfully, omit to do certain things.

I am a great respecter of Courts, and I know how very difficult it is to prove things in Court. I know, also, that a man may omit to do things wilfully and knowingly and yet it may be impossible to

prove that he has wilfully and knowingly omitted to do those things; and I should like some information to be put before us to convince us that we should depart from what has existed in the law before and introduce this new step of having to make it necessary to prove that a thing was wilfully and knowingly omitted. With these short comments, I commend the Bill to the Council.

**The Attorney-General (Mr. Austin):** This is a Bill which, in effect, puts new wine into old bottles, and to that extent it is not entirely satisfactory, since the bottles themselves are very old and the substantive Companies legislation is based on the Companies Act, 1948.

I recorded, exactly two years ago to this day, something which puts clearly what I wish to say. I said at the time:

"I think it is most important that when the spirit of development is in the air in British Guiana we should have up-to-date Company legislation to assist and safeguard those who wish to embark upon or take an interest in industrial and commercial ventures.

Our present law is hopelessly out of date, and we cannot therefore have the benefit of modern case law since that largely arises out of the Companies Act 1948 of the U.K. It is in the interest of the country that our law should be brought up-to-date without further delay."

On that point, I tried to get a Committee set up to examine Company legislation with a view to recommending a re-enactment of the Ordinance, because of the importance of Company law to a developing commercial and industrial community. However, it was difficult to do so at that time for various reasons and, eventually, this Bill was produced, which has taken important provisions out of the Companies Act, 1948, and adapted them to our needs here.

I would like to say, however, that the Government does not intend to let the matter rest there. The question of providing the country with up-to-date Company legislation is very much in the minds of the Law Reform Com-

mittee which, as hon. Members know, consists of representatives of the various aspects of law in this country: judiciary, law officers, and practising lawyers with experience in various branches of the law. We hope, as soon as possible, to get down to this very big task of producing an entirely new Companies law. We have already obtained models from elsewhere based on the Companies Act, 1948, the latest Companies legislation in England, but, of course, everything has to take its turn in the Government according to the necessary priorities. It is not merely a matter of sitting on things for five years. It is a matter of other things, often more important, taking priority.

I hope that hon. Members, when they signify their approval of this Bill, will do so against this background: that this is an interim measure, and before long it is hoped that a complete streamlined Bill will be presented to the Council to give the country up-to-date Companies legislation.

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 18 agreed to as printed.

Clause 19.—*Amendment of section 251 of Chapter 328.*

**Mr. Gairaj:** There seems to be an error here, because the first line of this Clause mentions "Section 19", whereas the explanatory note refers to an Amendment of section 251 of the Principal Ordinance. I should ask the hon. Attorney-General to check on it.

**The Chairman:** There is a definition of "director" in Section 251. The definition begins at the third line of page 4426.

**Mr. Gajraj:** It is probably a printer's error here.

**The Attorney-General:** That is right, Sir. It should be Section 251.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 19, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clause 20 agreed to as printed.

Council resumed.

**Dr. Jagan:** Sir, I beg to report that the Bill has been considered in Committee with a slight Amendment to Clause 19. I now beg to move that the Bill be read the Third time.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time and passed.

### ELECTRIFICATION OF VILLAGES

✓ **Mr. Burnham:** I beg to move the Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper which reads as follows:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that Government enter into negotiations to ascertain whether, and if so on what terms, the various sugar estates would be prepared to electrify villages until such time as the countryside rural electrification becomes a reality."

I do not propose to be long on this Motion because I find it difficult to anticipate any opposition to it. In the first place it recommends that negotiations be opened; it does not for one moment suggest what should be done. I have had the advantage of travelling along the East Coast on many an evening and seeing several—or at least two that I can remember—sugar estates like oases of light in the midst of a desert of darkness, and those deserts of darkness are in fact the villages. I have wondered, because on many of those occasions the lights from the estates

seemed to be in profusion, so much so that I suspect that there is an attempt by those who own the generating plants to use up as much energy as possible for fear of their machinery being fouled if full use is not made of the power that is generated.

For some time now we have been told that this Government and the previous Government had anticipated electrifying the rural areas which, of course, would include the villages. I have made some slight and cursory investigation, and I am led to believe that this plan for rural electrification by the Government is not likely to become a reality within a short time. I am going to be charitable and assume that it is likely to become a reality during the lifetime of some of the younger ones of us, but certainly it is not foreseen within the next few years. My further investigation has also led me to the conclusion that it would be possible, in some cases, for those sugar estates with generating plants to supply electricity to the surrounding villages; not necessarily to distribute electricity to individual consumers or would-be consumers, but to supply it in bulk, perhaps to the local authority or village council concerned, which can then undertake the responsibility for distribution as, for instance, has been done in the case of Wismar-Christianburg by the Demerara Bauxite Company.

I am not that naive to assume that such a plan would be without certain practical difficulties, or to assume that there will not be a number of minutiae that will have to be worked out. I am aware, for instance, that on some of the estates there is only a seasonal supply of a large amount of power. When an estate is grinding and the steam boilers are in use there is a greater and overwhelming supply, but I understand that in some cases when there is no grinding the respective estates switch back to a small diesel plant which can serve the

immediate needs of the estate and such personnel as use electricity.

That difficulty, as I see it, is not one that cannot be surmounted, and it is not one which cannot be resolved as a result of discussion and negotiation. There can be arrangements made, for instance, perhaps to supplement the plants on the estates or to supplement the facilities, so that even in the off-grinding period the necessary power can be generated which will yield a surplus that can be sold to the local authorities for distribution to consumers who would be interested in taking the electricity.

I do not believe that there is anyone here who would not like to see the modern and civilized convenience of electricity made available to the people in the villages and in the country districts of this country. No one, I think, will have to labour the advisability of having electricity made available to the people in the villages and in the country districts. Perhaps it may be said that since the purchase of the Demerara Electric Company's undertaking and the bringing into being of the British Guiana Electricity Corporation, the direct responsibility will be not that of Government but of the Electricity Corporation.

To my mind, if such an argument were put forward it would show the emphasis on technicalities rather than on realities, because if I remember correctly, the constitution of the Corporation is such as to leave a certain amount of residuary power in the hands of the Minister, and in any case, even if the machinery were to be provided through the Electricity Corporation. I cannot imagine in the wildest flights of fancy, that the British Guiana Electricity Corporation would refuse to adopt and implement the policy which has been accepted by the Government of the day.

In the circumstances, therefore, I propose that Government enter into negotiations with the various sugar

estates to find out whether they have available power, and whether they would be willing to make available such power for the use of the people in those areas, and in what circumstances and on what terms power could be made available for our residents in the rural areas. Of course, I anticipate that the arrangement will have to be such that the *pro tem* system can be absorbed without any difficulty into the larger system of rural electrification when that becomes a fact.

**Mr. Jackson:** Reserving my right to speak at a later stage, I beg to second the Motion.

**The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran):** I wish to take this opportunity to heartily congratulate the hon. Member, for bringing forward such an important measure as the electrification of the rural areas, even at this late stage in the life of this Council. I observed that there was some difficulty on his part, due to illness, in getting ready for the debate on the Motion. I am glad the hon. Member is well enough to come here this afternoon to dispose of it, for it has been on the Order Paper for some time.

Government is not unmindful of the need for electrifying the rural areas of this country, and indeed did not wait until the hon. Member tabled his Motion to inquire from the sugar estates about the availability of electricity in these areas. The picture that has been painted so far by the sugar estate authorities is more or less as described by the Mover of the Motion, that is, that in the grinding period there is a great amount of electricity produced for the grinding of cane and other works carried on in the factories, but that when that period is over they usually switch over to a small diesel plant merely to supply electricity for the residents and the workers on the estates.

As far as I understand from the operators of these plants, it would be

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quite uneconomical, and indeed they are in many cases unwilling to undertake the responsibility of generating electricity for consumption by the residents in villages, except that in one or two cases it has been suggested that Government should purchase plants and put them at the disposal of the sugar estates concerned, for the generation and supply of electricity to be distributed in bulk to consumers in the villages.

Without having had an opportunity to go into the details of this matter the hon. Member suggests that we should not get bogged down in technicalities but should look at the matter realistically. Nevertheless, there is a great deal of investigation to be done. For instance, the hon. Member will appreciate that it would be very difficult to "marry" the system to be carried out by the Electricity Corporation five years from now with a system that carries a different voltage.

It would be necessary to resort to very expensive transformers and other gadgets in order to "marry" the two systems, and I am sure the hon. Member will agree that this is too poor a country for us at this stage, when rural electrification is in sight. That is in spite of what the hon. Member says about the younger people of this generation. I am not as pessimistic as he is. Certainly I can say that rural electrification will be something which the older ones among us will be able to see in their lifetime, let alone the hon. Member who is still very young.

These technical difficulties must be gone into — must be overcome — before we can begin to talk about buying additional plant and handing it over to the operators on the sugar estates for a general electrification scheme. Perhaps, I can inform the hon. Member that generating electricity on a small scale is

not very attractive; and I know of one instance where the sugar estates — Bookers Sugar Estates, Limited, which generate electricity in Bartica for the residents there — are not very happy about it and have been, for some time, urging upon Government an increase of the rates under which they operate the existing franchise and, indeed, the rates have been revised upward only recently with the agreement of the Bartica Village Authority. Even Bookers would like to give up the franchise merely because it is very uneconomical.

In view of the fact that Government has, or will, put up proposals, as soon as the two 10-Megawatt diesel sets are installed at the Kingston Plant, there will be the availability of power, and its expansion very rapidly, to the rural areas, followed by the possibility of hydro-electricity. This is an attempt, at this late hour, by the hon. Member to put money into a scheme which would not be wholly satisfactory. It is far better for us to go ahead with the main scheme and urge the Electricity Corporation to proceed with the scheme for rural electrification. Let us get over the purchasing of the plant; let us, by all means think of the plant, and I am sure that even before the plant is paid for, the expansion of the distribution system would be put on part of the East Coast and there will be rural electrification in the areas around Georgetown.

I am not, as I have said, as pessimistic as the hon. Member. I think the firm way in which the Motion is worded — that Government should negotiate with the sugar producers — is unacceptable to Government because, as I have said, we have already spoken to these people and I think I should let the hon. Member know as much as possible on this question. I wish to assure him that every effort would be made for the supply of electricity from the Electricity Corporation to the rural areas. That, of course, does not mean



that those people in the rural areas, who wish to set up their own plants, would be prevented from doing so.

I understand that in certain parts of the Corentyne efforts are being made by people to set up their own plants under a co-operative system. Investigations are being carried out, data are being obtained from the Electricity Corporation and other electrical concerns for the installation of diesel sets in some of the rural areas until the rural electrification scheme is put in.

I think I heard the hon. Member say that on his recent visit or visits to the East Coast he had seen oases of light in a sea of darkness. I am more often in the area and can assure the hon. Member that I am quite aware even more than he who has noticed only recently. Perhaps, I should point out that the same situation exists in the Corentyne, Berbice. I understand there is a surplus of power at the New Amsterdam Plant, and negotiations are going on with the Town Council of New Amsterdam with a view to expanding the distribution system in order that more people would be able to get electricity.

Of course, as was indicated when the Bill on the Electricity Corporation was discussed, the Corporation would eventually become a Colony-wide concern and provision is made for the generating plant in New Amsterdam to be taken over by the Corporation. When that is done all the technical details will be tied in. There, again, we will run into some trouble because we all know that the New Amsterdam system of generating electricity is different from that in Georgetown. But I am sure the hon. Member will live to see that time; and it is far better to tackle it then rather than act on this untimely suggestion of the hon. Member. I think I have said enough to assist the hon. Member both on the technical as well as on the realistic approach to the problem, and I hope he will withdraw his Motion.

Mr. Tasker: Like the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, I, also have made it my business to make some inquiries on this subject, and I think it is fair to say that the result of these inquiries certainly shows that the practical problems involved in this Motion cannot be dismissed as he has suggested they should be. I think there are also some important matters of principle involved.

Firstly, I would like to clarify a statement made by the hon. Minister of Communications and Works who gave the impression, in his comments just now, that the sugar estates had been unwilling or reluctant to consider this whole question at all. I do not think that is a fair comment and it is not accurate. Certainly, the sugar industry has made it clear, in its discussions with Government, that it would not become involved in being a public utility. In other words, it will not take on the responsibility for the distribution of electric power to individual consumers. This is a reasonable point of view, particularly in the light of the newly-established Electricity Corporation, which is a public utility designed to do these things.

But the industry, I understand, has also made it clear to Government that it is perfectly willing to consider any proposals whereby the generating capacity of the sugar factories might be increased and the surplus power be supplied in bulk to an authority which would distribute it. I think the hon. Member for New Amsterdam will bear me out when I say that some four or five years ago, when he was Minister of Communications and Works, this very question was considered in terms of one particular factory and one particular residential area around it.

The matter was raised at that time because the estate in question was about to re-equip its electricity generating plant; and had there been an agreement to provide additional power in bulk to the local authority, the estate would

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then have purchased and installed a larger plant than it needed for its own requirements. These negotiations, in fact, broke down because the local authority was unable to assume responsibility for distribution and, as a result, the estate purchased the plant that it needed. That was in 1956; and I am informed that with the inevitable development of the use of electric power in the factory, coupled with the needs of new consumers on the estate, the position now is that the capacity of the new plant is fully utilized.

On this question of utilization: The hon. Member for Georgetown Central suggested that there was an over-use of electricity on the estates. I remember he said that driving by, the saw oases of light in a sea of darkness, and he gave us the impression that estates were using up more electricity than they needed. This, I suggest, is hardly fair or logical.

After all, electric power is generated by any industrial concern for the purposes of that concern. Over and above that, the sugar industry has always endeavoured to provide sufficient power for the residents on the estates, but it does not always succeed; and it certainly has not succeeded up to the present moment. But there is a great distinction between putting in a plant for specific industrial purposes and this question of ending up as a public utility. This seems to me not to be the responsibility of the sugar industry.

The hon. Member also referred to the "overwhelming supply of electricity during the grinding season." This is just not true. What happens, I am informed, is that during the grinding season when the maximum power output is required, the factories generate electricity at a capacity adequate for the needs of the factory at its peak period. It follows, therefore, that if the factory's

needs are below peak, there may be an indeterminate surplus of electric power at any given moment, but this, it is fair to say, only happens for short periods. There is no regularity of surplus power, and I think anybody who has dealt with this question will agree that you cannot go into the business of supplying electricity unless you have a regular supply. I admit that the recent history of the Demerara Electric Company proves them wrong, but the principle is the same.

Secondly, there is also the problem of maintenance. Reference was made to the standby generating plant at the estates—a diesel generating plant—which goes into operation when the estates are not grinding. This is not because anybody wants to put in two different forms of generating plant, but simply because the steam plant needs regular maintenance and is taken out of commission when the factory is not grinding. If, therefore, it is suggested that one solution might be for the estates to generate electricity continuously with both steam and diesel plant, it is easy to see that every factory would very soon find itself in the position from which the Government is now trying to extricate the Demerara Electric Company—in other words, with everything burnt out, and with serious breakdowns due to the inability to keep up with generating requirements and at the same time ensure proper maintenance.

The hon. Minister has already made the point about the uneconomic operation of small electrical undertakings, and that is certainly borne out, I understand, in the experience of the sugar industry. The point I would like to make is that the industry has at all times been willing to consider any proposition from the Government or, today, from the Electricity Corporation, whereby the power facilities of the factories could be brought into what would, in the long run, become a national grid system.

This is long term planning, but the sugar industry is always willing to consider possible ways in which it can contribute to the common good. It is important, however, to maintain a clear distinction between a willingness to consider this problem and the suggestion—so often made these days—that this is something else that the sugar industry should take on. I do not believe that for one moment, and I do not think anybody in this Council believes it, either. This is a matter for a public authority, and it is up to that authority to organize its supplies in the best and most economical fashion. If there is any practical way in which the sugar industry can assist that authority in the generation of the electricity which we all want to see, then the sugar industry will be only too willing to consider the matter. ✓

**Mr. Jackson:** Sir, one would have thought that the Motion which has been brought forward by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central could not have been brought earlier, in view of the fact that the considerations which would have made this possible have only now come into operation with the establishment of the Electricity Corporation to deal with the supply and distribution of electric current.

I make this statement because, I think, during the crisis when we were criticizing the Electric Company for its failure to supply sufficient current to its consumers, this was one of the possible means of relieving the situation. If my memory serves me correctly, I made the point in this Council when we were discussing one of the Bills in relation to the supply of electricity. This is a very appropriate opportunity which one can take to bring about the linking-up of all supply sources of electrical energy for the benefit of the entire country. I refer to energy of the kind which is now being generated by the plants to which reference has been made today.

I am sure all of us know the country. On the East Coast of Demerara you have two sugar estates; on the East Bank of Demerara you have another estate; on the West Coast of Demerara you have about three; on the West Coast of Berbice you have one; on the Corentyne Coast, I think, you have two sugar estates. Perhaps, if we go further we can find other sugar estates in some of the remote areas of the country which would be used for the purpose of giving a supply of electric energy for consumption by all the people who are in the country.

Nobody is unmindful of the fact that there would be difficulties in this matter. The Minister himself referred to some of the problems involved. He said that it was necessary to get transformers to build up a supply for further distribution. It is not my view that technical problems are things that cannot be overcome. It is my view that wherever there are technical problems you will find people who can deal with them effectively and efficiently.

It is a pity that the Minister misunderstood the views of the operators to whom he referred. He said that the operators were unwilling to do what was suggested. A correction to his statement was made by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, who said that the operators are willing to make a contribution to whatever system that may be used for the purpose of generating a supply of electric energy throughout the country, having in view a national concern.

I am in agreement with the point which has been made that the operators should not be the people to supply electric energy as though they were a public corporation or a utility concern. I think the point which could be made in that respect is that the operators should sell the electric current in bulk to the Electricity Corporation for distribution to the people. That is the pattern which, I think, is pursued in some

[MR. JACKSON]

other parts of the world where the Corporation buys the electric energy and sells it to the consumers. That is the reason why I said that this is the proper time for us to embark on this project.

We have an Electric Corporation which can purchase the electric current from the estates in bulk, and sell it to the consumers. It is not, in my view, a problem which could not be tackled, but, perhaps, the Government has a plan and it is prepared to follow it. The question is: How soon can Government's plant be put into operation? Can the plant be completed next year, or the next five years with certainty? That is, perhaps, the reason why there seems to be some unwillingness on the part of Government to accept this Motion.

It seems to me, in view of the fact that money is not always easy to get, the Government is finding it difficult to obtain money at either a low or high rate of interest. I think it would be better for Government to accept whatever willingness there is on the part of the operators of the sugar estates, and see how soon it can put into reality something that has been promised the people of this country for the past four or five years.

It is to be regretted that in 1956 the Corporation to which the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, referred did not see its way to take on the responsibility of purchasing electric energy in bulk and selling it to consumers. Had the Corporation done that, it would have proved that those who live in the East are far more full of vision than those who live in the West where the sun sets. I am sorry to hear that the Corporation did not take on that responsibility.

I feel that Government should re-examine this matter, in view of the clarification given by Mr. Tasker. If the

Minister were to review this situation, it may be found that something can be done to bring about the materialization of a supply of electricity throughout the country much earlier than if the Government follow its own plans.

Mr. Bowman: Ever since Government has pounded into their minds the idea of rural electrification, the people in the rural areas have been looking forward to the day when the villagers would be provided with electric lighting facilities. I observe that in the Development Estimates the amount set aside for this purpose is so small that I do not know what Government really intends to do with the amount provided.

I think this Government is guilty of withholding information from the Council. The Minister claims that Government has already had talks with the sugar estate authorities, but this Council was not informed of the results of those talks. If the information obtained from the sugar estate authorities had been made known to the Council no doubt the hon. Member might not have brought this Motion which suggests that Government should seek the co-operation of the estate authorities for the purpose of providing electric lighting facilities for the villages as a temporary measure.

I am not a pessimist; I am a realist. I do not know when the rural electrification scheme will become an accomplished fact, and in the circumstances I think the proposal in the Motion is a reasonable one. It may take between 10 and 15 years before we have rural electrification, during which time the people in the rural areas will have to continue without that amenity. As the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, said, and the Minister has also stated, during the grinding season the generating plants are not idle, but when the factories are not grinding the generating plants can provide electricity for the villages.

I think that if Government agrees to negotiate with the sugar estate authorities they would be prepared to assist the villages with electric power. The Minister said that certain technical aspects will have to be gone into. I do not see anything very difficult about the matter. I am sure the sugar estate authorities would be willing to co-operate, but according to Mr. Tasker they would have to consider whether it would not be dangerous for them to enter into a business undertaking that may be taken over by Government, or that they would have to submit their plans for approval by a Government which has clearly indicated its intention to control certain industries in this country. Government has already taken over the Demerara Electric Company's plant, and if the sugar estate authorities were to agree to give Government temporary control of their generating plants, the Government might develop the idea of taking full control.

**Mr. Tasker:** To a point of correction! I would like to clarify what I am alleged to have said. I was at pains to explain two things. Firstly, that there is no surplus of electric power available from the existing generating plants on the sugar estates. Secondly, that the provision of generating capacity by steam plant during grinding, and by diesel plant out-of-grinding, is designed to ensure balanced use and proper maintenance; and that if the steam plant were used continuously the estates would quickly find themselves in the position of the Demerara Electric Company.

It was suggested that there had been reluctance by the sugar estate authorities to hand over control of their generating plants. As far as I am aware, that has never been suggested. What I said was that the sugar estates would be willing to consider any proposition whereby additional electricity generated on a sugar estate could be supplied in bulk to a public authority.

**Mr. Bowman:** The point I was making was that it was said that during the out-of-grinding season the diesel plant was being used to generate electricity for use on the estates. I got the impression that it is possible that electric power could be sold if Government negotiated with the estate authorities for whatever surplus power there might be. My friend is saying that there is no surplus electricity from these plants during the grinding season. The diesel plants are used during the out-of-grinding season, and he has told us that if the sugar estates used their steam generating plants regularly there would be breakdowns such as we experience in Georgetown.

I went on to make another point. I did not say that Mr. Tasker had said so. I am saying, in view of Government's recent action, anyone might reasonably fear that however temporary a partnership with Government might be, Government might be tempted to take over complete control of an undertaking. That is the point I was making. Those are things which must be considered, and considered properly. I think the request in this Motion is quite reasonable because I do not know when Government will be in a position to have the entire countryside electrified.

Recently I moved a Motion recommending that the Government — owned rice mills should be sold to the rice producers. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, moved an Amendment, which was accepted, that Government should undertake to sell those mills when it is practicable. I will ask the same question here: when will Government be in a position to implement the promise made to the people in the rural areas to electrify those areas? Since I do not see the possibility of that being done within the next five years, I think Government should be prepared to enter into negotiations at once with the sugar estate authorities rather than reject the Motion.

**Mr. Ajodha Singh:** After listening to the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman), I have come to the conclusion that although he was once a sugar worker he has forgotten about the operations on a sugar estate. In the course of his speech he tried to tell us that because the sugar estates have diesel generating plants in reserve, for use when the factories are not grinding, they could use those diesel plants during the grinding season to sell current to the villagers in the area. The hon. Member's knowledge is very limited as to how a sugar estate operates, but he ought to remember that he was once a worker in a sugar factory.

**Mr. Bowman:** I have never lived on a sugar estate. My friend must understand that. I did not suggest that the sugar estates should sell electricity during the grinding season, but that I think they would be prepared to expand their present plants for the purpose of supplying light and energy to the villages.

**Mr. Ajodha Singh:** The hon. Member should know that every week a sugar factory suspends operations in order to clean the boilers and to effect minor repairs. What inconveniences would be caused villagers if every two days or every week they have to do without electricity because the boilers on the sugar estate have to be shut down! On such occasions the diesel plants are used to supply power for the machinery which has to be kept going in the factory and to supply electricity for the staff and other workers on the estate.

**Mr. Speaker:** I think the hon. Member said he thought the sugar estate authorities might be able to expand their generating capacity. So there is no use pursuing that point.

**Mr. Ajodha Singh:** I think it would be very difficult. It would entail a lot of confusion, because these people would equip their homes with electrical machinery and when the sugar estates can-

not supply the electrical current needed in order to keep these machines going, the people would have to undergo a great deal of inconvenience.

The hon. Member also said that rural electrification would come about in the next 15 years. The hon. Minister concerned with electricity assured him that within five years from now, rural electrification would be a fact.

**Mr. Burnham:** How many years?

**Mr. Ajodha Singh:** Within five years from now. Living on a sugar estate and knowing the position, I am one of these who are opposed to this Motion. Although I am of the opinion that electricity in the rural areas would be a good thing, I am sure that to enter into negotiations to carry out such a system, would be very difficult and, also, would not solve the problems. I feel it would be a half measure way of going about the whole affair. I feel the Mover of the Motion should withdraw it and, as the Minister assured us, wait until we can give the people in the rural areas of this country a proper supply of electricity.

**Mr. Saffee:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to oppose this Motion, and I wish to comment on a few points raised by some hon. Members on the other side of the Council. The hon. Member for Georgetown North said that Government should enter into negotiations with the sugar industry to see if it is possible to supply electrical energy from the sugar estates to the consumers. That, I have no doubt, would be an uneconomical proposition, as things are at the moment.

Only the other day when the Electricity Corporation Bill was being discussed in this Council, fears and doubts were expressed by Members on the other side, that this scheme would be a failure—Government would run into financial difficulties and the business would not operate economically. Here, the hon. Member for Georgetown North is saying

that Government should negotiate for the supply of electricity whether it is an economic proposition or not. The other day some Members on the other side were saying that the Electricity Corporation would be a millstone around the necks of the consumers of this country; now we are hearing the hon. Member suggesting that we should cause this Corporation to incur further losses. I just cannot understand how certain Members express themselves.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, I think, has given a clear picture of what the position is at the moment as regards the supply of electricity by the sugar industry. He said that there was no regular surplus of power and that if the Government is interested, the sugar industry is willing. I think that is fair. The suggestion by the hon. Member for Georgetown North, I think, would be an unsound and uneconomic proposition since it is a fact that Government has gone ahead with increasing its generating capacity, and there is every likelihood that the generating capacity of the British Guiana Electricity Corporation would be increased.

A White Paper, published sometime ago, states that Government plans to bring in another diesel plant and a steam plant this year. As expressed by the Minister of Communications and Works, rural electrification is not so far away; and I think that this piecemeal approach—asking the sugar estates to give a little help here and there, regardless of the difficulties involved—would not be in the best interest of the people of this country.

Another aspect which has been expressed by the Minister is that all these electrical equipment which will have to be installed to meet the requirements of the sugar industry, will have to be changed within the next few years, and that would result in quite a lot of financial losses. I think all these things should

be taken into consideration, and that it should be seen that the proposition is neither feasible nor economical to embark upon.

The hon. Member for Demerara River has made the comment that Government is in possession of certain information from the sugar industry, and has not given it to the Council. I do not think Government would supply a White Paper on every bit of information it gets. I think his comment should command no attention at all.

I want to say one last thing, and that is on the question of rural electrification. I think this Government is more interested—or shall I put it this way, the Majority Party is more interested—than any other Party or individual when it comes to the question of rural electrification; and I say, with very much certainty, that everything possible is being done to see that rural electrification becomes a reality.

**Mr. Davis:** Mr. Speaker, after hearing the last two speakers make their contributions to this debate, I wondered if they had taken the trouble to read the Motion. The Motion, as I understand it, only suggests that inquiries should be made "whether", and I repeat "whether" "and if so on what terms, the various estates..."

Speaking for myself, I would say that my criticism of the Motion is that it is too limited in its scope. Perhaps, I am actuated by the fact that I spend a great many hours of my leisure—[An hon. Member: "And pleasure"]—per week in the country district, and I know of the difficulties that the people there have to undergo for want of electricity. One hon. Member said rural electrification was promised the people in the country three years ago. I support that. I have heard a former Development Secretary telling the Regional

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Committees in the country districts that rural electrification would be in the country by the end of 1958.

Today, in 1960, we are no nearer our goal, except, of course, by promises that in the next five years we will get it. It is not that I do not appreciate the difficulties with which the Government has had to contend. It is because of that appreciation that I would express the view that half-loaf is better than no loaf at all.

When I said that the Motion is limited in its scope, I said so because I feel it should have been extended to include the two Government rice factories: the Mahaicony/Abary Rice Development Scheme and the one at Anna Regina as possible units from which people in the country could obtain electric current. I would also have thought that the Bauxite Company would not have been outside the scope of such negotiations. I know that electricity in the country would be a tremendous boom to the people, and it would stop the steady trek to town by people who desire to be near the bright lights of a city. The scope, at first, may be limited, but even a limited start would be appreciated in the country.

The hon. Minister has expressed the view that these installations may be costly and may become redundant later on. Surely things could be planned in such a manner that such a position could be obviated. For myself, I do not see anything wrong in the Motion. It states "...to ascertain whether, and if so on what terms, the various sugar estates would be prepared to electrify villages..." I will support it, even in its limited form.

**Mr. Burnham (replying):** Mr. Speaker, as I heard the hon. Minister of Communications and Works ambling

through his recitation, halting at some times, and inaudibly at others, I thought that he merely had to say something rather than had something to say. He spoke of the difficulties that would face an attempt to distribute electricity from the sugar estates. If he had taken pains to listen to my opening remarks, he would have recognized, or would have heard that I alluded to the fact that there were difficulties, some of which I appreciated, some of which I anticipated, and others which, I imagined, would crop up but of which I was not aware. I am not that naive as to believe that the distribution of electricity to the country and village districts from existing plants on sugar estates is something that can be achieved easily and without difficulty.

We hear of the difficulty of marrying the system which will be introduced, maybe in five years' time, to the existing system of electric plants based on the sugar estates. If the hon. Minister were able to say that such a marriage were impossible, he would have been able to find some logical objection to the Motion I have moved. He has merely said that it would be difficult.

I could never imagine a Minister of Government, a gentleman of the age of this particular Minister, being frightened by difficulties! It is true that his field of expertise is not electrical engineering or electronics, but what do you have experts for? If the experts had reported that it was impossible to marry the new system that is going to come into operation some years hence to the system now used by the sugar estates as bases, then, perhaps, we might have listened to his arguments and appreciated what he had to say. He speaks about different voltages and other things; he accused me of not understanding things, but the way in which he phrased his objection indicates that he himself does not understand. He knows not, but he would not admit that he knows not. I cannot see what is the objection to this Motion. He speaks of



rural electrification being in sight. In sight when? Rural electrification has been in sight for a number of years. In Creolese one would say: "While the grass is growing, the horse is starving".

With a little more astuteness than his colleague, the hon. Member for Berbice River, he did not condescend to give a period of time when rural electrification would become a fact. We are told that every effort would be made to supply these rural areas from the central point of the British Guiana Electricity Corporation. Does the Minister appreciate what anyone of average intelligence must appreciate, that even if rural electrification were begun in a few years, how long it is going to take for us to be able to electrify the entire rural areas? The East Coast may be comparatively easy. The East Coast is fairly near to Georgetown, but what about those areas in the Corentyne? What about those riverain areas? If you are going to attempt to electrify the riverain areas, I know, with our capacity, that you cannot at the same time attempt a thorough scheme of electrification for the entire coastland.

Even recognizing the difficulty that is posed with respect to far off coastal areas like the Corentyne, he said that in some cases attempts are being made by co-operatives to install their own plants. Obviously, the objection with respect to using energy from the sugar estates and the marriage subsequently must be followed with respect to these plants put up by the co-operatives. It seems to me that the hon. Minister and his Government are just inclined to reject any Motion that comes from this side of the Table. They imagine difficulties without knowing what the difficulties are!

As I pointed out when I began my remarks. I do not ask the Government to introduce a system of electrification based on the sugar estates. I ask this Council to recommend that Government enter into negotiations to ascertain whether, and if so on what terms, the various sugar estates would be prepared to electrify villages. I am asking Government to begin negotiations. It may well be that, as a result of these negotiations, it would be palpable and obvious that the proposal to use the sugar estates system is untenable. But without knowing his facts the hon. Minister mumbled that it would be uneconomic. On what basis does he come to that conclusion?

For instance, it is suggested that there could be an increase of plant for use in the off-grinding periods. Does the hon. Minister know what would be the cost of such a plant? Does he know what would be the cost of supplying the power from such a plant to a central body in bulk for re-distribution to consumers? Does he know whether or not, even if it costs a large sum of money, the consumers are prepared to bear and carry the expenses for the facility and use of electricity? These are details that cannot be decided on the floor of this Council. These are details which will come up as a result of negotiations and discussions.

We hear from the hon. Member for Berbice River, in one of his few excursions on the floor of this Council, that if we were to use the plants of the sugar estates there would be periodic cuts every week for 1½ days to 2 days. What utter nonsense! If these negotiations prove the advisability of using the sugar estates as bases, provision will be made by people who know, and not people like the hon. Member for Berbice River. So that there will not be these periodic cuts of 1 day, 1½ days or 2 days every week.

The hon. Minister, in one of his few audible moments, advised me to with-

[MR. BURNHAM]

draw this Motion. I shall not. Let them use their superiority of numbers, which does not reflect their superiority of intelligence, to throw out this Motion. I listened with some interest to the congratulations which came from the hon. Minister for my introducing this Motion so late. Those who live in glass houses should not throw stones. This Motion was introduced last year, and it had to be renewed because of this incompetent and lazy Government that will not debate important Motions.— [Mrs. Jagan: "You are never here!"]—Now he says it comes too late.

Even if this were the first time that it had been tabled in this Council, the fact that there was a necessity to table it arises from the fact that we never heard from members of the Government what they are doing about rural electrification. We cannot hear because they are not doing anything. They do not have the foggiest idea of where they are going. Bing Crosby, in a song of his, describes them correctly: "Running around in circles, getting nowhere very fast".

Question put., The Council divided and voted as follows:

| For            | Against                 |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| Mr. Bowman     | Mr. Hubbard             |
| Mr. Beharry    | Mr. Gajraj              |
| Mr. Tasker     | Mr. Jai Narine Singh    |
| Mr. Fredericks | Mr. Ajodha Singh        |
| Mr. Davis      | Mr. Saffee              |
| Mr. Jackson    | Mr. Rai                 |
| Mr. Burnham    | Mr. Ram Karran          |
| Mr. Kendall—8. | Mrs. Jagan              |
|                | Mr. Benn                |
|                | Dr. Jagan               |
|                | The Financial Secretary |
|                | The Attorney-General    |
|                | The Chief Secretary     |
|                | —13.                    |

Mr. Speaker: I declare the Motion lost.

### STATUE TO THE LATE MR. H. N. CRITCHLOW

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move:

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 the Bourda Green"

In this case I, also, do not propose to make my opening remarks lengthy. About three years ago Mr. Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow died. When he died tribute was paid to him in this Council and outside as well. Tribute was paid to the great work he had been doing — the person who organised in 1919 the first trade union in the British Colonial Empire and a great deal is known about his life. Born of poor parentage in 1884, struck by the revolting conditions on the waterfront, he organised the first labour demonstration in 1906, and later formed the British Guiana Labour Union which today is still alive. He played an important part in the Labour Movement in British Guiana, in the Caribbean, in the colonial world and also in the world at large. He also in those days of the restricted franchise played through the Trade Union Movement an important role in the political life of British Guiana.

In his later years his abilities and services were recognized when the Government voted a monthly pension to him. He was undoubtedly one of the outstanding sons of British Guiana — outstanding not for his academic achievements but outstanding for his organization; outstanding for the fact that he was the father of the Trade Union Movement here, outstanding for the role he played in the working class movement.

The twentieth century, I think Mr. Speaker, can be correctly described as the age of the common man, and I feel that we must not merely say that in

words but we must recognize it in deeds. In the circumstances, it is my feeling that a statue should be erected to his memory. I am aware of the fact that some time ago a committee was formed, and that the terms of reference of that Committee were to collect funds for the erection of a memorial to the late Mr. Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, but, unfortunately, we have not heard very much more about the activities of that Committee. I am not suggesting that the Committee is at rest. What has occurred to me is the fact that the Committee certainly does not seem to have been able to raise the necessary funds to put up that statue.

Government erected a memorial to those who fell in the First and Second World Wars, and I feel it is the responsibility of Government to bear the expense of the erection of a memorial to one of the greatest sons of Guiana. I do not have to repeat that he was one of the greatest sons; that phrase was used on both sides of this Table when Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow died, and if I want to perpetuate his greatness, possibly for posterity to see, to give effect to the moral which his life's work pointed to, I feel that this Government should erect a statue to his memory, in the same way as the Trinidad Government erected a statue to the late Capt. Cipriani.

I do not know what is the attitude of the Government to this, except that I have heard that there is a suggestion that a Committee should be set up to go into the matter. I do not see the necessity for any Committee. We admit that he was a great man; we admit that he was an outstanding man, and we admit that he has made a contribution and that his name should be perpetuated. Therefore the best thing for us to do is to get about the erection of a statue on a suitable plot, though I am inclined to suggest Bourda Green, the scene of his triumphs, for on many a Sunday night when

Bourda Green was avoided by so-called respectable people he held his own there lecturing to the workers.

I feel there can be no better place than Bourda Green for the erection of a statue to Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, and I have reason to believe that the Municipality of Georgetown which controls the Green will not be averse from making available the necessary spot of land for erection of such a statue. I accordingly move the Motion standing in my name.

**Mr. Jackson:** I rise to second the Motion, reserving my right to speak later.

**Mr. Fredericks :** I would like to associate myself with the remarks which have been made by the hon. Mover of the Motion, and to commend him for his very praiseworthy action. I regret that I did not have the privilege of knowing Mr. Critchlow personally, but from what was said in this Council at the time of his passing; what has been written of him and what has been told me, I have formed the impression that Mr. Critchlow was a man of integrity and honour whose contribution to his country has been of inestimable value.

We have been told that Mr. Critchlow was the founder of trade unionism in British Guiana and the West Indies and, possibly, initiated the Labour Movement in the British Empire. He was also a Member of the Legislative Council for some time, and was also a Member of the Executive Council and of the Georgetown Town Council. We have also been told by the Mover of the Motion that he made a contribution in the field of athletics, and that he was a good cricketer. One is amazed that a man without the benefit of a secondary education could have achieved so much in such a short lifetime and remained a very simple man, unspoiled by his success. It is chiefly

[MR. FREDERICKS]

as a trade unionist that he is remembered. Indeed, it is impossible to think of trade unionism in British Guiana without thinking of Mr. Critchlow at the same time, and I feel that it would be a fine gesture if this Council unanimously assents to the Motion.

Mr. Critchlow dedicated his life to the cause of trade unionism and worked tirelessly to promote the interests of workers, to improve their social and economic status both in the commercial and the industrial fields. He was a humble man, endowed with an abundance of self respect, and he also had great respect for all those with whom he came in contact. He believed in the dignity of hard work, and fought courageously and tirelessly for proper recognition and recompense of the workers for such work. And it is indeed difficult to find anyone, or to think of anyone more qualified in this country, for the people to honour, than Mr. Critchlow; and I would like to support this Motion wholeheartedly.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to support this Motion. I happened to know the late Mr. Critchlow. I knew him well. As a matter of fact, he was one of the Vice-Presidents of the trade union he led in this country — the British Guiana Labour Union—for years, when many of my friends did not think of the Trade Union Movement in this country; but the unfortunate thing is that great men have no honour in their own countries. He lived a life, many a time wanting a meal. He was rejected by many who now seek to praise him. But there is one other person who has served the workers in this country equally well in the trade union field, and I think his name should be added to this list if Government is undertaking this task of putting up statues.

A similar move was made in the Georgetown Town Council to put up a

statue of Mr. Critchlow. Every effort was made in that direction. I think the hon. Mover of this Motion was then Mayor; and despite the efforts he made, it seemed that nothing fruitful resulted. Now, Government is being called upon to assume the task. I know it is time to begin to honour and put up statues of our own sons and daughters of this land who have served the people of this land.

Well then, I think we should add one more name to those who have served this country; and I wish to add Ayube Mohammed Edun. He served the sugar workers and was, at one time, without food to eat in his own home. Like Mr. Critchlow, Government subsidized his very existence. His friends forsook him, but he lived despite it all. Humility and poverty do not detract from greatness, and so Ayube Mohammed Edun served, and did lose a considerable amount of his service because he was a poor man. In the light of the service of this gentleman, I am supporting the Motion; and with Your Honour's permission, I would like to add after the words "Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow" the words "and Ayube Mohammed Edun"; and that the word "statue" should be "statues" and the word "pioneer" be "pioneers".

There are no two ways about it, the workers on the sugar estates suffered immeasurable harm. They did not know what representation was. They suffered humiliation without representation of any kind, until Mr. Ayube Mohammed Edun came into the labour field, and he was able to effect better conditions through the Man Power Citizen's Association, now not the same fighting force it used to be when Mohammed Edun was there. It ceased to be a fighting force — a militant force that commanded the respect of every worker on the estates. Mohammed Edun fought for the people and stood with the people and never received a shekel from the employers on the sugar estates. He never fought for the check-off system because he knew the

iniquity that followed from the check-off system; so I ask to be allowed to propose this Amendment.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Do I understand you to move an Amendment that the word "statue" be "statues"; then "pioneer" be replaced by "pioneers", and you want added after "Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow", the words "Ayube Mohammed Edun"?

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** Yes, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Perhaps, you might read it in full and see how it reads.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** I am going to put it down in writing.

**Mr. Speaker:** You had better do that.

**The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan):** The name of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, as the mover has said, is well-known not only in the history of trade unionism in this country, but throughout the Caribbean. Many of us had known and worked with Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, and I am aware of the great contribution he has made to the development of trade unionism in this country. I recall — —

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not want to interrupt you. I just want to indicate that I am waiting to receive the Amendment. You may speak.

**Mrs. Jagan:** I can recall, many years ago before the Great Fire when the British Guiana Labour Union used to have its office in Hincks Street, joining with Mr. Critchlow in the organization of the domestic workers' section of his Union. The two of us used to sit up in the hall many nights for many hours waiting for the one or two or three union

members who used to show up. The work, even though it was many years after he had organized this union, was not easy going and, in fact, all his life he had to fight extremely hard to carry over the idea of trade unionism to the people and to encourage persons to join and attend meetings.

In working with him, I learnt a lot about his qualities of leadership and, also, we used to discuss the early days when he was far more active in the movement, and agile. As the Legislative Council Member for Georgetown South rightly said, he was, to some extent, rejected in his later years; and we find even today, that some of those who rejected him are now shouting his praise. It reminds one of the biblical saying: "The stone that the builders reject, the same is become the head of the corner."

I can remember marching in a May-Day demonstration some years ago and seeing Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow standing outside of his house on Crown Street watching the parade go by. I saw many of those praising him now, hissing Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow; but there was one politician and trade union leader in that crowd who had a very big heart. He went and took Critchlow by the hand and said: "Come Critch, join the parade; walk with us". That was the hon. Dr. Cheddi Jagan, who was then President of the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union; and Critchlow walked in the May-Day demonstration — in that group where others rejected him. And I remember when they assembled on the Bourda Green, he spoke. There were those who started hissing Critchlow again. They did not want him to speak. The hon. Dr. Cheddi Jagan said: "Give him a chance", and he was given a chance. These are the things that happened; and it is a pity that in his later years things were not quite as happy as they could have been.

We have not forgotten him. The

[MRS. JAGAN]

hon. Minister of Communications and Works recently named a hydrographic launch "The Hubert Critchlow." We have recently named one of the streets in the Housing Scheme after that man; so there are some who had not forgotten him, and do not make public that they had not forgotten him.

I would have liked to support this Motion, but I feel that its asking Government to put up a statue, is not the real answer to perpetuate the memory of this great trade unionist. It is easy, in election year, to stand up and say, "Let the Government build a statue." What is a statue? There are countries full of statues. It does not mean anything. It is true, in the past, there may have been monuments of great men, erected in British Guiana, but that does not mean because you have been building monuments of great men that we must keep on building monuments of great men. I believe that there should be something dedicated to the memory of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow; but I am not convinced that there should be a statue. I would honestly prefer something of greater use to the community. What could Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow have wanted? Would he want a statue stuck up in Bourda Green; or would he prefer a scholarship for young men and women to study trade unionism; or would he prefer a trade union hall or some other useful memorial? I am not equipped to state what type of memorial should be dedicated to his memory, but I think it is rather puerile and useless to suggest a statue. It does not mean anything real. His name will be recorded in our history books, and I have no doubt that others will follow our practice of naming objects of frequent use like boats, streets and villages, after his name. Those are things that will last.

I do not think it is the full respon-

sibility of the Government to contribute all the money for whatever memorial is decided. I think the Government should make a contribution by all means, but I think also that the community, and in particular the trade union movement, must make a substantial contribution. Mr. Critchlow came from the ranks of labour, and with little help as well as little education rose to be a trade union leader. It is from those ranks that the pennies, ten-cent pieces and twenty-five cent pieces must be collected to build a memorial. It may be in the form of a scholarship or scholarships. That is why I cannot support this Motion as it stands, although I support the essence of it.

The Mover of the Motion knows that the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour spoke to him, and asked him if he would consider altering his Motion to read:

"That this Council recommends that a Committee should be appointed to consider and make recommendations for a suitable memorial to commemorate the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, the great pioneer of labour, and to consider ways and means of raising funds for providing such a memorial".

However, the Mover of the Motion was not in agreement with the suggestion. I thought, perhaps, I could move an Amendment to this Motion along those lines, but I was advised by the Clerk of the Legislative Council that this would not be possible because it negated certain points in the Motion. I believe that His Honour the Speaker is aware of this.

I am in the position, therefore, where I support the essence of the Motion that there should be, perhaps, some memorial in the name of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, but I do not agree that it should be a statue. On the other hand, I do not agree that it should be the full responsibility of the Government. I would like to suggest again to the Mover of the Motion that he makes a

change in his Motion to include the points which the Government would like inserted: That a Committee be set up to decide what type of memorial should be established, and ways and means of raising money for it. It may well be that the Committee will agree with the Mover that a statue is the best thing. If a Committee, duly established, agrees that there should be a statue, whatever it says will have to be the decision.

I believe that there are so many other wonderful ideas that could be embodied in a memorial for the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, that it would be foolish for us to rush things and agree to the erection of a statue. I am one of those persons who feel very strongly about certain customs and habits some people have which are not entirely useful.

For example, I have made a suggestion to the Red Cross that, in the raising of funds for the Handicapped School for Children, they introduce a system that is now quite popular in the United States. When a person dies, rather than buying flowers which means nothing to the dead man or woman, the person who wishes to show his sympathy should send his contribution to the fund, and the fund in turn sends a condolence card to the family saying "Mr. and Mrs. So and So have contributed to the Handicapped Children's Fund in the name of the deceased". In the United States of America you have the Cancer Fund, etc.

I know that when my father died, we received dozens of such cards which meant more to the family, because we knew that rather than sympathisers spending money on flowers, the money had gone to a very useful purpose. That is why I suggest that a statue is not particularly useful but, perhaps, something else would be of greater use to the community, or to the trade union movement in particular. That is why I would urge the Mover of the Motion to indicate

that he is willing to make the necessary alteration to his Motion which, essentially, we all agree with.

**Mr. Bowman:** I rise to support the Motion in its original form. It has been the custom of mankind from time immemorial, when one has distinguished oneself in any given field, to commemorate the death of such a person. In some cases statues are erected, and in other cases different forms of objects are erected in the memory of the individual.

This Motion suggests something specific. It states:

"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."

Bourda Green is an historic meeting place. It is the distinguishing objective that attracts my attention. Everyone knows Bourda Green as a place where important meetings are held throughout the years. The Motion carries the distinguishing word "the". I do not know to what extent this word "the" could be applied to more than one person. If a man starts something and carries it on for 10 years before he is joined by another person, I do not see how the second person can also be considered a pioneer. I know that Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow is the pioneer.

The hon. Member for Georgetown South suggested that there should be added to the Motion the name of the late Ayube Mohammed Edun. I know that Mr. Critchlow was running things when I was a boy. He represented labour throughout the length and breadth of British Guiana; he represented carpenters, masons, sugar workers as well as all ordinary workers. I know that in those early days the Indians on the estates used to call Mr. Critchlow "Black Crosby". At that time Mr. Edun was not on the scene. Mr. Critchlow was the sole representative of labour at the time. The word "the" distin-

[MR. BOWMAN]

guishes Mr. Critchlow from all others in this matter, and I do not see where Mr. Edun can be recorded as a pioneer, too.

Apart from that, I do not agree with certain remarks made by the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing in that she is opposed to the idea of erecting a statue. I think a statue or profile of Mr. Critchlow would be most appropriate, especially if it is placed at Bourda Green. It is there where political meetings have been held for many years. I am supporting the view that there should not be anything else other than the statue representing the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow. I disagree with the Minister that anything else should be substituted for the statue.

I support the Minister's point that it should not be the full responsibility of the Government to provide the statue. I agree with her that workers throughout the country should contribute and add something to what the Government is prepared to give. I feel that Government should make a sizable contribution towards the erection of the statue. It must be remembered that Mr. Critchlow is one man who has enlightened the workers of this country. That is why I am supporting the Motion 100 per cent., and I will not support anything other than a statue.

**Mr. Gajraj:** Sir, I beg to second the Amendment made by the hon. Member for Georgetown South.

**Mr. Burnham:** Sir, on a point of order. I submit that the purported Amendment by the hon. Member for Georgetown South is not an Amendment,

and is not relevant to the question before the Council. The question involves the erection of a statue, not *in vacuo*, for Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow. If they want to erect a statue for Edun, a substantive Motion has to be moved. This Motion does not seek the erection of statues to all labour leaders, or to alleged labour pioneers. It asks for the erection of a statue to a particular man, and the Amendment should not be entertained.

**Mr Speaker:** I do not consider the Amendment irrelevant. The Amendment sought is, "That this Council recommends that Government should erect statues to the great pioneers of labour, . . ." As to whether there is more than one pioneer or not is not a question for me to inquire into. If there was only one and that was accepted, then if someone had asked me to add a name it would have been an entirely different matter. I do not find the Amendment irrelevant, and I will allow it.

The Amendment, as seconded, reads:

"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."

It does not violate the principle. As to whether there was one pioneer or more is not the question. It is now five o'clock and we have to adjourn.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Chief Secretary:** I move that Council adjourn to a date to be fixed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Council is adjourned to a date to be notified later.