

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 17th February, 1960

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT:

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. D. M. Hedges

Attorney-General, Hon. S. S. Ramphal, acting } *ex officio*

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

The Honourable **B. H. Benn**

—Member for Essequibo River
(Minister of Natural Resources)

Janet Jagan

—Member for Western Essequibo
(Minister of Labour, Health and
Housing)

Ram Karran

—Member for Demerara-Essequibo
(Minister of Communications and
Works)

B. S. Rai

—Member for Central Demerara
(Minister of Community Development
and Education).

Mr. **R. B. Gajraj**

—Nominated Member

„ **W. O. R. Kendall**

—Member for New Amsterdam

„ **R. C. Tello**

—Nominated Member

F. Bowman

—Member for Demerara River

L. F. S. Burnham

—Member for Georgetown Central

S. Campbell

—Member for North Western District

A. L. Jackson

—Member for Georgetown North

„ **F. B. Beharry**

—Member for Eastern Demerara

S. M. Saffee

—Member for Western Berbice

„ **Ajodha Singh**

—Member for Berbice River

R. E. Davis

—Nominated Member

H. J. M. Hubbard

—Nominated Member

A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.

—Nominated Member.

Mr. I. Crum Ewing—Clerk of the Legislature

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

ABSENT:

The Hon. Dr. C. B. Jagan—Minister of Trade and Industry—on leave.

Mr. Jai Narine Singh—Member for Georgetown South.

Mr. A. M. Fredericks—Nominated Member—on leave.

PRAYERS

Prayers were read by His Grace the Archbishop of the West Indies, the Most Reverend Dr. A. J. Knight, C.M.G.

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Mr. Sridath Surendranath Ramphal, Attorney-General (acting) and Mr. William Peter D'Andrade, Financial Secretary (acting) took and subscribed the Oath of Allegiance and were welcomed as *ex-officio* Members of the Council *vice* Mr. A. M. I. Austin, Q.C. and Mr. F. W. Essex, C.M.G., respectively, who were out of the Colony on official business.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Friday, 12th February, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

SUSPENSION OF SITTING

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, I shall suspend the sitting of this Council in order to enable me, and those accompanying me, to meet His Excellency the Governor and Lady Grey. The sitting is now suspended for that purpose.

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

At 2.10 p.m. His Excellency the Governor, Sir Ralph Grey, K.C.M.G., K.C.V.O., O.B.E., accompanied by His Honour the Speaker, entered the Chamber and proceeded to make the following presentations :

DR. C. ROMITI—O.B.E.

The Clerk: The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (Civil Division). To be an Honorary Officer: Doctor Cesare Romiti.

Dr. Romiti proceeded to the dais, accompanied by Mr. C. Vibart Wight, C.B.E., and Dr. G. Giglioli, O.B.E.

His Excellency: For outstanding services to the Government and peoples of British Guiana during more than thirty-five years of skilled and devoted

work as a surgeon and for notable contributions to medical research, by command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Insignia of an Honorary Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. [*Applause*].

MR. J. H. McB. MOORE — O.B.E.

The Clerk: The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. To be an Officer: Mr. John Hilton McBean Moore.

Mr. Moore proceeded to the dais, accompanied by Mr. W. O. Fraser, O.B.E., and Mr. Vincent Roth, O.B.E.

His Excellency: For invaluable service to the Government of British Guiana since the inception of the British Guiana Credit Corporation, first as a Member, and, since 1957, as Chairman; and for outstanding service on various Government Boards and Committees and as a Member of the Diocesan Synod and of the Incorporated Trustees of the Anglican Diocese of Guiana and in welfare organizations, particularly the Young Men's Christian Association, by command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Insignia of an Officer of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. [*Applause*].

MR. C. S. RIDLEY — M.B.E.

The Clerk: The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. To be a Member: Mr. Colin Stewart Ridley.

Mr. Ridley proceeded to the dais, accompanied by Mr. J. Phillips, M.B.E., and Mr. K. I. R. Kirkpatrick, O.B.E.

His Excellency: For valuable services over many years, notably in the hydrographic survey on the Essequibo River between 1925 and 1929, in the dredging of the Demerara River between 1939 and 1945, whereby the war effort

was aided by the shipment of bauxite, and in the study of physical conditions in the whole coastal area of British Guiana to the great and continuing benefit of the Departments of Public Works and of Drainage and Irrigation, by command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Insignia of a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. [*Applause*].

MR. H. S. RAMSAROOP — M.B.E.

The Clerk: The Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. To be a Member: Mr. Harry Sarran Ramsaroop.

Mr. Ramsaroop proceeded to the dais, accompanied by Mrs. Esther Dey, M.B.E., and Major A. D. Gomes, M.B.E.

His Excellency: In recognition of the great work for the destitute of all races and for the social uplift of the community performed by the Hindu Religious Society founded by the late Pandit Ramsaroop Maraj, M.B.E., and particularly for devoted and dedicated personal service to the community in the management of the Dharm Shala at Georgetown and in the County of Berbice, by command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Insignia of a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire. [*Applause*].

MAJOR J. T. ATKINSON

The Clerk: The Queen's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service: Major Joseph Thomas Atkinson.

Major Atkinson proceeded to the dais.

His Excellency: For distinguished service and conspicuous devotion to duty during twelve years in British Guiana whereby a high standard of readiness and efficiency has been attained in a Fire Service with responsibilities exceptionally

onerous by reason of the predominating use of timber as a building material, by command of the Queen, conveyed to me through Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Colonies, I present to you the Queen's Fire Service Medal for Distinguished Service. [*Applause*].

The Council rose, and His Excellency, accompanied by the Speaker, left the Chamber.

RESUMPTION

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: I have to announce that the hon. the Attorney-General is away on duty and will be absent for probably five or six weeks. We have already sworn in the acting Attorney-General.

The hon. the Financial Secretary has been on leave from the 14th February. He is also out of the Colony on official business.

The hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Naraine Singh) is also on leave and will probably be out of the Colony for about three months.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, is unable to be present at today's meeting.

PAPERS LAID

The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran): I beg to lay on the Table the

Annual Report of the Posts and Telecommunications Department for the year 1958.

ORDER OF THE DAY

FREEHOLD TITLE ON HIRE-PURCHASE BASIS

Mr. Speaker: There is a Motion standing in the name of the hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman) which reads as follows:

"Whereas the social and economic system which prevails in British Guiana

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is patterned on that of the Western World. India and Pakistan, and provides for free enterprise and the ownership of property; and

Whereas the policy of the Majority Party of the Government is opposed to freehold ownership of land:

Be it Resolved: That this Council urges upon the Government that freehold title on a reasonable hire-purchase basis be granted to —

- (i) farmers in respect of land they now occupy in Government Land Settlement Schemes; and
- (ii) persons occupying Crown Lands for farming."

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan): Before you take that Motion, Sir, I would ask the Council's indulgence to resume consideration in Committee of the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill. If Members agree I would appreciate the Bill being taken before the hon. Member's Motion. At my request a notice was circulated to Members of the Government's intention to ask the permission of the Council to complete consideration of the Bill before proceeding to the hon. Member's Motion.

Mr. Speaker: It is a matter entirely for Members who have heard the Minister's request. If it is the wish of Members we shall proceed with the Bill. The hon. Member's Motion will be taken at a later stage.

Agreed to.

WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (AMENDMENT) BILL

Mrs. Jagan: I beg to move that Council resolve itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Bill intituled.

"An Ordinance to amend the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance."

Agreed to.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

Clause 2.—*Amendment of Section 2 (1) of Chapter 111.*

The Chairman: I think that on the adjournment Clause 2 of the Bill was being considered, and there was a suggestion by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central, but I do not see him here now.

The Attorney-General (Mr. Ramphal, acting): The point that was taken by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central was communicated to me some days ago and I have had an opportunity to look into it more closely. He suggested, I understand, that it might be desirable to introduce a definition of "periodic payment" in the Principal Ordinance, on the basis of two decisions with which he was familiar. One was a local decision in the case of *Gibbs vs. Bookers Shipping (Demerara) Ltd.* and the other was a decision in the United Kingdom courts.

I have had an opportunity to consider them, and in neither case was the phrase under discussion dealt with. What was being considered was the scope of the phrase, and in one case an attempt was made to reduce its scope, and in the other to extend it. Neither decision seems to throw any doubt as to the real meaning of "periodic payment" in the Ordinance, and it seems reasonably clear from the Ordinance itself that "periodic payment" has a clear special meaning which we might only disturb by attempting at this stage to introduce a definition.

I have had an opportunity to examine some Commonwealth legislation based on a substantially similar model, particularly in Uganda and Tanganyika, and in neither case have these doubts been regarded as sufficiently real to justify a special provision; and I would advise the Council not to introduce a definition which might cause us further trouble later on. I understand that the hon. Member did not formally move an Amendment but merely suggested that consideration be given to it.

The Chairman: If there are no further contributions I shall put the ques-

tion. The question is that Clause 2 stand part of the Bill.

Agreed to.

Clause 2 passed as printed.

Clause 3. — *Amendment of Section 8 of Chapter 111.*

Mr. Tasker: I have given notice of an Amendment which affects the last paragraph of the Clause. It requests the deletion of paragraph (h) of subsection (1), as printed in the Bill, and the substitution therefor of a new paragraph (h) which reads:

"(h) by the substitution for the word 'twelve' in the proviso to paragraph (d) of the word 'ten'".

In moving the second Reading of the Bill the hon. Minister pointed out that only one of the recommendations of the Workmen's Compensation Advisory Committee had, to the best of her knowledge, not been accepted by the Government and incorporated in the Bill. That recommendation related to the proviso to Section 8 (1) (d) of the Principal Ordinance, Chapter 111.

The Amendment, of which I have given notice, is intended to give effect to the remaining recommendation of the Committee by providing that where incapacity lasts less than 10 days no compensation shall be payable in respect of the first three days. I should explain that the whole object of my Amendment is to retain the waiting period of three days, as recommended by the Advisory Committee, whereas the object of the Government Amendment, as provided in the Bill, is to eliminate that waiting period.

At the risk of wearying Members I would like to point out exactly what this period of three days means. As the hon. Minister noted in the debate on the Second Reading, under the Principal Ordinance, at Section 3(1) (a), the workman who is incapacitated either

totally or partially must be so incapacitated for at least three consecutive calendar days before he is eligible for compensation: in other words, no matter how it arose, he could not make a claim for compensation for less than three days.

This is important, because there has been a tendency to confuse the proviso in the Principal Ordinance with the proviso attached to the waiting period, although each of the two has a different history. The proviso attached to Section 8(1) (d) of the Principal Ordinance goes back to the Venn Commission and an earlier Advisory Committee, and the object of this proviso is partly to provide an incentive to workers against accidents arising from carelessness but, more importantly, it is designed to recognize a peculiarity, a unique fact in our law in British Guiana — that is the only country in the world which recognizes, at the lowest rate of income, full wages as the initial rate of compensation from the first day on which compensation is payable. And as I argued in the Second Reading debate, this problem of 100 per cent. compensation from the first day is a very important issue when considering the effect psychologically and financially, of this Amendment.

In the Second Reading we had a good deal of discussion on the subject of malingering and abuses; both the hon. Minister and the hon. Member for Georgetown North spoke with feeling on the need for education of the worker not only of his responsibility to his employer but also of his responsibility to his trade union, in order that malingering and abuses of legislation should be sought out and rooted out and denounced as what they are — thoroughly anti-social. I accept that view, and I am sorry that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, was not present during the earlier stages of the debate, because the hon. Minister in moving the Motion for the Second Reading disclosed that when she saw the Report of the Advisory Committee and questioned the re-

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commendation on this issue of the waiting period she had asked the B.G. Trades Union Council for their views, and the T.U.C.'s views were that they would be happy either to accept the recommendation of the Advisory Committee — a recommendation to which two of their members were party — or to accept Government's proposal to abolish the waiting period.

With your permission, Sir, I would like to read that part of the Committee's recommendation dealing with this waiting period. I am reading from page 4 of the Report of the Workmen's Compensation Advisory Committee, British Guiana, April 1958: tabled in this Council in November, 1958:

"(iii) Waiting Period

10. The last proviso of Section 8(1) (d) was the subject of exhaustive examination and discussion. The Committee went into its whole history and decided unanimously thereafter that there should be an incentive to encourage an injured workman to return to his work at the earliest possible time, compatible with health. It was therefore agreed to recommend the retention of the waiting period of 3 days.

10.1 The Committee was not unmindful of the criticism levelled against this provision and examined similar legislative provision in the West Indies. There, it was discovered that while no waiting period existed, except in St. Vincent where it is the same 3 days as in our law, compensation for adults amounted invariably to fifty per cent of wages, except in Antigua where it is seventy-five per cent. In our legislation by far the largest body of work-people who normally are involved in occupational injuries, that is, those who are in categories (d) (i) and (ii) of Section 8, receive 100 or 75 per cent of wages as compensation.

10.2 The Committee also considered the genuine cases of minor injuries which totally disable a workman for short periods and which heal within short periods also, and on medical advice the Committee arrived at an agreed compromise (only one member dissenting and wishing payment to be made for the first day if incapacity lasted 3 days) to recommend

that the figure 12 in this proviso be reduced to 10. The Committee therefore recommends that the proviso should now read:—

'Provided that if the incapacity lasts less than ten days no compensation shall be payable in respect of the first three days.'

10.3 The Committee further recommends that this proviso should be re-examined at the end of three or five years in the light of the experience gained by employers, workmen and insurance companies in its application."

It is in the light of these recommendations — which I think it will be agreed are extremely fair and which it should be remembered were unanimously accepted except for one dissenting member, on the question of a compromise solution — that certain points, arise. Firstly, the unanimous decision in favour of an incentive which is the thing the Committee decided to retain: the three-day waiting period. I think it will be agreed that there must be some incentive to the worker to keep himself fit, healthy and at work so long as his health is not impaired.

Secondly, the comparable legislation elsewhere. This is not generally appreciated, but it is a point brought out in the Report of the Venn Commission which I quoted from in the debate on the Second Reading. With your permission, Sir, I will quote paragraph 67 of that Report:

"Having heard the evidence on both sides, we recommend that, although it would put the industry on a different scale from all others in the Colony, 75 per cent. be substituted for the present figure. In most other parts be of the Caribbean the rate is 50 per cent, and we believe that nowhere else in the world are full wages taken as the initial basis for compensation".

It is largely in the light of that recommendation that the Committee considered legislation enacted elsewhere, and they have reported that St. Vincent is the only place which retains the waiting time found here. Members of the Committee put forward the point that invari-

ably in other parts of the Caribbean the initial basis is 50 per cent., except in Antigua, where it is 75 per cent. The same is true of North America and other countries. In North America it averages 66½ per cent., varying with industries, and elsewhere is 50 per cent. to 75 per cent.

Thirdly, there was this clear statement of the compromise reached. As the hon. Minister remarked on the Second Reading, there are obviously genuine cases where the worker is injured and is certainly eligible for compensation, but the injury or incapacity does not last as long as 12 days, which is at present the minimum accepted. The Advisory Committee took that into account, and took medical evidence on it, then compromised with the recommendation that the 12 days should be reduced to 10—which goes a long way towards meeting the Minister's point.

The fourth point arises out of that very clear recommendation. Having gone about their business of making this recommendation, the Committee said quite frankly — and this goes back to their earlier reference to criticisms — that it should be re-examined at the end of three or five years in the light of experience gained by employers, workmen and insurance companies in its application. One of their reasons why, I suggest, there should be this re-examination later is because most of their recommendations are for considerable increases — increases not only of the levels of earnings at which these rates should apply, but also of the rates of compensation payable.

There is another point arising out of this. Why should all the responsibility be placed on the employer, as it must be if Government's Amendments, as printed in the Bill, are accepted? What has happened is that we are asked to increase the level of earnings by 50 per cent., and the rates of compensation payable under

the Ordinance, and on top of that Government proposes to delete this proviso which, at the present moment, is the only safeguard for the employer.

I have no doubt that the recommendations of the Venn Commission must have been considered by the Advisory Committee which drafted our present legislation, but I do not know what arguments were adduced for and against a reduction of the initial compensation from 100 per cent. to 75 per cent. However, in the light of the consistency of the recommendations made by the Venn Commission, if the Government is determined to delete the proviso to 8(1) (d), then the only logical course is to go back to the subclauses (d) (1) to (4) in the Principal Ordinance, which set out the level of wages and the proportion of compensation payable, and recognize that those should be reduced. I am not suggesting that all rates of compensation should be reduced, but simply the initial one.

I would like to make the point that it is not as simple as saying, as did the hon. Minister, that the present legislation is unfair to workmen. I have already shown that the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance works more to the benefit of workmen in British Guiana than anywhere else in the world, as regards the initial rate; and if that is so, then the three-day waiting period, as has been agreed on by the Advisory Committee as being a reasonable compromise, should be retained in the light of the high level of that initial compensation.

Finally, I think we should remember that this Committee has reported almost unanimously, one member dissenting; and it was only very recently here, that the hon. Minister chided us vigorously, when we were discussing the Constitutional delegation, because we did not seem to accept the democratic principle of majority votes. I would ask the Minister to agree that when an Advisory Committee makes a recommendation — almost unanimous — with two out

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of three of the workers' representatives also agreeing, it is hardly reasonable for her to deny that Members on this side of the Table should expect that this recommendation, which has been so carefully considered, would be accepted by Government. If it is accepted, then there can be no argument with the Amendment which I now move.

Mrs. Jagan: The hon. Nominated Member referred to the question of democratic votes during our discussion on the selection of the Constitutional delegation. I was then referring to the question of adult suffrage and the reflection of those votes by the Elected Members of any Legislative Council. In this case, an Advisory Committee had been set up by the Government to advise. I think it is an accepted principle that Advisory Committees are for that very purpose — to advise — but not necessarily to dictate. In the case of this Advisory Committee it sent in an excellent report advising the Government, and the Government in its wisdom has accepted about 99 per cent. of its recommendations, but no Government is bound to accept every recommendation of any Advisory Committee. If that were so, there would be no need for a Government.

As Minister of Labour, I sit as an Elected Representative of the people to judge what is best for the Government and the people of the country. I give my views on the advice received, then I consult my Colleagues. There is a further examination of these views under the Chairmanship of His Excellency the Governor in Executive Council and then a decision is made. In this case, I mentioned to Members that a thorough discussion and examination of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee was held in the Ministry of Labour and in the Executive Council of Government.

We did not rush to make up our minds. We examined everything very, very carefully. I am quite sure that all factors were most carefully considered and weighed.

It is true that the Committee unanimously agreed to the reduction of the period from 12 days to 10 days, and it was for that very reason that I called in the T.U.C. and asked them what was their position, because I know that the T.U.C. had been clamouring for months for a removal of the three-day waiting period, yet their two members had supported its retention. I had them at the Ministry and said: "What am I to do as Minister of Labour? I have seen your resolutions on it and I have heard the need for this change at public meetings. That is why the Committee was set up with two members of the T.U.C. on it. What am I to do? If I come forward and agree to this report you will say that I have gone against the T.U.C. and if I do not follow the recommendation, as the hon. Nominated Member has said, then you will say I have not followed the recommendation of the Committee". I put it to the T.U.C. and they gave me a verbal suggestion as well as putting it in writing. I will read to you what the B.G.T.U.C. wrote on the 9th July, 1958:

"The T.U.C. accepts the Report as a good one and pledges to honour and support its implementation, but as you will realise the original stand of the T.U.C. on the removal of 3 days waiting period, forces the T.U.C. to be critical on that part of the recommendation of the Committee, however, as previously stated the T.U.C. would not oppose its implementation but will certainly support any governmental arrangements to remove the 3 days waiting period if Government thinks it advisable."

Therefore, the T.U.C. threw the ball into my lap and said: "You are the Minister of Labour, whatever you say we are with you. We will back you 100 per cent",

which they are so doing. So I am aware of the fact that the members of the T.U.C. had long felt the need for this change, and also aware of the fact that the member representing the M.P.C.A. had submitted a minority report removing himself from the recommendation of the majority report which deals only with the waiting period.

The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, has pointed out that we are the only country having 100 per cent. compensation and now we are making it more difficult for the employers by also removing the proviso for the 12-day period to the 10-day period recommended.

On many occasions in this Council we have asked whether we should or should not follow what exists in other territories. No doubt it is a good guide to use what exists in other territories or what does not exist, but at the same time we cannot be slavishly led by what exists in other areas. Sometimes British Guiana can be ahead of other areas and can be more progressive than other areas, and it is true that by the Bill before us, if it is accepted, we may be a little ahead of other territories in workmen's compensation legislation. What is wrong with that? If we have better laws for the protection of our workmen I think it is better for the country as a whole.

As I told Members on the last occasion, on no account would we urge any change in the law which would encourage malingering by an injured worker, or would we urge workers to be dishonest in relation to the law which protects them. I have said that it is the responsibility of the Government, the employers and the Trade Union Movement, to educate workers to their responsibility — that they must never take improper advantage of any law that is for their protection. I think that workers in the main appreciate this. Unfortunately, there are always one or two who would try to take improper advantage of the law. I reminded the hon. Member on the last occasion we spoke, that in my view removal of this

waiting period would improve the situation. As the law now stands, if a worker is injured, his injury must last for 12 days if he is to be paid for the first three days. But if that worker feels better by the sixth day and he knows that he has to be incapacitated for 12 days so as to be paid for the first three days, he may make it appear that he is still unable to work so as to get compensation for the first three days.

We have removed this incentive to dishonesty. Pay the worker if he is injured and unable to work. Why shouldn't he be paid his normal wages? He is not only suffering from an injury but he is unable to take his pay packet home. I also made the point last week that a normal human being does not seek an injury. A worker is not going to go out of his way to get injured unless he is mentally ill. An injury is usually the result of an accident; sometimes it is due to carelessness on the part of the worker, and sometimes the carelessness of the employer, but more frequently it is the result of an unanticipated event or obstacle.

I cannot agree with the Amendment. I do not feel that it would be in the interest of the workman whom this Bill is seeking to protect, nor do I think it would be in the best interest of the country or the employers to have this change made.

Mr. Tello: I am sorry to have to express the opinion that this Amendment is somewhat disappointing. The burden of the argument in its support is that we have at last led the world in this piece of social legislation. What is wrong with that? We have been struggling behind others for many years and at last we have found our true position and have started off by leading the world in social legislation. The Amendment is seeking to deprive a worker of a certain amount of his compensation unless he is incapacitated by injury to such an extent that he cannot work for 12 days. Let us remember that we are dealing with human beings, and it must not be lost sight of that

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when a worker is injured he is exposed to a certain amount of discomfiture, pain and probably mental worry. A good worker is always worried mentally when anything affects his efficiency. That is a heavy penalty which the worker faces. It may deprive him of his self-confidence; he may lose his desire to lead and to be an example to others because of his loss of confidence and his full capacity.

The point was made that with regard to the rate of compensation we are ahead of other countries, and possibly ahead of the world. We are rather late, and I am suggesting that we should keep it up. I doubt that an employer who knows that he has to pay an injured workman 100 per cent. of his wages, would neglect any effort to avoid an accident. I feel that we have a high degree of intelligence amongst our employers who are among the best in the world. I have dealt with them in negotiations and I find them intelligent, especially in their own interests, and it is recognized that accidents reduce efficiency, retard production and possibly have an effect on future development and profits. An employer, knowing that he must pay 100 per cent. of wages when an employee has had an accident, would be willing, I am sure, to spend a little more money on safety devices. I believe he would be ready and willing to co-operate with the workers or their representatives, or with Government in any educational programme to teach workers safety behaviour during their employment. He would be willing possibly to arrange film shows to demonstrate what is done in other countries to reduce the incidence of accidents during employment. He would encourage the setting up of Safety Committees to work for accident-free working time.

There is nothing wrong in an employer watching his own interests. It is quite true that two representatives of the T.U.C. sat on the Advisory Committee that made that recommendation, but I would dismiss it by saying that it is only

another of the many instances where compromises are made against the workers' interests. We are not ashamed to admit it. A compromise had to be reached, and we find that a representative of a very large body of employees differed from the other two union representatives and withdrew from the Committee's report the unanimity that was sought.

It is true that it was recommended that there should be an experiment with a further trial period of three to five years, but I am suggesting that while there should be a further period of trial it should be in the interest of the workers this time. In this case we are asking this Council to let the trial period be for three or five years, and if both the workers and the employers find that it is a failure we could give further consideration to it. At least this will be the first time in the history of trials in this country that the workers will enjoy some benefit.

This particular proviso has quite a history of agitation against it. I went into the records of the T.U.C. and found that they were never satisfied with it; they were talking about compensation from a different point of view. Later legislation was passed and this proviso was enacted, but from the day of its enactment the Trade Union Movement and every affiliate of the T.U.C. have been agitating against this waiting period. It is quite true that after the report of the Advisory Committee was tabled we met the Minister at her invitation, and what we wrote to her is perfectly true. In other words, what we wrote was that we are prepared to honour what our representatives have done, but we will not stop agitating until our representation bears fruit. I would say that the T.U.C. delegation left the Ministry of Labour feeling quite certain of the sympathy of the Minister, and when this Bill was introduced we felt extremely happy that the Minister was courageous enough to recognize the workers' plea, the justice in

their plea, and was prepared to bring this amending Bill before the Council.

I have obtained the full permission of my Council to support the Amendment in the Bill in preference to that now proposed by the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, and I do so feeling that I am doing this country and the working class people a sincere service.

Mr. Tasker: Mr. Chairman, I am not surprised that the hon. Minister is blushing. Seldom have we seen so many bouquets thrown at her. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, very properly spoke "in the workers' interests." The use of that phrase suggests that nobody else has the workers' interests at heart, and one of the reasons why I am pursuing so vigorously the consistency of the Report of the Workmen's Compensation Advisory Committee is that the Committee represented both employers and employees, and had presented constructive proposals. Those proposals were largely in the interests of the workers, and the hon. Minister said that she had accepted 99 per cent. of them. The other one per cent. happened to constitute something in the employers' interests and it is the large employer who is going to be penalized by this provision in this Bill — let me make that abundantly clear.

I think the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, is still a little confused about the actual working of the Ordinance.

But I hope that, as a result of his comments, we shall be getting in industry generally a vigorous approach to this whole problem of accident prevention by the B.G. Trades Union Council. I know they have the full co-operation of the Education Department, and I cannot think of anything better than increased prevention of accidents in industry at all times.

The hon. Minister inevitably took me up on my reference to other countries' legislation, and we had the old story of slavish imitation of other people's laws; but I am sure she will remember that a number of Bills have been introduced in this Chamber by Government — and it is surprising how often — to bring our legislation into line with that of other countries. Not so long ago — I think it was during the debate on the Land Bonds Bill — it was pointed out that Jamaica had similar legislation and therefore we should have it in B.G. Time and again we bring our legislation into line with legislation existing in the United Kingdom, and only recently the hon. Minister herself made great play of the Labour (Amendment) Bill, which included I.L.O. provisions, to bring us up to the higher levels of labour legislation. I wish I had the time to find out what the I.L.O. accepts as the rate of initial compensation, because, in fact, as things stand at the moment, throughout the British Caribbean area a rate of 50 per cent. is accepted, the only exception being Antigua.

Frankly, I am not impressed by the argument that because B.G. is ahead in this field, I am therefore being unfair in criticizing this particular provision. I think the only thing that is unfair is, if this Bill goes through in its present form, we shall deliberately be penalizing employers by refusing to accept that if we are going to make them pay an unduly high initial rate of compensation, then we should recognise this by retaining the waiting period. For this reason I urge the Committee to support my Amendment.

The Chairman: I shall put the Amendment, which is the deletion of Clause 3 (1) (h) and the substitution therefor of the following.

"(h) by the substitution for the word 'twelve' in the proviso to paragraph (d) of the word 'ten'."

The Committee divided and voted as follows:

| <i>For</i> | <i>Against</i> |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Mr. Tasker | Mr. Bowman |
| Mr. Davis. — 2 | Mr. Hubbard |
| | Mr. Tello |
| | Mr. Gajraj |
| | Mr. Jackson |
| | Mr. Burnham |
| <i>Did not vote</i> | Mr. Ajodha Singh |
| | Mr. Saffee |
| Mr. Campbell.—1. | Mr. Rai |
| | Mr. Ram Karran |
| | Mrs. Jagan |
| | Mr. Benn |
| | The Financial Secretary |
| | The Attorney-General |
| | The Chief Secretary. |
| | — 15 |

The Chairman : The Amendment is lost.

Question put, and agreed to.

Clause 3 passed as printed.

Clauses 4 to 9 passed as printed.

Council resumed.

Mrs. Jagan : Sir, I beg to report that the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill, 1960, has been considered in Committee and passed without amendment, and I beg to move that the Bill be now read the Third time.

Mr. Ram Karran : I beg to second the Motion.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read the Third time and passed.

FREEHOLD TITLE ON A HIRE-PURCHASE BASIS

Mr. Speaker: Next is the Motion standing in the name of the hon. Member for Demerara River, as follows:

"Whereas the social and economic system which prevails in British Guiana is patterned on that of the Western World, India and Pakistan and provides for free enterprise and the ownership of property;

And whereas the policy of the Majority Party of the Government is opposed to freehold ownership of land:

Be it resolved : That this Council urges upon the Government that freehold title on a reasonable hire-purchase basis be granted to —

- (i) farmers in respect of land they now occupy in Government Land Settlement Schemes; and
- (ii) persons occupying Crown Lands for farming."

Mr. Bowman : This Motion represents a clash of the land policies of the Progressive Liberal Party and the People's Progressive party — the Majority Party. I presume it is well known throughout this country that the P.P.P. is opposed to freehold ownership of land.

It may be argued by them that their policy affects only Land Settlement Schemes, but as far as I know, that is not so. If any such argument is adduced by them, I would regard it merely as a tactical camouflage and manoeuvre. If they say that that is the policy now, it will I say, only be the policy until independence is won, and after that time the general intention of the Party will reveal itself. I have no doubt that what I am saying is true.

The People's Progressive Party, as far as I know, is wholly opposed to freehold ownership of land. The first step to deny the people of that ownership is the introduction of Government's land settlement policy. The total land area of this country is 83,000 square miles. The experts have said that we are only occupying about 1/5 of the total area along the coastal strip of this country. I do not see, therefore, any reason why the freehold ownership of land must be denied the inhabitants of this country. If the land along the sea coast is insufficient to be distributed among the inhabitants of the country then, by all means, Government should make it possible for the people to penetrate the interior and exploit the possibility of being able to settle there so that all can get as much land as they want.

The land which is along the coast is to be given out in small parcels. Of course, they talk about fragmentation and all sorts of things. I am not concerned about that. What I am advocating is that the lands which are to be given out soon should be given freehold title. I am asking that they be given title on a reasonable hire-purchase basis. That is my contention. I am trying to suggest that these people be given a reasonable way to own lands. The basic rent or rents that are obtained should be credited to the purchase account of the settlers, so that when the total cost has been covered, transport would be given to them. That is what I am asking.

I have been to Australia—and that is one of the things for which I must thank the P.P.P., because had it not been for the preponderance of their votes I would not have gone there — and I did some research whilst I was there. It seems to me that this Government, which professes to be the champions of the masses, would like to retain, in fact, in my opinion they want to establish State Feudalism. I will quote two paragraphs extracted from the Australian Encyclopaedia, which I brought back with me, to prove my case. On the question of land ownership :

“Under the common law of England the ownership of all land in the realm is theoretically vested in the reigning sovereign. This theory is traceable to the Norman Conquest, which afforded an opportunity for the King to assume personal ownership of the conquered territory, and to let his subjects into possession of parts of the land only on terms of rendering feudal services to himself. They “held” their land of the King, and the form of ownership accordingly known as a tenure or tenement. These feudal services were originally very valuable to the King, but they virtually disappeared during the Stuart period and only a bare theory now remains. For all practical purposes land became ownable by subjects absolutely.”

The second paragraph which I will now quote concerns freehold ownership of land. It says :

“The form of tenure known as a freehold was so called because it was the

holding of a free man. As distinct from the tenures which were allowed to villeins or serfs, a freehold was heritable — it descended to the heirs of the tenant. The most important freehold tenure — in fact the most important of all land tenures — is the estate in fee simple. It is mainly distinguishable from other forms of tenure in that it is capable of enduring for ever. An estate in fee simple comes to an end only when the current owner dies intestate without leaving an ascertainable lawful relative. It is then said to escheat to the Crown.

Estates in fee simple are said to be the nearest approach to absolute ownership of land, the owner having almost complete dominion over it. The tendency of modern statute law, however, is to restrict not only the owner's power of disposing of his land but also the uses to which he can put it.”

The principle of free enterprise still exists in this country. A man can invest his money in various forms. Some people prefer to invest their life savings in land; some buy properties. Let us take the civil servant, for example. He works with the Government for quite a number of years and then he decides to retire. In fact, his time for retirement arrives and he retires. Government sometimes give him a gratuity and a pension. That man decides to invest his gratuity in land because he realises that the value of land is rising. You may say that this is irrelevant; but I am trying to make the point to refer to the Land Bonds Ordinance and the Land Acquisition Ordinance. A man acquires his land from his savings but he may not have had the means to develop it, and Government steps in and takes it away from him.

The next move is that Government does not have the money to pay for the land and issues a bond for 25 years and, I understand, that period can be extended for another five years. What happens to the man and the money he has invested during that time? A man, after he has invested his money and becomes the owner of land, can carry his transport to the bank or to any money-lender and borrow money to develop his land or to do anything else with the

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money he has so borrowed. I want to ask the Government if they can give me the assurance that any one of the settlers on any of the Government Land Settlement Schemes can take the contract given to them by Government and go to any bank or moneylender and produce it and ask for a loan? Not even the Credit Corporation lends money on lease land. That is one of the greatest disadvantages of leases. If we are thinking of becoming self-rulers, then, by all means, we should also become owners of the land.

I feel it is the right of each individual in this country to own a piece of land by deed; and if it is the intention of Government to own all the land, then we are going to hear of expropriation without compensation and all sort of things in the future. I am sure that that is behind the minds of the members of the P.P.P., and that is why I am demanding, by this Motion, that title be given to all the land settlers on Government Land Settlement Schemes and also to farmers who are at present occupying and who, in future, will occupy Crown lands for farming.

There is another example which I will like to quote. As far as I gather, three of the oldest land settlements can be found on the West Coast of Demerara. Let me start from the east and go west. They are: Plantations Windsor Forest, La Jealousie and Hague. These are three Government land settlement schemes. From information, I gather that these settlements started in 1912. The settlers were charged \$6 per acre for the land and were given 99-year leases.

I would like to show that although Government tries to impress upon the people that it is offering them security of tenure for 21 or 25 years, this Government cannot be relied upon at all. I am not only referring to the present Government but to its predecessors also, because some of the 99-year leases have been reduced by Government which, apparently, has no regard for the pledged

word. I have seen some of the leases signed by Governor Thomson and Governor Lethem, which were subsequently reduced from 99 to 21 years. I know the argument will be adduced that that is only done when a lessee sells his rights to another person. But what is wrong about a man selling his rights to another? If an ordinary man committed a breach of contract he would be taken before the Court, but it is not so with Government which is all-powerful. What it does is law, and it is for that reason I am saying that no one can rely upon the Government because there is really no security of tenure. The only security is in the freehold ownership of land.

Government has not only reduced the period of leases but has increased the rental from \$6 to \$15 per acre, which I feel is quite unfair and inequitable. A 50 per cent. increase would have been far more reasonable. If a private landlord did that he would be taken before the Court, but Government is supreme and there is no appeal against its decision.

To show that there is no real security of tenure where Government is concerned, I would like to quote from "The Daily Argosy" of the 7th of February a statement made by the Leader of the Majority Party at his Saturday Press Conference. It says :

"The Hon. Cheddi Jagan, Minister of Trade and Industry, announced yesterday that Government had decided on the annual rentals to be charged in respect of land on land settlement schemes. In a statement to the Press the Minister pointed out that for new land settlements a basic rental of 25 cents per acre plus improvement charges according to the fertility of the soil based on the rates in the First Schedule of the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance, less 25 cents per acre, plus the services charges in accordance with the rates in the Fifth Schedule of the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance. The service charges would be subject to annual review.

For old land settlements the basic rental of 25 cents per acre plus an improvement charge of \$7.25, plus a service charge of \$7.50—the charges to be based on the

amounts charged for similar lands under the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance".

I quote this to show what is happening already on the land settlement schemes. I refer particularly to the three land settlements on the West Coast—Windsor Forest, La Jalousie and Hague. The Minister has announced that the rentals fixed under the Rice Farmers (Security of Tenure) Ordinance will be charged on all Government land settlement schemes, but the settlers on those schemes were given a different undertaking when they leased the lands in 1912.

It is my Party's intention to ask that lands leased to settlers on all Government land settlement schemes be sold to the settlers on a reasonable hire-purchase basis. For the record, I would like to refer to the settlements I particularly have in mind. They are the Corentyne land settlement scheme at Blocks 1, 11 and 111, the land development schemes at Mara, Onverwagt, West Coast, Berbice, Cane Grove, Garden of Eden, Windsor Forest, La Jalousie, Hague, Vergenoegen, Boerasirie Extension Project, Anna Regina, Charity-Amazon, Tapacooma Lake and all other schemes when they are completed. I wish to emphasize that I am urging that the lands on all Government land settlements, present and future, should be sold to the settlers on a hire-purchase basis. I suggest that the basic rents paid by the settlers should be credited towards the purchase price for the land, and that the settlers should be given title when the full amount is paid.

I would like to make reference to the case of a settler named Sukra who was granted a lease for 99 years, but when he went to renew his lease in accordance with Government's requirement, the term of his lease was reduced to 21 years and his rental increased from \$6 to \$15 per acre. I feel that that was quite unreasonable. If there was a hire-purchase scheme in existence at the time those

lands were given out to settlers, they would have been the owners of the lands today, but in spite of the fact that most of them have been paying rents from 1912 to 1959 they do not own the land, and, under the Land Acquisition Ordinance, Government can take away those lands if it wishes, and the settlers can do nothing about it.

All the rents which they have paid over all these years have brought them nothing. That is why I am advocating that the Government should adopt my suggestion and sell the lands to these people on a reasonable hire-purchase basis. I have more to say on this question, but I reserve it for my reply.

Mr. Beharry: I rise to second this Motion. This Motion requests the Government to approve freehold ownership to cultivation plots and household plots on land settlement schemes, but the Mover of the Motion stated that Land Settlement Schemes should be made freehold on a hire-purchase basis. I intend at a later stage to move an amendment to delete the term "hire-purchase", and to amplify on the resolve clause by asking that all Land Settlement Schemes should come within the provisions sought in this Motion.

I am supporting this Motion because I believe in private ownership of property. Our country, under-developed or undeveloped as it is, needs every incentive for those in whose hands we place the task of production. The economy of this country, as we all know, is an agricultural one. Sixty-eight per cent. of the export of this country is represented by agricultural products, and the two main lines of production are sugar and rice. The Development Programme is based on borrowings and much interest has to be paid on what is borrowed. It is argued that in this Programme emphasis has been placed on the productive sector—and the productive sector is the agricultural sector.

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In order to raise the economic standard and increase the purchasing power of our people we have to create as many incentives as possible. I know that arguments are going to be put forward by Government and authorities will be quoted, such as Professor W. Arthur Lewis, in favour of leasehold ownership.

Mr. Speaker: It looks as though we have no quorum. I may have to adjourn, as Members do not seem to have much interest.

[*Members return*].

Mr. Beharry: Mr. Speaker, your observation was very timely. It does appear that some representatives of the people have no interest in such an important Motion. I say their absence was intentional.

To continue, if authorities are going to be cited and arguments raised on behalf of leasehold ownership let me say now that they are going to be a mere play of words. We know that words and phrases can be used to distort meanings and intentions.

This is one of the issues that caused me to be on this side of the Table. It is on this very issue that I had to leave the Government. However, nothing lasts in this world. As I said on previous occasions in this Council, as time goes on this Government will prove to be merely a smudge on the pages of the history of this country. One of the reasons why this Government does not accept the idea of freehold ownership of land in this country—and I say this without fear of contradiction—is because it has been argued time and time again in the People's Progressive Party's caucus, of which I have been a member, that “we must not develop a consciousness for the ownership of property in this country as it does not fit in with our ideological and philosophical beliefs.” In my view any argument which is put forward today in

favour of leasehold ownership is superficial, and just an indication of the philosophy of the P.P.P.

Not long ago in this Legislative Council when the Land Bonds Bill was being debated, I stated that the purpose of that Bill was to acquire land because this Government kept complaining that it had no money. The Government stated that as it had no money, it could not purchase lands. That Land Bonds Bill was written by me, even though it was introduced by the present Minister of Natural Resources. The Bill was complementary to another Bill seeking freehold ownership but the latter Bill was “killed”. “We are not to make our people become conscious of the ownership of property”.

Large sums of money have been ear-marked for further land settlement schemes and the Black Bush Polder scheme, parts of which are to be allotted this year, will cost this Government nothing less than about \$14,000,000. That money will be borrowed money, and interest and capital will have to be paid. This Motion calls on Government, in effect, to sell the Black Bush Polder scheme to the settlers on a long-term basis extending over a number of years. Government in such a way would be able to get back every penny of the money spent on the scheme. Economically, it would be good policy for Government to accept this Motion. I would urge the Government, to implement this Motion and forget about their ideology. This country is too poor to be worried about by ideologies, and ideologies mean little to the starving masses, whom we often hear the Majority Party say it cares for.

At present Land Settlement Schemes are all losing money. Every one of them is being run at the expense of the general taxpayers. If those lands were freehold we might have been saving more money for use in the Development Programme, which, in turn, would have been receiving more assistance.

We see the Government advocating the Marshall Plan. We see that we are to have a new rural administrative system in the Marshall Plan. What is going to happen? An anomaly is going to be created in that you will see, in the rural districts, lands which are freehold and leasehold, and both freehold and leasehold individuals paying taxes in areas to be administered by local authorities. Then the people with freehold lands will definitely have an advantage over the individuals with leasehold lands. Here, again, is another reason why, in the interest of the people of the country, we should make all land settlement schemes freehold. The policy on all land settlement schemes today is 15 acres of cultivation plot and two acres of household plot. It has been brought to my notice that household lands would be given freehold.

I cannot see Government advocating freehold ownership for cultivation plots. I cannot see why we should separate a cultivation plot from a household plot. The present Government, if it adopts such a policy of making household plots freehold and cultivation plots leasehold, will be creating a condition on land settlement schemes whereby settlers will find themselves in a difficult position. They will mortgage their household plots and they will have no place to live. On the other hand, you will see emerging from the land settlement schemes individuals owning freehold plots and having no cultivation plots. That is why I say that if the Government argue that it is their intention to make household plots freehold, I say, there again, an anomaly will be created. Conditions are going to be created which would work against the settlers on these schemes.

I do not advocate that land should be made freehold without some condition. The Government is aware that conditions can be made with respect to freehold ownership in order to make sure that fragmentation does not take place on these land settlement schemes. I say

that conditions should be made to prevent fragmentation on these schemes. Reservations should also be made to prevent aggregation, that is, settlers buying other settlers' lands and making large estates; and I say the basic issue is ownership of property and not the use of that property. The basis of this particular Motion is not the use of property but the ownership of that property, because the use of that property can always be safeguarded against. Fragmentation can be safeguarded against; abandonment can be safeguarded against; aggregation can be safeguarded against. Therefore, I say again, if Government should make any excuse that they do not want to create aggregation, abandonment and fragmentation on these schemes, these can be safeguarded against in any freehold purchase agreement. But this Motion is getting down to the most fundamental issue that, today, has caused the West Indian colonies to progress whilst British Guiana still remains in the background, economically.

We see, today, that this policy—this policy that hits at the basis of progress—has prevented this country from moving forward like the West Indian territories. As soon as one opens the newspapers these days one reads of independence. Jamaica is not an independent territory, but we do know that her standard of living is higher than that of British Guiana's. We know she has been prospering, economically. There has been great migration of industry in that territory. So when this Government lays blame for our economic backwardness at the door of independence, that is just beclouding the issue in the sense that our people should not realize that it is the ineptitude and backward policy of the present Government that are responsible for their economic condition.

If this Government argue that there are large tracts of land owned by people that are not in use, and that is why they do not want private ownership, I say again that laws can be enacted to tax

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lands which are not beneficially used. But why take away the lands from the people? That is why I made the earlier remark that the fundamental issue is ownership of property and not the use of the property; because, if it is to be argued that we do not advocate freehold ownership, it will be beclouding the issue. This Government has been adopting a land policy that has been extremely detrimental to progress and production. We do hear that production in rice is rising. We read that from time to time, but I want to warn this Government that when a man is not working he can accept a job without conditions, but when he gets employed, then he will become conscious of the conditions that are attached to the job.

We have more land in British Guiana than our people can occupy, and because of that this Government thinks that the people are contented with leasehold land. Who does not want to make sure that that which he has turned from a wilderness into a flourishing cultivation can be passed on to his generation? This Government is keeping this country back. Freehold creates a greater incentive. Man would develop the land when he knows it is his and can be handed to those who belong to him when he would have gone to the Great Beyond.

I said before, that with the implementation of the Marshall Plan, people who are on land settlement schemes will be at a serious disadvantage in that when a man owns his land, freehold, he uses it and can pass it on to his relatives or widow or anyone else, but when a man occupies leasehold land, no one can deny that that is not ownership in as much as there may be protective clauses. Any agreement can be made between two people or two nations. History has recorded that agreements are broken with no redress. But when the land belongs to a man, no agreement is necessary.

I said before, that it was at the Congress of the P.P.P. that it was decided

that people would not be permitted to own property because it does not fit in with the philosophy of the Party; and I know there are members who sit on the other side of the Table, who do not agree with the Party on that score but they dare not vote in favour of this Motion. When I brought this matter up in the Party's caucus, they supported me. I was supported by members sitting, today, on the Government's side.

Mr. Bowman: Call their names!

Mr. Beharry: I do not want to be personal. I never liked to be personal; but I would like the country to know that one cannot destroy what is clean, pure and true. I know they will emerge, but as I said before, time and history will tell.

Mr. Speaker: Speak to the Motion!

Mr. Beharry: This Motion is dependent, very strongly, on the behaviour of the Government. I referred to individuals sitting on the other side of the Table as members of the Government and I made mention of the belief of Members on the other side of the Table in relation to this Motion, and I strongly believe that the time will not be far distant when the democratic forces—forces that believe in freedom, forces that do not believe in the word 'freedom' but really in the meaning of the word 'freedom'—will emerge and justice will be done in our country.

This question of land ownership is a very important issue in the country; important in the sense that the very minimum standard of every individual is tied up with it. I would like the Council to realize the seriousness of it. I say that every Guianese is involved in this Motion because every land settlement scheme that has been or will be undertaken by the Government involves expenditure of money. Because of the present policy not to sell these lands and recoup the cost of putting them into beneficial use, every taxpayer will have

to bear the cost of bringing them into production.

Mr. Speaker: In another two minutes you will need a Motion to permit you to continue.

Mr. Beharry: I shall reserve some of my remarks on the Motion when I shall have moved an Amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Can you? You have to consider whether, having seconded the Motion, you can move an Amendment to it. Having seconded the Motion and spoken on it, the question is whether you can move an Amendment. Some difficulty will arise there, and I think you will find the Standing Rules against you.

Mr. Beharry: When I got up I said that I rose to second the Motion but I would like to move an Amendment at a later stage.

Mr. Speaker: That was only a pious hope. You should have allowed someone else to second the Motion. Anyway, that person may move your Amendment for you. You still have a few minutes. I did not say anything then because I thought you were hoping to get the Mover of the Motion either to agree to an Amendment, or you would have got someone else to move it.

Mr. Beharry: I really thought the Mover of the Motion would have accepted my Amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Perhaps he might.

Mr. Beharry: I mentioned it hoping that the Mover would have accepted my suggestion to substitute "instalment" for "hire-purchase."

Mr. Speaker: He probably will; I do not know.

Mr. Beharry: Having said this I will reserve part of my remarks on my Amendment to the Motion.

Mr. Speaker: If and when such an Amendment is moved you will have the right to speak again, if it is moved by someone other than yourself.

Mr. Beharry: I say again that in recent times we have had several important individuals coming to British Guiana and speaking on the development of our country, and each and everyone has observed a lack of co-ordination and interest on the part of the people, quite unlike what has been happening in the West Indian territories. I lay the blame for that at the feet of the present Government in not being able to create conditions whereby it can move the inhabitants of the country as a whole towards economic progress. I can blame no one else but the Government, because it is the Government of every country that generates the social and economic progress of the country. We have had the opportunity of a visit by the Chairman of one of the largest companies in this country who has observed that, unlike the West Indian territories, there has not been any concerted effort towards economic progress in this country.

Who is responsible for this? I say it is the present Government. Through its attitude and irresponsible behaviour, it has not been able to move the people of this country towards economic and political independence. Rather than our people being given an incentive to create wealth so that there can be more to be shared, we only read of what is not practicable; we read about the clamour for independence. I presume we will use the "Queriman" as a warship, because when we become independent we will need a navy. I notice that there is a Motion suggesting that a name should be found for a politically independent British Guiana.

Mr. Speaker: You cannot anticipate another Motion. I think your time is up. You will have to get someone to move a Motion to allow you to continue.

Mr. Tello: I move that the hon. Member be permitted to continue his speech for another 20 minutes.

Mr. Speaker: That would not be practicable because the time for adjournment is five o'clock.

Mr. Davis: I beg to second the Motion.

Mr. Speaker: We will only go up to five o'clock.

Mr. Tello: I suggest 20 minutes more—five minutes this afternoon and 15 minutes tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker: No, until the adjournment. You can move another Motion tomorrow, or whenever we meet again.

Mr. Tello: I will therefore amend my Motion to read "until the adjournment."

Agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We cannot have a Rule in our Standing Orders and then from time to time make nonsense of that Rule. If we want to do that then we must strike it out. If the Rule is there, then it is there for some purpose.

Mr. Beharry: The economic progress of this country is tied up with land development. In the Budget Statement presented by the Financial Secretary we heard him say that land development and the agricultural sector is of great importance to the economic pro-

gress of this country, and will be so for quite some time. Agricultural production is closely allied to the ownership of land and the relationship with the individual using it. We cannot dissociate the individual from the land. I have said before, and I would like to emphasize now, that whenever we open our newspapers, rather than a directive from the Government to the people of the country towards its economic progress, we find the Government telling us that our present economic condition is due to the political situation. I consider that it is the backward outlook of the present Government, its disinterestedness in the progress of the country, that is responsible for our lack of economic progress.

This Government is not concerned about improvement of the standard of living of our people, and irresponsible statements which are being made do not tend towards economic progress. All we hear about is "independence now." How are we going to maintain independence? Acquiring something is one thing; maintaining what you acquire is another. I would say that lack of experience, political immaturity and ignorance are responsible for our present economic condition.

Mr. Speaker: Will you speak to the Motion? If you do not I shall have to ask you to stop. It is now five o'clock.

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

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