

# SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Friday, 2nd June, 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*

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| The Honourable <b>B. H. Benn</b> | —Member for <i>Essequibo River</i><br>(Minister of Natural Resources)                     |
| ” ” <b>Janet Jagan</b>           | —Member for <i>Western Essequibo</i><br>(Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)          |
| ” ” <b>Ram Karran</b>            | —Member for <i>Demerara-Essequibo</i><br>(Minister of Communications and Works)           |
| ” ” <b>B. S. Rai</b>             | —Member for <i>Central Demerara</i><br>(Minister of Community Development and Education). |
| Mr. <b>W. O. R. Kendall</b>      | —Member for <i>New Amsterdam</i>  |
| ” <b>R. C. Tello</b>             | —Nominated Member   |
| ” <b>F. Bowman</b>               | —Member for <i>Demerara River</i>   |
| ” <b>L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.</b>  | —Member for <i>Georgetown Central</i>   |
| ” <b>A. L. Jackson</b>           | —Member for <i>Georgetown North</i>   |
| ” <b>S. M. Saffee</b>            | —Member for <i>Western Berbice</i>  |
| ” <b>Ajodha Singh</b>            | —Member for <i>Berbice River</i>  |
| ” <b>Jai Narine Singh</b>        | —Member for <i>Georgetown South</i>   |
| ” <b>R. E. Davis</b>             | —Nominated Member   |
| ” <b>A. M. Fredericks</b>        | —Nominated Member   |
| ” <b>H. J. M. Hubbard</b>        | —Nominated Member   |
| ” <b>A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.</b>    | —Nominated Member.  |
| Mr. <b>E. V. Viapree</b>         | —Clerk of the Legislature (acting)  |
| ” <b>V. S. Charan</b>            | —Assistant Clerk of the Legislature (acting).   |

## ABSENT:

- The Honourable **Dr. C. B. Jagan**—Minister of Trade and Industry—on leave  
**Mr. S. Campbell**—Member for North Western District  
**Mr. E. B. Beharry**—Member for Eastern Demerara  
**Mr. R. B. Gajraj**—Nominated Member.

The Clerk read prayers.

## MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 1st June, 1961, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## ORDER OF THE DAY

## PUBLIC BUSINESS

REPRESENTATION OF THE  
PEOPLE (AMDT.) BILL

Council resolved itself into Committee to resume consideration of the following Bill Clause by Clause:

A Bill intituled: "An Ordinance to amend the Representation of the People Ordinance, 1957."

## COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Clause 14.—*Amendment of section 34 of Principal Ordinance.*

**The Chairman:** The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, was speaking when the adjournment was taken.

**Mr. Tello:** Sir, when the adjournment was taken yesterday, I was trying to impress upon two leaders of two political parties that they should not press this Council to accept the Amendment for the use of symbols and photographs at the coming election.

**The Chairman:** I think you were dealing with Clause 14 of the Bill which refers to Section 34.

**Mr. Tello:** Yes, Sir. I want to repeat that plea today. It is quite true that in 1953 there was need for both symbols and photographs, because the party system was so new to British Guiana that it was necessary to assist the electorate as much as possible. I am quite sure this Council will agree that things have changed, and the elector knows the party he wants to support. Now that the Chief Secretary has accepted a suggestion from the parties concerned that we

should have symbols to assist the electorate, the need for photographs seems to be superfluous.

I do not think we should encourage the electorate to think in terms of photographs. If we want to encourage people to think in terms of Party Government, then we should assist them as much as possible without having a photograph to enable them to know the exact person they are voting for. While you are assisting them, you are also defeating the desire to conform fully to party politics. I am sure I do not have to stress it because most of the elected Members of this Council seem to have accepted the party system, but possibly, in their zeal to assist the electorate, they have lost sight of the point. May I remind them of it and ask them not to press for photographs and a common symbol.

**Mr. Jackson:** Perhaps the opposition to photographs on the ballot-box is based on the fear that the pictures of the cannibals on the ballot-boxes may scare away the people who are of the master race, and who may be afraid of being devoured by the pictures. This request for having the photographs of candidates on the ballot-boxes in addition to a common party symbol has been offered as a means by which there should be very little confusion in the minds of those persons who are going to cast their votes on the 21st August, 1961. It appears to me that we still have among us those who do not intend to assist the electorate to a greater extent than that proposed in the present Bill which is seeking to amend the Principal Ordinance. Visual aid has become part and parcel of the conducting of modern activities, and it is very surprising to me that a Member of this Council who accepted the visual aids as a means of assisting persons to grasp something more quickly and permanently should now condemn one of the most certain ways of getting the greatest degree of assistance, for the people who are to cast their votes on the 21st August, 1961.

There is no reason why the photographs of the candidates should not be placed on the ballot-boxes. My colleagues and I will strongly urge that this is done. The hon. the Chief Secretary in his reply to one of the points made by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Burnham) unwittingly gave away valuable information to this Council. He has given me at least, if no other person, the reason for the obstinacy on the part of the Government to accept what are reasonable suggestions as regards the continuation of the procedure which took place in the past at the next election.

For instance, yesterday I pointed out that although provision is made for the employees of the Transport and Harbours Department working on trains and steamers to exercise the franchise by proxy, no such provision was made for those people who are working under similar conditions but not in the employment of the Government. If you are going to allow an employee of the Transport and Harbours Department working on a train or a ship the right to exercise the franchise by proxy, there is no justifiable reason for denying an employee in a similar category, who may be bound to leave the city or the country on the morning of polling day, the right to exercise the franchise by proxy.

I referred to the fact that it may be possible that up to 5 a.m. such a person is bound to leave the country, because his employer has arranged, by schedule, that the ship on which he is working must leave at that time of the day, which happened to be polling day. I am interested in the hon. the Chief Secretary's observation that by administrative act the ballot-boxes have been already made, and that the Bill we are now discussing is already in the hands of the printers. The Amendments, which are presented before this Council, are also in the hands of the printers and will be carried by virtue of Government's numerical strength in this Council. Therefore they

have taken action to have the ballot-papers and the boxes prepared to suit themselves. It appears to me that that is why these very reasonable suggestions are not accepted by the Government. We are now debating a Bill which has a certain value to the Government. If Government is going to act in administrative matters before we agree to the proposals, then such acts are in all respects making this Council a tool in the hands of the Government. That is the impression I gain from what has been said by the hon. the Chief Secretary. I am protesting very strongly against this attitude of the Government.

**The Chief Secretary:** (Major Smith): Your Honour, a great deal has been said towards the close of yesterday's discussion and again now about the statement which I made to the effect that a great deal of arrangements in connection with the voting at the forthcoming general elections have already been done. Speaking on that the hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Burnham) said it looked as if Government did not welcome advice, and he referred to the fact that he had been consulted. That is true.

As long ago as August of last year he had an interview with me and mentioned a number of things. He promised to let me have more details, which I am yet to receive. At no time did he mention anything which had to do with the actual method of voting.

The hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh) said yesterday—he gave me a homily on the power of the Legislative Council as the supreme body. I entirely agree with him, but what appears to have been entirely lost sight of is the fact that the arrangements which have been made, and which could not be left to the last moment to be done, were made in accordance with the law of the land—what exists in the Representation of the People Ordinance, 1957.

[THE CHIEF SECRETARY]

Take the question of printing. The fact is because copies of the Representation of the People Ordinance, 1957, were in short-supply, as will be recalled by the Clerk of the Legislature, we had a number of copies printed.

**Mr. Burnham :** As an individual, I have the highest regard for the hon. the Chief Secretary, but for his memory I have to extend my sympathy to him. When I consulted him in August last I clearly told him, after I was asked by him, that the form of voting which I advocated was a separate ballot-box system as existed in 1953. I clearly told that to the individual I see here as the hon. the Chief Secretary whose lapse of memory I bemoan.

The hon. the Chief Secretary said the arrangements could not be kept back any longer. Whose fault is it that until this time arrangements have not been made? Why was not this Bill prepared and presented to this Council since last year? It was known not later than May, 1960, that there was going to be a new Constitution and a new Legislative Assembly, and that general elections were going to take place not later than August, 1961. Those were facts which had to be known for the presentation of this Bill, and they were known to me, let alone the Government.

I do not see why they should be allowed to take advantage of their own incompetence and laziness. We are told it is too late and arrangements had to be made before the presentation of this Bill. But the hon. the Chief Secretary knows, and his predecessor in office and the person who was there acting for his predecessor in office also know that for months I have been asking them, "When are you going to bring up the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill? How soon will it be in our hands?"

Now it is brought forward we are to be told by the most illogical reasoning that they could wait no longer on the Bill for arrangements to be made.

The hon. the Chief Secretary should have consulted the hon. the Attorney-General before he elected to speak about the law of the land. He says this Ordinance No. 3 of 1957 is the law of the land, but it cannot be, so far as the elections of the 21st August 1961, are concerned. It is not applicable until it is amended, so that you could not make arrangements for the elections under it. It refers to a Legislative Council of fourteen members and not to a Legislative Assembly of thirty-five members. Therefore arrangements made under it for the purpose of the forthcoming elections will not be made under the law of the land for that purpose.

I wish he had consulted the hon. the Attorney-General. If the hon. the Attorney-General advised him to the contrary, I say that as leader of my profession he would have advised him incorrectly. There is no law of the land in existence so far as the August Elections are concerned. We are now seeking to make the law of the land for the Elections.

Therefore I desire to move an Amendment which has been circulated, that Clauses 14, 15 and 16 be deleted and substituted by a new Clause 14, which will read (as on pages 1 to 3 of the Amendments in my name).

"Sections 34, 35, 36 and 37 of the Principal Ordinance are repealed and the following sections substituted therefor:—

- 34 (1) In the case of a poll at an election of a Member of the House of Assembly the votes shall be given by ballot.
- (2) The ballot of each voter shall consist of a ticket (in this Ordinance referred to as a ballot ticket).
- (3) Each ballot ticket shall have a number printed on the face and shall have attached to it

- a counterfoil with the same number printed on the face.
- (4) At the time of voting the ballot ticket shall be marked on the back with an official mark and delivered to the voter within the polling-place, and the number of such voter on the finally revised list shall be marked on the counterfoil.
- (5) The voter shall place the ballot ticket in a closed ballot box (hereinafter referred to as a ballot box) bearing thereon the name and the photograph of the candidate for whom he desires to cast his vote and the symbol and where allocated the colour so allocated to that candidate, in the presence of a poll clerk at the polling-place after having shown him the official mark thereon.
- (6) Any ballot ticket which has not thereon the official mark, or on which anything except the said official mark, or on which anything except the said number is written or marked by which the voter can be identified shall be void and not counted.
- (7) After the close of the poll the ballot boxes shall be sealed by the presiding officer so as to prevent the introduction of additional ballot tickets and shall as soon as is practicable thereafter be taken charge of by the returning officer, who shall, in the presence of such agents, if any, of the candidates as may be in attendance, open the ballot boxes and ascertain the result of the poll by counting the votes given to each candidate, and shall forthwith declare to be elected the candidate to whom the majority of the votes has been given.
- (8) The decision of the returning officer as to any question arising in respect of any ballot ticket shall be final, but shall be subjected to reversal on petition questioning the election or return.
- (9) The provisions of this section shall also apply to persons voting as proxies.
- 35 (1) If any voter is incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause from voting in the manner provided by the Ordinance the Officer presiding at the polling-place shall, at the request of such voter, in the presence of the agents of the candidates cause his vote to be cast in the manner directed by such voter and the ballot ticket shall be placed in the appropriate ballot box.
- (2) The name and the number in the finally revised list of every voter whose vote is so cast for him, and the reason why it was so cast, shall be entered by the presiding officer on a list which shall be delivered to the returning officer.
- 36 (1) Where, after the counting of the votes by the returning officer (including recount) is completed, an equality of votes is found to exist between any candidates at an election in any electoral district, and the addition of a vote would entitle any of those candidates to be declared elected, the returning officer shall not be entitled to a casting vote but shall forthwith decide between those candidates by lot, and proceed as if the candidate on whom the lot falls had received an additional vote.
- (2) Where, on an election petition, it appears that there is an equality of votes between any candidates at any election, and that the addition of a vote would entitle any of those candidates to be declared elected, then—
- (a) any decisions under the foregoing subsection shall, in so far as it determines the question between those candidates, be effective also for the purposes of the petition; and
- (b) In so far as that question is not determined by such a decision, the court shall decide between them by lot and proceed as if the one on whom the lot falls had received an additional vote.

[Mr. BURNHAM]

- 37 (1) Every officer, clerk and agent in attendance at a polling-place shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting in such polling-place, and shall not communicate, except for some purpose authorised by law, before the poll is closed, to any person any information as to the name or number in the finally revised list of any voter who has or has not applied for a ballot ticket or voted at that polling place.
- (2) No person shall annoy, molest or otherwise interfere with or attempt to annoy, molest or otherwise interfere with a voter when casting his vote, or otherwise attempt to obtain in the polling-place or within two hundred yards thereof any information as to the candidate for whom any voter in such polling-place is about to vote or has voted, or as to the number on the ballot ticket given to any voter at such polling-place.
- (3) Every officer, clerk and agent in attendance at the counting of the votes shall maintain and aid in maintaining the secrecy of the voting, and, without in any way affecting the generality of the foregoing provision,—
- (a) Shall not attempt to ascertain at such counting the official number on any ballot ticket; or
- (b) shall not communicate any information obtained at such counting as to the candidate for whom any vote is given in any particular ballot ticket.
- (4) Any person who acts in contravention of any of the provisions of this section shall be liable, on summary conviction thereof, to imprisonment with or without hard labour for any term not exceeding six months, or to a fine not exceeding one thousand dollars or to both such imprisonment and fine.

The purpose of this Amendment is to substitute for the ballot-paper system of voting, the ballot-ticket system of voting which was invoked in 1953.

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh:** Mr. Chairman, I do not know, as far as this item is concerned, whether the Government would like time to consider this matter. I think it is a system which worked very well in 1953 and should be given an opportunity.

**The Chief Secretary :** I can say that Government has made its position quite clear on that particular point.

**The Chairman:** The proposed amended Clause or Section 26 (2) (b) is original?

**Mr. Burnham:** No, Sir. It is a provision which existed in Ordinance No. 3 of 1957, and, also, existed in Chapter 56—Representation of the People Ordinance, 1953. But I notice, according to the Amendment before this Council, that it is proposed to delete that.

**The Chairman:** If nobody wishes to speak then I shall put the Question.

**Mr. Burnham:** Mr. Chairman, before you put it, may I find out whether it is correct to say that the ballot-paper or the printing of the ballot-papers has already started?

**The Chief Secretary :** I cannot answer that question; I do not know.

**Mr. Burnham:** May I put it another way. Can the Chief Secretary say whether the order for the printing of the ballot-papers has been placed? That he must know.

**The Attorney-General:** (Mr. Austin): On that I would like to reply—

**Mr. Burnham:** On a point of order. He is not the Chief Secretary.

**The Attorney-General:** I have the right to speak. Whether the order for the printing of the ballot-papers has or has not been placed is immaterial at this time for the reason that, contrary to what the hon. Member for Georgetown South said in one of his earlier speeches this afternoon, this law is the pattern for elections, until it is changed, except for consequential Amendments. It is unthinkable that legislation which is in common form with other places in the Caribbean area should, automatically, be rejected. We cannot start again to think of all sorts of new ways of voting, identifying and disqualifying people and so forth. What has existed in the past has been tried and proved successful and there is no justification for thinking that it should be changed.

It is with that idea in mind that the hon. the Chief Secretary—and I support him—said that this is the law relating to voting today, except for formal consequential Amendments and others such as the Amendment to provide for the staining of the finger which was raised some weeks ago by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central. If the hon. Member had all these bright ideas about voting and one ballot-box for each candidate, why did he not move a Motion weeks ago so as to bring the matter up instead of waiting for the eleventh hour? He has only himself to blame.

The law has been tried and tested. These are not home-made provisions that we are dealing with. They are in common form in this area, and there is no justification for their being altered or our going back to the provisions which applied in 1953 when the circumstances were entirely different.

**The Chairman:** I think the Member to whom you intended to refer was not the Member for Georgetown South but the Member for Georgetown North.

**The Attorney-General:** I meant the Member for Georgetown Central.

**Mr. Burnham:** Mr. Chairman, sometimes I do not know whether to be irritated by the Attorney-General's remarks, to be amused or to be sympathetic. Now, this is what he said: "This is in common form in the Caribbean." It is also in common form in the Caribbean for there to be a larger category of persons to exercise their votes by proxy. You cannot burn your candles at both ends and at the middle; and for heaven's sake do not let us hear about bright ideas. I gave the hon. the Chief Secretary, Major I. O. Smith, this bright idea since August, 1960, and I spoke to the Attorney-General some months ago. Do not let us be hypocritical. Both the Attorney-General and the Chief Secretary, as individuals, knew. I spoke to them since last year. However, says he, "this is the law, except for certain consequential Amendments." Why, in 1957, didn't you make consequential Amendments to Chapter 56? In the same way as the hon. Attorney-General in 1957 had the energy to draft a new Bill, the hon. Attorney-General in 1961 should have had the energy to draft a new Bill. In this Legislative Council you are always patching and pruning Bills and presenting them with a number of Amendments, and the layman experiences great difficulty in following them intelligently. The Bills presented to this Council are lawyers' Bills, because only lawyers will put themselves to the trouble of following cross-references and so on. There seems to be no consideration for the layman.

The hon. Attorney-General should know better. He is the senior member of the Bar, and he is telling us that this is the law of the land. I wonder whether he knows that this Bill deals with the Legislative Council? I wonder whether he knows that this Bill will give the Governor certain powers which he could not possibly have under the new Constitution? He should know better than that—he is not speaking to all laymen.

**The Chief Secretary:** The hon. Member for Georgetown Central says that I know that he spoke to me about the matter of voting, but I am afraid I do not know about that. He remembers that he did, and I remember that he did not.

**Mr. Burnham :** There is no use carrying on the argument. What one forgets one does not know, therefore, the hon. Chief Secretary does not know.

**Mr. Tasker:** I have no intention of supporting this Amendment, but I would like to lend support to one of the comments made by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central regarding the type of legislation presented to this Council, and I think that this Bill is a very good example. As he rightly says, a Member of this Council who is not blessed with legal training finds it exceptionally difficult to follow certain legislation intelligently, and even if he follows it intelligently, he is unable to follow it with the assurance that he is following it accurately.

I do not think we are making sufficient use of Select Committees, and I feel that when we are dealing with highly technical Bills, those who are trained in the law should argue the various matters in Committee and give us a clear picture to follow. If this is not done, then, with the best intention in the world, some of us will be left in the dark. I think Government should bear this suggestion in mind in future.

**The Chairman:** I shall put the Amendment in relation to Section 34. The Question is, "That Clause 14 be deleted."

Question put, and negatived.

Clause 14 put, and agreed to.

Clause 15.—*Amendment of section 35 of Principal Ordinance.*

**The Chairman:** The Question is, "That Clause 15 be deleted."

**Mr. Burnham:** I beg to withdraw my Amendment to this Clause, because since the deletion of Clause 14 did not take place there is no point in moving the deletion of the subsequent Clauses.

Agreed to.

Amendment withdrawn.

**Mr. Bowman :** I arrived late, and I am wondering what has been done with the Amendment I have proposed. I do not know whether it was by-passed, or deferred for discussion on my arrival.

**The Chairman :** An Amendment to what? Do you have an Amendment to Clause 14? If so, I do not have it in my possession.

**Mr. Bowman :** It is an oversight; I was looking at Clause 13, Sir.

**The Chairman:** That was dealt with yesterday; we are now dealing with Clause 15.

Clauses 15 and 16 agreed to.

Clause 17.—*Insertion of new section 36A in Principal Ordinance.*

**Mr. Bowman :** I beg to move an Amendment to Clause 17, subsection (6) of the new section 36A by the deletion of all the words after the word "to" in the ninth line, and the substitution therefor of the words "six month imprisonment without the option of a fine." In view of the fact that the hon. Attorney-General made certain suggestions yesterday, I am prepared to accept his amendment.

**The Chairman:** Your Amendment is that all the words after the word "to" in the ninth line should be deleted, and



the words "six months imprisonment without the option of a fine" substituted therefor.

**Mr. Bowman :** I am prepared to accept the hon. Attorney-General's Amendment which was mentioned yesterday.

**The Attorney-General:** I think the hon. Member wishes to move an Amendment to the Clause so that the punishment would be "not exceeding five hundred dollars, or imprisonment for a term not exceeding twelve months."

**Mr. Burnham:** The hon. Member wishes "or to both such fine and imprisonment" to be included. That is what the hon. Attorney-General offered to Council yesterday.

**The Attorney-General:** I know that all of the statutes passed here have adopted the formula of fine and imprisonment, or both fine and imprisonment, but it is very rarely used. If you sentence a person to imprisonment as well as a fine when he is in default, he goes to prison for a long time. I suggest that such additional punishment is not in keeping with modern thought.

**Mr. Burnham:** I seem to remember that in one of our recent Traffic (Amendment) Ordinances we inserted "fine and imprisonment." I do not think it is one year yet since the hon. Attorney-General submitted such legislation. This Ordinance was passed in 1957, and one has to be consistent as far as possible in respect of the punishment for offences. In no case where there is an alternative to a fine or imprisonment there should be a second alternative to a fine and imprisonment. I suggest, particularly in the light of these offences, that if a presiding officer in marking the finger of an elector and, if necessary, ordering an elector to return his ballot paper fails in his duties he should not be punished. I am asking that it be not pressed.

I see the difficulty alluded to by the hon. the Attorney-General, but there is a certain Amendment which would obviate that and a further difficulty which exists at the moment. The contravention may not be wilful. I wonder if the hon. the Attorney-General would insert the word "wilful" before the word "contravenes" in sub-paragraph (c) of subclause (6). I do not feel very strongly on the penalty of imprisonment and fine, but I may just point out that the hon. the Attorney-General has introduced legislation in this Council within the last twelve months in which there is that provision. As I see it, these offences are not serious, and so I will not insist on imprisonment and fine. But I think it should be a wilful contravention instead of just a contravention.

**The Attorney-General:** I perceive that the hon. Member for Georgetown Central has suggested it as a lawyer's point—the question whether for a statutory offence you do not have to prove *mens rea*. I will look into this point. There may be similar references in the law. If you put it in one, you must put it in everywhere. It is a matter on which I cannot immediately give a decision, but I do accept the hon. Member's Amendment. If he wishes he may move that the punishment in subclause (6) be increased to six months' imprisonment or a fine of five hundred dollars, but not both.

**The Chairman:** There is an Amendment here relating to subclauses (2) and (3).

**The Chief Secretary:** The reason for that is, the original subclauses refer to immersion in electoral ink.

**The Chairman:** The hon. the Chief Secretary is now dealing with clause 17. What is put down is Section 36 A (1). He is proposing an amendment, a copy of which hon. Members have on a separate sheet. I think it was circulated some days ago.

[THE CHAIRMAN]

"That for subsections (2) and (3) of the new section 36 A there be substituted the following subsections —

(2) No presiding officer shall permit any elector voting otherwise than as a proxy to put his ballot-paper in the ballot-box unless, immediately before he does so, one of his fingers has been stained with electoral ink; and every presiding officer shall, upon being shown any such elector's ballot-paper in accordance with provisions of subsection (3) of section 34, require him to permit one of his fingers so to be stained by that officer:

Provided that where the presiding officer is satisfied that the elector is suffering from an injury to any finger of such a nature as to render it undesirable for that finger to be stained with electoral ink, the presiding officer shall not require that such finger be stained.

(3) If any such elector, upon being required by the presiding officer to permit one of his fingers to be stained as aforesaid, fails or refuses to do so the presiding officer shall thereupon order the elector to return his ballot-paper to such officer and to leave the polling-place forthwith and shall destroy any ballot paper so returned and make an entry in the poll book setting out the facts in relation to such failure or refusal."

**The Chief Secretary:** I think the difference is that instead of stating that "no presiding officer shall permit any person voting unless he has immediately before stained one of his fingers by immersing it in electoral ink" it states "require of him that one of his fingers, be stained with electoral ink." The idea is that we may not get the particular type of ink in a container to allow of immersion, but the finger can be marked.

**The Chairman:** Have hon. Members followed what the hon. the Chief Secretary has said?

**Mr. Burnham:** I do not, but it is immaterial.

Amendment put, and agreed to.

**The Chairman:** I cannot put the whole Clause as subclause (6) has to be done.

**The Attorney-General:** I accept the Amendment of the hon. Member for Georgetown Central for the insertion of the word "wilfully".

**The Chairman:** That is to subclause (6) of Clause 17 dealing with penalty. The Amendment is that the word "wilfully" be inserted in the second line between the word "officer" and the word "contravenes" so the clause will read "every person, who being a presiding officer wilfully contravenes ....."

Amendment put, and agreed to.

**The Chairman:** In the same subclause (6) the Amendment is proposed that instead of the words "two hundred and fifty" there be substituted the words "five hundred" and in respect of the term imprisonment the word "six" be substituted for the word "three." So the subclause will read ".....Be liable to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months".

Amendment put, and agreed to.

Clause 17, as amended, passed.

Clause 18.—*Amendment of Section 37 of Principal Ordinance.*

**Mr. Burnham:** Mr. Chairman, I did propose that the Amendment on the back page of the cyclostyled copy which has been circulated should be inserted here but, on careful scrutiny, I think it should go in at 19 because Clause 18 seeks to amend Section 37 and my Amendment seeks to amend Section 41; so I wish to move that we finish Clause 18.

Clause 18 passed as printed.

Clause 19.—Amendment of Section 42 of Principal Ordinance.

**Mr. Burnham :** It is at this point I desire to move the Amendment which appears at page 4; and it would be to the effect that a new Clause 19 be inserted and Clauses 19 to 31 be renumbered 20 to 32, respectively. The total number of Clauses is 31, so if we were to bring in a new Clause, there will be 32. Clause 19 to read as follows:

"Section 41 of the principal Ordinance is hereby repealed and the following section substituted therefor:

- 41 (1) Every employer shall permit every elector in his employ to be absent from his work for such period as to enable the said elector to exercise his vote at the polling place at which, under sections 27, 28, 29 and 30 of this Ordinance, he is entitled to vote, and no employer shall make any deduction from the pay or any remuneration of any such elector, or dismiss, or impose upon, or exact from him any penalty by reason of his absence during such period.
- (2) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any law for the time being in force every elector shall be entitled to absent himself from his work for such period as will enable him to exercise his vote at such polling place at which he is entitled to vote under sections 27, 28, 29 and 30, and such elector shall not be liable to any criminal or civil penalty whatsoever for such absence from his work.
- (3) Any employer, who, directly or indirectly, refuses or by intimidation, undue influence, or in any other way, interferes with the granting of any elector in his employ, for such period for voting as in this section provided, shall by summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding \$1,000.00 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or to both such fine and imprisonment.

- (4) In this section "employer" includes the Government of British Guiana and any person or officer who, acting as agent of the employer, is empowered to grant or withhold such leave of absence as may be required by such elector aforesaid."

**The Chairman:** Perhaps, you might explain it.

**Mr. Burnham :** The purpose of this Amendment is to give an opportunity to persons to go and exercise their votes, even beyond the opportunity now provided under the present Section 41. Under the present Section 41, that opportunity is limited to a reasonable time on polling day; whereas in the proposed Amendment there is no limitation to the day. So that if we insert that a person can exercise his franchise under Sections 27, 28, 29 and 30 if he is a day or two away from his polling place, he will still be entitled to pay or other remuneration or free from penalty as a result of his absence from his employment. This is only to widen the provision of the present Section 41.

I pointed out yesterday during the course of my contribution to the debate, that Section 41, as it stands, does not cover those persons whom I seek to give an opportunity to vote by proxy. You are going to give a person who, by reason of his work, is a day or two away from his polling place, a day or two to exercise his vote. Subsection 3 of the proposed Section 41 seeks to increase the penalty to which the employer is liable if he refuses, intimidates or exercises undue influence or in any other way interferes with the granting of leave of absence to the elector; and subsection 4 gives the definition, for the purposes of the particular Section, of the term "employer."

To remove all doubt, it is clearly stated that the Government of British Guiana is an employer for the purposes of this Section, and any officer who acts

[MR BURNHAM]

as an agent of the Government is empowered to grant such leave of absence and is also deemed an employer for the purposes of Section 41. It is difficult to see what objection the Government will have, unless the Government will come out clearly and say: "It will not provide the utmost facilities to give an employee the opportunity to exercise his franchise."

**The Chairman:** When you say, in your Section 41 (1), "under sections 27, 28, 29 and 30 of this Ordinance," you mean as already been passed in this Bill?

**Mr. Burnham:** Yes, Sir.

**The Chief Secretary:** I appreciate the point made by the hon. Member about those who are working far away. It is considered that this is too wide a Clause and may well lead to an abuse; and I would like to—

**Mr. Burnham:** I did not have the advantage of hearing the last words of the Chief Secretary, but I rather doubt that this provision for an elector to exercise his vote can be considered too wide a Clause. It is not too wide because it does not say 'a person can take any period.' It just says: "for such period for voting as in this section provided..."; so that if there is any attempt by the employer to dismiss his employee, it must be the subject-matter of a legal enquiry and the court has to decide whether or not the period during which the employee had absented himself was reasonable or unreasonable. If it was a reasonable period, he has got the protection which is sought to give him under subsection 3 and the employer is estopped, in any way, from discrimination against him. It is said 'he who is above is above all.' I do not know if it will meet the Chief Secretary and his colleagues if I were to insert after the word "such" in the second line of 41 (1), the word "reasonable".

**Mr. Bowman :** I am fully in agreement with the Amendment, but I can very well foresee a certain amount of complications. I am wondering why the Government is so stubborn or mule-like. I remember before this Bill was debated, the Mover of the Amendment had moved a Motion asking that polling day be declared a public holiday. If that Motion was accepted, the request in this Amendment would not have been made; and it is far more complicated than the Motion. If an employer gives his employee time to vote and the employee goes and meets 150 persons in the queue, who will determine how long it will take that employee to cast his vote? It may take him two or three hours, and the employer may not be satisfied. If the day was declared a public holiday, then all these complications would be avoided. I am in full agreement with the Amendment.

**Mr. Tasker:** The hon. Member for Georgetown Central has argued in support of his Amendment but, so far as I am aware, he has not made any convincing comments. I understand, today, the provisions of Section 41 of the Principal Ordinance, as applied to the election of 1957, have proved adequate. So far as I am aware, there was not any number of valid complaints resulting from the election of 1957 on the working of Section 41, and I have yet to hear that Section 41 is inadequate. So I am yet to be convinced that this Amendment is desirable.

**Mr. Burnham:** The difficulty the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, has in understanding the point is that he was absent yesterday when this question was discussed. At a glance, Section 41, as it stands at the moment, says that the employer is only to permit time for voting on polling day; whereas, there are some electors who work more than a day away from the polling place at which they are entitled to vote. That is why, particularly, the phrase "polling day" has been removed in the Amendment; so

that if it takes more than a day for a man to get to the polling place, he should enjoy the same facilities as the man who can get to the polling place in a few hours.

**Mr. Davis :** Then it does necessarily follow that for all that length of time the employee must be paid?

**Mr. Burnham:** Yes. That is what it means. I can assure the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, that that is what is meant and that is what is intended. You must do it or suffer the penalty of one thousand dollars. And why I proposed the penalty of one thousand dollars if the employer or agent refuses to pay the employee, is to make it so high that he would give the employee time for him to cast his vote.

**Mr. Tello :** It seems to me that this is the outcome of the Government's refusal to widen the scope of extending the right to vote by proxy. I think the appeal made yesterday with regard to the widening of conditions whereby people can vote by proxy was a fair one. The arguments were sound, and hon. Members pointed out that it was not always convenient for people to leave their working place within twenty-four hours to go and exercise the franchise. The alternative is to ask some other qualified person to exercise it on their behalf. Why can't Government accept the Amendment? Why should the police and certain other categories of persons only have that right? After all the result of the election is intended to reflect the people's wishes with regard to the election of the Government.

Are we going to put a stumbling block in the way of those who live far away from their polling stations? A man may be on the spot, and a few hours before the polling station is opened he may be transferred as a result of an emergency. In the circumstances, he would be unable to cast his vote. Are you going to

deny him the right to vote? He may be employed in the Interior and cannot get back within seventy-two hours. Why can't we amend Section 28 and give such people the right to vote by proxy? I know that such an Amendment will have a great impact upon the industrial and commercial life of the country. It is better we had declared a three-day holiday.

I ask the Government to accept the suggestion, and I would like the Clause to be recommitted so that we could include an Amendment whereby certain people would be able to vote by proxy. I am referring to the Government now as an employer. Is it cheaper to permit a man to vote by proxy, or to pay him for three or four days to enable him to go and exercise his right to vote?

**Mr. Burnham:** I am grateful for the purported support from the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, but I would like to assure him and the Council that this is not only an alternative to voting by proxy but something more. It is an attempt to give a man an opportunity to vote personally. Though I still adhere to my original intention that the scope of voting by proxy should be widened because it is too small, it is my conviction that every facility should be given to the elector to cast his vote personally because proxy is only a makeshift arrangement. You can give your wife your proxy vote to exercise, but she may exercise it for a different person from the person for whom you intended to exercise your vote. The proxy should be used only when better cannot be done. Either widen your proxy, or accept this Amendment. If Government should accept this Amendment, I should be most grateful to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, for his appeal for a recommitment of Section 28.

**Mr. Tasker :** I see no reason why this cannot be done, if Government accepts the principle of postal voting by those who are unable to vote personally. It should be proxy plus postal

[MR. TASKER]

voting, which seems reasonable to me, but I cannot support the Amendment. I would support any measure which enabled an individual, who by virtue of his employment is away from his polling place, to vote by proxy or by postal vote. I do not see why this cannot be done.

**Mr. Burnham:** That is what we get from some people. Does the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, believe that his principals will have to pay the people too much money when they go to exercise their right to vote?

**Mr. Tasker :** I regard the use of the franchise as the responsibility of the individual citizen. I feel that everything should be done to enable an individual to vote, but I would never agree to making a circus of an election by giving employees two or three days to go gallivanting around the country.

**Mr. Burnham:** Is it a circus for a man to gallivant from the country to Georgetown to cast his vote? What about those people who indulge in a circus all the time gallivanting out of the country for months and months? They are allowed circuses, but other people are to be denied such things. What is a reasonable time, in the circumstances, to get from Kaieteur to Mahaicony? It will take a man two days to come down and two days to return. If a man comes from Kaieteur to Georgetown, Bookers must pay him for those days. It is all right to talk about democracy, but as soon as we try to put it into practice they talk about circumstances.

**Mr. Jackson :** Some people have been transferred from one place to another by their employers, and that is one of the reasons for having the proxy extended to other persons. I know of two employees who have been transferred to the North West District, and Government cannot refuse to give them leave to come down to Georgetown to vote. Because of the stubbornness on

the part of the Government to listen to reason, it will have to give those employees time to come down and vote. If we say that we want everyone to have the right to vote, it is only a small price to pay for that right. I hope that some light will enter the hearts of those whose hearts were like stone yesterday.

**The Chairman:** I shall put the Amendment. The Question is, "That Section 41 of the Principal Ordinance be repealed and the following section substituted therefor:

- 41 (1) Every employer shall permit every elector in his employ to be absent from his work for such reasonable period as to enable the said elector to exercise his vote at the polling place at which, under sections 27, 28, 29 and 30 of this Ordinance, he is entitled to vote, and no employer shall make any deduction from the pay or any remuneration of any such elector, or dismiss, or impose upon, or exact from him any penalty by reason of his absence during such period.
- (2) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary in any law for the time being in force every elector shall be entitled to absent himself from his work for such period as will enable him to exercise his vote at such polling place at which he is entitled to vote under sections 27, 28, 29 and 30, and such elector shall not be liable to any criminal or civil penalty whatsoever for such absence from his work.
- (3) Any employer, who, directly or indirectly, refuses, or by intimidation, undue influence, or in any other way, interferes with the granting of any elector in his employ, for such period for voting as in this section provided, shall by summary conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding \$1,000.00 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding 12 months, or to both such fine and imprisonment.

- (4) In this section "employer" includes the Government of British Guiana and any person or officer who, acting as agent of the employer, is empowered to grant or withhold such leave of absence as may be required by such elector aforesaid."

Amendment put; the Committee divided and voted as follows:

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Bowman	Mr. Tasker
Mr. Jackson	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Burnham	Mr. Fredericks
Mr. Kendall	—4. Mr. Davis
	Mr. Ajodha Singh
	Mr. Saffee
	Mr. Ram Karran
	Mrs. Jagan
	Mr. Benn
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney-General
	The Chief Secretary
	—12.

*Did not vote—*

Mr. Tello            --1.

Amendment negatived.

Clause 19 passed as printed.

Clause 20.—*Amendment of section 55 of Principal Ordinance.*

**Mr. Burnham :** I remember that during the debate on the Second Reading I asked the reason for some of these Amendments which our courteous Chief Secretary forgot to give. I wonder if he can give them now. For instance, the Amendment to section 55 which took the form of a repeal of subsection (6). What is the purpose of that Amendment to subsection (6) of section 55 of the Principal Ordinance? The subclause says.

"If the election expenses return and declarations are not transmitted before the expiration of the time limited for that purpose, the candidate shall not, after the expiration of such time, sit or vote in the Legisla-

tive Council until either such return and declarations have been transmitted, or until the date of the allowance of one of the excuses mentioned in subsection (1) of section 57 (hereinafter referred to as an authorized excuse) for the failure to transmit the same, and if he sits or votes in contravention of this subsection he shall on summary conviction thereof, be liable to a fine not exceeding five hundred dollars for every day which he so sits or votes"

I do not see why there should be a repeal of that.

**The Attorney-General :** The explanation is that this is one of many provisions which are being taken out of this Representation of the People Ordinance and will be re-enacted in a Legislative Controversies Ordinance. Not only the section dealing with election petitions but all consequential Amendments are to be taken out and re-enacted in this other Bill which will be introduced in a week or two.

**Mr. Burnham :** I repeat that when it suits the hon. the Attorney-General to borrow legislation from the West Indies he does so. What I would like to know from the hon. the Attorney-General is if this Legislative Controversies Bill will be enacted before 21st August. The pace at which we are proceeding makes me feel that it will be after the 21st August.

**The Attorney-General :** I finalised it this morning. I hope it will have the approval of the Executive Council certainly not later than week after next. I hope that in the next three weeks it will be brought before this Council.

Clause 20 passed as printed.

Clauses 21 and 22 passed as printed.

Clause 23.—*Amendment of Section 76 of Principal Ordinance.*

**The Attorney-General :** As I indicated yesterday, it is proposed to alter section 76 of the Principal Ordinance

[THE ATTORNEY-GENERAL]

which deals with the arrangements for legal practice. I beg to move that clause 23 be amended as follows:

(a) by the insertion of the words "or to a term of imprisonment of six months" after the word "dollars" appearing in subsection (1)

(b) by the repeal of subsection (2)

(c) by renumbering subsection (3) as subsection (2)

**The Chairman:** The Ordinance speaks of "or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months." For uniformity I think the Amendment should be so worded.

**The Attorney-General:** Yes, and it will be consistent with the Amendment we made changing two hundred and fifty dollars to five hundred dollars, and the term of imprisonment from three months to six months.

**The Chairman:** Hon. Members will recollect that the hon. the Attorney-General said yesterday he would accede to the request of the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman). So that the Clause should read: "Section 76 of the Principal Ordinance is hereby amended—(a) by the insertion of the words "or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months" after the word "dollars" appearing in subsection (1); and (b) by the repeal of subsection 2"; and then the original (b) would be (c) by the renumbering of subsection (3) as subsection (2). I think that is clear, now.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 23 passed as amended.

Clauses 24 to 29 passed as printed.

**Mr. Tello:** Mr. Chairman, I was wondering whether you would grant my request to recommit Clause 10.

**The Chairman:** Not at this stage.

Clause 30.—*General amendment of Principal Ordinance.*

**The Attorney-General:** Mr. Chairman, I beg to move an Amendment to Clause 30 by substituting the following Clause:

General amend- 30. The Principal Ordinance  
ment of : amended as hereinbefore pro-  
Principal provided, exclusive of section 114  
Ordin- thereof, is hereby amended by  
ance. the substitution for the words  
"Legislative Council" and  
"Special Reserve Police  
Force", wherever occurring, of  
the words "Legislative Assem-  
bly" and "Special Constabulary"  
respectively.

The reason for this Amendment is: that after the Bill was drafted, it was realized that the Special Reserve Police Force no longer existed but has been replaced by the Special Constabulary. This omnibus Amendment is accordingly inserted.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 30 passed as amended.

Clause 31 passed as printed.

Schedule

**The Attorney-General:** Under Schedule in the Form Note 3, paragraph 2, there are the words "Special Reserve Police Force", and I move that that expression be replaced by the expression of "Special Constabulary".

Question put, and agreed to.

Schedule passed as amended.

**The Attorney-General:** I am sorry that the hon. Member for Georgetown Central is not here. He raised the question whether the phrasing of Section 27 (2) is sufficient because it refers to voting by a qualified person. Section 27 (2) reads:—



"Every qualified person whose name appears upon the official list of electors for any polling division shall be entitled to vote in that polling division, notwithstanding that he is not resident in that polling division upon the day of the election:

Provided, however, that no person shall vote in more than one electoral district or in more than one polling division in the same electoral district."

This has been considered by me and my colleagues and we feel it is perfectly clear. It is clear in its original text, and when read as a whole in the Ordinance it is quite plain that what the proviso refers to is the person voting in person and not by proxy. There are other sections—31 (2), for instance, provides that you must not have dual voting, as a person and as a proxy. Section 31 (2) says:

"A person shall not be capable of being appointed to vote or voting, as proxy at any election unless he is a British subject of full age and not subject to any legal incapacity to vote thereat as an elector, and a person shall not be entitled to vote as proxy at the same election in any electoral district on behalf of more than two electors...."

And Section 75 (1) prescribes the penalty for persons who vote as proxies or as individuals more than once in the same electoral district at the same General Election. Therefore, Section 27 (2) need not be amended, but should be passed as it stands.

CLAUSE 9 RECOMMITTED

**The Chairman :** The Question is that Clause 9 be recommitted.

Agreed to.

Clause 9 passed as printed.

CLAUSE 10 RECOMMITTED

**Mr. Tello:** I am asking your permission, Mr. Chairman, that Clause 10 be recommitted. Yesterday this matter

of proxy voting was not given a fair examination, and now the Member for Georgetown Central has moved an Amendment to give effect to the same thing. I will suggest the same words the hon. Member used as his Amendment:—“(f) the general nature of the occupation, service or employment of the person”.

**The Chairman :** Let me put the Question to the Members for the Clause to be recommitted. There is a Motion by Mr. Tello asking that Clause 10 be recommitted.

Agreed to.

CLAUSE 10 RECOMMITTED

**Mr. Tello:** I beg to move an Amendment to Section 28 (1) paragraph (ii) of the Principal Ordinance by the addition of sub-paragraph (f) to read as follows:

“(f) the general nature of the occupation, service or employment of the person”.

I do not think I will waste the valuable time of this honourable Council because the points were made forcefully yesterday. I feel that as a result of the Members of the Government having slept on the Amendment to Section 41, it would cause them to give a second thought to the Amendment moved yesterday and support it today.

**The Chairman :** The Amendment is that a new subsection (f) be inserted to read as follows:

“the general nature of the occupation, service or employment of the person”.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 10, as amended, ordered to stand part of the Bill.

**The Attorney-General :** The Government intended to vote against the Amendment, and I think, the question was not understood.

**The Chairman :** I read the Amendment and nobody voted against it. If Members say they did not understand what they were voting for, I will put it again. I took pains to read and explain what the Amendment was. I shall put the Amendment again, and I hope Members will understand what I am putting. You will see from page 5 of yesterday's minutes that Mr. Burnham moved a similar Amendment. The Amendment is that a new (f) be added to section 28 to read as follows:

"the general nature of the occupation, service or employment of the person."

Question put; the Committee divided and voted as follows:

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Bowman	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Tasker	Mr. Ajodha Singh
Mr. Davis	Mr. Saffee
Mr. Tello	Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. Jackson—	Mrs. Jagan
5.	Mr. Benn
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney-General
	The Chief Secretary—9.

**The Chairman:** The Amendment is lost.

Clause 10 put, and agreed to.

Council resumed.

**The Chief Secretary:** I beg to report that the Bill has been considered in Committee and a number of Amendments have been made. I now beg to leave to report progress.

#### B.G. CREDIT CORPORATION

**Mr. Speaker:** The next item is the Motion standing in the name of the hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh) which reads:

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends to Government the appointment of a Committee to investigate the working of the British Guiana Credit Corporation".

**Mr. Jai Narine Singh :** Mr. Speaker when I was asked to have this Motion placed on the Order Paper I did consent to have it debated by this Council. That request for its debate was made since October 1958, and it is now 1961. Two years have actually passed. The circumstances and conditions which prompted me to bring forward this motion no longer exists. I therefore ask leave of this Council to withdraw it.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion withdrawn.

#### LOAN FOR ROAD TO BRAZIL

**Mr. Speaker:** The Motion in the name of the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman) reads:

"Whereas it is stated on page 10 of the 1960-1964 Development Programme that there was general agreement between Her Majesty's Government and this Government that a continuing programme of development on a large scale was needed, not only in the immediate future but also in 1965-1969, if land and other assets are to be available for the ever-growing labour force;

"And whereas the Evans Commission and the International Bank Mission have both recommended the construction of a road linking the coastal and interior (Rupununi) road system, and in view of this \$15,000,000 was allocated in the Colony's five-year Development Programme of 1956-1960 towards the cost of completing the link between Mahdia at the end of the Bartica-Potaro road and the Rupununi road system;

"And whereas it is felt that such a road would make available immediately after completion, lands for land settlement, farming, pasturage, gold and diamond mining, woodcutting, etc., and would encourage the development of the Tourist Industry.

"And whereas it is felt too that in view of the serious unemployment situation, the Development Programme should be revised so as to give priority to and expedite the completion of the link between Mahdia and the Rupununi;

"Be it resolved: That this Council recommends to Government that immediate steps be taken to seek a special loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development or any other source for the building of an all-weather road from the coast to our frontier with Brazil."

**Mr. Bowman :** Mr. Speaker, this Motion was tabled on the 17th February, 1961. For what reason has Government brought it forward now? I do not know whether it is Government's intention to reject it. I know there are other questions of importance which have been introduced by me and other Members of this Council which have not been brought forward for debate. However, the reason or motive for bringing this Motion is based on what has been said by Mr. Berrill about such a road. Apart from that, from my own experience as a man who has worked in the bush for 20 years, I know that the lands in the interior are fertile. I feel that in view of the unemployment situation something should be done in the matter. I do not know exactly what are the figures at the moment; probably they are between 40,000 and 50,000. Then you have the children leaving school every year.

I have been a working man all my life, and I know what it is to be out of work. It is true that the Government has embarked upon land reclamation, drainage and irrigation, but most of the reclaimed land is for the purpose of rice cultivation. I am thinking of making lands available for other purposes—farms with permanent crops. I know the interior is quite capable of producing such crops. I know that in the Potaro area hundreds of pounds of cocoa have been reaped and sent to Georgetown. I even asked the Director of Agriculture once, if he was aware of that, and he told me that there was a nursery in the Bartica area for the planting of cocoa.

The Motion does not call for much argument. The reason for it is set out quite clearly in the preamble. Gold, diamonds and timber will be obtained

as the result of such a road. The Motion seeks that this Council agrees to instruct the Government to go and seek a loan to provide such a road. I know what some hon. Members have in their minds. However, when I ask this Council to recommend to Government the seeking of a loan, I mean one from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The total cost of preliminary surveys is estimated at \$600,000 and the road will probably cost \$5,100,000. Not long ago people connected with the World Bank came here to make certain investigations, and from the reports I saw in the newspapers, they have agreed to give this country \$1 million (U.S.A. Currency). When I heard they were coming here I was glad, because I thought they would see the necessity for assisting this country, and would have given us a liberal sum of money. But \$1 million is a miserly amount. It cannot do much in this country. I do not blame the representatives of the Bank if they refuse to give more, because they have little faith in this Government.

I am sure if this Council recommends to the Government to seek this loan of \$5,100,000, the estimated cost of the road, and the World Bank refuses to give it, the Government may then think of going to some other source. I am not thinking of Russia, Czechoslovakia, East Germany or other Communist countries. When I say "other source", I mean in the West. I want it to be clearly understood; I do not want money from any Communist source.

I made a mistake in drafting the Motion. I should have said "any other source in the West", but I am saying so now. Government must go to those other sources in the West and find the money. I am thinking in terms of the possibility of the World Bank giving the money, but failing that Government may try other sources in the West.

**Mr. Speaker:** There is nothing to preclude the hon. Member from including in the Motion the words he wants.

**Mr. Bowman:** Thank you, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** What do you want added?

**Mr. Bowman:** The words "among the Western Nations". I realize that Cuba is among the Western Nations, and they may try to circumvent this by going to Cuba.

**Mr. Speaker:** Would you like to leave it as it is?

**Mr. Bowman:** Yes; I am opposed to this country having anything to do with Communist countries. I want this country to remain democratic and within the West. The intention of this Motion is to make it possible to form village communities in the interior where not only the cultivation of crops will be possible, but also sheep-rearing, cattle-rearing, and other things.

I have not been to the Rupununi Savannah, but I understand it has very great possibilities. If this road goes to Lethem, in time the Brazilian Government would do their part of the road. So I am seeking from this Government the development of the hinterland road. We have asked Government to send Missions to Brazil to inquire whether they are still interested in having an outlet through British Guiana. If such a road is built, then the produce of the northern part of that country, together with their imported requirements, could be taken through B.G. — that would create work for thousands of Guianese. If this Council agrees to recommend to the Government the construction of this road, it is possible that the Brazilian Government would ask this Government for an outlet here, and I can see in that a start in the real development of this country.

**Mr. Tello:** I have pleasure in seconding this Motion. The preamble, alone, commends it to this Council. The possibility of the development of our interior is inestimable. Undoubtedly, a road to our hinterland would open the archway to prosperity. Much of the expenditure that was necessary for capital investment on the coast of British Guiana resulted through the activities of "small" people to the interior. These people had to find a means of prosperity, and if their mode of travel can be a little more comfortable or encouraging, one might anticipate a quicker acceleration of prosperity.

The vastness of the interior as well as its possibilities is not easy to estimate because of the precious stones, metals and forest that can be found there. If the mode of transportation was of such that the average forest worker can reside in the area and transport his logs, and his logging exercises can be connected directly with the coastland, the whole matter of logging would be revolutionized. Today, people are thinking mechanically. The average man who is now engaged in logging is using mechanical devices; but to embark on transportation that can accommodate the acceleration or output of the mechanical devices is beyond the capacity of the loggers.

As I see it, a road would at once bring about a regular transport service. As I see it, many people who are so attached to the coastland will be more willing to go and work in the interior; so we would find this great challenge — the question of unemployment — resolving itself, not by the creation of new jobs, but by the people themselves re-organizing their entire attitude to employment.

I see in this Motion, if it is accepted, that a large number of people who now refuse to go to the interior because it is too far away from the lights of the City, would at once change their way of

thinking. Men would begin to think that a trip to the Kaieteur Fall is something comfortable, and if they desire to make a trip they can return within a day or two. I visualize skilled people and people of great intelligence working in the interior giving technical advice on the question of economic production. With a road to the interior there will be a greater distribution of assistance. Work in the interior would not be burdensome.

We know that there are valuable minerals in the country that cannot be produced in such large quantities as to enable the industry to procure its own transportation facilities. We know that many people might have been thinking of farming in that area, but the one handicap is the cost of transportation; and we know that prosperity attracts people. I agree with the hon. Member for Demerara River that alongside this road, spontaneously, we would find growing up new villages and new communities, and British Guiana would then register the commencement of its true development.

I see the little island of Barbados, —a one-industry country—offering people a very high standard of living -- a standard of living that compares favourably with Jamaica and Trinidad. What is primarily responsible for that? There is hardly a place in Barbados to which you cannot travel comfortably in the best car. There is no place of which you can think that you cannot indulge in peasantry and use your own cart or motor car to bring out your produce. It is quite true that we have rivers, but, as yet, we have not evolved a means of transporting by waterway cheaply enough to encourage people to leave the City and coastland and go to the interior and really exploit it.

I would not try to advise Government as to where it should obtain the money. The Motion, itself, in the resolve clause has made the suggestion — “the International Bank for Recon-

struction and Development or any other source.” What I am interested in is that if a proper programme can be put up to the same International Bank with a view to developing the interior — that is, together with this road that the Motion calls for—it will be a simple and easy matter to raise the money to meet any such development programme. In spite of the fact that, up to now, a large portion of British Guiana’s wealth comes mostly from activities on the coastland, and although it is right and proper that there should be an agricultural programme so as to employ as many people as possible, I think Guiana’s development cannot really start until we tap the resources of the interior. I believe that Government, in pursuit of its many problems, might have forgotten the importance of the recommendation of this Motion. I think, in spite of the fact that this Motion was tabled sometime ago, it is better to be late than never.

I felt that the hon. Member for Demerara River has done this country a great service in reminding the Government of the importance of the development of the Interior, and reminding it also of its real priority in the development programme. All the soil surveys and other surveys mean little or nothing if easy travelling to the Interior is not provided. I think it should be the foremost item for priority in the development programme, and we should commence this road at once.

Your Honour, the potentialities in the hinterland, we know, are sufficient to pay for any road to the hinterland and to offer some prosperity to the people on the coastland, many of whom are now seeking employment. Lack of employment is due to this Government not being kindly disposed to capital investment by private enterprise, although it has not the ability and capacity to make a success of the industrialisation that British Guiana so badly wants. I think the opening up of the hinterland by roads is one of the ventures this Government can successfully embark upon.

[MR. TELLO] ...

This Motion recommends itself to any Government that is elected in August. Construct your roads into the Interior and pave the way for prosperity. I want to say a few words more on this Motion, but I see the time for adjournment is up.

**The Chief Secretary:** I move that the Council adjourn to Wednesday of next week, 7th June, at 2 p.m.

Question put, and agreed to.

*Council adjourned to Wednesday, 7th June, at 2 p.m.*