

THE  
**PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 2]

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

*15th Sitting*

*Wednesday, 27th September, 1967*

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

*Prayers*

*[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]*

*His Honour the Deputy Speaker, Mr. R. C. Tello,*

*Members of the Government*

*Ministers*

**Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid,**

*Minister of Trade.*

**The Honourable N. J. Bissemer,**

*Minister for Parliamentary Affairs*

*Leader of the House).*

*(Absent — on leave)*

**The Honourable R. E. Cheeks,**

*Minister of Local Government.*

**The Honourable E. F. Correia,**

*Minister of Communications.*

**The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin,**

*Minister of Education.*

**The Honourable C. M. L. John,**

*Minister of Home Affairs.*

**The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C. B. E., J.P.,**

*Minister of Health and Housing.*

**The Honourable C. A. Merriman, J.P.,**  
*Minister of Labour and Social Security.*

**The Honourable M. F. Singh,**  
*Minister of Works and Hydraulics.*

☛ ***Parliamentaries Secretaries:***

**Mr. D. B. DeGroot,**  
*Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.*

**Mr. O. E. Clarke,**  
*Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education.*

**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**  
**Mr. J. Budhoo**  
**Mr. M. Kasim**  
**Mr. W. G. Carrington**  
**Mrs. R. G. B. Field-Ridley**  
**Mr. D. M. Ibraj**  
**Mr. H. Prashad**  
**Mr. T. A. Sancho**  
**Mr. J. H. Thomas**  
**Rev. A. B. Trotman**  
**Mr. H. M. S. Wharton, J.P.**

***Members of the Opposition***

**Dr. C. B. Jagan,**  
*Leader of the Opposition.*

**Mr. A. Chase**  
**Mr. Ram Karran**  
**Mr. R. Chandisingh**  
**Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard**  
**Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.**  
**Mr. C. V. Nunes**

Mr. E. M. G. Wilson  
Mr. M. Hamid, J.P.  
Mr. J. R. S. Luck  
Mr. H. Lall  
Mr. Mooneer Khan, J.P.  
Mr. Y. Ally  
Mr. L. Linde  
Mr. M. Bhagwan

*OFFICERS*

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F. A. Narain  
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M. B. Henry.

*Absent*

The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.,  
Prime Minister

The Honourable L.F.S. Burnham, Q.C.,  
*Prime Minister*

The Honourable R. J. Jordan,  
*Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources* .. .. . (Absent – on leave)

The Honourable M. W. Carter,  
*Minister of Information*

The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, C.G.M., Q.C.  
*Attorney-General and Minister of State*

Mr. P. S. d'Aguiar  
Mr. B. H. Benn .. .. . (Absent – on leave)

Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye

Mr. D. C. Jagan

Mr. R. D. Persaud, J.P.P.

Mr. M. N. Poonai

Dr. S. A. Ramjohn

Mr. E. M. Stoby

Mr. S. M. Saffee.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE  
SPEAKER**

**Leave to Member**

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Hon Members, the hon. Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources (Mr. Jordan) is excused from this sitting.

**PUBLIC BUSINESS**

**MOTIONS**

**Recognition of Degrees awarded by  
the University of Guyana**

Whereas the University of Guyana will begin to award degrees in the current year;

And whereas the graduates are entitled to receive treatment in accordance with their academic status;

And whereas the standards achieved by students at the University have been high in the several fields of learning in which studies have been undertaken when compared with the attainment of students in the United Kingdom and other overseas countries:

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the degrees awarded by the University of Guyana be recognised in Guyana in the same manner as degrees of comparable status granted by the universities in the Commonwealth. [Mr. Nunes.]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The hon. Member Mr. Nunes.

**Mr. Nunes:** The Motion now before the House seeks to have recognition in Guyana granted to holders of degrees awarded by the University of Guyana in the same manner as holders of degrees of comparable status granted by other Universities in the Commonwealth. We, on this side of the House, wish to deal with three main points

to prove our contention. The first point with which we would like to deal is that of the syllabus. If we made a comparative study of the syllabi of the University of Guyana and those of the University of the West Indies, we would find that there is a clear and convincing illustration that the content of the syllabus of the University of Guyana is on par with that of the University of the West Indies. To be more specific, let us deal with two subjects Biology and English.

In the field of Biology, the work covered at the University of Guyana is probably the same as that covered by the University of the West Indies. As a matter of fact, one will find that in one instance the University of Guyana covers much more ground than the University of the West Indies in its syllabus. I refer to the specific item of micro-biology. We know that this field has made many of the more important discoveries in recent years, and in this particular field the University of Guyana is placing more emphasis than the University of the West Indies is doing. As a matter of fact, a close examination of the syllabus of the University of the West Indies will show that not only at the inception of that University, but even up to the end of the last academic year, there was a very small portion devoted to the field of micro-biology. A close examination of the field of hereditary and psychological genetics will reveal that the University of Guyana has the edge again when compared with University of the West Indies.

Let us now deal with the field of English. In comparing the two syllabi, we find that the University of Guyana offers a wider range and, generally speaking, it is much more stimulating than that offered by the University of the West Indies or the University of London. We find that English Literature, as taught in the University of Guyana, is not merely literature but a combination of literature and English, taking into account the writers from all the regions in which English

[MR. NUNES]

is spoken. These writers include Walcott, Seymour and Naipaul, who have made various contributions to the contemporary life of the area, and the syllabus also includes a comparison of life in this region with life in other regions.

At the University of Guyana, there are unique ways of interpreting life. For example, while students are required to delve into life as it existed in the early centuries, — the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth, — yet they are not required to live unduly, the lives that were lived in those days, but the main aim seems to be to draw from what life obtained in those days, and apply the best parts of it to the life of the present day. In this sense, we can say there is much more imagination, much more stimulation, much more thought given to the syllabus as obtains in the University of Guyana.

My next point deals with the question of staff. Whatever may be the syllabus, whatever may be its content or whatever may be the heights reached or attained by the syllabus planned by any University, the next thing that we need is a staff of some quality. Well do we remember when the University was first established in 1963 by Ordinance, that the People's Progressive Party Government made every effort to secure the best available tutors on the market in which persons at the level were very difficult to obtain. We were very fortunate to obtain the services of one of the well-known scholars of the century, Professor Lancelot Hogben, who accepted the invitation to become the first Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of Guyana.

2.25 p.m.

This was in keeping with whatever aspirations the P. P. P. Government had for

the then present and for the future of Guyana. But we did not stop there. Our aim was also to secure Deans to the three Faculties which were then established — Arts, Natural Science and Social Science — Deans who were highly qualified in their fields, and who were able to give the best start to the University. And that was what we attained.

What amazed this side of the House, however, was the witch-hunting that was carried out against one of the Deans, Horace Davis, a highly qualified graduate from Harvard and Columbia Universities, and whose contributions in the field of research are well known. On the 20th of July, Professor Horace Davis produced a book entitled *Socialism and Nationalism*, which is right now on the market, and one could only conclude that whatever Professor Horace Davis believed in, in terms of ideology, were really the good causes of his being witch-hunted from the University of Guyana. Who, can deny the quality of persons such as Ramsahoye, Drayton, Campayne and Hopkinson? All of them, in addition to your present Vice Chancellor, have made wonderful contributions to the development of the University of Guyana. We would also like to include Stewart Baves who made a sterling contribution to the working of that institution. We feel that a competent staff is needed in order to carry out all the plans which are necessary to make such an institution a success, and to make it deserve the comparable status which we, on this side of the House, are seeking.

My next point deals with standards. Here one has to find some measure or yardstick in determining the standards attained by the University; and the only yardstick I should like to deal with is that which comes about as a result of the examinations done by these students. Whatever we may know of the teachers, and regardless of how satisfied we

may be about their competence, we will have to look at what is a temporary end result. I make emphasis on the word "temporary." We must look at the question of examinations to see if exactly what we are seeking is really deserved.

First of all, I should like to state the system employed in the University of Guyana. The papers for examinations are first set by the internal examiners at the University. These papers are then sent up to the external examiners of the institution whose duty it is to vet them, and to express whatever contrary opinions they may have on the questions set by the internal examiners. When agreement has been reached, the papers are finally printed in the United Kingdom – it is correct to say that they are printed in Scotland. When examinations are held, these papers are first marked by the internal examiners and then sent to the external examiners whose decision on the award of degrees to the candidates of the University of Guyana is final.

At this point, I should like to mention some of the institutions from which our external examiners are drawn. These can be found in the bulletin of the University. Examiners are drawn from the University of the West Indies; the University of London; the University of Cambridge; the University of Edinburgh; Sussex University; Canberra University; Queen's University; University of Ontario; McGill University; University of New Delhi.

The Guyana Graphic had this to say as emanating from Dr. Pryor of Cambridge University, who happens to be one of the external examiners of the University of Guyana. "Professor Pryor lauded the giant strides of the University of Guyana. He stated that the University of Guyana has achieved an amply high standard since its inception." Two other persons have had very good things to say about the

accomplishments of the students at the recently concluded final examinations of graduate students of the University of Guyana. They are Professor Mahadeba, Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, and Professor Williams who now holds a Chair at Reading University.

In another field, the comment of the external examiner has been that the teaching and the standard of marking are comparable with those obtaining in the new English Universities, and in the University of the West Indies. Other external examiners have said that the working of the internal examiners was careful and well done, and there was a need to increase the marking of the internal examiners by two to three per cent. The external examiners have not only been satisfied with the standard of teaching at the University, but also with the quality of work submitted by students. They have gone much further to say that our own internal examiners have failed to give the students what they deserved, and they had, by international standards, to increase the award meted out to those students by the internal examiners, by as much as two to three per cent in each case. These all go to prove the quality and the high standard of work done by the students at the University of Guyana.

One examiner had this to say: "I want to compliment the students of the University of Guyana on the excellent standards and their superior grasp of the subjects." By international standards, marking had to be raised one letter up after local examiners had given their assessment. But the students are concerned as to the fate of their degrees, and quite naturally so. The People's Progressive Party put this Motion in the last Session and repeated it very promptly at the opening of this Session, to be exact, on the 9th of August. We feel that something ought to be done. These students who are concerned should be relieved of the anxiety which they

[MR. NUNES]

now feel, anxiety for the recognition in their own country of the degrees which have been so highly recommended, and which have been so highly thought of by the external examiners of this institution. It is true that six of our students have been admitted — before graduation day — to universities abroad.

2.35 p.m.

Two of them have been admitted to Sussex University; one has been admitted into Makerere University in Uganda; another one has been admitted into MacMasters University in Canada, and there are still others who have been admitted into other institutions, the names of which I am not yet aware. This demonstrates that degrees of our University of Guyana have already begun to receive the recognition that they deserve by Universities in the Commonwealth.

What are we doing in our country of Guyana to give people recognition for those degrees which have richly earned the recognition of Universities abroad? We on this side of the House wish the Government of Guyana to make a clear and unequivocal statement that it recognises the University of Guyana degrees. It is very important not only to those students who have just graduated but also to those who are taking courses now. They want to know if recognition will be granted to the degrees that they hope to receive at the end of their courses. It is also important to those who are about to start as freshmen. They want to know what will be the value of the degrees as evaluated by the Government of Guyana.

We on this side of the House therefore wish to ask in very strong terms for the immediate recognition of the University of Guyana degrees by the Government of Guyana and that they be given status as degrees of the University of the West Indies

and the University of London are given in Guyana. [*Applause.*]

Mr. Luck: I rise to support the Motion moved by my friend the former Minister of Education.

Before I proceed to speak on the Motion may I observe this: this is the first Member's Motion to come before this Session of Parliament and if it means that the Government is going to make time for Members' Motions then I welcome it, but we were promised that a Government White Paper on Education would shortly be presented to this House, and since this Motion deals with an important aspect of education policy, I wonder whether we can conclude that the White Paper, promised in the Throne Speech, will not be debated for another two years. I would welcome — I think the country would welcome — a general debate on the policy of education and, in particular, a debate on the appalling standards which prevail in most schools at all levels.

In supporting this Motion I support what should have been self-evident, for a country must be the best judge of its own standards. It makes a mockery of an Independent nation if its citizens accept too readily, the judgment of other nations. In the matter of Guyana University and its degrees the decision as to who should be accepted as worthy for promotion and for enhanced positions due to their learning, should be by ourselves.

I should have thought that precisely because the entire working of the University of Guyana is to be geared to the peculiar requirements of the needs of this territory — it is an assumption I make, but quite possibly it is without any foundation — the training that the students will receive there will be best suited to produce good men and

women. It must therefore follow that we should accord a graduate of that University the highest possible recognition.

I am a bit worried whenever this talk of degrees comes up. I know that thousands of years ago, in China, the first system of public examinations was introduced. I am not certain that this was an improvement on other possible arrangements. Do we judge a University by the difficulty of its examinations? Is that the criterion? I know that our University is aiming at making examinations as difficult as anywhere else. Is that the right thing to do? Or should a University in a territory such as this, seek to inquire into the bases of civilised life, of civilised order, – and having inquired, seek to implant its findings into the minds of our students. – As a teacher I must say that I am appalled by the material we meet. It is quite clear that this country borders on anarchy. There is anarchy in the streets and in the conduct of public business. An arrangement was recently concluded which I think is novel in the history of Parliaments. The leader of one party to a Coalition resigns from the Government and the Government remains a Coalition. There is anarchy everywhere. *[Interruptions.]*

My own analysis is that unless some university, some school or some institution seeks to analyse what was done to the people of this country, we will get nowhere. For myself I think that the colonialists and the slave-owners, in order to perpetuate their power, deliberately tried to destroy all moral values. One thing they destroyed, the concept of family life, the concept of right and of justice. One walks on the streets of Georgetown, and sees a big boy beat a little boy, and not a soul puts out a hand. All this argues an appalling lack of good sense.

I say that no person, however learned he is in terms of book learning, is. . . if he has not, instilled in him, the concept of right, –

[Dr. Reid: “Nunes says you must talk on his Motion.”] a good citizen of his country.

2.45 p.m.

It is my view that just as an engineer must first have experience in the peculiar condition of the foundation of our roads, – the mudland, so it is that educators – learned people – should have a knowledge of the foundation of the human material which this University has to mould and train. Our experience in this country has been vastly different from the experience of educators in other countries; we must create a University, a school of learning, designed to train the minds of our youth after having a prior knowledge of their deficiencies.

This wave of choke-and-rob which is plaguing our country today does argue a remarkable deficiency of mind, of character and of upbringing; and until educators, at all levels, are able to lay a proper foundation they would continue to fail because they assume a foundation which is not there.

I regret to say that many of the people of learning in this country, so far as degrees go, have so little commonsense, so little moral sense, that one wonders why we should recognise degrees as such. For this reason, precisely because I hope that the University of Guyana and those who run it, are taking cognisance of the human material with which they deal and are trying to work on the human material that they have, to create a product that is laudable; I say that we should accord to holders of the degrees of this University equal status with the holders of degrees from any other university.

I wish to give one word of caution in this matter. It is right that men of qualifications should gain preference and should be better paid than those who have never undergone a course of study in their respective subjects. This is right, but I wonder whether we are not reaching the position where, in this rat race for degrees, the holders of degrees have



[MR. LUCK]

come to believe that, having got their degrees, they need not strive any more, that their work is done, their battle won. Some of them seem to have become as the products of the imperial Chinese examinations became — “pakoos”, stupid people unable to think constructively.

I wonder whether it is not the deliberate policy of this Government to create an aristocracy”, people of genuine merit. As between two persons who both went to school where one failed, — the probability is that the person who passed is the person of merit; there is no question about it. But where a job is advertised, as so many jobs are advertised, and only one person possesses the requisite qualifications, there is a great probability that that person may not be considered for the appointment. This is happening in many important positions in this country.

Let me say it again. We are asked to use yardsticks. May I say that it has never been argued by any professor that the mere possession a B. A. degree — assuming that the first requirement for a job is that only persons with B.A. degrees should apply — would be guarantee that you would not get a fool. This is happening so often that I wonder whether it would not be right for this country to lower the requirements for many of these posts so that we would not get fellows who, throughout their lives, kept their eyes to their books, looking up only to see the fat jobs and the fat salaries that await them on passing their examinations.

I want to believe that a better policy would be to open most of these jobs to many applicants so that the people who allocate these jobs will have a wider choice of people to choose from. I could name —

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Will the hon. Member please read the Resolve Clause of the Motion?

**Mr. Luck:** I have done so. We can look at post after post. The Government wanted a solicitor and only one person applied. The Government waited six months and it had to appoint the man. The Government wanted a Commissioner of Inland Revenue and only one person applied. There is no question of choice in these matters. I would have thought — this is only a presumption — that the holders of degrees are people of merit. Only a Government bent on devious purposes would so tailor its requirements for qualifications as to make the applicants for jobs non-competitive.

Now coming back to this University, I want to believe that the examinations are made unnecessarily difficult because, if we assume — as I assume — that the bulk of the work of the students of this University should deal with living co-operatively together, instilling in them — the concept of right and justice, love of truth, the desire to do good, then, of course, to set too difficult examinations would be to court disaster.

Today men of practical affairs are minded to laugh at holders of degrees. I am not one such but may I say this: We have a University and I hope — now that the degrees awarded by that University are to be accorded high status — that those who govern this University will bear in mind that they cannot do everything with the students. You cannot concentrate on book learning thereby making the examinations terribly difficult.

And then, what is happening to the social graces? I say that those who speak of international standards of education delude themselves. They have no profound concept of education and for this reason, and with this word of caution, I suggest that the examinations be not made unnecessarily difficult. I myself have looked at the papers and I wondered whether it is enough for a fellow to know all that, and yet not to be honest or to believe in the integrity of

others. Those are things we should teach here. We have to believe that people of different races can be honest and fair.

The University should not overburden itself with difficult examinations. Many teachers attend lectures there and it would appear that they have become neglectful and lazy. The students of the University of Guyana find it difficult to work with their employers. They work in the day and study at night and I have seen many of them hard-pressed with their studies. I understand that employers have got the message about students who attend this University, to the detriment of the University and the country. Is there any law that states that the man who reads forty books is, for that reason, a writer? I know of no such law and this talk of international standards is to fool the unwary.

I have attended some of the finest Universities in the East as well as in the West, and they are totally different. What we have to do is to educate all, or perish; we shall all be overrun by "choke and robbers". If we set standards that are artificial, that is no assistance to us and disaster awaits us. *[Interruption]*.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

The Minister of Education (Mrs. Gaskin): I rise to sympathise with the hon. Mover of the Motion, Mr. Nunes [Mr. Luck: "When are we getting this White Paper?"] who did a very good job in proposing the Motion that the University Degrees should correspond in their acceptance with the status given to other Universities, but his Colleague, the hon. Mr. Luck, seems to have spoken against the Motion moved by Mr. Nunes. But then, Mr. Luck is noted for being number one, the muck raker of the People's Progressive Party and number two, the happy wanderer in the labyrinths of incoherence.

The Motion before the House is one that

this Government can, in every way, support. Actually, the thought that came into my mind when Mr. Nunes' Motion was presented to me was that this being "Efficiency Year" and our being so concerned with saving time, it may well have been settled by a telephone call. The Government of Guyana has already made it absolutely clear that the University belongs to the country and if the country educates people in its University, it must of necessity accept those people whom it has educated.

As far back as December, 1965, I attended a Christmas Party at the University of Guyana — [Mr. Ram Karran: "That is all the money is for."] — which, incidentally, was attended by Mrs. Jagan who enjoyed the money too, and I particularly stated that the Government had every intention of recognising the Degrees of its University. The time has come now when the first bunch of graduates are about to leave and I can well understand the qualms that must have been felt by the hon. Mr. Nunes, realising that in establishing the University, he had forgotten or neglected to make provision for acceptance of its Degrees. It is evident, also that there is very little consultation and co-operation between him and the Secretary of the People's Progressive Party in that he was, up to this moment, ignorant that the Government had already guaranteed the degrees. The Government of Guyana has already held consultations with representatives of the University of Guyana and for the information of Mr. Nunes, I should like to make this statement most categorically.

- (a) Degrees awarded by the University of Guyana will be equivalent to general degrees in like subjects awarded by Universities of comparable status in the British Commonwealth. This is what Mr. Nunes asked for.

[MRS. GASKIN]

- (b) There will be no difference between the four-year degree awarded to the first batch of graduate students and the five-year degree to be awarded to subsequent graduate students.

I say that much for the acceptance of degrees.

The hon. Member, Mr. Nunes, went across the line somewhat in an otherwise admirable speech in drawing attention to the staffing of the University. It is not my belief that the names of members of the staff should be bandied about in this House but if Mr. Nunes would like to do so, and he has done so, and he has seen fit to charge the Government with witch hunting to replace a particular member of the staff, Mr. Horace Davis, I should like to ask the hon. Member to find out for what reason Mr. Davis was sacked from the last University to which he was appointed before coming to the University of Guyana.

3.05 p.m.

In deference to Mr. Davis who is not here, I will not disclose it. But the hon. Member, Mr. Nunes, ought to know that Mr. Davis was sacked, and he ought to find out why.

[Mr. Wilson: "Well, why you sacked him?"] Children must keep out of big peoples' quarrels. [Laughter.] I do not think that I need to labour any longer on a point that was not only well taken, but was considered even before the Motion came before the House.

Before I close, I should like to make one addition for the benefit of the hon. Mr.

Luck, and I think he should applaud this because this is what he sought in his long and rambling dissertation. On the question of acceptance of degrees, it is stated in our Agreement with the University's authority that, although the degrees of the University

of Guyana will be fully accepted for graduate status, particular requirements, where necessary, should be met. For instance, a general degree in Social Science will not automatically entitle its holder to a graduate teacher position unless the subject had been taught to the required depth. [Mr. Luck: "What is that?"] You are not deaf.

I also wish to state that in accepting the graduate degrees of the University of Guyana, the Government wishes it to be known that it is willing and ready to give equal acceptance to the post-graduate degrees of this University when the necessary facilities for post-graduate work are available. Therefore, may I say that the Government not only fully supports the Motion, but wishes it to be clearly understood that it need have come here because it was already agreed. [Applause.]

Mr. Nunes (replying): The point was made by the Minister of Education that the question of award of degrees was not looked after by the People's Progressive Party when it was the Government. This is not a fact. The People's Progressive Party was very conscious of the need to have degrees recognised, and to this extent, we started at the end of the first year. The end of 1964 was the first year that the University was in operation. We had a system where the external examiners were noting the quality of the teaching and the quality of the work produced by the students. This was done in preparation for the recognition of the degrees, so it is unfair and incorrect to say that the P.P.P. was not looking after its duty.

Again, the Minister said that a statement was made in 1965 at a party which she attended at the University of Guyana, and that the General Secretary of the P.P.P. was present when that statement was made. I wish to inform the Minister that a statement, so important, and so vital to the

interest of the students and to the lecturers of the University, would have been received with the importance or the profundity it deserved. But what do we find? There is still concern, and it would have been better if the Minister had made this statement in other areas throughout the country so that everyone would have been properly aware of Government's policy in this particular direction. Many students and lecturers at the University are anxious about this matter, and it is only now, I believe, that this anxiety is to be removed.

The Minister also referred to the question of Dr. Davis, and she asked whether we were aware that Dr. Davis had been sacked by the last University, before coming here. We were not aware that Dr. Davis was sacked before coming here, and we are also not aware of any reasons connected with Dr. Davis being sacked from the present University. The Minister implied that Dr. Davis was sacked, and it is her duty to tell this House why he was sacked. [Mrs. Gaskin: "He was not sacked. He is on one year's leave."] [Dr. Jagan: "Why was he demoted?"] Why did the Minister refer to Mr. Davis being sacked?

[Mrs. Gaskin: "Because you said we were witch-hunting, and I said you should find out who was witch-hunting and why he was sacked."] ]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Give the hon. Member a chance to reply.

**Mr. Nunes:** I think I should reiterate that Dr. Davis has had an excellent academic record, and the University and the Government were satisfied that Dr. Davis was eminently suited to hold the post of Dean of Social Sciences at the University of Guyana. He is also an excellent research student. He wrote a book which was published in the United States on the 20th of July, and which will be published in many other parts of the world. This is clear

evidence of the quality of Dr. Davis' mind. The students who came under Dr. Davis have also expressed great satisfaction — [Interruption.]

We, on this side of the House, after pressing the Government to make a statement on this point, have now had a clear and unequivocal statement from the Minister that the Government is willing to recognise the degrees awarded by the University of Guyana. Perhaps members of the Government are also hearing for the first time that the University of Guyana degrees are to be given equal recognition to those obtained from universities in the Commonwealth.

3.15 p.m.

*Question put, and agreed to.*

*Motion carried.*

#### **MOTOR VEHICLES AND ROAD TRAFFIC (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 1967 (NO. 12)**

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly, in terms of section 98(3) of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Ordinance, Chapter 280, approve of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic (Amendment) Regulations, 1967 (No. 12), made by the Governor-General on the 19th of September, 1967, and published in the Gazette on the 20th of September, 1967." — [The Minister of Communications.]

**The Minister of Communications (Mr. Correia):** Mr. Speaker, the purpose of this Motion is to give some relief to farmers who use tractors solely on farms.

On the 1st January, 1967, Regulations were introduced to amend Part A of the First Schedule of the Motor Vehicles and Road Traffic Ordinance, Chapter 280. The amendment was introduced to bring

[MR. CORREIA]

uniformity to the motor vehicles licences. Item 5, which was amended, was as follows:

“For each goods vehicle —

- (a) not exceeding 1120 pounds unladen weight. \$50.00
- (b) exceeding 1120 pounds but not exceeding 2240 pounds unladen weight. . . \$100.00
- (c) exceeding 2240 pounds but not exceeding 4480 pounds unladen weight . . . \$200.00
- (d) exceeding 4480 pounds but not exceeding 11,200 pounds unladen weight. . . \$300.00
- (e) exceeding 11,200 pounds unladen weight. . . \$400.00

It was unfortunate that tractors and trailers that do not use the roads were brought under item 5 of the Regulations and were required to pay \$300. I was approached by some farmers shortly after the regulations were introduced and asked to grant some relief. In view of their representations the approval of Cabinet was sought and this Motion is brought before the House today. This is really a tidying-up affair.

These Regulations were laid in the Assembly on the 20th September, 1967, that is, the last day the Assembly sat. We now ask hon. Members to amend item 6 as follows:

- (i) For any agricultural motor tractor and trailer which are used for the sole purpose of carrying agricultural machinery, appliances and produce or any of them to or from, or to and from, any cultivated plantation, lot or farm within a radius of 6 miles thereof but not in Georgetown or New Amsterdam. . . \$120.00
- (ii) For any agricultural motor tractor used alone for the said purpose. . . \$20.00

The Assembly is now asked to approve this Motion.

Mr. Ram Karran: Little by little our friends across the Table learn. You will recall, sir, that when this measure was debated in this House the Members on this side drew attention to the Government's callous decision to tax this section of the community, but the ex-Minister of Finance, the former third Deputy Prime Minister, refused to listen to reason. He refused to listen to the cries of farmers and the measure was passed.

Hon. Members will recall that the hon. Minister of Communications (Mr. Correia) sat down without saying one word although motor transport and licences came under his portfolio. He was completely ignorant of what was taking place. He now tells us that a group of farmers approached him. Even in that, the hon. Minister would wish to mislead this House. It is true that a group of farmers went to meet him, but it was a special group of farmers; it was a group organised under the Rice Producers Association. Why does the Minister wish to hide the fact that it was this Association that went to speak to him?

Members on this side of the House and farmers in general would wish to congratulate the hon. Minister in spite of his “hard ears”. He has brought this measure to the Legislature. Is he going to arrange for a refund to those farmers who had to take out licences during this period? Are they going to get any measure of relief? Can he assess with his colleagues, who have some experience in rice farming the amount of money which has been spent - and which farmers can ill afford - to maintain these tractors and trailers during the last crop year?

It is the vicious feeling of antagonism against farmers which we witnessed in the last Legislature from Members who were then in the Opposition and who are now in the Government, it is the activity of individual members of the P.N.C., which

caused the Government to make this blunder which must now be corrected with complete humility.

The hon. Minister (Mr. Correia) comes here and says that a group of farmers made representations and they are going to adjust the charges in order to give some relief. Is it that they really want to grant relief? Do they really wish to change this vicious attitude against the farmers who allegedly have large houses and large farms? Do they really wish to change this vicious attitude against the farmers who allegedly have large houses and large farms? Have they come to their senses and do they realise that the callous policy pursued against farmers was really an attempt to destroy the country?

The hon. Minister has belatedly come to the conclusion that this must be changed. Has the Minister also come to the conclusion that all these tax measures must be rescinded as this one has, and the facilities which farmers enjoyed with duty-free petrol must be granted again? We recently saw legislation being rescinded and the now substantive Minister of Finance had to bring back the capital gains tax in a watery form. We are going to say a few harsh things, but that does not mean that the Government will not relentlessly pursue its policy of taxing the farmers.

*3.25 p.m.*

The Minister comes and tells us that he made a mistake, that it was unfortunate these things were done. A lot of other things are unfortunate and I hope that the Minister would be brave enough to come and tell us that these things have been unfortunate too, and that measures have been taken to give relief where is necessary.

In all countries of the world, even the great United States of America, one of the richest capitalist countries, all sorts of assistance are given in the field of

agriculture. Our Government has now accepted that agriculture is the backbone of our country. I heard the Minister of Education say that agriculture is the mainstay of the country and that we must learn to develop the country by that means. Surely, if you have learnt that lesson, then you must learn the other lesson which obviously must follow - the question of assistance in this field.

While on this I wish to observe and draw the Minister's attention to the fact that, particularly in the Essequibo Coast, farmers with their cage-wheel tractors are very seriously harassed. These tractors do absolutely no damage to the roads, in fact, the roads do a great deal of damage to the tractors. The Minister of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Singh) must realise that the roads in Essequibo do a tremendous lot of damage to the tractors, and farmers who wanted to get out from their rice mills to go to their homes were forced, during last year, to take off the cage wheels from their tractors, put them aside in the rice field, and drive the tractors two miles to their homes.

This is vicious persecution but it is only the philosophy of the Government transmitted from the political head to the Police who carry out the dirty work of getting behind the farmers. These cage wheels are nearly four inches away from the tyres and absolutely no harm can be done to the road, even if foreign matter stick to the cage wheels. These are really used in the fields, in soft mud to keep the tractor buoyant, to prevent it from bogging down. No engineer or policeman can prove that these cage wheels actually ruin the road.

Why then is the Ministry of Communications reluctant to consider the people in so far as the cage-wheel tractors are concerned? The sugar estates, particularly those in West Demerara, run very heavy bulldozers on the surfaced public road without the necessary protection which

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

is required by the Ministry. This is sheer disgrace and all these matters affecting the Ministry of Communications, on account of the incompetence of the Minister of Communications, ought to be given serious consideration, and the Police Department, the Chamber of Commerce and the people who sell these tractors ought to give proper advice so that our roads would remain in a decent state.

Once again I wish — without referring to the fact that the hon. Minister locked himself up with his secretary for hours when the farmers attacked him to get their licences — to thank the Minister for bringing forward this measure, at this late stage. This will bring some measure of relief to the people who are seriously affected.

**Mr. Hubbard:** This country moves from crisis to crisis because the Government cannot make up its mind, or because, having made up its mind, it has made a serious blunder. The Minister of Communications has come to us this afternoon to ask us to permit what he describes as a “tidying-up” operation but which, indeed, is a fundamental alteration to the taxation system devised to help Bank Breweries Ltd. and to punish the farmers of this country.

The other day we had a crisis in this country because a person was picked for the post of Commissioner of Police and sufficient judgment did not go into his selection. Having been sent for training or observation, as the case may be — we do not know what — he is to be hustled off the job. So this country moves from crisis to crisis. I hope that, before the end of this year, the Minister of Communications will come to us with a request for another tidying-up operation, but this time in respect of the owners of three-wheel carts who move goods from the bonds, the Customs warehouses to

the merchants' stores. I know that he will not be able to hide behind the excuse of a tidying-up operation and I hope that the task of finding some other ruse will not prevent him from rendering justice where it has been denied.

I want solemnly to request of this Government that when it decides to take action it must make its decision after careful, thorough and impartial judgment. This is good advice to an individual. It is advice which should be quite unnecessary for a Government which seeks the respect to the community which supports it. I ask that the Government take another look not only at its policy in regard to taxing the machinery used in the productive sector but that it also take a long look at the question of duty-free gasoline in the productive sector also.

I have just returned from Bartica — I believe that the hon. Minister of Communications is unable to go there at this time and is unlikely to want to meet the people of Bartica in the near future — and I can assure the hon. Minister that what I saw, distressed me, and made me terribly aware of the price Bartica is paying for having made a political error of judgment. All the beaches around Bartica, for miles around, are full of round timber — logs, hewn logs and logs of all sorts — lying around idly. I came across one man there who had been encouraged to spend about \$12,000 to fix up a concession only to have his permission recalled because the protege of some Minister was interested in the land that he had been encouraged to prepare.

3 35 p.m.

The fiscal policies of this Government are an abomination, and they oppress the producers of this land. I should ask that some tidying up operation of greater significance than this be brought, now that

we have a new Minister of Finance who, possibly, can see over the edge of his own profits. We will, of course, support the

Motion before the House but we would urge that the Minister step quickly in bringing about another tidying up operation in relation to the three-wheel motor cart

*Mr. Correia* (replying): The speech made by the hon. Mr. Ram Karran reminds me of the speech made by the other Member who did not speak on the Motion but found something else to say, so it was not necessary to reply to them. I should like to emphasise again that this Motion is brought

solely to relieve farmers. Whenever this Government finds it necessary to bring relief to farmers, this Government will do so without fear. I therefore ask the House to approve of the Motion.

**Question put, and agreed to.  
Motion carried.**

### ADJOURNMENT

**Resolved**, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Wednesday, 4th October, 1967, at 2 p.m." [*Mr. Bissember.*]

*Adjourned accordingly at 3.38 p.m.*