

# SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 5th July, 1961

The Council met at 2 p.m.

## PRESENT:

**Speaker**, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

**Chief Secretary**, Hon. D. M. Hedges

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

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

} *ex officio*

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

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

## ABSENT:

Mr. R. B. Gajraj—Nominated Member

„ L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.—Member for Georgetown Central—on leave

„ S. Campbell—Member for North Western District

„ E. B. Beharry—Member for Eastern Demerara

„ Ajodha Singh—Member for Berbice River

„ Jai Narine Singh—Member for Georgetown South—on leave.

The Clerk read prayers,

## MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Thursday, 29th June, 1961, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## LEAVE TO MEMBERS

**Mr. Speaker:** I beg to announce that the Member for Georgetown South, Mr. Jai Narine Singh, is on leave out of the Colony as from the 2nd July this year.

The Member for Georgetown Central, Mr. Burnham, has asked to be excused from meetings today and for the rest of the week. He is suffering from a bad throat.

## PAPERS LAID

**The Chief Secretary** (Mr. Hedges): I beg to lay on the Table

The British Guiana (Constitution) Order in Council, 1961, made on the 26th day of June, 1961, at the Court at Buckingham Palace and published in the Gazette on 27th June, 1961.

**The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing** (Mrs. Jagan): On behalf of the Minister of Communications and Works, I beg to lay on the Table

Memorandum on the Report of the Committee appointed to examine the present Government organisation for the construction and maintenance of Public Works. (Sessional Paper No. 4/1961).

## ORAL ASKING AND ANSWERING OF QUESTIONS

## FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL AID FROM THE U.S.A.

**Mr. Bowman:** I would like to ask the hon. the Financial Secretary Question No. 20 standing in my name on the Supplementary Order Paper: Will the Financial Secretary state whether this Colony has received financial, technical or any other aid from the United States or from U.S. Government agencies? If so, would he give details?

**The Financial Secretary:** (Mr. D'Andrade) Yes, Sir. Aid was received from the Government of the United States of America in the form of technical assistance, including scholarship and fellowship grants (in the fields of Agriculture, Industry, Transportation, Labour, Health, Education, Public Administration, Community Development, etc.) to a total cost of approximately BWI \$3 million between 1954 and the present time. In addition surplus commodity donations were valued at approximately BWI \$900,000. The administrative cost of supplying this assistance, also met by the United States Government, has been some \$550,000. The total assistance therefore was about BWI \$4½ million over the past 7 or 8 years.

## FINANCIAL AND TECHNICAL AID FROM VENEZUELA

**Mr. Bowman:** I would also like to ask the hon. the Financial Secretary Question No. 21 standing in my name on the Supplementary Order Paper: Will the Financial Secretary state whether this Colony has ever received financial, technical or any other aid from the Venezuelan Government or any Venezuelan firm in the past?

**The Financial Secretary:** Yes, Sir. The Venezuelan Government has granted 10 scholarships to Guianese children between 1956 and 1957 and has provided free medical treatment to 7 Guianese patients. The Government has also had the benefit of the advice of a representative of a Venezuelan firm in connexion with proposals for the establishment of a cement industry locally.

**Mr. Bowman:** I have a supplementary question. I should like to know whether what we have received from Venezuela bears comparison with what we have received from the U.S.A.?

**The Financial Secretary:** The figures speak for themselves.

**Mr. Bowman:** I have another supplementary question. In view of the financial and other benefits which we have

received from the U.S. Government, do you not think it would be better to give them the contract for the building of the Parika-Bartica road than to give it to the Venezuela Company?

**The Financial Secretary:** I am not sure that the question is relevant to the question which has gone before.

**Mr. Bowman:** I am glad the hon. the Financial Secretary has said so—

**Mr. Speaker:** I may remind the hon. Financial Secretary that the question of relevancy is not one for him. The question of whether he should answer the question or not is one for him, and him alone.

**Mr. Bowman:** I am very glad the hon. the Financial Secretary has said that. This question stems from the two questions I have originally asked.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member cannot speak on it.

**Mr. Bowman:** I am only making a statement [*Laughter.*] Two questions were addressed to the Minister of Communications and Works, and this question came as a result of those questions. I would like the hon. Minister to answer. [*Pause.*]

#### INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Mr. Davis:** I beg to introduce the Bible Protestant Congregational Church of British Guiana (Incorporation) Bill, 1961, No. 21, which was published in the Official Gazette on the 17th and 24th of June and 1st of July.

#### ORDER OF THE DAY

#### BILL—FIRST READING

The following Bill was read the First Time: A Bill intituled: "An Ordinance to incorporate the Bible Protestant

Congregational Church of British Guiana and for purposes connected therewith."

#### MOTION—RETRENCHMENT OF SUGAR WORKERS

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

"Whereas during the month of May 1961 two hundred and ninety workers of Plantation Port Mourant were retrenched;

And whereas this retrenchment has led to a sharp increase in unemployment in the area particularly and in the country generally;

And whereas the employers of these workers claim that the retrenchment was necessitated by the need to mechanize the sugar industry and to stabilize their labour force;

And whereas the policy of retrenchment is being pursued on many sugar estates in this colony;

Be it resolved: That this Council records its grave concern at the retrenchment of the workers of Plantation Port Mourant and other sugar estates and urges the Government to consider what steps should be taken to present a repetition or such acts which tend to dislocate the economy of the country, and which brings about hardship and misery to many families."

The hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh) was speaking at the time of the adjournment, but he is not in his seat today. We can proceed from there, if hon. Members wish.

**Mr. Fredericks:** Mr. Speaker, unemployment and underemployment are two of the most serious and grievous ills of this country, as they strike at the foundation of our society and cause untold misery and suffering. Every true Guianese ought to sympathize with the unemployed and those who have been retrenched, including the 290 or 222 retrenched sugar workers of Pln. Port Mourant, irrespective of whether they have been retrenched because of economic reasons or not, by the estate. However, I do not fully agree with the second preamble to this Motion.

[MR. FREDERICKS]

While it is true that this retrenchment has led to a sharp increase in unemployment in the area, the number of 290 is less than one per cent. of the total unemployment figure, which is approximately 35,000 today. The retrenchment of workers in any industry in any democratic country in the world, is cause for alarm, as it tends to have a serious psychological effect on family life. Retrenchment and underemployment also provide an opportunity whereby an efficient and competent Government can demonstrate its resourcesfulness in tackling this problem, and the success achieved will be a measure of the Government's efficiency and competence.

Notice of this Motion was only given a few short weeks ago, yet Government has deemed it so important as to rush it into this Council for debate, and to give it preference over other Motions submitted long before, dealing with matters of equal importance. It does seem incredible that instead of taking positive action to deal with the unemployment situation, Government should seek to bring this Motion before Council to ask this Council to urge Government to consider what measures should be taken to relieve the situation.

**The Minister of Community Development and Education:** (Mr. Rai): It is not a Government Motion.

**Mr. Speaker :** Strictly speaking it is not a Government Motion.

**Mr. Fredericks :** It emanated from the Government side of the Council. It emanated from the Majority Party, and they are running the Government today.

**Mr. Speaker :** That is quite in order; it emanated from the Government side of the Council.

**Mr. Fredericks :** The Government is not only unsympathetic but unwilling to help, and utilizes this Motion to bring every ounce of communist-line propaganda for their electioneering campaign.

I will not support the substantive Motion. Sir, as I do not propose now, or in the future, to stifle the dictates of my conscience for political expediency. The Motion of this Majority Party appears to lack mature thinking, and bears a startling resemblance to what occurred in 1953 when they sought to incite the sugar workers to strike at the expense of the sugar industry.

If anyone in this Council votes for this Motion, then he or she, I say, does not understand the true functions of Government. The aim of any Government should be the fulfilling of the needs and the safeguarding of the rights of its people, and no good Government needs to be urged to consider what steps should be taken when suffering and distress are present among its people. When the people are suffering unemployment, the Government should make every effort to provide employment to every unemployed in the country, and in such a manner as to enable them to provide for themselves and their families in a manner consistent with the dignity of man.

I sympathize with the Amendment of the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson). I appreciate his desire to include all categories of workers in the Motion but, as I said earlier, relief of unemployment is the obligation of the Government, and the workers should look to the Government for a solution of the problem. The Government has not made an honest and sincere attempt to conduct the affairs of this country properly. Are we satisfied that this Government has done everything possible to remedy the situation? The answer must be "No", especially when one considers that the Government has shown incompetence and inefficiency even in the spending of sums of money allocated under the Development Programme. What is the use of seeking for more development loans when the Government is incapable of spending the money it already has? Government has failed to spend the money it already has at its disposal and.

therefore, has directly contributed to the unemployment problem. We have seen that \$700,000 was allocated for building schools, providing furniture and accessories, and Government was only able to spend approximately \$95,000 by the end of June, 1960. What a shocking state of affairs!

Although there are about 35,000 persons unemployed and thousands of children are being turned away from schools through lack of adequate accommodation at primary school level, this Government is incapable of erecting simple school structures so as to provide places in schools for the children and also relieve the unemployment situation. Instead, Government chooses to dissipate its energy to enslave the minds of the young to its godless communist ideology, by seeking to control education in British Guiana. Instead of trying to understand the vital role education has to play, especially technical education, to provide a literate and trained labour force, without which, no true development is possible in the interests of the people, the Government chooses to confiscate schools.

Mr. Speaker, the present Government advocates a socialist or communist approach to the problems of economic development. The Minister of Natural Resources has said in this Council that you can stop tomorrow but you cannot stop communism. And in yesterday's *Guiana Graphic*—

**The Minister of Natural Resources** (Mr. Benn): Misquoted!

**Mr. Fredericks :** It was said at a street corner meeting. He went further and said, and I quote:

"There is no force on earth to stop the march of communism—the Churches, bishops or parsons—it is the inevitable fulfilment of civilization."

**Mr. Benn:** True.

**Mr. Fredericks :** True for you. The Archbishop has deemed the Minister of Education "impertinent."

**Mr. Speaker:** Does that come under this Motion?

**Mr. Fredericks :** We, in this Council, should be more charitable. The Minister of Natural Resources needs not only our sympathy but our prayers. The Minister of Natural Resources has re-stated his Party's policy as it relates to economic development. He said that the means of production must be owned by the State.

**Mr. Benn:** To a point of order. I do not know from where the hon. Nominated Member got that statement. I never made such a statement.

**Mr. Fredericks :** I have it here in my notes.

**Mr. Speaker :** Did he say that when he spoke on the last occasion?

**Mr. Fredericks :** He re-stated that the means of production must be owned by the State.

**Mr. Benn:** The hon. Member probably does not understand things when I speak.

**Mr. Fredericks :** Any policy which seeks to nationalize the means of production, which seeks to vest all the means of production in the State, would have the effect of nationalizing all existing industries, businesses, and lands. It means, therefore, that if this is the policy of the present Government, the development of this country can only be financed by loans—by money borrowed by the Government. In other words, the whole Development Programme in the future must be financed by loans; and any such policy must and will have the effect of scaring private capital away. No private investment capital will come into the country if there is any threat of nationalization—of a communist dictatorship. Private investment capital is absolutely necessary for development in any under-developed country. The policy of the present Government has been to scare away much needed private capital which could have been encouraged to come here to provide more jobs and thereby help to alleviate the grievous unemployment situation.

[MR. FREDERICKS]

We have seen what has happened in the neighbouring West Indian island of Puerto Rico. Twenty years ago she had a low standard of living, but today what do we find? — full employment, a very high standard of living and a very buoyant economy. And one of the reasons is, that it is blessed with a hard-working and efficient democratic Government. I would like to quote from an advertisement published by the Puerto Rican Government in the March, 1961, magazine *Fortune* referring to the investment possibilities in that country. It states that there are 600 factories built in 10 years; 62 expansions to existing factories; the labour force is 625,000; 12 vocational schools, enrolment 17,000; 10-year tax holiday; there is U.S. investment of approximately \$1,000,000 per week; Puerto Rico bought \$760,000,000 worth of U.S. goods in 1960; is a self-governing Commonwealth within the American union; politically stable; and property and investments are safeguarded.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources has made use of the opportunity afforded by this Motion to launch a vicious attack on the sugar industry, the P.N.C. and the United Force. He has said that the United Force and the P.N.C. are the defenders of "sugar". I know that the P.N.C. is quite capable of defending itself in this Council. As a member of the United Force, I would refute that statement made by the Minister and state categorically, that the United Force is not the defender of any sectional business interests. It defends the free enterprise system and is diametrically opposed to Godless communism. As regards sugar, we, of the United Force, believe that our policy should be so directed as to increase the percentage of independent farmers' cane from the very

low figure of 5 per cent. to a higher one approximating that which is obtained from the independent farmers in the neighbouring West Indian islands of Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad, having regard to the very grave difficulties of drainage and irrigation which obtain in British Guiana. To equate the problem of drainage and irrigation as it affects the sugar industry with that of the rice industry, as the Minister of Natural Resources did, is to be unrealistic, and also shows a lack of recognition of the efforts of the sugar industry to bring greater efficiency in the industry.

We do feel that an equitable solution to the problem of increased independent farmers' cane could be worked out in a spirit of harmony and goodwill with the sugar industry, although it may mean that the industry may have to give up some of the lands it now cultivates. Instead of seeking to nationalize the sugar industry, we, of the United Force, shall strive to obtain better conditions for the sugar workers. We feel that the estates should see that better roads are provided in the housing schemes, that there should be proper and adequate water supply and sanitation facilities, also electricity. We also feel that we should call upon the estate authorities to see that secondary education is provided for the children of sugar workers, also that any pension scheme must be met with the majority approval of workers in the industry.

[*Interruption.*]

**Mr. Speaker :** Order ! Order !

**Mr. Fredericks :** The Minister of Natural Resources has attacked the policy of mechanization and automation because the result, he said, would lead to redundant employees being added to the unemployment total. We must face the facts of life. To be competitive means that every effort must be made not only to reduce the cost of production, but also to make the product more attractive. If

a better and more attractive product is put on the market—and is made available—more use would be found for that product, which in turn creates more jobs. Any such mechanization and automation must result in temporary dislocation of employment, and it must be the duty of the Government to see that such dislocation is reduced to a minimum.

Let us, for a moment, consider what would happen if the sugar industry or, for that matter, any industry did not mechanize or automate. It would be unable to produce cheaply; and in the case of the sugar industry, it would not be able to make any profits at the guaranteed prices paid and, inevitably, the industry would be forced to close down, thereby throwing out of employment not only a few workers, but all workers in that industry.

It has been found wherever mechanization and automation had been introduced in industries, that those industries could afford not only high wages and shorter working hours, but better welfare and pension schemes. We must be realistic; we must realise that we are living in an industrial age. Automation is here to stay. We must face the facts of life squarely.

The hon. Minister has stated that there is no unemployment in the utopia of life in communist Russia and China. I would like to remind him of Article 12 of the Soviet Union's Constitution which states: "He who does not work shall not eat." — **[Mr. Benn:** "That is correct."] — That is what the present Government wants to introduce in British Guiana.

**The Speaker:** You must always bear in mind the Resolve Clause to this Motion.

**Mr. Fredericks :** Sir, I am replying to what the hon. Minister has said. This is what the present Government wants: forced labour, low wages, no free trade unions, no freedom to strike, no freedom to change ones job. He has also made

mention of the C.I.O. and A.F.L. unions of the U.S. In this respect I would like to quote what the President said to his union last month. In addressing the union which has a membership of 13.5 million, Mr. George Meany said:

"Free trade unions are the organisations best fitted to defend and extend the rights of the working people and to assure their place in society as men and women with individual dignity and freedom.

We of American labour believe in the free enterprise system. In our country it is possible to promote the dignity and freedom of the individual and the well being of the great mass of the people through the free enterprise system."

**Mr. Speaker :** Please pass the text of your quotation to the Official Reporters.

**Mr. Fredericks :** I will do that, Sir. The hon. Minister refers to the five million unemployed in the United States of America and quotes the figure of \$13.00 per week unemployment relief which the American Government is paying to each unemployed worker. As usual the hon. Minister has his figures wrong. Each unemployed worker in the U.S.A. receives an unemployment relief of \$35.00 U.S. per week, which is equivalent to about \$60.00 B.W.I. currency. This means that the average unemployed worker in America receives almost double the weekly wage of the average worker in British Guiana.

The hon. Minister scoffs and attempts to ridicule the term "economic dynamism" as it applies to the future development of British Guiana.

**Mr. Benn:** Nonsense.

**Mr. Speaker :** Order! You are a Minister, and you were allowed to speak without interruption.

**Mr. Fredericks :** I would strongly advise him to curb his anxiety to speak without giving some thought to what he has to say. I would advise him to listen

[**Mr. Fredericks**]

to his boss, the Minister of Trade and Industry. His boss said at a street-corner meeting last week: "What this country needs most is a dynamic economic policy."

**Mr. Speaker :** Who is his boss? This is a Legislative Council, and each Member has a designation.

**Mr. Fredericks:** The Minister of Trade and Industry said at a street corner meeting last week: "What this country needs is a dynamic economic policy." And yet the Minister of Natural Resources says here that he does not know what is meant by "economic dynamism." Economic dynamism is a dynamic economic policy. The only salvation for this country is a vigorous economic policy. A vigorous economic policy coupled with the pressure of population growth, plus a literate working force, can bring about the accelerated development of British Guiana, thereby relieving unemployment and bringing prosperity to this country.

With this policy of economic dynamism, large sums of money will be borrowed from the richer and more industrialized countries of the world. With a stable and efficient Government which can create a suitable climate of confidence, private investment capital from abroad will be encouraged to invest in British Guiana thereby creating more jobs and more employment possibilities.

I would like to quote, with your permission, Sir, from a magazine called "Industrial World."

**Mr. Speaker :** From what page?

**Mr. Fredericks :** I do not have the magazine—only a clipping. I quote:

"CAPITAL CREATES PROGRESS  
—Capital is like water. It will flow in the direction that offers the least resistance.

Just as water is essential to plant life, so capital is essential to industry. If the inflow of capital to an area is cut off, industry will find it difficult to expand. Before long the industry in that area will no longer be modern or efficient. It will wither.

Where Governments have tried to ease the path of new capital, the result is usually a flourishing economy. When restrictive measures dictate the movement of capital, economic stagnation sets in.

In recent years, the areas that have shown greatest increases in industry are those that have welcomed private capital. These include the Netherlands, Scotland, Australia, Brazil and Puerto Rico.

The prescription for attracting capital is the same in the U.S. as overseas. It means the establishment of a favourable economic climate, where industry can produce products at competitive world prices.

New capital is one of the basic ingredients industry needs to produce better products. When its free flow is restricted, productivity falls off and the consumer loses. Where there is freedom of capital flow industry flourishes."

**Mr. Speaker :** Your time is up.

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

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

Question put, and agreed to.

**Mr. Speaker :** Please proceed.

**Mr. Fredericks:** As I have said, any threat of nationalization or communist domination will have the effect of scaring away private capital and thereby retarding the development of any country. There is little doubt in my mind that the sugar industry has exploited this country and its people, and we should be careful that that does not happen again. We should not encourage any industry to come into this country and do likewise.



I feel that appropriate legislation should be introduced so that only a small percentage of the profit of any industry would be allowed to leave the country—the greater percentage of the profits must remain in this country for future investment purposes. If that is done, this country will benefit the most ultimately, from any industry which is started here.

I would like to quote what the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. John Diefenbaker, said in this connection when he visited Jamaica:

"Canada welcomes outside investments to help develop her resources but all investments must be made in a way that affords Canada the major benefit. She insists that companies operating on outside investments be incorporated in Canada, that they shall have a majority of Canadian shareholders and Canadian directors. Investors who respect these rules will find Canada a land of great opportunities and a wonderful place to do business in."

I do not see any reason why British Guiana should not follow such a policy.

The hon. Minister of Natural Resources has seen fit to mention the shooting at Enmore. He has seen fit to repeat the usual communist claptrap: "When they asked for bread they received bullets." He sets himself up as an authority on communism, so I need not remind him of that well-tryed, well-proven and much used technique of communism: to instigate a riot; and advice the police before hand so that ready-made martyrs are produced for the cause of communism. The blood of the murdered sugar estate workers at Enmore hangs on the head of the People's Progressive Party and cries out for justice. The same technique has been used in Kenya and other countries.

Stalin has said:

"Promise men anything if it suits our purpose; the end justifies the means." Lenin has said: "It does not matter if three-fourths of mankind is destroyed, all that counts is that ultimately the last quarter becomes communist."

Those are the architects of communism which the People's Progressive Party worship; those are the men they venerate; those are the leaders whose examples they seek to follow. They should follow the example of some of the responsible leaders of the emerging countries in Africa. On the eve of the elections in Kenya, Tom Mboya quoted Kingley's memorable lines:

"If you can wait and not be tired of waiting,

Or being lied upon, do not deal in lies.

Or being hated, do not give way to hate."

I would also recommend to them what Julius Nyerere has said in a broadcast in Tanganyika, a country which has achieved self-government. I quote:

"Don't waste time fighting battles that are over. Neither Africa nor the world is going to judge us by the amount of venom we pour out against old or even new forms of colonialism."

The speech by the hon. Minister of Natural Resources dramatizes the ineptitude of this Government during the past four years, and is a sad reflection on its competence and efficiency during its term of office. This is hardly surprising seeing that members of the Government are not even conversant with the fundamental functions of a good government. I shall not support this Motion.

**The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing** (Mrs. Jagan): The Motion moved by the hon. Member for Berbice River has led us into many paths which appear to be unconnected with the problem before this Council.

In fact the hon. Member who last spoke has treated us to a tirade of his Party's policy, which frankly I do not think is appropriate to this debate. Therefore, since he has chosen to mention it, one must follow him and pick up the threads he has left behind. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, challenges the Government by stating that the sugar workers should look to the Govern-

[MRS. JAGAN]

ment for the solution of the problem of unemployment, and yet when a member of the Majority Party brings to this Council a Motion which basically seeks to relieve the distress of unemployment, the hon. Member says he cannot and will not support it

The essence of the Motion is one expressing grave concern over the retrenchment of sugar workers of Pln. Port Mourant and other estates, and urges the Government to take what steps it can to prevent a repetition of such acts. The Motion emphasizes the fact that unemployment has been accentuated by this retrenchment and other retrenchment in the sugar industry. I have figures here which show us that in 1954 it was reported that there were 27,899 workers in the sugar industry, and by 1959 that had been reduced to 21,766. That means that in an interval of five years 6,133 were put out of work in the sugar industry.

When we examine the figures of the industry from the years 1950 to 1960 we see a steady rise in the production of cane, rising from 195,651 tons in 1950 to 334,441 tons in 1960. The acreage under cane cultivation had also been going up, rising from 72,300 acres to 98,094 acres. In other words, the sugar production has gone up, the acreage under cane cultivation has gone up and the population on the sugar estates has also gone up and, as the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, quite rightly said, that was due to the fine work of one of the industry's officers, Dr. Giglioli, in his control of malaria on the sugar estates. The health of the population on the sugar estates had improved and there was less infant mortality. The population on the sugar estates had increased from 80,000 to approximately 150,000.

The significant fact is that there has been an increase of the acreage of cane cultivation, but a steady decline in the number of workers employed in the sugar

industry. Quite obviously this has been not a minor but a main factor in the unemployment problem. Yet those who have addressed this Council have been bold to remark: "How can a member of the Majority Party bring to this Council a Motion which deals only with one industry?"

I say the loss of employment to the workers in the sugar industry has been sufficiently significant for us to take interest in it. It cannot be compared with the loss of employment to workers in the other industries. If we examine the man hours, if we reduce the number of workers to the number of man-hours, because it may be said that the policy of stabilization means fewer persons working, we find from the figures available that from 1957 to 1960 there has been also a reduction of man-hours by workers to 237,527 hours. So there is a gradual reduction of the number of human beings who once received employment in the sugar industry but who are not now receiving that employment.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, also referred to the fact that the Ministry of Labour has obtained a Professor from U.C.W.I. to come to British Guiana at the invitation of the Ministry of Labour to examine the effects of mechanization in the sugar industry, the effects on the general economic position of the country, unemployment etc. But we can see the significance from these figures I have quoted, and that, perhaps, answers a number of speakers who are trying to say: "Why bring up this Motion now? Why did you not bring it when the Carnegie Trade Centre retrenched two or three of its employees, or when the Government building project retrenched its employees?"

We have to distinguish at all times between what is normal and regular employment and what is employment on a specific job. If a man is employed by the Public Works Department to repair a

sea-dam, when the work is completed and he is laid off, that cannot be called retrenchment. There is a vast difference between the two types of employment. That is why we cannot accept the Amendment by the hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson).

I would like to clear up a few points and to cross swords with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, who very clearly said that 290 workers were not retrenched at Pln. Port Mourant. He said that the estate re-employed 73 of that number. For his benefit I want to remind him exactly what took place in relation to this matter. Let me go into the details. The workers of Pln. Port Mourant who were given retrenchment notices came to me, as Minister of Labour, for assistance, and as the result of my discussion with them I requested an interview with the employing company, Messrs Booker Bros. McConnell and Co.

I had an interview with them and asked them if they could kindly consider the re-employment of the workers who had been retrenched. I pointed out to them that the workers needs were great, and that many of them depend on that employment for a living. I was told that the matter would have to be considered by the Directors. I also took the opportunity at the moment to raise the point which the workers took extreme objection to. That is, they were dissatisfied with the severance pay.

Under an agreement with the M.P.C.A. severance pay is calculated on an average week's earning for over the year of his employment. But the method of calculation of what is an average week's earning is incorrect, because the sugar estate takes the total earnings of the worker for one year and divides that by fifty-two to get what is the average week's earnings. But very few workers in the sugar industry work 52 weeks in a year. I urged that it was simple mathematics for the Company to take the total earn-

ings of the worker and divide it by the number of weeks he worked and not by 52, which gives a false average.

They said they could not do anything about it because the Union had agreed to it, I made my objection on May 23, and on May 27 I received this letter from them:

"We are writing in connection with the meeting held at your Ministry on Tuesday, May 23rd, between the Minister, representatives of her Department and representatives of this Company, to discuss the retrenchment of 290 employees of Port Mourant Estate. The Minister asked our representatives to reconsider the retrenchment of the workers, or if that were impossible, to re-examine the calculation of severance pay and to give the retrenched workers more notice.

Our representatives explained to the Minister that the decision to retrench 290 employees of the female weeding gang and the boy gang, was taken by the Board reluctantly and after careful consideration, and was based on the fundamental act that there was insufficient work at Port Mourant to keep the whole labour force fully employed, this problem being most acute in these two gangs, which throughout the whole of 1960 had, on average, only about 2 days work a week. Although our representatives said that in these circumstances there was no prospect of the Company being able to withdraw the retrenchment notices, they agreed to convey the Minister's request to the Board.

We now wish to confirm that we regret that we cannot reverse the decision to retrench these employees. We believe that our decision, which is in pursuance of the policy to provide full employment for employees wherever possible, is in the long run in the best interests of the majority of our employees and of the industry as a whole.

As regards the severance pay terms, our representatives pointed out that the formula to be used was that recently negotiated with the M.P.C.A. This agreement is based on the accepted principle that severance pay should provide help to retrenched workers over a period of weeks, generally determined by length of service, following determination of services. This help is in lieu of wages at the time at which they would have been

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paid in employment. Because of the irregularity of employment, the average weekly wage is taken as being the fairest computation irrespective of the season at which retrenchment occurs. In fact, had these workers in the female weeding gang and boy gang continued in employment, there would have been very little work available to them at the present time and their rate of earnings could have been correspondingly low. In these circumstances we believe that the average weekly earnings basis is a fair one. Employers with 20 years service will get a minimum of 35 weeks pay. We regret that the period of notice cannot be extended as suggested by the Minister.

Finally, we cannot accept that the agreed formula for the computation of severance pay should be changed. We are continuing to examine alternative measures for the alleviation of hardship in respect of these former employees".

I also said it was highly improper to retrench employees without notice and the workers should have been given six months' notice in order to adjust themselves as they would be out of employment. Now they have said they regret they cannot reverse their decision to disperse with the employment of those workers. They refused to withdraw the retrenchment notices to those 290 workers. What happened then is what has been happening in the sugar industry for many years. The trade union organization had put up no protest.

The workers then came to us, and we put up a fight on their behalf. The employers refuse to abide by our request, but wait later for the union to put up a show fight.

Then the Union asked for the retrenchment notices to be withdrawn, and the company decided to withdraw some of the notices. What is further interesting in this case about the retrenchment, is that the Union had done the despicable thing to ask, at a Committee meeting, that these very workers be retrenched; and in a Press notice which I issued, I quoted from

the minutes of the Emergency Estates Joint Committee Meeting held on March 12, 1961, at 9.30 a.m., in the Port Mourant Local Accounts Office. At that meeting, the M.P.C.A.'s representative had urged retrenchment — and I quote from the minutes:

"Mr. Sankar, who is Assistant Secretary of the M.P.C.A. said that since 1954, the work was getting shorter every year and that something should be done about retrenching workers as it is not likely that the situation will change. He asked how long it would take Management to give a decision on this."

Then Mr. Narine, Industrial Relations Officer of Booker Bros. McConnell and Company said — and I quote:

"... that any question of retrenchment must be gone into by the Board of Directors and if it is undertaken on such a large scale as suggested by the Unions it will be necessary to get approval from London. Mr. Sankar, Assistant Secretary of the M.P.C.A. then asked how soon could the Union be told how long it will take to consider the implementation of the general retrenchment."

We have from the words of Bookers' representative that if the Union is demanding such a great retrenchment, the matter has to be referred to London. The Union's representative had been forcing the issue that there should be a retrenchment. Mr. Sankar asked how soon could the Union be told how long it would take to consider the implementation of the general retrenchment. I quoted this in the newspaper and the President of the Union has not refuted it, because it was already in a number of files. The President of the M.P.C.A. said something else. He slandered the workers saying that his representative was forced to call for retrenchment because, he said, the workers demanded retrenchment. When it all came out, it was a lie. The workers did not demand retrenchment. There was one small group of field mechanics who had asked to receive severance pay, but the 290 people retrenched did not ask for retrenchment. With retrenchment they face days ahead of them with no money

to buy food; and so the very Union, which had brought about the retrenchment, turns around and begs the Company. After I had raised the issue, as Minister of Labour, the Union turned around and begged the Company; and then the Company in its dignity, having refused the Minister, reinstates 73 — and that has been going on very frequently.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks. Some of the things he said fascinated me. For example, his praises of Puerto Rico have left me spell-bound, because only a few breaths before he had let out a terrible blast of fire on this Government for the agitation of the take-over of the 51 schools which, he says, is communism; it is a most despicable thing that should happen in this country—the control of schools by this Government—it is communism, it would destroy the country, etc., etc.

But then we hear him praise Puerto Rico — this gentleman who stands and gives us a dissertation on everything, from economic dynamism to education, the C.I.O. and the United States and a wide range of subjects. I thought he was well read. Perhaps he did not observe the election in Puerto Rico which took place in November, last year. Perhaps he forgot the basic election issue in November, 1960. It was the Catholic Church against the popular Party and the issue was the control of schools.

The popular party fought an open battle with the Church on the question of Church control of schools. When I was in Puerto Rico I read of a Priest of the Catholic Church being taken to open Court in connection with an election issue. It was the Catholic Church against the Party in power. Because of the state control of schools and the introduction of birth control, the two issues which the Catholic Church would not tolerate, the Catholic Church put up candidates to fight the election. I am glad the views of the

hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, will be recorded in the *Hansard*. The issue of which we are accused so vehemently is the one which the very Puerto Ricans had as their election issue. Incidentally, the popular Party of Muñoz Murin won.

We heard about the United States and the C.I.O. I wonder, if one were to speak on the same issue, if he is aware that the State controls schools in the United States? I wonder if he appreciates that Queen's College and Bishops' High School are controlled by the Government of British Guiana? I want to urge Members of this Council, who are afraid of the indoctrination of communism which will be thrust down the throats of their children, if they feel so strongly they should certainly not allow their children to go to these schools. How foolish some of our speeches can be!

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, also accused this Government. He asked what is it doing about unemployment? It could not spend the very development money last year. Let me take the hon. Member on a little trip. I would like to remind him that when this accusation was made last year, we explained that in any Development Programme it takes some time to get things going. Our Development Programme for 1960—64 could not start until the Legislative Council had given its approval, which was some time in January. After this, the many plans had to be drawn up; technical work had to be done; contracts had to be advertised three months between publication and award, and a very large number of things had to be done.

I can remember being one of the speakers who reminded Members that we would not be so foolish as to deliberately hold up our Development Programme. We cannot obviously 'cut our noses to spite our faces'. I reminded them of the U.C.W.I. where I attended as a delegate to discuss their three-year budget. The

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College asked that they be permitted to spend the money they could not spend in the first year, in the second year because, they said, in the first year it took them sometime to get going, but as soon as acceleration began they would want to spend the full amount for the second year and also the amount they could not spend in the first year, in the second year.

Let me tell hon. Members here that it was only last week Members of the Executive Council had been examining the problem of finding additional money to spend on our Development Programme this year because we are moving very fast. We are spending more than we have this year, and that is precisely what I and others anticipated last year. The pace is now so rapid that that, in itself, presents a problem. To those who want to suggest that money was deliberately held up last year, I would say: "Go and study your economics before making these silly, childish, immature statements in this Legislative Council."

We are told, also, by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, that the United Force—he brings his political party into this Legislature—will seek better conditions for the sugar workers.

**Mr. Fredericks :** To a point of correction. The Minister of Natural Resources was the first person to mention the United Force in this Council. And for the Minister of Labour's information, I had not replied to all the points made by the Minister of Natural Resources.

**Mrs. Jagan:** The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, said that he, then, will seek better conditions for the sugar workers; and in the other breath he denies the sugar workers any assistance in their retrenchment by not giving his support to the Motion. How can he deny them his support in a serious matter of life or death, of living or not living, of not working and not having wages and

of working and having wages? He says he is going to help them. He also tells us about a pension scheme his party would introduce which would have the sanction of the majority of workers in the sugar industry. One cannot help associating him with or dissociating him from a very prominent associate of his — a political friend of his — who is also President of the M.P.C.A. I doubt he would deny that association. Of course, if he would, let him stand and deny it; and he has promised us that the sugar workers should have a pension scheme which should have the sanction of the workers.

For the information of this Council. I and other colleagues have spent a great number of hours trying to urge the same gentleman and the sugar producers that it was wrong not to give the workers in the sugar industry more information and more notice about the introduction of the pension scheme. However, I wish to assure Members that the President of the Union informed us that he had the full confidence of the workers, and had negotiated on behalf of the 25 000 members of the Union.

I issued a challenge to the President of the M.P.C.A. who informed me that the workers in the sugar industry supported the pension scheme 90 per cent. In order to prove that, I asked him whether he would be prepared to go to the sugar estates on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to explain the pension scheme to the sugar workers to see whether they agreed with it. I told him that a Labour Inspector would accompany him as an observer. That was said to the President of the M.P.C.A. last week, but up to now he has not yet replied. I am still awaiting a reply from him. Representatives of the sugar producers have stated that they do not like the idea, but the President of the M.P.C.A. was either unable or unwilling to accept that simple challenge. Yet we hear in this Council that a certain group to which the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, is associated would not

have introduced any pension scheme unless it had the sanction of the sugar workers. One wonders how reliable such statements can be when his colleague tried to force the pension scheme down the throats of the sugar workers.

We also hear the hon. Nominated Member say that one of the things his political party urges is that profits should not go out of the country. I wonder whether he has given thought to that statement.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** I beg to move that the Minister be given another half-hour.

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

Question put, and agreed to.

**Mr. Speaker:** Please proceed.

**Mrs. Jagan:** I was —

**Mr. Fredericks :** On a point of correction, Sir. The Minister associates me with Mr. Ishmael. He is a friend of mine, but I am not aware that he is a member of the political party to which I belong. The United Force does not have anything to do with the M.P.C.A. The second point I would like to make is: I did not say that no profits should go out of the country. I said that a percentage of the profits only should be allowed to leave this country, but the greater part should remain for the purpose of reinvestment in the interest of this country.

**Mrs. Jagan:** I am glad the hon. Member has cleared up that point for me. I want to know whether the leader of his party believes in reinvestment, because instead of investing money here he has gone to Barbados to reinvest some of his money.

We have been given a tirade here, and the P.P.P. has been blamed for the shameful shooting at Enmore. I was horrified to hear the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, standing here and suggesting that the shooting at Enmore was a communist plot. I wonder whether all of the shootings we have known in British Guiana were the result of a communist plot. I am amazed at the intelligence of any Member of this Council who would suggest that the strike at Enmore was communist inspired. Was the trouble at Leonora and Ruinveldt also communist inspired?

A Guianese should know his history much better, and the hon. Nominated Member should know that in 1948 there was no P.P.P. party. Why blame the P.P.P. for the strike at Enmore? These are the facts of history, and the hon. Member should learn history before getting up here and lashing out at the P.P.P. The hon. Member also referred to remarks made by my hon. Colleague the Minister of Natural Resources regarding the unemployment benefits given to people in the United States of America. Unfortunately, I am unable to say who is correct, but the hon. Nominated Member has clarified the fact that the American worker receives higher unemployment allowances than the Guianese worker receives in wages.

I wonder whether the hon. Nominated Member would recall the struggle of the sawmill workers in British Guiana to obtain a decent wage. They had to strike against the sawmill owners and fight every inch of the way until they finally received \$3.00 per day as the minimum wage. He is telling us about the American worker when he, as the owner of a sawmill, has done his best to prevent sawmill workers from getting \$3.00 per day. He should be ashamed of himself for making that statement.

**Mr. Fredericks :** On a point of correction, Sir. I want to state definitely that at no time have I ever resisted an increase in wages in this country. Increase

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in wages must come, and the Minister should know that when the cost of a product goes up it will be necessary to compete with other markets.

**Mrs. Jagan :** I have noted the remarks of the hon. Member. I would like to give him a passing reminder regarding trade unions in the United States of America. I have the highest regard for trade unions in America, and I have the highest regard for what they have achieved. We cannot sit here and imagine that all is well with them in America. We have to remember that there are second class citizens in the United States—second class by pigmentation, and in many areas in the United States the workers do not get unemployment benefits, trade union protection and decent wages. If one happens to be in Alabama and one has the wrong colour of skin one might not get certain things. Those are the facts in the United States, so that when people make statements they must always put a balance to them.

The hon. Member for Demerara River suggested that the retrenchment at Plantation Port Mourant took place because of political pressure. He said: 'Because of Jagan's agitation'. I wonder how much support he has in that claim since those very close to him do not seem to consider the retrenchment that took place at Port Mourant to be of much significance.

**Mr. Bowman :** Sir, on a point of correction. When I referred to the retrenchment at Port Mourant, I was dealing with the closing down of the factory. That came about as a result of Dr. Jagan's agitation. I am not saying that with water in my mouth.

**Mrs. Jagan :** I wonder how much support you will get with that. It is meeting the point that mechanization in the sugar industry has taken place to bring political pressure against the

P.P.P., and the centralisation of the sugar mill is another effort by the sugar industry to hit back at Dr. Jagan and the P.P.P. Perhaps the hon. Member should sort that out at a higher level.

The hon. Member for Demerara River quarrelled with Government and asked why it was not building roads. He said that he had brought a Motion regarding the building of a road to Brazil and Government did nothing about it. Yet he is the same Member who quarrels furiously because the Government of this country is going ahead at a very fast rate with a road to the Interior from Parika to Bartica. In one breath he quarrels when the Government fails to do something, and he quarrels when the Government does something. He does not want the Government to do anything, and that shows the inconsistency of the hon. Member in his discussions.

He asked why we did not refer to other retrenchments that have taken place. I say that the retrenchment which has taken place in the sugar industry during the last five years which approximates 6,133 workers is a serious enough business for all of us to be concerned with. That is why we are supporting this Motion which records our grave concern, and which asks this Government to consider what steps should be taken to prevent a repetition because it will dislocate the economy of the country and bring about hardship and misery on many families.

This Motion refers to a specific issue — an issue which affects a large number of people in this country—and I do not see any point in broadening the Motion. If hon. Members feel strongly about labour conditions in any other industry — the bauxite industry for example — no one prevents them from bringing a Motion to this Council in relation to that, and to general retrenchment which is taking place in the industry. It asks no more of this Council than to record its concern, and to take steps to prevent a repetition.



**Mr. Hubbard:** This Motion brings us face to face with our remote and recent history, and with our future. At this moment I do not want to cast my eyes over my shoulders. I just want to look forward, to learn, to read a lesson from what has taken place over the retrenchment of 290 workers at Pln. Port Mourant. First of all, let us remember that the retrenchment was done by the sugar companies and not, as some will have us believe, by the Government. When it was initiated there was an outcry, and the Government moved to secure what we may call "a stay of execution". What happened?

The sugar companies listened politely to the Government and then said "We have made up our minds. We have retrenched 290 sugar workers and we leave it there." The hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing failed in getting them to change their views, and the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry then approached the one liberal mind in the sugar industry; but that one liberal mind was not at his desk. The answer came back: "We have decided; we will do as we have decided, despite anything the Government may wish."

Now, this is an elected Government of the people of British Guiana, and those Guianese who speak disrespectfully of it do so because they do not and cannot respect themselves. When they go further and aid and abet disrespect of our elected Government by alien forces—forces outside the country—then we see how deep is the disrespect. Then we understand how it is that so many people in developing countries find it necessary, because of political blindness, to surrender their nationality and live anonymous lives in distant lands. It is because they do not respect themselves.

But the situation is graver as we are within weeks of a moment of transition—a moment when the cocoon, so to speak, will burst. The absentee prop-

rietor has said "We will do what we want, despite what your Government says." The local minority elements have said "We uphold those acts of defiance, and we will use our own powers to support them." These minority elements seem to have forgotten one thing. I said it to them in the debate on the selection of the personnel for the Constitutional Talks, and I will say it to them again:

We are on the verge of emergence; the minorities may live with the majority in harmony and on equal terms. The majority does not want to take all the rights and all the powers in its hands; it is generous; all it seeks is the enjoyment of these rights equally by all. But the minorities are never wise; they never think; they only feel. However, the minorities must live with the majority or they will have to live under them. The minorities do not find it easy to surrender rights and privileges which they have enjoyed exclusively. They find it particularly difficult in a country like ours where the majority is distinguished from the minority by the colour of the skin.

It is humiliating to people of paler skin to sit under a Government which they do not themselves control, and the Members of which do not look like them. The 290 sugar estate workers are the same kind of people as those who sit at the ministerial desks and, therefore, the minorities of paler skin must teach these people a lesson and put them in their place. But this is not 1953. They can no longer have their Archbishop write a letter to the Leader of the Opposition in Britain's Parliament and obtain the suspension of the Constitution. That is finished. The world has moved very far since 1953. They cannot reverse the situation.

The behaviour of the sugar companies towards this Government may be described, if I were given to ecclesiastical language, as "impertinent" or "presumptuous". But it was neither. It was merely

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typical. It was merely that the sugar companies were exercising their political right to tell our Government, which they do not like, that they acted legitimately on a question of policy.

The Amendment which has been offered obscures the issue: "do we submit to foreign dictation or not?" The blood of Atta is in me, and I will not submit to coercion whoever else will. I give my wholehearted support to the Motion, because it is my duty as a Guianese, and I feel sorry at the fact that there are some persons born here who cannot bear the responsibility of nationhood and cannot rise off their hands and walk like me.

**Mr. Bowman :** Last week and to-day I have listened to speeches made from the Government Bench and from those lackeys on this side of the Council. The hon. Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Benn) in his speech last week said that the history of British Guiana is the history of sugar, I agree with that because I know that four different races were brought here on account of sugar. I wrote a booklet on that. But he also referred rather casually, I think, to the biological change which has taken place. When he speaks he does so for another race.

Therefore, the Motion before this Council, I want to repeat, was brought because the elections are near and this Government, which has been trying its utmost to maintain its past popularity by stealing and intrigue, has brought this Motion to retrieve some of that lost popularity. They have recognized the fact that today the sugar workers do not look upon them as they used to in the past. The Majority Party from its inception had been stealing and intriguing, and continues to do so, and its popularity was based upon falsehood. At Pln. Port Mourant the estate is still carrying over 300 persons who are technically surplus requirement.

I suggest it is unreasonable to try to suggest that the sugar industry has behaved irresponsibly in this matter. The hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing has given us a dramatic account of her own action in this matter. I will only add one point. She appears to imply that the 73 persons out of the 295 retrenched who had been reinstated would not have been reinstated if a great deal of fuss had not been made. I am informed that from the beginning of the discussion on the matter of retrenchment, the employing company made it perfectly clear, as it has done on a similar occasion, that all cases of pension grants for long service will be considered separately on their merits. As the result of that assurance the 73 persons were reinstated.

The only other point I would like to make is with regard to this problem of severance pay. The hon. Minister is arguing that the company's computation is wrong. The whole of it is difficult, and it is only at the last negotiation between the Sugar Producers' Association and the Trade Union that an agreement on severance pay was placed in the Agreement. I think all of us would wish that it could have been more generous than it is, but I can say, inadequate though it may be, apparently, it is rather better than what the Government servants enjoy.

I am informed that a worker is retrenched at the age of 55. After working from the age of 18 he gets from the Government  $66\frac{2}{3}$  per cent. of weeks' wages, and from the sugar industry the worker gets 84 per cent of weeks' wages. I am informed also that whereas the commencement age for service to count for pension is 20 in the Government Service, it is 15 in the case of the sugar industry. I am also informed that the minimum service for eligibility for severance pay is seven years in the Government Service and five years in the sugar industry.

It is a fact that the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing referred just now to the contributory pension scheme

— a scheme which had been denied the sugar workers until the first of this month. I want to go further to prove where this Party has not had full control of the sugar workers, and this goes back to the 1950's. Since 1953, this Party has been trying to gain complete control of the sugar workers, which they have not got up to now.

The Minister of Labour in the 1953 Government, Dr. Latchmansingh — God bless his memory — was the most popular labour leader in the industry, but this Party wanted to take complete control out of his hands. I am one whom they used. [*Laughter.*] More recently — in 1956 — after having tried to infiltrate the M.P.C.A. and failed, they decided in the Executive of the Party to form a rival union. That union—I have the certificate of registration — is called the B.G. Sugar Workers Union. This has been the brain child of Janet Jagan, the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing, and her husband, with the one object of seizing control of the M.P.C.A. They did not succeed, and they are making their last effort to ridicule the leaders of that Union and, if possible, break it. I have a list of all the names of the officers of this Union.

**Mr. Speaker :** I do not want to hear the names.

**Mr. Bowman :** This is conclusive proof.

**Mr. Speaker :** Keep it.

**Mr. Bowman :** The present Government has been trying to gain control in spite of the fact that the members say, here, that they represent the sugar workers. They do not represent the sugar workers. They only want to gain control because without control they cannot retrieve themselves. And they are trying to do so by instigating what is not, in fact, true that the agreement which is contained in the present draft scheme is not in favour of the sugar workers.

The Minister said, not very long ago, that she asked the President of that Union whether he would go on the estates and explain the scheme to the workers and that she is, up to now, still waiting for him to do so. This scheme was agreed to, and the Government is quite aware of it, since January this year. Government sat down and did nothing about it. No doubt its objection is based on certain recommendations that were made by the Venn Commission. That Commission recommended that there should be a contributory pension scheme based on the representation of one-third/two-thirds. In other words, if the worker puts one part, sugar must put two parts. To see the willingness of this Government, they, who claim to be the representatives of the sugar workers, sat here for four years without advocating its establishment. Since 1950, the year after the recommendation was made known —

**Mr. Speaker :** You had made sufficient reference to that. The Motion has nothing to do with a pension scheme and the long details about it. The Amendment upon which you are supposed to be speaking asks “that this Council records its grave concern at the retrenchment of the workers in every field of enterprise including departments of the Government” and so on. You can refer, incidentally, to pension scheme and all the rest of it, but I cannot let you hold a debate on pension schemes.

**Mr. Bowman :** This was brought up by the Minister.

**Mr. Speaker :** We cannot contemplate a debate on pension schemes. It must come on a substantive Motion. You cannot make it the subject of the main debate on an Amendment which asks the Council to record its grave concern at the retrenchment of workers. You can refer to it incidentally, but it cannot be made the subject of a main debate.

**Mr. Bowman :** In spite of the fact that it may be long, I am just mentioning—

**Mr. Speaker :** You mentioned it three or four times already.

**Mr. Bowman :** We are discussing the question of sugar workers and this, incidentally, concerns sugar workers.

**Mr. Speaker :** I have already ruled, and if you persist I will stop you.

**Mr. Bowman :** Perhaps you might object to this. However, the Minister mentioned my speaking of the Parika-Bartica road. Perhaps she misunderstood what I said or what I meant. The last Motion introduced here by me asked this Council to recommend to Government that a special loan be sought from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for the completion of the road from the end of the Mahdia road to Lethem in the Rupununi. I did not mention anything about the Parika-Bartica road. I am aware of the fact that that road is being built. I am speaking of the completion of the road recommended by the World Bank and the Venn Commission. I am thinking of the working man. I want to see opportunities created for the working man.

The Minister also mentioned that the sugar workers are unlike the workers employed by the Public Works Department; but that is not quite true. As a matter of fact, the sugar industry is a seasonal industry. Some of the workers, for example, the cane cutters, are employed for a given time and after then they are laid off. Similarly, men employed by the Public Works Department to do certain jobs, for example sea defence work, are also laid off when the work is finished. It all adds up to the same thing. However, I want to make the point that because election is near this Government is trying to create bad feelings against sugar proprietors.

I am supporting the Amendment moved by the Member for Georgetown North because it includes all workers.

This Government, which is quite partial, has brought this Motion because most of its supporters are on the sugar estates. Workers had been retrenched in the bauxite industry, at the Transport and Harbours Department and in other fields of endeavour and not one word was said by this Government. This Government is discriminating in making representation. That is why I said last week that unless I am told by the Mover of the Motion what he wants this Council to recommend—whether he would like the Council to recommend that the Personnel Departments of the sugar industry should be taken over by Government so as to prevent a repetition of retrenchment or whether he wants us to recommend the complete take-over of the sugar industry—I would not support the Motion. I would like him to state clearly what is in his mind. If that cannot be done I would not support the Motion.

I know that Government has the voting strength to outvote us, but it will go on the record. History has a funny way of repeating itself. Today the Majority Party has the majority. Human beings cannot say what will happen in the future. We do not think bad things of ourselves. This Government is in power now, but who knows what will happen after the 21st August? If any party succeeds or attempts to introduce measures like the one which is being introduced today—a biased Motion like this which seeks to assist only one group of people, the sugar workers in the Corentyne—what will happen in this country?

This is intended to assist the workers in the Corentyne, the workers at Port Mourant in particular. I know that sugar workers have been retrenched on the East Bank. What has this Government done about that? Port Mourant is the home of the Leader of the Majority Party and, realizing that he has lost favour up there, he is trying to whip up some kind of antagonism which will bring the people over to his favour. This cannot go on for long.

The hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing also referred to the Leader of the United Force having refused to reinvest a certain amount of money in British Guiana and having taken it to Barbados. He had a legitimate case for doing that. A previous Government had given that gentleman certain concessions concerning an industry that was recently established in this country, but this Government changed everything that was done by the previous Government. I was with them at the time; I pleaded with them and told them that their actions would discourage investors from investing in this country. I felt that it was a new industry and, regardless of how much profits the gentleman had made during the first year, they should not change things.

I remember reading in a newspaper that Mr. d'Aguiar intended to expand the industry by introducing certain by-products, but because of the action taken by this Government he decided to go to Barbados where better concessions were given to him. Apart from that, the Leader of the Majority Party on many occasions said that he did not intend to give certain concessions to the imperialist firms or companies because they were sending out the profits. Mr. d'Aguiar, a Guianese, has gone to Barbados to invest a certain amount of his money which, no doubt, would result in this country receiving more income tax. Whatever money is made there as a result of the investment, I am sure this Government stands to benefit. If I remember rightly, this Government stands to benefit by 47 per cent. of whatever money will accrue as a result of that investment.

The Minister talks about exploitation. If a Guianese goes to Barbados and exploit the Barbadians for the benefit of Guianese, whatever money is made there will be brought to British Guiana. If a Barbadian politician said the same thing the Minister is saying, what would we say? I used to mouth those things when I was with the party. When one acts in

this way one must remember what will be the repercussion tomorrow. Even Marx has said that all things are subject to change—from a grain of sand to the moon is subject to change. Changes will occur in this country, and if repercussions come as a result of their present actions they should not feel it very much.

There is one last thing of which I want to make mention. In referring to the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing said that he had praised the Government of Puerto Rico. I myself have praised the Government of Puerto Rico. She referred to the taking over of schools by the present Government in Puerto Rico, but Mr. Fredericks was praising the former Government for encouraging investors into the country.

The only investors this Government is prepared to allow in this country are those from communist countries. This Government has people surveying our roads and railways. Not very long ago I asked the Minister of Communications and Works five questions. At the last meeting of this Council the Minister of Labour, Health and Housing answered one on behalf of the Minister of Trade and Industry. Today the Financial Secretary answered two questions, but these questions stem from the questions I have directed to the Minister of Communications and Works.

**Mr. Speaker :** If your questions were not answered, whether rightly or wrongly, that does not affect the subject of this debate. You may be right in complaining that your motions and questions were long in coming before this Council, but that is not the subject of the debate today.

**Mr. Bowman :** I brought these questions ———

**Mr. Speaker :** Let us assume that you have a genuine complaint that you have had motions and questions tabled which have not been dealt with and you have

[MR. SPEAKER]

cause to talk about it. How does that affect the question before us today? There are many Members who have genuine complaints, but the reason why we have an Order Paper is to indicate what items we should deal with. If we deal with things which are irrelevant, it would make a farce of the Order Paper. You have given me the most trouble in this connection.

**Mr. Bowman:** I have given reasons for it.

**Mr. Speaker :** I cannot allow your reasons.

**Mr. Bowman :** I will not persist. The Minister referred to the Parika-Bartica Road, and the Company that is going to build the road—

**Mr. Speaker :** What is the reference?

**Mr. Bowman:** I asked questions concerning the road. A contract has been given out, but——

**Mr. Speaker :** That cannot be debated now.

**Mr. Bowman :** I am referring to the road——

**Mr. Speaker :** Do not refer to the road at all, otherwise I will have to stop you.

**Mr. Bowman :** The Minister referred to it just now.

**Mr. Speaker :** You cannot debate the questions and motions now. If I have to stop you again it will be final, so go very carefully.

**Mr. Bowman:** The Minister said that the construction of the road had created jobs and that, apparently, I had forgotten that a road is being built. In referring to that I made mention of the questions which I have tabled here. I do not see anything wrong with that. However, Your Honour does not want to hear about them.

**The Speaker:** You cannot speak about them now. If you speak about them again I will ask you to take your seat.

**Mr. Bowman:** All right chief.

**Mr. Benn:** Chief?

**Mr. Bowman:** He is the chief of this Council, and I consider him as the chief. What is wrong with that? I will close my speech by saying that this Government is a biased and partial Government, and its efforts during the past four years have been directed towards finding jobs and other things for a certain group of people, forgetting that this country is moving towards nationhood. Moving towards nationhood calls for unity, but if the present Government continues to act in the way in which it has been acting, how can it expect to have unity? As far as I know it has created grave dissatisfaction among the people apart from a certain group—even the people in that group are dissatisfied at the moment.

The question of whether or not the people are dissatisfied will be proven on the 21st August. I say that many of the things which have been done will be undone by the new Government. If I happen to be here, I will put right the abrogation of certain contracts which were recently given out—contracts that were shady.

**Mr. Ram Karran:** On a point of order. I submit that the hon. Member by referring to contracts as being shady is imputing that members of the Government have done something improper. I think it is improper for him to say that in this Council.

**Mr. Speaker :** If he has done so it is improper.

**Mr. Rai:** The hon. Member referred to shady transactions.

**Mr. Speaker :** If he did, it is improper.

**Mr. Bowman:** Only yesterday I read in the newspaper that certain politicians referred to the fact that there is political pilfering going on.

**Mr. Speaker :** I am not concerned with that.

**Mr. Bowman:** But, Mr. Speaker, I know.

**Mr. Speaker :** The hon. Member will have to table a Motion on that.

**Mr. Bowman:** I do not wish to do that.

**Mr. Tasker :** Speaking on the Amendment, I do not wish to tire the Council further, but I would like to comment on a few statements made by the hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan) in her vigorous address to this Council. I am sorry the hon. Minister did not give an answer to any of the questions which I posed last week. Is this not a basic problem facing any industry employing a large number of workers and moving from a relatively inefficient form of organized labour to a more efficient one at a time when our population is increasing rapidly?

While I accept the figures quoted by the hon. Minister with regard to stabilization over a period of recent years, I would remind her and this Council of the point I made last week regarding the casual element in those figures. Speaking on an earlier occasion I said that, taking the five crops from Autumn 1955 to Autumn 1957, of the workers who had been retrenched during that period over 70 per cent. had worked for less than 15 days in any one crop. I pointed out that this was despite the fact that work was available.

I also pointed out that while there may well have been some workers who would have liked to work more and could not, there was clearly a large proportion of workers in the industry who only turned out to work on limited occasions and could not, therefore, be said to look to the sugar industry for their main or principal income.

There is nothing wrong with this, if one can get away with it—in effect treating the industry as a convenience. But this is no longer possible in the economic position of sugar in the world today. The industry has to modernize, mechanize and stabilize its labour force. For had the industry continued its previous policy of spreading the work available among the largest number of workers, it would have been accused—and rightly so—of paying sub-standard wages. Yet when the industry embarks on a programme of stabilization—in order to raise the levels of earnings of those who want regular employment—it is accused of adding to the nation's unemployment problem.

I must relate the statement of the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, who said that the sugar industry is opposing the Government in this issue. The sugar industry has no intention of being against the Government of British Guiana. All that it is endeavouring to do is to ensure that unemployment and underemployment be treated as the national problems that they certainly are. The employment position in the major industry is part of these national problems, but it is only one part. And the industry recognizes the dilemma brought about by the effects of stabilization in a period of increasing unemployment. The social scientist may very well argue on one side and the economist on the other. The majority of the economists, including Professor Arthur Lewis for example, have come down firmly on the side of efficiency. He had said, clearly and unequivocally, that any industry that does not put its house in order, by mechanising wherever possible, does so at its peril.

Reverting to the particular problem of the work at Pln. Port Mourant, with your permission, Sir, I would like to quote figures showing the relative position in the two estates of Port Mourant and Albion. These two estates are contiguous, and their soil and other conditions are similar.

[MR. TASKER]

In 1960, which was a very busy year for the sugar industry and produced a record crop, the total number of employees in the boy gang and the female weeding gang at Albion was 293, for a cultivated area of 7,205 acres. At Port Mourant, the two gangs totalled 548 people for a cultivated area of 5,880 acres. There is no difference between the problems of cultivation at Albion and at Port Mourant, and those figures illustrate the truth of what I said earlier—that even after the retrenchment at Port Mourant, the estate is still carrying a labour force surplus to its requirements.

Finally, may I say again that I think we should endeavour to approach this very serious problem of unemployment, underemployment and population increase as it should be approached—on a national scale.

**The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Rai):** The Motion, as far as I have seen, seeks two things, and it seems to me that there is no controversy at all about what the Motion is seeking.

First of all, the Motion seeks “that this Council records its grave concern at the retrenchment of the workers of Plantation Port Mourant and other sugar estates.” If I understand my hon. Friend, Mr. Tasker, aright, he agrees with this part of the Motion, but he is not merely concerned with the retrenchment of the workers at Port Mourant, and I think every other Member of this Council has expressed his concern about retrenchment.

The second part of the Motion reads: “and urges the Government to consider what steps should be taken to prevent a repetition of such acts which tend to dislocate the economy of the country and which brings about hardship and misery to many families.” And if, again, I understand my hon. Friend, Mr. Tasker,

aright, he says this is a national problem and in any national problem Government must be interested. Here, again, I see there is no controversy.

Everyone says he is concerned with the retrenchment at Port Mourant. Some Members say it is a national problem; it is not merely a problem for the sugar estates. This is what the Motion says. We are interested in what is happening at Port Mourant and we are directing Government’s attention to it—to take steps that there is no repetition of such acts which tend to dislocate the economy of the country. This is what the Motion seeks to do. Can any Member of this Council say that he is not concerned with the retrenchment on the sugar estates? Every worker has a right to work and earn wages for the protection of his family; and I think this is also the teaching of the Catholic Church. I am surprised to hear the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, say he cannot support this Motion. He is a member of the Catholic Church—

**Mr. Speaker :** Do not bring in the Church.

**Mr. Fredericks:** To a point of correction—

**Mr. Rai** rose—

**Mr. Speaker :** Just one moment. I just want to hear what is his reason for rising.

**Mr. Fredericks:** He said just now that everyone in this Council agrees with the second part of the Motion.

**Mr. Speaker :** That is not a point of correction.

**Mr. Rai:** He took the opportunity in the course of the debate, to attack the Minister of Education about schools, and said that there are not enough places in this country for children to attend schools; that children are being turned away from



schools. The only schools from which children are being turned away are the catholic schools. They are the ones who are practising discrimination against the children in this country. And it is not true to say that from any other schools children are being turned away, except from catholic schools.

He went on to say we are not spending the money allocated in the Programme for the building of schools, and he cited the figures up to June, 1960. He was speaking on the basis of what happened up to then, and said that Government is not spending the money allocated for the building of schools. I wish to assure him that the School Building Programme is likely to exceed the vote which is allocated this year to build new schools. New schools are to be built at Cummings Lodge because the Church is unable to put up one at Ogle, at Vryheids Lust because the Church is unable to put up one at Better Hope, at La Bonne Intention because the Anglican Church is unable to replace the one there, at Annandale, at Enterprise, Albion Bush Lot, Black Bush Polder, Yakusari, Zeeburg, Coomacha, Zeelugt, Johanna Cecilia. Schools are going to be put up this year. In the next few weeks contracts for the building of some of these schools will be awarded. The School Building Programme in 1961 is likely to exceed the allocation; so this charge about Government not spending the money allocated for the building of new schools is entirely baseless.

It has always been said, in this Council and outside, that if you have a stable Government capital will come in. The Majority Party has only been in office for four years now. Even if you wish to dispute that it is not true that this is a stable Government, what has happened to the stability of the other Governments which were ruling this country over the last 100 years? Why has not capital come into this country to develop it for over 100 years? I wish to assure hon. Members that for the last

four years more overseas capital has come into this country than there has been for the last 50 years. They say there is no stability in the Government and that is why private people are not coming in. My hon. Friend belongs to the employer class of the community. His own investments are being increased daily. Those who speak about the instability of the Government are increasing their investments daily. Why go about the country districts talking about the Government not being stable—trying to scare away the people from their leaders while, at the same time, spreading their investments and increasing their profits?

Mr. Tasker says the sugar industry wishes to maximize and standardize its policy. True, but why do this, having regard to the people who are being thrown off, at the expense of human dignity and labour? In other countries, it is well-known that where industries have to mechanize and stabilize, the rate of mechanizing and stabilizing is controlled or guided so that human misery and suffering would not be brought about because of this mechanization and stabilization and that is one of the ways in which that problem can be met. It is no use telling us that this is a problem for Government; that all we are concerned with is trying to stabilize and control the industry. You have a responsibility. What notices have been given to these 290 people? None whatever. And 290 families have to go abegging for work. Where are the consciences of the employers? Are they only out for profits? These are the questions people are asking.

I do not think anybody would disagree with mechanization, but we are also concerned with the stopping of further social consequences; and all that this Motion says is that the Government should direct its mind to this and see what should be done to prevent a repetition.

My hon. Friend said that the 73 workers were reinstated under compassionate means and not as a result of re-

presentations by the Ministry or Government or other workers. In a letter dated the 27th May, 1961, from Bookers Estates Limited, it was stated, and quote:

"We now wish to confirm that we regret that we cannot reverse the decision to retrench these employees. We believe that our decision, which is in pursuance of the policy to provide full employment for employees wherever possible, is in the long run in the best interests of the majority of our employees and of the industry as a whole."

The reinstatement of the 73 workers took place after the date of this letter.

**Mr. Tasker :** To a point of correction. The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing has already read that letter. All that I said—and I would like the record to be clear—was that from the start of negotiations regarding retrenchment, the employers said that exceptions on the grounds of compassion or of long service would be treated on their merits, individually. I see absolutely nothing contradictory between that statement and the letter to the hon. Minister.

**Mr. Rai:** In that regard, I say that this letter has no reference to it. The letter makes quite a categorical statement:

"We now wish to confirm that we regret that we cannot reverse the decision to retrench these employees."

It has been suggested by my hon. Friend, Mr. Bowman, that this Motion was brought here because this is election year. It has also been suggested that because this is election year this retrenchment has taken place! My hon. Friend, Mr. Bowman, says that because the sugar workers form the bulk of the supporters

of the Majority Party, it has made a public issue of the retrenchment, but may it not be that the sugar industry wishes to show its economic power over the lives of these people by retrenching the 290 workers? These are some of the inferences given: but the fact is that the workers have been retrenched, hardship has been caused. Are we in sympathy with the workers or not? Are we going to support the Government or not?

I am not surprised at the views expressed by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks. As I said, he is a member of the United Force and his views are consistent with the views of that Party. But I was rather surprised to hear the views expressed by Mr. Bowman, an ex-sugar estate worker. He said he was a shovelman on the estates. Is he opposing these workers on the estates who have been dealt with so badly?

The Motion is very simple; and I wish to clarify it for those Members who have been speaking irrelevantly. It seeks two things. Are you in sympathy with the retrenched workers? If you are, support the Government. If you are not, then do not support the Government which wants to take steps to have something done about it.

**Mr. Speaker :** The hon. Mover of the Motion is not in his place to reply. I shall therefore put the Amendment first, which reads as follows:

"That this Council records grave concern at the retrenchment of workers in every field of enterprise including the Departments of Government, and urges Government to consider what steps should be taken to prevent a repetition of such acts which tend to dislocate the economy of the country and bring about hardship and misery to many families."

Question put, and the Council divided and voted as follows:

<i>For</i>	<i>Against</i>
Mr. Bowman	Mr. Hubbard
Mr. Tasker	Mr. Fredericks
Mr. Jackson	Mr. Saffee
Mr. Kendall	Mr. Raj
--4.	Mr. Ram Karran
	Mrs. Jagan
	Mr. Benn
	Dr. Jagan
	The Financial Secretary
	The Attorney-General
	The Chief Secretary
	—11.

Amendment negatived.

**Mr. Speaker :** The Amendment is lost, and I will now put the Motion which reads:

"Whereas during the month of May, 1961 two hundred and ninety workers of Plantation Port Mourant were retrenched;

And whereas this retrenchment has led to a sharp increase in unemployment in the area particularly and in the country generally;

And whereas the employers of these workers claim that the retrenchment was necessitated by the need to mechanize the sugar industry and to stabilise their labour force;

And whereas the policy of retrenchment is being pursued on many sugar estates in this colony;

Be it resolved that this Council records its grave concern at the retrenchment of the workers of Plantation Port Mourant and other sugar estates and urges the Government to consider what steps should be taken to prevent a repetition of such acts which tend to dislocate the economy of the country and which bring about hardship and misery to many families."

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Chief Secretary :** I move that the Council do now adjourn to 2 p.m. tomorrow.

**Mr. Speaker** The Council stands adjourned to tomorrow Thursday, 6th July, 1961 at 2 p.m.

*Council adjourned accordingly.*