

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 1]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE
FIRST PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA

15th Sitting

Wednesday, 16th November, 1966

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*]

Present:

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. A. P. Alleyne

Members of the Government

Ministers

The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.	<i>- Prime Minister</i>
Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid	<i>- Minister of Home Affairs</i>
The Honourable P. S. d'Aguiar	<i>- Minister of Finance</i>
The Honourable N. J. Bissenber	<i>- Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)</i>
The Honourable R. E. Cheeks	<i>- Minister of Local Government</i>
The Honourable E. F. Correia	<i>- Minister of Communications</i>
The Honourable L. John	<i>- Minister of Agriculture</i>
The Honourable R. J. Jordan	<i>- Minister of Forests, Lands and Mines</i>
The Honourable M. Kasin	<i>- Minister of Works and Hydraulics</i>
The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C.B.E.	<i>- Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation</i>
The Honourable D. Mahraj	<i>- Minister of Health</i>
The Honourable C. A. Merriman	<i>- Minister of Labour</i>
The Honourable J. H. Thomas	<i>- Minister of Economic Development</i>
The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.	<i>- Attorney-General and Minister of State</i>

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. D. B. deGroot	- Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office
Mr. G. Bowman	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour
Mr. O. E. Clarke	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education and Race Relations
Mr. P. Duncan	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Local Government
Mr. J. G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics
Mr. C. V. Too-Chung	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Other Members

Mr. W. A. Blair	Dr. J. K. M. Richmond
Mr. J. Budhoe	Mr. T. A. Sancho
Mr. W. G. Carrington	Mr. R. Tello, Deputy Speaker
Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley	Rev. A. B. Trotman
Mr. H. Prashad	Mr. H. M. S. Wharton, J.P.

Members of the Opposition

Dr. C. B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition	Mr. J. R. S. Luck
Mr. A. Chase	Mr. D. C. Jagan
Mr. B. H. Benn	Mr. H. Lall
Mr. Ram Karan	Mr. M. Khan, J.P.
Mr. R. Chandisingh	Mr. Y. Ally
Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard	Mr. R. D. Persaud
Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.	Mr. M. Poonai
Mr. C. V. Nunes	Dr. S. A. Ramjohn
Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye	Mr. S. M. Saffee
Mr. E. M. G. Wilson	
Mr. M. Hamid, J.P.	

Clerk of the National Assembly - Mr. F. A. Narain
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (ag.) - Mr. M. B. Henry

Absent:

The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin, Minister of Education and
Race Relations - on leave

Mr. L. Linde
Mr. E. M. Stoby
Mr. M. Bhagwan - on leave

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER
LEAVE TO MEMBERS**

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I have to announce that leave of absence has been granted to the hon. Minister of Education and Race Relations (Mrs. Gaskin) up to the 17th of this month.

**PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS
PRIVATE BILL**

GUYANA PANDITS' COUNCIL BILL

Rev. Trotman: I seek permission, on behalf of the Guyana

Swatantra Vidwat Parishad commonly known as the Guyana Pandits' Council, to introduce a Private Bill intituled: "An Act to provide for the incorporation of the Guyana Swatantra Vidwat Parishad commonly known as the Guyana Pandits' Council and for purposes connected therewith."

The Clerk: The Petition reads as follows:

71, Croal Street & Winter Place,
Stabroek, Georgetown,
GUYANA.

HIS HONOUR THE SPEAKER

- and -

HONOURABLE MEMBERS OF
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY:

The Humble Petition of:

PANDIT NARINE PRASHAD SHARMA AND
PANDIT OUDIT NARINE SHARMA in their capacity as President and Secretary respectively, and the accredited representatives of the Guyana Swatantra Vidwat Parishad commonly known as the Guyana Pandits' Council of the above address:

RESPECTFULLY SHEWETH:

1. WHEREAS the Guyana Swatantra Vidwat Parishad or Pandits' Council herein referred to as the Pandits' Council has been established since 1953:
2. AND WHEREAS the object of the said Pandits' Council is, among other things, to promote religious and cultural activities among the people of Guyana;

3. AND WHEREAS the Pandits' Council has a membership of One Hundred (100) practising Pandits;
4. AND WHEREAS the Pandits' Council, among its activities, is to erect a Hindu Temple and Cultural Centre in the City of Georgetown to the approximate cost of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000);

Your Petitioners therefore respectfully request permission to have introduced in the National Assembly a Bill Intituled AN ACT TO PROVIDE FOR THE INCORPORATION OF THE GUYANA SWATANTRA VIDWAT PARISHAD; COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE GUYANA PANDITS' COUNCIL AND FOR THE PURPOSES CONNECTED THEREWITH;

AND as in duty bound your Petitioners will ever pray.

(Sgd.) Pandit NARINE PRASHAD SHARMA
President.

(Sgd.) Pandit OUDIT NARINE SHARMA
Secretary."

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS
DELIVERY OF MAIL TO
RESIDENTS OF PRINCESS
CAROLINA

The Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan): On behalf of the hon. Member, Mr. Chandisingh, I beg to ask the Minister of Communications Question No. 41 standing in his name on the Order Paper: Will the Minister state why it is impossible for residents of Princess Carolina, Demerara River, to receive their mail where they live instead of at Soesdyke?

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Correia): The Answer is, it is not impossible to deliver letters to Princess Carolina, but economically it is not practicable.

Dr. Jagan: Could the Minister say how many residents are at Princess Carolina and why it is impracticable?

Mr. Correia: I have no idea of the number of residents, but I know that less than a dozen letters are received at the Post Office for residents of that area.

Dr. Jagan: Is it not the practice for other letters to be delivered in the Demerara River, and is it not possible for delivery to take place at Princess Carolina at the same time?

Mr. Correia: Letters addressed to Princess Carolina go to Soesdyke Post Office where they are collected by the addressees.

Mr. Hubbard: Will the Minister say whether the Post Office will refuse to deliver letters to a section of Georgetown because the number of letters going to that section does not amount to more than a dozen?

Mr. Speaker: Does the question have a bearing on the original Question? Supplementary questions are intended to bring out something from the original ones.

Dr. Jagan: May I ask whether all letters from areas surrounding Princess Carolina in the Demerara River are delivered at Soesdyke?

Mr. Correia: I have no idea. If the hon. Member wishes to put the Question in writing, I shall have the Answer for him.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA

The Assembly resumed consideration of the following Motion -

"Be it resolved that this Assembly recommend that steps be taken to amend the Constitution of Guyana to provide for declaring vacant the seats of Members of this Assembly who cease to support the Party on whose list they were elected to this Assembly." [Dr. Ramsahoye.]

Mr. Speaker: At the Adjournment last evening the hon. Member Mr. Sancho had been speaking for seven minutes.

Mr. Sancho: When we took the Adjournment yester-evening I was about to remark on the very important Conference which our then colonial masters called almost exactly a year ago to date, November, 1965. That Conference was the first Independence Conference where one of the parties in this House, that particular party which now seeks to have a Motion of recall carried in this House, absented itself, having gone to the Conference before that one. It was at that Conference that this present Constitution, which, as I remarked yesterday is five months old roughly, was hammered into shape. It was at that Conference that the P.P.P. which now seeks to have an Amendment of the most sacred document of our land should have been present, to raise matters such as this.

Nevertheless, perhaps because of the absence of that party, careful considerations were given to a whole set of points and long arguments in which the then Colonial Secretary, Mr. Greenwood, expressed the view that he wished the most democratic of Constitutions to emerge, if only because of the absence of that party. It was never conceived and cannot now be conceived that a document which was arrived at, and which eventually came into force on May 26 of this year, should now be changed, a document which at a previous Conference the leader of the P.P.P., the leader of the P.N.C., and the leader of the U.F. had all agreed should basically be settled by the United Kingdom Government.

It is the view of Members of this side of the House that the proper place to have raised this

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question of recall was at such a Conference. It is the view of Members of this side of the House that there was absolutely no reason why matters such as this could not at least have been discussed, if there were such burning matters in the minds of members of the P.P.P. But what they had hoped to happen to others has happened to them.

2.20 p.m.

Perhaps, they had hoped at one time not to contest the Elections at all, but they, eventually, had second thoughts and took part in the General Elections. Perhaps they had hoped that, having contested the Elections and lost, they would refuse to move out of The Residence and would not enter the House at all. However, better wisdom prevailed. Perhaps, they had hoped that, having entered the House, the defections would have been from this side of the House and not across there.

It is clear that this Motion has been conceived out of fear. They fear that there will be more defections on their side of the House. Let us go more closely into this matter. I will not deal with the matters which were dealt with yesterday afternoon by the hon. Attorney-General and Minister of State. [Interruption.]

Mr. Speaker: No one must walk between the Member addressing the Chair and the Speaker. That is an act of impropriety.

Mr. Sancho: I will not deal with the matters which were referred to yesterday by the hon. Attorney-General and Minister of State, except to point out that the hon. Member Mr. Bhagwan very often voted with that side of the House after he had been expelled from the P.P.P. The same thing can be said of the hon. Member Mr. Saffee. Since he has been expelled from the party, he has voted with that side of the House on many issues.

It is quite clear that the very fundamental point that was raised yesterday: "At what stage is a member considered to have ceased supporting the party in the Parliament?" raises a whole area of doubts as to what can be considered as cessation of support. It is quite clear that to attempt to set such a burden of decision on any authority will be too much, because when a man becomes a Member of Parliament he becomes something higher than his party's possession and a tool for his party's control. His responsibilities then are not primarily to the party, but to the whole nation.

The point the P.N.C. has always been making is that the last Government always thought in terms of the party and not of the country. Perhaps the members of the P.P.P. now see the crossing of the Floor by their members as something in terms of the party. It is certainly not in keeping with the Constitution. This National Assembly is not here merely to rectify the failure of the party to keep its colleagues in discipline. The National Assembly is here to deliberate at a higher level. If,

in the opinion of a Member, something has happened which can no longer make him vote with his colleagues on major matters, then we feel that he has a right to vote as his conscience dictates and, if necessary, within the lifetime of Parliament after he has crossed the Floor.

Yesterday afternoon the hon. Mover of the Motion, Dr. Ramsahoye, referred to the fact that the Constitution mentions lists and not parties. He himself said so. You may have heard it said that these lists can be presented by individual persons and not necessarily by a party. It must be assumed that when a man is placed on the list of a party, the party must have had some faith in him. In the case of the P.P.P., we might assume that he was a willing child, and that he had done his rudimentary work mouthing certain slogans and so on by rote.

Now, the point I wish to make is this: to get on a party list, one presupposes that the party has some confidence in the individual who is placed on the list. In some cases that man of his own right can bring a certain number of votes to the party, independent of the party. In all three parties in this House there are names on the lists, and these members on their own accord could have got a few thousand votes. [Mr. Wilson: "Only Mr. Kendall."] It cannot be presumed that because a party puts a name on the list that *ipso facto* the name had no support at all.

On matters of this nature where members of the Opposition are asking for the recall of a Member of Parliament who crosses

the Floor, it should be something mandatory by the people. It must be presumed that the people in the community had some favour with the candidate on the list; it must be presumed that in a majority of cases candidates on the list in their own rights had certain popular support or, at least, the good wishes of the electorate as men apart from their party.

I want to say that I am very much mindful of what has been written by the English constitutionalists Dicey and Bagehot. We must consider the relationship between the Cabinet and the membership as well as the relationship between the membership of Parliament and the people. That is the hyphen that joins, the buckle that binds, and if a matter like this is to be seriously considered — if a Motion like this asking for an amendment of the Constitution by some miracle should be passed, then it should have the consent of the people who gave their consent to have certain persons on the list elected apart from the list as a whole.

2.30 p.m.

I want to make this point clear because the hon. Mover of the Motion stated that an overwhelming majority exercised their votes in favour of a party, not a person. The opposite to some extent proves my point, too. If I may refer to the Barbados elections, I would remind hon. Members that it had been thought for years that party organisation carries the candidate in the whole of the Caribbean, and yet Mr. Frank Walcott lost his seat in the Barbados elections. I

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remember when I first visited that country some eleven years ago I was told by Barbadians how popular this man, a fellow trade unionist and brother, was. I was told that he was the power behind the throne, that no party could win an election unless the Barbados Workers Union supported that party. Yet popularity sometimes disproves itself and that gentleman who, upwards of 21 years, had been winning his seat steadily in the Barbados House of Assembly as an Independent Member, when carried by a party for the first time lost his seat.

To speak of the converse, if a party puts someone on its list it is not always true that such person could not have won as an independent. It is not material in the light of this reference whether the system is P.R., double-member constituency, first-past-the-post, or a mixture. I am not saying for one moment that that gentleman's inclusion on the party's list in Barbados did not mean very much to that party for which he fought, but the point is this: popular as he was, when he joined a party and went on a party list, he lost his own seat which he had been winning year after year.

Why then, within the life-time of a Parliament should a Member have to lose his seat merely because he happens to disagree with his colleagues and happens perhaps, to cross the Floor? Let us suppose that there is a situation where the very leader of the People's Progressive Party decides to cross the Floor. What would happen then? Such a situation is not impossible. Is he

going to lose his seat merely because the rest of his colleagues are annoyed because he has - to use a word which I mentioned yesterday - "succumbed"?

I do not think that this will be in keeping with the traditions of Parliament. I do not think there is this indivisible tie between the party member and the Parliamentarian. The Motion seeks to say that it is indivisible and that if the party member no longer supports the attitude of his colleagues in Parliament he must lose his Parliamentary position, which is something above the party.

It may be argued that in some countries Members of Parliament, who no longer agree with their party and who for some reason or the other find that they are unable to keep in line with the policy of their parties, decide to resign. This is a matter involving two things, the conscience of the individual member as he sees the national situation - and the national situation of Guyana is not the same as that of England or of some of the countries where a member might resign because he disagrees with his colleagues. There are many in this Assembly who have experience and knowledge and can continue to serve in Parliament, either by adopting an independent position, which was not originally theirs, or, if they are convinced that the other side is right and the side on which they sit is no longer right, by joining the governing party for the good of the government or because they feel that the policies of that particular government are right. [Mr. Luck: "Did you not call Bowman a rat?"] I am not in

the habit of calling some people names which better refer to others, therefore I will not bother with your remarks.

I would like to say that in a country like Guyana, one must not assume to be the bravest of the brave by attacking everything that the other side puts forward and calling it "opposition". When a colleague fails to support you on a particular matter he does not become a "rat" and someone to be expunged. It is quite clear that the fears on that side of the House are real. It is quite possible that despite that party's organisation, despite the fact that all hon. Members on that side of the House have to be true lambs of the Lord, there are still many who are dissatisfied and further defections may take place.

This is not the place to rectify that type of difficulty; this is not the place to bring a Motion of this sort. I have recently returned from Germany to which country I had the honour to lead a delegation. I saw much of that country's political and trade union activities. Hon. Members are well aware that in West Germany there is a system of proportional representation and the Germans have managed to democratise their Constitution. [Laughter (Opposition)] The Germans themselves argue that only twice in their history have they had a democratic Constitution and it took place after the two World Wars, in the time of the Weimar Republic and now.

The point I want to make is that in a country, where there is proportional representation as in Guyana, members of political parties have crossed the Floor

and there are no rules in the Constitution, - a democratic Constitution, a Constitution in the drawing up of which, not only Britain and America, but also Russia, had some part to play, - which prevent members from crossing the Floor.

2.40 p.m.

It is quite clear that this type of Motion could not be embodied in the Constitution. This type of Motion is a waste of time and I want to point out that a party which fails, as I said a few minutes ago, to hold its members cannot come here, in this House, to seek constitutional redress for what -

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member has exhausted his time.

Mr. Chase: I beg to move that the hon. Member be given an extension of 15 minutes to continue his speech.

Mr. Luck seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Sancho: I will only take five minutes. [Laughter.] If we look at the record of the P.P.P., in matters of constitutional propriety, there is very little that it can dare to speak about. For two years the members of the P.P.P. failed to fill a seat in this House, a thing which would hardly ever happen in Britain. These people who so believe in the British first-past-the-post system should know that if that had happened in Britain, a by-election would have been declared within months. But they left a seat in this House purposely

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vacant because they were afraid to hold elections! Iniquitous! So that our House was not properly and fully constituted for a long time, and nothing that the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Burnham) could have said ever made them decide to hold that by-election.

They come here and say sometimes that the Governor seized up the works of Government because one or two Members, now out of favour, were spirited away to Sibley Hall. But that did not happen to their Members of Parliament only. As far as I remember, one of our prominent comrades was removed from the House, so that they should not bring that argument here. What is to be noted is that they have failed to have the House properly constituted for a long time and now they seek, within five months of an independent Constitution - they did not attend the Conference where they could have aired their views - to have a fundamental change in the Constitution just brought about like that because a man has crossed the Floor.

Let us look at the array of defectors from the People's Progressive Party: Sydney King, Lachmarsingh, Jai Narine Singh, Balram Singh Rai, Beharry, Bowman Snr. and Jnr., Bhagwan, Saffee, Victor Downer, Ashton Chase. [Laughter.] I would like to be true, veracity is important. In the case of my hon. Friend, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Chase), I am of the belief that he once left his colleagues and, having gone abroad,

he came back and spoke one night on the platform of the P.N.C. before a certain Election, then he went another side. Is there not one of these people who had reason on his side? Is it only the highest members over there who are right? We sympathize with the P.P.P. for the defections.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Merriman): On a point of order. May I ask my hon. Friend Mr. Luck if he is taking pictures in the House?

Mr. Luck: No, I am not.

Mr. Merriman: There is a camera on the other side.

Mr. Jagau: That is not a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Proceed.

[*Interruption by Mr. Merriman.*]

Mr. Speaker: Let us proceed with this debate. The hon. Minister will please be quiet. Proceed.

Mr. Sancho: I should like to point out that when the Prime Minister referred to the Constitution as a book of rules, it reminded me, in a sense, of the rules of cricket and of the very great calypso, "Sir Garfield Sobers", by that gifted West Indian, Sparrow. In that calypso Sparrow says that because one or two of our fast bowlers hit the heads of the Australian cricketers, the Australians immediately cried that the rules needed changing, that they must have helmets against this fast bowling to protect their heads -

"c ash" helmets, my hon. Friend points out - and that if this continued the series should be stopped. I can think of nothing better than to tell them the same thing which that artiste told in his calypso! We hope for no more defections from your side, but "Better luck next time." [Laughter.]

The Constitution is a book of rules, and woe unto us when the day arrives when these "verte gallantes" on the opposite side use it like that literary figure, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* whose servant bore a name similar to mine in order to achieve cheap political advantage.

Mr. Chase: Because some Members seem to be labouring under the delusion that this is the first occasion on which the P.P.P. is advocating the right of recall, I think it will be necessary for me to begin by briefly tracing the history of this question of right of recall in this country. It is unfortunate that this debate is taking place after certain defections have taken place in this House because, to some extent, this colours Members' appreciation and understanding of the principles which are at stake and prevents them from seeing the true principles which are involved in this matter.

As long ago as 1948, the leader of the P.P.P. (Dr. Jagan) moved a Motion, in what was then called the "Legislative Council", with regard to the right of recall. At that time, the system of elections in this country was under what was popularly called "first-past-the-post". I shall endeavour to show that the ques-

tion of recall becomes an even more urgent and necessary one under the system of proportional representation, but I will deal with that later.

I refer to the *Hansard* of 1st September, 1948, Column 1501. This is the Motion moved by Dr. Jagan:

"WHEREAS the Constitution of British Guiana provides for the election of Representatives to the Legislative Council every five years but does not provide any guarantee to the voters that those elected will give honest and sincere representation;

"AND WHEREAS it is a recognised democratic principle that voters should at all times have an opportunity to pass judgment on the conduct of their representatives who are merely agents of their popular will; . . ."

Mr. Speaker: There is whispering in this corner. I have to concentrate on what the Members are saying. If you are going to whisper in this corner, I am going to whisper you out. [Laughter.]

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Chase: Thank you, sir. I shall continue to quote from the Motion moved by Dr. Jagan in September, 1948:

"AND WHEREAS it has been recommended that unofficial members will be provided with an allowance from public funds of a sum of one hundred and fifty dollars per month from January 1st, 1948;

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"BE IT RESOLVED that Government enact legislation to give the electors of every Constituency the right to recall members of the Legislative Council at any time after elections."

At column 1502 this is what Dr. Jagan said:

"The recall provision was introduced in Los Angeles, California, U.S.A., as long ago as 1903, and within a short space of time several other States adopted it. Today 25 of the 48 States have made provision for recall, and over a thousand Municipalities have adopted the provision, and even State officials who are elected can be recalled. In Switzerland, the people have the right to ask for the dissolution of the entire Canton. I feel that we can do no less than follow those countries by giving our people the same right."

Then at column 1503 the mover of the Motion went on to say this:

"I should mention so that Members may be acquainted with the method by which the recall is put into operation. A group of voters in a constituency may petition the Government expressing their desire that their representative be recalled. The percentage of voters required varies. In the United States it varies from 15 to 35 per cent, but the average is around 25 per cent of the voters in a constituency."

This was a long time ago when the system of voting in this country was first-past-the-post.

The Attorney-General, supported by the last speaker, suggested that the P.P.P. has put forward the Motion before the House out of pique. Nothing could be further from the truth because the P.P.P. has always taken a consistent line on this question of recall. [Mr. deGroot: "Why didn't you do it before?"] I should like the hon. Member who is mouthing, "Why didn't you do it before?" to listen carefully to what I shall now read from representations made by the P.P.P. on the 5th December, 1964, in a memorandum to the Commonwealth team of observers, who came to this country to observe the General Elections. This is what is stated in that memorandum.

"Firstly, I wish to observe that there is no provision in the Constitution for the vacation of his seat in the House of Assembly, where a candidate elected on a party list withdraws allegiance from the party which supported his candidature, and who crosses the floor in defiance of his party. My party had for years urged that there should be a right of 'recall' and the Secretary of State had resisted this demand while the method of election was on a basis of first-past-the-post in single member constituencies. The regulations which complete the necessary provisions for the imposition of proportional representation leave no room whatever for the cor-

rection of anomalies which may arise because a person necessarily lacking in character or integrity feels unable to resign his seat when he can no longer support the party which caused or enabled his election. It is clear that the intention is to create a system of party representation, candidates receiving their support not as individual members but as members of one list of candidates and the system of proportional representation could and should be made to provide for the contingency to which reference has been made."

This was before the Elections were held and before anyone knew the results. The P.P.P. had made it quite clear that this system of proportional representation, which has been introduced in this country, had grave loopholes, and allowed for the kind of political rascality that is taking place. I respectfully say that, now that we have the system of proportional representation, the Motion before the House today becomes all the more important.

How did we come to have the system of proportional representation in this country? That system came about because the then Opposition advocated a change in the electoral system. I wish to refer to a memorandum put forward by the P.N.C. in 1962, criticising the existing system of first-past-the-post, and advocating the system of proportional representation. In that memorandum the P.N.C. pointed out that, at the General Elections in 1957, the P.P.P.

with 47 per cent of the popular vote gained 64 per cent of the seats in the Legislature; it is stated that, at the General Elections in 1961, with 42.7 per cent of the votes, the P.P.P. gained 57 per cent of the seats in the House of Assembly. It was the P.N.C.'s contention that this was an over representation of the P.P.P., and it advocated that the system be changed so that parties in the House should reflect the percentage of votes which they obtained at the General Elections. What is sauce for the goose must also be sauce for the gander. The P.N.C. should bear this in mind now that it is in the Government.

3 p.m.

This is, in essence, what this Motion seeks to draw attention to this afternoon. The memorandum of the P.N.C. recognised the political party machinery. If I may quote again from the memorandum in answer to statements made by the hon. Attorney-General as to the position of the political parties, this is what the memorandum had to say:

"Further, in many countries where a fetish is made of giving the voter the choice of individual candidate and personality, this choice in practical terms is more apparent than real, what with the giant and efficient party machines."

The memorandum recognised that the voters were not really choosing candidates to the House on the basis of personality, or individual quality, or predeliction, but that people were being

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chosen from the political party to which they were associated; and, consequently, the P.N.C. as far back as 1962 recognised the pre-eminence of the party machinery.

The memorandum also opted for the Israeli system of proportional representation, and I quote again from it:

"The Israeli system, in which the whole country is one constituency and where the voters vote for Party Lists, has the advantage of reducing to an absolute minimum the inaccuracies and distortions latent and patent in the 'first past the post' system, and which are present to a lesser degree even under some systems of P.R. where there is a number of multi-member constituencies."

The leader of the P.N.C. in addressing the Plenary Session of the Constitutional Conference in 1962 said that it seemed unquestionably that proportional representation was a fairer system than single-member constituencies since it would prevent any party from being over or under represented in the legislature. The case, therefore, at that time was that no party should be under or over represented in the legislature.

Our proportional representation elections have been held, and we are all familiar with the results. The P.P.P. at the 1964 General Elections got 109,332 votes, that is roughly 46 per cent of the votes, and secured

under the Constitution 24 seats in the House. The P.N.C. got 96,657 votes - roughly 40 per cent of the votes cast - and got 22 seats in the House. The U.F. got 29,612 votes or 12 per cent of the votes cast which entitled it to 7 seats in this House. It is my opinion that an alteration in the position of these parties in the House by the system of Members crossing the Floor from one side to another invalidates and negatives what the electorate voted for in 1964. The intention of the electorate is clearly expressed in the way in which they cast their votes for the P.P.P. and gave it 24 seats, the P.N.C. 22 seats, and the U.F. 7 seats.

This Motion is not presented because three members of the P.P.P. have defected. It is a Motion of far-reaching consequences because it touches the electorate, who would support it if given an opportunity by way of a plebiscite. It is quite possible for what has happened in the case of the P.P.P. to happen to any one of the parties opposite. In fact the members of the U.F., it has been stated in this House, are aware of the fact that defections are taking place among their members. We are saying to the other parties in this House that this is not playing according to the rules of the game in so far as proportional representation is concerned.

This Motion seeks to get a decision on the principle of the matter. This is all that we are seeking to do. I observe that some Members on the opposite side of the House show an air of smug complacency and at times jubila-

tion, perhaps, at what has taken place. Our aim is to establish a good standard of political morality, a good standard of parliamentary decency, because what is taking place here runs counter to these principles.

I do not wish to indulge in any question of personality - who crossed or who are likely to cross the Floor, backward or forward, or anything like that - at this moment. Sufficient has been said about those things already. I only wish to remind hon. Members on the other side of the House that there is a trite local saying: "A dog which brings a bone can also carry a bone." I also wish to remind hon. Members opposite that, when a party indulges in political bribery, it also exposes itself as a party which is capable of being bought and sold.

Under the system of proportional representation the pre-eminence of the party political machinery is unquestioned. That is inherent, in my submission, in the system of proportional representation which was foisted on us. The order of the list of candidates at the Elections is fixed by the political parties: who should be first, second or thirty-fifth on the list is determined by a political party. How then can we say that a political party should not have power to remove those whom it has put on the list?

3.10 *for M.*

The people who voted for us at the elections voted for a political party and not for indi-

vidual candidates. No elector has a right to strike out the name of any candidate and to insert the name of another candidate or to vary the list of candidates. It is cut and dried. The electors either have to vote for the list as it stands or to vote against it. All the arrangements are made by the party political machinery. Individual candidates do not receive votes; it is the party which receives the votes. The party funds are spent to ensure the return of members to Parliament, hence the importance of the party in the whole machinery of elections.

Because the P.N.C. has said that it is enamoured with the Israeli system of proportional representation, I would wish to refer to *Government and Politics in Israel*, a book by Oscar Kraines. The book gives an analysis of the proportional representation system in Israel, which the P.N.C. says it favours. I quote from page 95 of that book:

"Party lists of candidates are drawn up by the party organizations; and unless the individual voter is an enrolled party member who exercises his opinion and influence within the party organs, he cannot influence the composition of the lists of candidates. Once the list is made up, the individual voter has no further choice as to the candidates to be elected.

Consequently, a member of the Knesset owes his election to the party's central

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or executive committee, which places him high enough on the list to have won the seat. Lacking any direct contact with or responsibility for any specific group of voters in a geographic area of population, he looks to his party's top leaders for his guidance in legislating and for his future in politics."

On page 96 the same author has this to say when dealing with the electoral system:

"Israel's political parties are generally controlled by highly centralized committees whose concentrated power is tightly secured under the present system of proportional representation. Since these inner councils draw up the lists of candidates and select their places on the election lists, they can make or break political careers."

Under the Israeli system, the importance of the political party in making or marring a Parliamentarian's political future is clearly recognised. There is no doubt that what has taken place in this country during the life of this present Parliament could not take place in Israel.

If I may now turn to the address on this Motion made yesterday by the hon. Attorney-General and Minister of State: I gather that he was making out a case completely against the Mo-

tion, both as to its principle and as to its implementation, although the hon. Leader of the House is reported as saying that his party had at one time advocated the right of recall and it was the P.P.P., or rather Dr. Jagan, who resisted this. This is, of course, contrary to the true position. Be that as it may, the tenor of the speech by the Attorney-General was one completely against the Motion. He found fault with the wording of the Motion; he found fault with the manner in which such a Motion could be implemented.

No one on this side of the House is saying that the Motion is drawn up with terminological exactitude. What we are seeking to do is to get this House to approve of a principle. The principle having been decided upon, the lawyers can certainly draft legislation to provide for the carrying out of that principle. It is utterly wrong to say that it is impossible to put this principle, which is being advocated this afternoon, into legislation. I say, without fear of successful contradiction, that it is possible to put in legislative form the principle which is behind this Motion. If this Parliament wills the way, I am sure that the legal draftsmen will certainly will the means, because it can be done.

The Attorney-General took the mover of this Motion to task. He asked a number of questions as to what is meant by the words "who cease to support the Party". He asked in what circumstances

could a declaration be made that a Member had ceased to support the list. He wanted to know when and by virtue of what acts does a person cease to support a party, and he asked a number of other questions. Was it when a Member made a single speech in opposition to his party? Was it because he was not paying financially to his party? Was it because he did not go to some extra-curriculum exercise or did not speak at a political meeting? Was it because he abstained from voting? What, the Attorney General asked, was to be the criterion to determine when a Member ceases to support a list?

The Attorney-General also asked a number of questions about declaring the seat vacant. By whom should it be done? How should it be done? He asked a host of questions. I looked upon the hon. Members opposite as he spoke and it seemed to me that they were all mesmerised by the plethora of questions which came from the Attorney-General on this matter. If they had gone into the matter with much more care and thoroughness they would not have been bamboozled by the questions which were posed by the Attorney-General yesterday afternoon, because the Attorney-General ought to know that the questions which he posed can be easily answered. The hon. Attorney-General ought to know that these words which appear in the Motion are words which do not derive originality from the mover of the Motion.

Mr. Speaker: Time

Mr. Khan: I move that the hon. Member be granted an extension of fifteen minutes to continue his speech.

Mr. Chandisingh: I beg to second that.

Question put, and agreed to.

3.20 p.m.

Mr. Chase: I have no doubt that, yesterday afternoon, many persons went away with the impression that the words "cease to support the Party on whose list they were elected to this Assembly" or "cease to support the Party" were something originally put forward by the hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye. I wish to say that this is not so, and this impression which was created is an erroneous one. The last hon. Member who spoke (Mr. Sancho) also fell into this erroneous category set by the Attorney-General.

I should like to refer to *The Constitution of Guyana and Related Constitutional Instruments*. I refer to this document because it is going to give the answers to the questions that the hon. Attorney-General was posing yesterday afternoon. I think the hon. Members on the opposite side know that the constitutional draftsmen, on the last occasion, made provision that in the next elections, or in subsequent elections, the system of elections in this country could be varied from straight P.R., as is provided for under the Israeli system, to a dual system akin to the system in

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Western Germany. Because of that intention, they have had to create Constitutional Instruments to give that authority.

I should like to read Article 66(3) of *The Constitution of Guyana and Related Constitutional Instruments*:

"(3) Parliament may make provision for the division of Guyana into such number of electoral areas, not being more than half the number of elected members of the Assembly, as Parliament may prescribe and for the election in each such area of one member of the Assembly, each elector having for this purpose one vote in addition to the vote which he may cast in favour of a list of candidates; but, if Parliament makes provision as aforesaid, then -"

I come to the most important part to which I should like to refer:

"(a) a person may stand as a candidate for election in any such electoral area only if, in such manner as Parliament may prescribe, he has declared that he supports, or has otherwise identified himself with, one of the lists;"

I repeat: the candidates who will stand for individual consti-

tuencies can only be persons who have made a declaration that they support one of the lists.

Can we not ask what does supporting one of the lists mean in this context? Obviously, it must mean the opposite of what ceasing to support the party list means. What does supporting the list mean in this context? Does it mean voting once, speaking at public meetings once or twice in support of the particular list? Does it mean giving financial aid to the people who are sponsoring the list? Does it mean any of these questions that my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General raised yesterday afternoon?

I submit that if Article 66(3)(a) can be interpreted, and if it has any meaning at all, then what is stated in this Motion, equally, has sufficient meaning and validity because - let us not quibble about words - what we are seeking to do -- [The Prime Minister: "The Motion is lost."] I recognise that you have closed your mind. The Speaker said you were once great. What is stated in Article 66(3)(a) of the Constitution of Guyana is very material to the discussion before Parliament this afternoon because, what is the form the declaration has to take? What does the candidate have to swear to when he swears that he is supporting the list? What does that mean? What does that envisage?

Surely, it must envisage something. It must envisage that he is identifying himself with a list of candidates whose policy

and whose programme he will support. I respectfully say that this Motion is seeking to get Members to accept the principle that, if a Member of Parliament no longer identifies himself, in this House, with the programme and policy of the list of the party which, in effect, sponsored his candidature, his seat should be declared vacant. This is a matter of principle. This is not a matter which can be disposed of by addressing our minds to what has taken place in this House since the introduction of this system of proportional representation to which the P.P.P., as a party, is vigorously opposed.

When a candidate swears to a declaration under Article 66(3), I ask again, is he swearing that because he has made one speech he supports the list? Is he swearing that he will vote no differently from the other persons who comprise that list? Is he swearing that if he makes one deviation from the manner in which all the other candidates on the list vote, he should no longer be regarded as supporting the list? Is he swearing that he is, financially or in some way, supporting the party? Is he swearing that he is going to take part in extra-curriculum activities, addressing meetings here and there in the country? Is that what the declaration amounts to? If that is what the declaration amounts to, then we must be told because I am sure these words could not be inserted here without the knowledge or the approval of my hon. and learned Friend the Attorney-General.

I respectfully say that if these words have meaning in this context, it would be a travesty of political decency to permit a man to swear to a declaration that he supports a particular list and then sit by impotently and allow him to act contrary to his declaration. He gets his seat by virtue of making that declaration which he makes before man and God, and then he comes into this House and does the complete contrary and no one has any control over that man to say, "Look, you made a declaration, but you are not carrying out that declaration." It seems to me that, implicit in this Article of our Constitution, it is an acceptance of the fact that the other 53 candidates who put their names on the list are persons who implied that they too support that list, in substance, that they too support the policy and programme of the particular party.

The Attorney-General has alluded to the fact that the Constitution makes no reference to political parties. This is so because political parties have no legal personality at law. But let the Attorney-General look at the *Official Gazette* which published the results of the last elections in 1964. Let me invite the Attorney-General's attention to the forms which were put out by the Electoral Commission. There he will see that the words "People's Progressive Party List", "People's National Congress List", "United Force List", were mentioned in those forms as well as in the *Official Gazette* of this country.

[MR. CHASE]

3.30 p.m.

It seems to me that we are not facing reality when we try to isolate lists from political parties because lists are, in fact, made up by political parties; the lists are the creatures of political parties. Surely, to suggest anything different is not to face the realities of the situation, and I put this point forward too, that, if the learned Attorney-General's objection is to political parties because they have no corporate existence for making a declaration that a Member ceases to support a party, then we have 200 persons who had to sign their names before each and everyone of us could have taken our seats in this House. This is a matter of mechanics. If the hon. Members wish, they can say that 51 per cent of those persons who signed can make the declaration that the Member no longer supports that list. That is democratic, that is fair. Those 200 persons have a place under the Constitution. Had it not been for their proposal, no Member could have been elected to this House.

Consequently, if the contention of the other side is, "Oh, this thing sounds fairly good but to implement it is difficult because you will leave yourself open to the party executive or the parliamentary group", then the answer is to recognise the 200 electors, through whose signatures all of us in each party had to be proposed before we be-

came Members of this House. This is the essence of democracy. In 1948 Dr. Jagan referred to lower percentages making the petition. If you like, you can let 51 per cent of the 200 persons make the petition to an authorised body. But I do not wish to be too much embroiled in the mechanics of this thing. The mechanics can be worked out.

All we are asking this House to do is to make the recommendation to accept the principle because, once the recommendation is made, it is a simple matter to determine how it can be put into effect. Those persons who try to raise a lot of difficulties as to a party's non-existence as a body, and what will happen if the party splits, and so on, are merely raising red herrings. Is the behaviour of a certain hon. Gentleman in this House one of propriety? Is it or is it not? If it is not, then we must condemn it in no uncertain terms.

Constitutional writers from England, in the context of what is taking place in Guyana today, cannot really state opinions in matters of this kind. We have a new political situation with which we are dealing, and for which a remedy must be provided. The hon. Member who took his seat before I took my stand here, complained at one time that we were coming forward with a request to amend the Constitution much too early. If he thinks that an Amendment should not be put forward until "so many months or years" after the drawing up of

the Constitution, then he should say if he is going to write down a time limit before amendemnts could be made to the Constitution.

I have been at pains to quote in this House, from a properly documented and prepared statement, the reasons why this party did not participate in the Constitutional Conference in the United Kingdom in 1965. We did not wish to lend any representation or decency to the fraud which was enacted at Lancaster House, and we gave our reasons. To talk about this being a highly democratic Constitution is merely to speak nonsense because, if this is a democratic Constitution, then all I can say is that the hon. Member has not begun to read Constitutions otherwise he would not have thought this to be a highly democratic Constitution.

The last Member who took his seat seemed to create some amusement about some Members leaving and coming back. That is irrelevant to the Motion which is before the House. Indeed, I do not wish, at this stage, to defend myself, personally, against attacks that he purported to make in this matter. Suffice it to say that his allegations concerning me are hopelessly inaccurate and falsified.

What we are considering this afternoon is a Motion which seeks to regulate the conduct of Members of Parliament elected to this House. We are seeking to prevent a party from being over

represented in this House. If, according to the arguments of the hon. Mover of this Motion, a party such as the United Force were completely extinguished in this House and the members were to move over to the other party, it is clear that that political party would be over represented. It is the same case that the P.N.C. made up when it was at the other end of the stick. It is the same case that is before the House this afternoon.

Parties must win seats on the basis of the votes cast at the Elections and not by under-hand methods of gaining Members elected on the basis of another political party, or by devious and other means. Let us say that the P.N.C. should have 22 seats in this Parliament, would it be fair and right for it to have 25 seats? Let us assume that the events had moved the other way. It would still be wrong. Suppose the P.P.P. representation, by this same means had been increased, we take the view that it would have been unfair and wrong.

3.40 p.m.

We object to this as a matter of principle. [Laughter.] You may laugh today, but you may cry tomorrow. He who laughs last sometimes laughs best. You are laughing now, but this may not be the end of the matter.

I respectfully submit that the difficulties which the hon. and learned Attorney-General attempted to put before this House are more imaginary than

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real. It is quite possible that Instruments can be drafted to take care of members who defect from the list of candidates on which they were elected. For one to talk about parties not being recognised by the Constitution is not to recognise the realities of political power in this country and the Israeli system of government which the P.N.C. as recently as 1962 said it favoured.

There is nothing sinister in this Motion. It is based on what is enshrined in the Constitution. It is an easy matter for Members to approve it, and in due course the law makers can draft legislation to give effect to the principle set out in the Motion.

Mr. Tello: I want to say at once that I am diametrically opposed to this Motion. This is a step to reduce the democratic rights of the electorate: the right to elect and the right to reject. The hon. Mover of this Motion made reference to a publication in the *Sun*, my party's paper. I would like to preface my remarks by saying that any good parliamentarian who accepts party politics accepts the party whip, or accepts the decision of his Parliamentary Committee [Interruption.] I now speak as a result of a decision of the Government's joint Parliamentary Committee.

I want to say that because I accept party politics, I hold the view that the leaders of parties accept the responsibility of properly leading their parties.

They must accept that they have an obligation to have their human relations with their members at such a level that it would be easy to obtain the loyalty of the members at all times. I know that each Member across the Table accepts that when a list is prepared for the purpose of the Elections under the P.R. system the list is prepared and presented to the electors with the understanding that the parties have offered the names on the list because they are satisfied that the candidates are fit and proper persons; they are satisfied that their character, integrity and loyalty, need no question. If that is not the attitude of the leaders of the parties, then they must give up their leadership because they are misleading the electorate. When a party presents this list it at once gives the assurance that the candidates elected from the list shall remain in Parliament throughout its life in order to implement the promises it has made in its manifesto. If the leaders of the parties cannot give the electorate that assurance, then they are dishonest to the electorate.

No list is prepared lightly. Let them not try to confuse us here. We have seen the readjustments of lists recently; we have seen the change of priorities, and all of that is public evidence of the amount of thought that went into the preparation of lists. The list is treated as important as the manifesto, because the manifesto means nothing without the men in Parliament.

The hon. Member Mr. Chase tried to mislead us that personality played no part in an Election. If that is so, then what brought about the changes in the priorities of the list of the P.P.P.? It was brought about because of the personal magnetism of certain people. There are many personalities full of magnet and such people are capable of winning enough votes not only to secure their seats, but to ensure a majority of votes for their party. [Mr. Wilson: "Only Kendall can do that."]

3.50 p.m.

I say that every man whose name was on a party list, and who consented to go to the polls on a party list, consented on the understanding that if he were elected he would remain in Parliament for its life. That is fundamental to an election, whether it be in the municipality or in the Trade Union Movement. When a person nominates someone as a fit and proper person to fill a post it means he will fill that post for the duration of the term of office. I want to say that any candidate who offers himself for election works diligently by day and night because he sees himself as a necessary element in Parliament. I want to say that every candidate who offered himself to be placed on the list worked even harder because he was quite certain that he was being elected for the full term. Many of the great names that appeared on the three party lists would never have appeared if there had been any uncertainty as to the term of office.

We must now recognise that every elector who went to the polls and cast his vote in secret went there to elect a team of candidates as shown on a list and to give them a full mandate to sit in the National Assembly throughout its life and to fulfil the promises they made at elections. I say that because the lists, party lists, are voted for it behoves the leaders of the parties to recognise their obligation to the electors to keep, as Members of the National Assembly, those persons who were elected.

I say that any fiddling with the Instruments of the Constitution can only confuse the electorate and candidates at the time of election. I can imagine the thoughts of a busy man who is considering whether or not he should permit his name to be on an electoral list. He would know that while only the electors can give him a seat in the House there are other means for putting him out. Some persons who might have made good parliamentarians have become nothing but rubber stamps because they fear that they may not be on the lists at the next general election. For that reason, important contributions are withheld. Imagine what the position would be if that Sword of Damocles were there, the right to remove Members at any time when they ceased to support their parties! Imagine what sort of Parliament there would be if the most important thing was to satisfy the high and mighty and not to serve the electorate! It

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would be as well to dissolve the Parliament and to cease to have democracy in the country. [Interruptions.] Some Members are trying to heckle me because they know full well I am speaking the truth.

I put this point to hon. Members. When a party presents a list of names to the electorate, the party is obligated to the electorate to see that its human relations are such that it is assured of the continued loyalty of the team of candidates which it has commended to the electorate.

If we look into the record of the People's Progressive Party we find a most unsatisfactory, disturbing and callous attitude. The leaders do not seem to know their full responsibility. They do not understand that when the electorate voted for the P.P.P.'s list they expected that the leaders of the party would see to it that the persons presented to them were fit and loyal persons. There must be something radically wrong with the leaders of the party that they cannot even hold their parliamentarians. Something is radically wrong with their human relations and I shall always charge them with gross negligence when they fail the electorate.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.36 p.m.

On resumption

Mr. Tello: At the suspension I was making the point —

Mr. Speaker: Did you not yield the Floor before we took the suspension? Did you not complete your speech before we took the suspension?

Mr. Tello: No; I am sorry that there has been some misunderstanding. I saw you rise and I took my seat, as I should. At the suspension I was making the point that each candidate who has been successful owes allegiance to the people who elected him. As is customary, every successful candidate anticipates sitting in this House. Moreover, when an hon. Member takes his seat here, his loyalty first and foremost is to this Parliament. If his activities in this Parliament are to fulfil the promises he has made through his party's manifesto, it is necessary for him to sit here throughout the life of the Parliament. Moreover, because the party made promises on his behalf, it is incumbent upon its leaders to make it easy for the hon. Member to sit here throughout the life of Parliament to enable the party to fulfil its promises to the electorate.

I venture to suggest that any change, any abrogation of this constitutional right to fulfil the obligation to the electorate, is an assault against democracy itself. I want to point out that hon. Members who are in the hierarchy of parties must realize that, in their office, they carry tremendous responsibilities to the nation.

4.40 p.m.

It is dishonest to go to the electorate and make promises. No one puts candidates on party lists lightly. [Mr. Luck: "Peter regrets putting you."] Tremendous thought is put into the preparation of lists, and I would say that politics is a matter of people; it is always a two-way relationship; it is always a two-way obligation. The electorate has given you a mandate and it is your obligation to stay in this Parliament and fulfil commitments of that mandate.

But let us see what history tells us. These hon. Members came here to seek the assistance of a constitutional amendment so as to remove their Members from their seats. I am talking about the recent history of this very Parliament in which we sit. I wish to remind the hon. Members that if the electorate has given the percentage to the Members, they are entitled to it. It was not until after the Elections that the Opposition became cognizant of the fact that this gentleman from the Pomeroon River is not really necessary. The very first thing it did was to set the example of resignation, and then it is flabbergasted when its old members resign. Members of the Opposition have worked the man, they have ridden him in the hard struggle of an election campaign, and I am putting this to the hon. Members that they, themselves, set the example.

We have never been told what pressures have been brought on my good friend Mr. Caldeira. I

doubt very much that Caldeira's resignation was voluntary, judging from the amount of work that he has put in the party and the Elections.

Mr. Luck: To a point of correction. I know of the resignation and it was voluntary.

Mr. Bissenber: The hon. Member rose —

Mr. Speaker: I gave the hon. Member Mr. Luck the Floor.

Mr. Luck: I would like to say once and for all that I wrote Mr. Caldeira's resignation at his dictation. [Interruption.]

Mr. Tello: From the list of the P.P.P. we were offered candidates who could not write their own resignations. [Mr. Luck: "Who said that the man could not write it? I said I wrote it at his dictation!"] This is a high degree of irresponsibility; having gone to the electorate with a list which a party properly laid down, accepted and confirmed, and when this House was opened for the real business of Parliament, the P.P.P. then discovered that the hon. Member Mr. Mooneer Khan was more suitable for a higher priority than my friend Mr. Caldeira. This is an absurdity. The P.P.P. should truthfully present a list of people whom it can vouch for. [Mr. Luck: "Peter is sorry he vouched for you."] Unfortunately, in this very Parliament we have found that, not only was it necessary to force upon Mr. Caldeira a resignation having ousted him from the electorate, but also that, subsequently,

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in this most important Parliament, the first Parliament of our new nation, there were three defections, and these defections were not made by simple, ordinary back benchers like myself. Two of these defectors were Parliamentary Secretaries in the P.P.P. Government, men who were accustomed to responsibility, men whose integrity won for them the confidence of the party to elevate them to the status of Parliamentary Secretaries.

I think that something must be radically wrong, either the disciplinary rope is too tight or it is too lax because the other Member who defected was the Chairman of the Youth Arm. The Youth Arm, they said, was the most important sector of the party, and this man must have had the confidence of the party and the confidence of his youth followers.

I want to say that I am not trying to minimise the strength of character of the leadership of the P.P.P., I am only putting the historical facts before us, and I want to say that if the leadership of the P.P.P. does not know enough of personal psychology, and cannot recognise a man who is worthy of its support, then something is wrong with the leadership itself. All of this portrays the fact that the hon. Members of this House do not take sufficiently serious the business of this House. I say that in order to cover up the inaptitude of the leadership of the P.P.P., the

hon. Members on that side of the House want the Constitution amended to enable them to control the people they are incapable of disciplining.

4.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Wilson: I move that the hon. Member be allowed to continue his address.

Mr. Hamid seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Tello: The hon. Mover of this Motion made two serious statements in this House - one is really a charge. First, he said that he had brought the Motion before this House because the hon. Member Mr. Bowman crossed the Floor; secondly, he charged Members on this side with national bribery. Is this really true? Let us examine the facts and the statements and see how much truth there is in the charge of national bribery.

The parliamentary history of the P.P.P. is littered with defections. We find that in the House of Assembly during the period 1957 to 1961 there were two defections which led to crossing of the Floor. The people who crossed the Floor were not political infants. Take, for instance, the fanatic zealot, Mr. Fred Bowman. The leader of the P.P.P. said that he was a very good man, but he was a bit confused. The other person was a Minister in the then Government.

At the branch road at Mahai-cony, I heard the leader of the P.P.P. saying that Mr. Edward Beharry was a man who had a good heart, but during the 1957 - 61 period of Government, it would appear that there had been a collision between his heart and his brain, because Mr. Edward Beharry was expelled from the P.P.P. and he crossed the Floor in this House.

I am sorry the hon. Mover is not in his seat at the moment. I ask this question: Was there any national bribery that influenced the hon. Member to cross the Floor at the time? No. Again in the period 1961 - 1964 we witnessed a defection and another crossing of the Floor. The hon. Minister Mr. Rai crossed the Floor after he was elevated to the confidential office of Minister, having served some period as a back bencher. In 1966 we witnessed another defection and another crossing of the Floor. The hon. Member Mr. Bowman was an ordinary back bencher like myself, but the leader of the P.P.P. had so much confidence in him that he elevated him to the status of a junior Minister of the Government; he shared all of the secrets of his Government and was able to work well with his colleagues but he was forced to cross the Floor during the short life of this Parliament.

I have to remind the hon. Members on the other side of the House that the crossing of the Floor here is far too recent history for me to repeat it. I also have to remind hon. Members opposite that, whether the P.P.P.

was in the Government or in the Opposition, defections and crossing of the Floor have always taken place. [Laughter.] Where shall we find a solution for this sort of thing? I say now that the hon. Members on the other side should leave this sacred document, the Constitution, severely alone. They must learn to accept and carry out their responsibilities to this House and to the electorate as well as to their members.

Mr. Wilson: Much of what the hon. Member has said is really in support of the Motion. He said that hon. Members of this House are sent here on a mandate from the electorate. What electorate gave hon. Members of this House a mandate? The electorate can be divided into three parts: those who voted for the P.N.C.; those who voted for the P.P.P.; and those who voted for the U.F. Therefore, whatever mandate any Member of this House may have is a mandate in the context of the manifesto on which the various sections of the electorate voted. If he is saying that members are sent here on a mandate, then it is obvious that the members sent here should continue to remain on the party list - they should always support the party on whose list they were able to get a seat here.

I now refer to the points raised by the hon. Attorney-General and Minister of State. He quoted Burke in relation to membership of Parliament, but he seemed to have forgotten the right of the electorate. He is thinking merely of the rights of

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a Member of Parliament, but he has forgotten the rights of the thousands of people who sent him here. The mandate on which a person becomes a Member lasts as long as the House exists - normally four years.

5 p.m.

Another point made by the hon. Member, Mr. Tello, was that the fault lay with the leader of any party that failed to hold the Members whose names appeared on its list. We know that Christ had all knowledge - He was on a mission from God - yet He did not know that Judas was going to betray him. Would you blame Christ for that betrayal?

I would like, also, to speak on something on which the Attorney-General was labouring. He tried to draw a lot of smoke herrings across the trail. [Laughter.] [Hon. Member: "You mean red herrings."] He is aware of the various concepts, the concept that a man should no longer be a Member of the Assembly when he ceases to support the party on whose list he appears, the concept of the party, the concept of the list. We asked questions on these matters and he must be aware of the various issues which must be taken into consideration in determining on what conditions a Member who failed the electorate, who has not honoured the trust placed in him, who has behaved like a Judas to the electorate, should not be allowed to continue to betray the trust that the electorate placed in him.

Let us look closely at the concept of the list. The list is a concrete expression of the fact that the men in the party placed their confidence in those candidates to carry out their mandate. What is the mandate? The mandate is the manifesto and whenever any Member ceases to carry out his obligation to the manifesto of the party he ceases to honour the mandate and therefore disqualifies himself from being a Member of the House.

There is one concept to which the Attorney-General did not address his mind, and that concept concerns the list, namely, that there is nothing in the Constitution to provide for the amendment of a list. I have seen nothing that provides for the amendment of a list. According to the Constitution, on which list is Mr. Bowman now? He is not on the P.N.C. list; he is on the P.P.P. list. Then, there should be something in the Constitution to provide for amending the lists to provide that Mr. Bowman should be on the P.N.C. list. There is nothing in the Constitution to provide for transfer from one list to another.

I am not as learned as he, but I submit to the learned Attorney-General that at least in these two respects the Constitution needs to be amended. It is idle to say that we are suggesting that the Constitution should be tampered with, since the Constitution needs to be amended. The Prime Minister admits it. [The Prime Minister:

"Cheddi should have come to the Conference."] Let us get on with the business of amending the Constitution to provide for transfer from one list to another. Since there are no provisions for amending lists and transferring persons from one list to another, then those Members who cross the Floor are anomalies in this House; they are not properly before the House. They are constitutional errors, constitutional deficiencies and it is right that this House should put itself in order by providing for the necessary amendment.

The Attorney-General is a man to whom we are paying the sum of \$4,000 a month; he has the necessary ability and all he needs to know is our intention. The intention of this House is that a Member shall not betray the trust or the mandate that the electorate reposed in him and if he betrays that trust something should be done to get him out of here. We know that the Attorney-General is competent to draft legislation to provide for that. We do not need to tell him all the details. He has heard our recommendation; he knows what we want and it is for him to cater for the intention of this House, namely, that a Member who betrays the confidence of the electorate, which voted for him on a particular list, disqualifies himself.

The Attorney-General also tried to put a smoke-screen before us when he asked who would declare the Member's seat vacant. I would like to read from the Constitution, this sacred docu-

ment, to show him that the Constitution envisaged that there would be someone to do this sort of thing. Let me read from Article 68 (5) of the Constitution:

"Subject to the provisions of paragraph (6) of this article, a representative member of the Commission shall be appointed by the Governor-General, acting in accordance with the advice of the member of the Assembly whose name appears first on the list in respect of which the member is appointed or, if a majority of the members of the Assembly who belong to that list notify the Governor-General that he should act in accordance with the advice of some other member of the Assembly who belongs to that list, in accordance with the advice of that member."

There is a suggestion of who is to declare the seat vacant. The obvious person is the person who heads the list of the P.P.P. or whichever party the Member defects from. The head of the list has a constitutional position and is recognised by the Constitution.

5.10 p.m.

Let us say that something happens to this person who is at the head of the list. There is provision here that a majority of the members here who form the list should decide whether the person's seat should be declared vacant or not. These are the hon. Attorney-General's words. I

[MR. WILSON]

am assisting the hon. Attorney-General because he has a lot of work. Having enlightened him about his own work, it should not be so difficult to know who will make the declaration.

Mr. Carrington: I rise in opposition to this Motion. I take into consideration that the Motion hits at the roots of democracy: freedom of thought, freedom of speech. Every Member of this Parliament has a right to make his own decisions on Motions or debates. The proof of the ability a Member of this Parliament to make his own decisions is clear as we debate this Motion today. In this Motion, the Opposition intends to win the support of the Government by way of debate. I see nothing wrong if the Government finds it within its ability to win the support of the Opposition not only on the question of debating but for all time. It proves the ability and influence of the Government.

I should like to refer, very briefly, to a few of the points put forward by the hon. Member Mr. Chase. I want to make it clear that I am not easily bamboozled. I am satisfied that the arguments that the Minister of State (Mr. Ramphal) put forward yesterday are logical. He dealt extensively with the constitutional bottle-necks that would be created by this Motion. I do not intend to venture into constitutional arguments because I am no constitutional lawyer - that is for the hon. Minister of State and the hon. Member Dr. Ram-sahoye.

The hon. Member Mr. Chase did not intend to draw a red herring, he attempted to draw a mackerel. He went to the ridiculous by saying that we should allow a decision to be made by 50 per cent of the 200 signatures - [Mr. Persaud: "51 per cent."] - submitted on the list. [The Prime Minister: "Who said so?"] Mr. Chase said so. Why did he not say that we should get 55,000 of the voters' signatures? Why did he not say that we should get 40,541 to make a decision on this seat? He limited his argument to just half of the amount - 101 votes approximately. These arguments coming from the hon. Member show clearly the problems that will be created if this Motion is passed.

From the arguments put forward by the hon. Member Dr. Ram-sahoye and from the tone of the speeches of the Opposition Members, it is clear that there is a high degree of emotionalism and vindictiveness in this Motion. The Opposition should not expect to solve a party problem in Parliament. This is what it is attempting to do here. If a party lacks stability, if the leaders of a party are unable to keep their members in their ranks, this is not the place to correct it. The place to correct it is in the party.

Surely, Members would agree that no one would want to stay in a party or have confidence in a party when its leaders work in devious ways. Members would want to cross the Floor as soon as possible. We see how often the chairmen of the P.P.P. are changed. It is clear that some-

thing is wrong with the P.P.P. [Mr. Merriman: "As always."] [Mr. Ram Karran: "We do not offer bribes."] When a party puts forward its candidates, whether it be under the system of proportional representation or first-past-the-post, it must be careful in making its selections. A party is not a mere piece of paper; a party comprises people, personalities, leaders who should be able, by their influence, to discipline party members when the time comes.

It is clear that undeveloped countries, under-developed countries and developed nations accept the party system. A party, in our view, makes the Government and it is for this reason that it must select candidates who, in its judgment, will not cross the Floor and who will be able to maintain party discipline in the House. I am sure that if the shoe were on the other foot, if it were a question of defections from this side of the House to the other side, there would have been no Motion.

I am sure that, throughout the life of this Parliament, there will be no defections from this side of the House. We on this side of the House have no fear of the possibility of defection from this side.

5.20 p.m.

The party to which I belong will not, for one moment, use this Parliament as a means of correcting party problems. We have leadership that can use its influence and guidance to keep

the members of the party in their ranks. Some of the speakers on the other side referred to the question of bribery and fraud. It may be a good thing if you can buy an individual, but we know of cases where individuals, or an individual, set out to buy the P.P.P.

Let us examine the reasons for all these defections mentioned by the hon. Member Mr. Tello. Was it because somebody was paying more than the other and you had to keep pace with demands? Was it a case where, if you did not keep pace with demands, you had to resign? I say that the discipline must first start in the party.

When a Member is elected, whether it is under the system of proportional representation or first-past-the-post, he does not in this House serve a political party, he is a member of the Government; he is here to serve the Guyanese people - the nation. He is bound to do this, and we cannot for one moment leave the question of vacancy and expulsion to single individuals. We cannot leave it to the leader of the People's Progressive Party or the leader of the P.N.C. in this Parliament to say who should be expelled, or whose seat should be declared vacant. This should be decided by the entire electorate.

What the hon. Member Mr. Wilson fails to realise is that we are operating under proportional representation, and there is no set of constituencies. We are presently operating as if there is one constituency, so it is difficult to have a referendum.

[MR. CARRINGTON]

My argument is that this is not a question for Parliament. This is seriously a question for the party. The members of the party must be disciplined to direct its legislative committees in such a manner that there will be no defection. But, concerning defection, if a member of the Opposition feels that he can serve the nation better on this side of the House, why should he be prevented from crossing the Floor?

When a member decides to become a candidate for Election, he means that he intends to do his best for the nation, and if examinations over the months prove that he will never be able to do his best for the electorate or the nation on that side, I think he should be given the right to cross to this side and do better for the nation.

I refer again to the question of party discipline because, as the hon. Member Mr. Tello said, it is not that something is wrong with the Opposition in Parliament, though we agree that the behaviour of Members on that side is, at times, not in keeping with parliamentary democracy; the defections do not come about because of abuse in this House, but because of abuse in the party. It is clear that there is need for a serious examination of the P.P.P., there is need to find out whether or not there are persons in the party with ability to put forward suggestions to maintain unity and party discipline. I hope that members of that party will not take what I am saying

with regard to party discipline along the lines of the "Red Guards" because this would not be the best procedure. The best procedure or the best example of good party discipline is seen on this side of the House.

They have put forward suggestions to divide the coalition, but if the coalition gives the appearance of one party, then that is good and they should compliment the Government for this. They should not try to deride it and question whether four or five Members will cross the Floor. If it appears as if the members in the coalition are working together, this is what we have set out to do, and this has come about because of the leadership of the two parties. This has come about because the two parties realise that they have an obligation to the nation. But those who want to create confusion can go ahead!

[Mr. Luck: "And you told me that Burnham does not like you?"] This Motion will create some confusion if it is passed.

It has been suggested that the Motion is useless. Tampering with the Constitution is a serious matter. The Constitution is not a matter of rules of an authority, a trade union, or a co-operative. It is the rules of an entire nation. You cannot take it lightly. You will have to be very careful when you tamper with it and it is clear that the mover of the Motion was not careful when he prepared this Motion. If he had been careful, he would have put forward the points to show us clearly what

should be done. The hon. Attorney-General had to remind hon. Members what should be done and what would be possible if this Motion is passed. [Mr. Hubbard: "You were not listening to Chase."] The hon. Member Mr. Chase made a very good attempt, but as I said earlier, it was not a "red herring" it was a "mackerel".

5.30 p.m.

I want to remind hon. Members that my points are based mainly on the question that the problem is with the party and not in this House. If a party possesses leaders who appear to be dictators - if it is a party where heads will roll at a flash - you will always have defections. If you have a party where it appears that the man who can make the biggest contribution is being thrown out, then you will always have defections. If you have a party where people are shifting on the question of policy - today they are nationalists, tomorrow they are socialists, the next day something else - there will always be inconsistency and nobody will know where he is going. For these reasons there must be defections.

The fears of the members of the P.P.P. are that there may be more defections on their side of the House. I want to assure the P.P.P. that we will not accept any and every defector; we will be very selective in taking defectors into our ranks. We want men on this side who have ability and are willing to serve the country. I would advise the mem-

bers of the Opposition that they should seriously examine the structure, procedure and organisation of the party.

Dr. Richmond: Yesterday morning I discovered from a newspaper that I planned to make a speech on this Motion. [Interruption.] I discovered that I had extremely violent views on the subject. I had not been aware of that. I have said to Mr. Singh of the *Graphic* that, in order that there might be some element of truth in his report, I would make a speech. That is why I am speaking now. I, therefore, wish to take the opportunity of correcting certain misapprehensions that have arisen about the position of the executive of the party of which I am chairman.

We have not been unaware that defections were taking place. [Interruption.] We were not unaware of crypto-defectors. This is a matter which caused us some concern. However, we did not feel that any action was necessary. The defection which caused us to reconsider our opinion was the appointment of the hon. Member Mr. Bowman as a Parliamentary Secretary. Now, the question immediately arose as to why Mr. Bowman had been appointed. Perhaps I should say, since it is no secret, that there was only a token consultation and our party was in opposition to this step.

However, we asked the question: Were there some special qualities that this gentleman had? Was there some quality which my colleagues on this side of the House did not have? The

[DR. RICHMOND]

answer was, I am afraid, that we were unaware of any quality which he possessed which was not possessed, at least as well, by other Members already on this side of the House. We also took note of the fact that at that time there had been no prior discussion.

So we wondered. We wondered whether this had any bearing on the matter. We noticed that since the governing party possessed an ample majority, the inclusion of another individual would make no difference in the parliamentary work of the Government. Therefore we decided to reconsider the matter, and it is at this point that I wish to correct some misunderstanding which has arisen.

I am not taking personal issue with my colleague, Mr. Tello, but I must remind you that, while Mr. Tello has been General Secretary of our party, he is not now a member of the executive. I say that merely to point to the fact that he is not in a position to say the manner in which this matter arose.

I should now like to proceed to point out how the decisions have been arrived at, and what action the executive has taken. Let me say that in most instances the decisions were made in accordance with and at the prompting of our leader; our executive were not acting as an irresponsible group without direction. We were acting as an executive fully constituted, and our decision in

the first instance was to oppose such movements of Members of Parliament and to have them recalled. We were particularly concerned about what was happening, especially when a defector joined the Government. What was particularly absurd was that in the event of the death of such a defector to Government side, his seat would be taken by a member of the Opposition.

Let me say that we proposed to support the recall of defectors and crypto-defectors. It would have been of some interest to have watched whether the crypto-defectors would have voted for their parties or to secure their own positions. [Interruption.] However, at this point a new feature cropped up. Just as we reconsidered our position in the first instance, when the new feature cropped up we reconsidered the matter and decided to let the matter slide. The new feature is the Motion which is now before this Assembly.

5.40 p.m.

We considered it in some depth, and it was drawn to our attention that this would give practically dictatorial powers to the leader or some other constituted body in a political party. There can be no question about this. It may however be argued that this may be one of the consequences of the system of proportional representation.

The other factor which was drawn to our attention was the difficulty of writing or framing

a law to give effect to the Motion now before us. We were informed that it would not be possible to do this. I must at this point make a personal observation: those who have taken this judgment very badly underestimate the ability of the hon. Attorney-General. I have already congratulated him on the virtuosity of his foot-work yesterday. In fact I was reminded of a problem which absorbed many churchmen over a long period. I have never understood why this question worried them: the question of how many angels could stand on the head of a pin. While I cannot answer this question, yesterday I felt sure that a large number as nimble as our Attorney-General, Mr. Ramphal, could have stood and danced on the point of a pin. I would be astonished if he were unable to draft the necessary legislation. However, this is a lay opinion.

As a result of this information our party decided that it would not support this Motion. Now, I must confess that I do not entirely understand the position. It goes like this: we are of the opinion that it is improper, immoral, for a person who does not any longer support a party to use that party as a vehicle for being in here. We are still concerned about the appointment of Mr. Bowman. Let me say that I do not know whether there is a proverb that fits here, but I would certainly look for one which would be parallel to the one that says that the receiver is worse than the thief. We are still unanimously opposed to this

happening, but though we are opposed to it we do not propose to take any action.

As I said at the start, we have now had two formal opinions from our executive, I cannot say whether a further opinion may come, so my own position shall be that when the time comes to vote I shall take the average of whatever positions we shall have taken up to that point.

Mr. Saffee: I was not able to attend the sitting of the Assembly yesterday so I was not in a position to listen to the heated arguments which transpired, but when I looked at this morning's newspaper, the *Guyana Graphic*, I noticed it was reported that Dr. Ramsahoye said the following - and I wish to ask your permission, sir, to quote from the *Guyana Graphic* of November 16:

"Dr. Ramsahoye, who spoke for an hour, said that while overtly the P.P.P. had suffered from three defections in Parliament since the last general election, the United Force, he claimed, had by covert means lost the greater part of their seven representatives in Parliament.

The system of Proportional Representation, he said, recognised parties, not individuals, and it was most immoral and fraudulent to permit MPs who defected from their parties to cross the Floor and become Junior Ministers and Ministers of the Crown.

[MR. SAFFEE]

We must bear in mind that in this House we are merely the trustees of the people, and that we are here because the people voted for the parties on whose lists we were placed and elected. The parties on whose lists we are elected cannot replace us by others, and therefore it is shameful and immoral for us to switch political support after having entered Parliament."

From what I have read I must assume that this Motion affects me as a Member of this National Assembly and I wish to defend myself. I was elected on a P.P.P. ticket. What is most amazing is that the P.P.P. finds itself in a very embarrassing position, since its leaders sat in Guyana when the Constitutional Conference was being held in London. They have now discovered that there are certain loopholes in the Constitution in that there are no provisions to remove a Member from the House once he is elected. The trouble with the members of the P.P.P. is that they sit down and prevent themselves from doing the right thing at the right time. There is bungling leadership in the P.P.P.

5.50 p.m.

The mover of the Motion spoke about the morality of amending the Constitution and the immorality of crossing the Floor. [Mr. Ram Karran: "You have not crossed the Floor."] I am still here. Who is to be blamed for

this? The leadership of the P.P.P. is to be blamed for this, and I say so categorically without any fear. If you are leading, you must lead positively and straightforwardly. I do not know how the pygmies could dictate what the leaders should do. The members of the P.P.P. now want to "fingle" with the Constitution. I am totally opposed to this because this is a sacred document.

If the Government had proposed an amendment to the Constitution in favour of the Government to enhance its manoeuvres in this House, I wonder what would have been the P.P.P.'s reaction to such a proposition. The members of the P.P.P. are laying down a foundation; they are setting down the precedent of fiddling with the Constitution.

I have often heard the argument that once you are elected on a party list, you are bound head and foot to that party, you must remain with that party regardless of the humiliation you are subjected to as an individual. [Mr. Ram Karran: "Have you heard about Chan-A-Sue?"] I know that is your wish. I want to tell you that you will have to force me to resign. Whenever I am ready to resign, I shall resign.

I mentioned a while ago that the whole trouble with the P.P.P. is due to bungling leadership. I wish to quote from a letter dated April 9, 1965 which was sent to me signed by Janet Jagan, General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party:

"Dear Sir,

I am directed by the Executive Committee of the People's Progressive Party to inform you of its decision . . . "

I am sorry, that is the second letter. I wish to read the first letter. [Mr. Ram Karran: "That is the one before you begged."] I never begged you. The first letter states:

"Dear Comrade,

You are requested by the Executive Committee of the People's Progressive Party to attend a meeting on Saturday, April 10 at 1 p.m. at Freedom House to discuss the matter of your attendance at the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, April 7th."

This letter was dated April 9, 1965. I wish to read from a copy of the letter dated April 10, 1965 which I sent to the General Secretary of the P.P.P.:

"Dear Comrade Secretary,

With reference to your letter of the 9th inst. inviting me to attend an Executive meeting of the Party which is to be held today at Freedom House at 1.00 p.m. I regret to inform you that it will not be possible for me to attend the meeting due to other engagements.

However since you have indicated in your letter that the meeting is to discuss my attendance of the Legislative

Assembly meeting on the 7th. inst. I wish to take the opportunity of making the following comments:-

That I am surprised at the attitude of Executive Council members questioning my attendance of the Legislature, when it is they who helped to make the decision that the Party must participate in the functions of that forum.

That it is an indisputable fact that the Party's Executive Council, General Council and Parliamentary Group, agreed that the Party Legislators will take their seats in the Legislature after the ceremonial opening.

That my action is not contrary but strictly in keeping with Party decision on the matter of participation in the Legislature.

I must express how I feel confused and deeply frustrated about the way Party decisions are allowed to be flouted by certain elements within the Party.

Within recent times I have noted with concern that whenever any decision is made by the Party and if that decision does not meet the wishes of a certain clique, special concession is given to have the matter committed over and over.

Why this special privilege? If the Party is to maintain itself as a democratic entity, then it is

[MR. SAFFEE]

absolutely necessary that any decision arrived at - especially when it is supported by a two-thirds majority, as in this case, must be honoured.

I maintain that my attendance of the meeting of the Legislative Assembly on Wednesday 7th, is in strict conformity with Party decision, and I am perfectly prepared to stand by my action.

I am willing to meet you or the Party Executive Committee any other suitable time."

6 p.m.

On April, 10, I received a letter from the General Secretary. It reads as follows:

"Dear Sir,

I am directed by the Executive of the People's Progressive Party to inform you of its decision to expel you from the Party for breach of Party discipline.

I am also directed to advise you that since you were elected to the Legislature on a Party list, and since you are no longer a member of the Party, you should send your resignation to the Speaker.

Yours sincerely,

(Sgd.) Janet Jagan
General Secretary."

Well, they are still awaiting that. As I said, I have been expelled by the P.P.P. I have been elected on a party ticket, but, sir, I maintain that the action which was taken against me was wrong, it was not based on justice, it was ill-conceived on the understanding of party operation. Let them understand that I will not resign from this House. I maintain that what I did was right. [Mr. Ram Karran: "All rats do that."] You are the biggest one in the party.

The next point is that the P.P.P. is operating on a very bad principle. It is operating with the understanding that as soon as a man differs from the views of the party he is a "rat." He is not entitled to his own views. He should not speak to anybody who opposes the political view of the P.P.P. This is the basic trouble with the P.P.P. It does not have the courage to listen to other people's views. It does not maintain the democratic principle where every member is entitled to express his views according to his conscience.

When it comes to bribery and corruption, not one of the members of the P.P.P. can raise a finger at me. They have found that, having kicked me out of the party, they cannot get me out of the House. Some of my friends have told me, "Why worry, this does not affect you." But once the question of recall is passed, we know how the hammer is going to fall.

Now, as I said, they are trying to correct something which they should have done when the

Constitution was being framed in England. But they maintained that they were not going because they felt if they did not go the British Government would not hold the Conference. [Applause.] They felt that if they did not take their place in the House, the House could not function. This was the view expressed by the hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye. [Applause.] This was the view expressed by the two legal brains in the party. [Mr. Ram Karran: "What was your view?"] But the fraudulent thing in the whole operation was that while some of the bigwigs in the party were opposed to participation, the party's General Council by a majority decided that Members should take their place in the House. They told people that the party had decided not to take part in the House. This was not true! I am speaking the truth and nothing but the truth -- [Mr. Ram Karran: "So help me God."]

This is a clear case to show that I did not betray the party, but I eventually found myself expelled from the party. They have tried to impress upon this House that, once your name was put on the list, when you leave the party you are bound to resign your seat in Parliament. The question of a list is a separate thing from being a Member of the House. Let me point out that a list of candidates for Elections and membership of the House are two separate things. If they were tied up together, a certificate would have to be issued separately to each Member. However, the Constitution was based

on the United Kingdom Constitution. That is why there is no provision to say that when a Member crosses the Floor, or is expelled from his party, he should resign from the House.

6.10 p.m.

Another point raised by the hon. Member Mr. Chase was this: He quoted Article 66(3) of the Constitution which states:

"Parliament may make provision for the division of Guyana into such number of electoral areas, not being more than half the number of elected members of the Assembly, as Parliament may prescribe and for the election in each such area of one member of the Assembly, each elector having for this purpose one vote in addition to the vote which he may cast in favour of a list of candidates; but, if Parliament makes provision as aforesaid, then -

- (a) a person may stand as a candidate for election in any such electoral area only if, in such manner as Parliament may prescribe, he has declared that he supports, or has otherwise identified himself with, one of the lists; and . . ."

This deals with the lists, but it had nothing to do with the Parliament. This does not tie-up with the Parliament: The hon. Member Mr. Chase is trying to tell us that everything is tied up, but that is not so.

[MR. SAFFEE]

I am totally opposed to any amendment of the Constitution. I stand here as a Member of this House, and I shall maintain my position as a Member of this House regardless of what the Opposition may say about me. The members of the Opposition have tried to humiliate me by saying all sorts of things about me. [Mr. Ram Karran: "You are no good."] You are a donkey; you like to be ridden, and you do not have the strength to stand up for your rights.

I want to conclude by saying that I do not support this Motion. I feel that those who have advocated this measure merely want us to tamper with the Constitution.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour (Mr. Bowman): I am fully conscious of the fact that, like the other two independent Members of this House, this Motion is mainly directed at me. I would have been content to sit here and allow others to speak, but I took particular note of the manner in which this Motion was presented to the House as well as the person who brought it to the House. I had expected that, brilliant lawyer as he is, the whole tenor of his presentation would have been at a higher level and not on the level to which he descended.

The Motion before the House concerns three Members: Mr. Saffee, Mr. Bhagwan and myself. We have been told about the de-

fections in this House only. What about the other people who have left the party? If one examined the recent history of this party, one would find that during the past few months well over twenty persons have defected from the ranks of the P.P.P. The entire Youth Arm of the party has, more or less, left the party.

Let me say that when a member, once elected, takes his seat in this House he remains here legally under the Representation of the People Ordinance. I was taught that in each country there are two sovereigns: the legal sovereign, that is the Government, and the political sovereign, that is the people themselves. The point has been advanced that a member comes here on a party list, and the moment he ceases to support his party, then automatically he represents no one and he should resign his seat.

Certain Members on the other side of the House come before this House and parade themselves as people with high morals, people above corruption, people with integrity and so on, but they must remember that the persons whom they are seeking to destroy in this House were once members of their party and we know them well. How are we going to remain in this House and allow a Member to get up and say, for example, that the fault is in the constitutional system and not in the party? What we are asked to do here is to rectify something which should, in the first place, have been rectified in the party.

Throughout the years I have been in the P.P.P., I have often heard the slogan being mouthed: "Criticism and self-criticism." That is supposed to be socialism and socialist party. Even in the early days when members of the P.P.P. resigned, every opportunity was taken to criticise them. However, certain big persons in the party who have been found guilty of offences were permitted to commit offence after offence and error after error. No effort has ever been made to criticise such persons.

Let me give you an example. Whenever a decision is made in the P.P.P. it is made after very many hours of serious deliberations. Sometimes a meeting will go on to the wee hours of the morning before a decision is made; but the peculiar thing to note is that after you have spent so many hours and have taken a decision - a decision by the majority of members present - you will find that a few days later that decision will be recommitted so long as certain persons are against it.

6.20 p.m.

A decision may be taken by a majority and you may rest assured that if these persons are opposed to it there will be a recommitment, so that questions are discussed time and time again and members of the party will tell you that I left for home on many occasions when this kind of thing happened.

One may well feel, because of the position of the Member who brought this Motion to the House,

that it was the executive or the General Council of the People's Progressive Party that brought this Motion to the House. We may feel that the persons who sponsored this are the people who have paid their party dues, that they are honest people who work very hard in the party and therefore form the leadership of the party, but can the leaders, with the exception of a very few, stand up and say that they work harder, are more competent and have been doing more party work over the years than those persons whom they have recently pushed out and those who remain with them but are persecuted and humiliated to the point of degradation? Persons who came into the party while others were away, very quickly found themselves in a position to say to me, "Look, so and so." One afternoon when a prominent member who had been pushed out was to have appeared before the executive to account for his withdrawal of a Motion from this House, a member of the P.P.P. who had recently re-entered the party spoke to me. We hear talk about people crossing the Floor but in the People's Progressive Party we have men who have crossed and crossed back. That is called a "double-cross". A member who had just returned to the party after a quarrel lasting a number of years, a man who had vilified the party and engaged in a whispering campaign in an effort to rush for position and elbow his way up, had the temerity to tell me, "Look, tell your boy" - he meant the former Chairman of the party - "if he comes

[MR. BOWMAN]

before the executive this afternoon and answers its charges quietly we will not expel him, but if he comes in any way hostile he shall be expelled immediately". When the member was about to enter Freedom House I told him what the comrade had told me. [Mr. Luck: "Tell us about the communist money you were begging for."]

Hon. Members were told that we needed honest people and that Members must not be allowed to cross the Floor, because this cuts across principles and so on. It is all well and good to talk about principles but people, whether in the People's Progressive Party or elsewhere, are human beings and, as such, have pride. They want to be treated as people; they do not wish to be treated as so many pieces of hardware; they do not wish to remain in a movement where, if you can say "Yes", you become one of the favoured chaps, and if you do not offer too much of an argument you are O.K., but if you differ and argue you find yourself gradually ostracised.

Let us take the case of the former Minister of Communications (Mr. Wilson) to see how low men can stoop to remain loyal, as they see it. We were at Congress on one occasion and a decision was made when the then junior vice-Chairman of the party was presiding. The decision was that the number of members elected to the executive from the General Council should be reduced from

seven to five. Previously seven members of the General Council together with five officers comprised the executive, so it was decided to reduce the representatives of the General Council from seven to five. The hon. Member, Mr. Gladstone Wilson, sat down in the Council with his eyes fastened on the General Secretary and voted for the reduction, and when the time came to recapitulate he asked how it was that the number was reduced. The vice-Chairman had to remind him that he had voted for it. His only interest had been to see the manner in which the Secretary voted and he could not remember that he had voted for the reduction a few minutes before.

This is the kind of thing that happens. Two qualities alone will help us in this country - objectivity and courage. [Interruptions.] I disagreed with the party on account of the treatment meted out to the Chairman, not to myself. In any movement one would expect that no one would be indispensable to it, and one would expect in the interest of democracy that irrespective of the status of the person who makes an error, the executive would have the courage to say to that person, "You are wrong and our directions should be carried out".

I mention these things not because I want to be vindictive but because I want to show hon. Members that over the years tension has been building up in the party and has now caused many persons to leave it at this particular

time. Over the years, there has been no serious attempt within the party to examine itself. There was an instance when the leader of the party disagreed with the then junior vice-Chairman for some reason or other. After looking into the matter, the executive decided that there was no case against the junior vice-Chairman and that the leader should apologise. No apology was ever given and eventually the

junior vice-Chairman had to leave for no reason at all related to the party machinery.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Thursday, 17th November, 1966, at 2 p.m." [Mr. Bissamber.]

Adjourned accordingly at 6.30 p.m.