

# LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

(Constituted under the British Guiana.  
(Constitution) (Temporary Provisions)  
Order in Council, 1953).

THURSDAY, 18TH APRIL, 1957

The Council met at 2 p.m.

## PRESENT:

*His Honour the Speaker:*

Sir Eustace Gordon Woolford,  
O.B.E., Q.C.

*Ex-Officio Members:*

The Hon. the Chief Secretary,  
Mr. F. D. Jakeway, C.M.G., O.B.E.

The Hon. the Attorney General,  
Mr. A. M. I. Austin.

The Hon. the Financial Secretary,  
Mr. F. W. Essex.

*Nominated Members of Executive  
Council:*

The Hon. Sir Frank McDavid,  
C.M.G., C.B.E. (Member for Agriculture,  
Forests, Lands and Mines).

The Hon. G. A. C. Farnum, O.B.E.  
(Member for Local Government, Social  
Welfare and Co-operative Development).

The Hon. R. C. Tello

*Nominated Official:*

Mr. J. I. Ramphal.

*Nominated Unofficials:*

Mr. L. A. Luckhoo, Q.C.

Mr. C. A. Carter

Mr. E. F. Correia.

Mr. H. Rahaman

Dr. H. A. Fraser

Mr. R. B. Jailal

Mr. Sugrim Singh

*Clerk of the Legislature:*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing,

*Assistant Clerk of the Legislature:*

Mr. E. V. Viapree.

*Absent:*

The Hon. P. A. Cummings (Member  
for Labour, Health and Housing).

The Hon. W. O. R. Kendall (Member  
for Communications and Works).

The Hon. R. B. Gajraj

Mr. T. Lee—on leave.

Mr. W. A. Phang—on leave.

Rev. D. C. J. Bobb.

Miss Gertie H. Collins.

Mrs. Esther E. Dey—on leave.

Mr. W. T. Lord, I.S.O.—on leave

The Speaker read prayers.

The Minutes of the meeting of the  
Council held on Wednesday, 17th April,  
1957, as printed and circulated, were  
taken as read and confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Mr. Speaker:** Mrs. Dey nas asked to be excused from today's meeting.

## PAPERS LAID

**The Chief Secretary** (Mr. Jake-way): I beg to lay on the table:

The Annual Report of the Commissioner of the Interior for the year 1955.

## ORDER OF THE DAY

## ACQUISITION OF LAND (LAND SETTLEMENT) BILL

The Council resumed the debate on the second reading of the Bill intitled:

"An Ordinance to repeal and re-enact the Acquisition of Land (Land Settlement) Ordinance."

**Sir Frank McDavid** (Member for Agriculture, Forests, Lands and Mines): Since the adjournment, Sir, it has come to my knowledge that there exist many apprehensions concerning some aspects of the Bill. Indeed, some of the facts on which the debate has proceeded appear to be wrong, and some of the conclusions also appear to be wrong, and I think it might help to clear the air if, before we proceed further with the debate, I afford Members an opportunity for a private discussion on the Bill. Some talk has already taken place, but I am not sure that it is welcomed by all the Members. If it is, we might adjourn the debate for a while for such a discussion to take place. I am just throwing out a suggestion; it is for Members to say whether they wish it or not. Personally I think it would help to clear the air quite a lot.

**Mr. Speaker:** The debate having commenced, I am afraid it would be against practice for the mover of the

Bill to suggest that the resumption of the debate be adjourned. I do not think I have ever heard of such a procedure, but of course my experience is limited. Now that we have heard the hon. Member's statement on the Bill, other Members who are not Members of the Executive Administration have intimated to me that they desire to speak on the Bill, and I think it would be the proper course to afford them an opportunity to speak on it as it appears to them. Mr. Jailal and Dr. Fraser have already given way to Mr. Sugrim Singh who will resume his address today. There are other Members who I know would like to speak. What their position would be when the debate is resumed I do not know. They may be ill and not be able to be present. I think we should see how far the debate goes. I quite appreciate the hon. Member's desire that there should be no misapprehensions about the Bill and what it means. I would suggest that we see how the stream runs. I think that is the proper course.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It would be a matter for the other Members, not for me.

**Mr. Speaker:** It is hoped that in an important Bill like this any ideas Members may have for opposing it could be resolved. If it is to be of any possible benefit to the community I think it is much better to have a little airing of what the other side feels on the policy.

**Mr. Sugrim Singh:** Yesterday afternoon when the debate was adjourned I was developing the point as to why the sugar estates were using their front lands, in some cases for planting cassava, and in other cases for cultivating rice. I want to ask the hon. Mover of the Bill what efforts have been made, if any, since the debate on the motion in 1951 with respect to sugar estate lands? The first resolution of that motion, which was not accepted by the Council, read:

"Be it resolved that this Council recommend to Government that either the leases for lands not beneficially occupied be withdrawn or the rental be increased to a figure commensurate with the rate levied for other Government lands."

The second resolution, which was passed by 11 votes to 4, read:

"Be it further resolved that this Council recommend that Government enter negotiations with the Sugar Producers' Association with the view of obtaining freehold title to estate-owned lands on which extra-nuclear houses are to be built in exchange for absolute grants of equivalent areas of land now leased."

As hon. Members will observe, that resolution called for negotiation with the sugar producers—not compulsory acquisition of their lands. I would like to know, and I think the Council would be interested to know, if any such negotiations have ever taken place with the Sugar Producers Association, and with what result. I want to make it perfectly clear that in opening the case for the opposition to this Bill I did not wish to be partial to any landlord or any big business concern in dealing with this matter. What I am saying, and with some conviction, is that there is absolutely no necessity for such a Bill.

I have read extracts from the World Bank Report to show that only to a depth of 1½ miles in the County of Demerara and 2½ miles on the Corentyne were the front lands on sugar estates freehold property, acquired in many cases during the times of the Dutch. I am also saying that the rest of the lands throughout the Counties of Demerara and Berbice are Crown Lands which were leased during the period of the Dutch occupation to the original owners of those sugar estates at 5 cents per acre or two Dutch stivers. My point is that even if the proprietors of the sugar estates would like to expand their cultivation of sugar they are anchored down by the sugar quota. Years ago we had the case of sugar

estates actually manufacturing sugar in excess of the Colony's quota, and having to throw the surplus down the drain. It is not so in the case of rice or any other agricultural produce in this country. We can produce all the rice we can. As a matter of fact we have periodical shortages of rice, and I recall reading in the "Trinidad Guardian" very trenchant criticisms of the irregular supplies of rice from this country to Trinidad. I also have a recollection of reading a suggestion that Trinidad should import rice from the U.S.A. My friend, Mr. Jailal, is better informed on that point, and I do not wish to trespass upon his "portfolio".

The point I am making is that in the case of sugar there is a limitation of production which does not apply to any other agricultural produce. As a result of the sugar quota large areas of land which were under cane cultivation under the old Dutch tenancy are lying idle through no fault of the sugar estate proprietors. In our own time we have found the sugar estate authorities willing to co-operate in any move to relieve any land shortage in this country. It is on record that four sugar estates, notably Schoon Ord and Versailles on the West Bank, and Albion on the Corentyne, have thrown in their lot with certain schemes and sold their lands to Government at \$1 per acre. We also have the case of Cane Grove. I would therefore like to know from the hon. Mover of the Bill how far have negotiations proceeded between the Government and the sugar estate proprietors with a view not to planting cassava and rice and then destroying the crops, not to have the nice foreshore lands which are suitable for building houses lying barren and idle, but with a view to asking them across the table to consider a business proposition to take over thousands of acres of land which are not under cane cultivation. In view of the solemn vows given to the Dutch at the

time of the capitulation in 1803, and ratified by the Treaty of 1814, I think it would be improper to pursue this compulsory acquisition of land.

But, Sir, outside of Law there is what I know, and every Member of this Council knows, as Equity, and we have heard of the maxim "Where Law and Equity meet Equity prevails". Here there are thousands of acres either paying 5 cents per acre or 50 cents per acre if cultivated. Is it not an equitable approach — the villages nearby are crowded and there are people who would like to remove from the slum areas — for Government to say to the sugar estates, "Here it is you occupy all these lands and your production is limited to a quota of so many thousand tons; it therefore follows that until such time that you get an increase of quota for sugar there is no necessity for you to have all these areas of land?" Is it not an equitable approach across the table to go to those people and say "We are jammed for land for housing, why send us to Boerasirie and Tapacooma, away from human habitation to get land. Frank Brown himself in his report said he does not believe in settling people away from human habitation, and when you give them land and house you must carry with it medical and social services.

**Mr. Speaker :** Must I assume, Mr. Sugrim Singh, that the motion has in view those distant lands? It does not necessarily mean that the object is to go to those outlying places.

**Mr. Sugrim Singh:** The motion relates to any suitable lands. The hon. Mover of the motion in opening the discussion made reference to the World Bank Mission's Report and the riverain lands. I ask you to take judicial

notice of that, though I agree entirely with you that no mention has been made of that in the Bill. My point is, that negotiations with the sugar estates, which have large areas of land in good sites which can be used for effective land settlement not too far away from human habitation, can be made. To be specific, we have crowding in Georgetown and we want to have land settlements for the people. Are we going to find ourselves at Garden of Eden, sublime as the name is, and leave lands where you have lights, the nice ozone of the sea, easy and efficient conveyance on the spot and medical attendance? But no, Sir, cassava must be planted on those lands of the sugar estates. Cassava is more important than human beings. I fail to see where in such negotiations the sugar estate proprietors will make a hard bargain with Government. It has been proved in our time that they are willing to go to the rescue of Government. Has Government explored these possibilities? I would like the hon. Member to relieve my anxiety on this very important point. Since this resolve clause was passed years ago calling for negotiation with the sugar estates, I would like to know on this question of the acquisition of land for land settlement whether any approach has been made to the sugar estates to come to the rescue of Government and with what results.

No approach has been made to Sugar to come to the rescue of the Colony, and here I must agree with the axiom of the hon. Mover that where the interest of the community clashes with the interest of the landlord the interest of the community must prevail. I may have quoted him wrong, but that is my impression of what he said. Here you have the interest of the community, this interest of people who have worked up their estates, who converted them from swamps infested by reptiles and

mosquitoes and who before the advent of D.D.T., lost their lives in thousands in developing those estates. Is it equitable if not legal to call upon those people, to meet the call of the masses to assist in this situation? I refuse to believe the Sugar Producers are so unconscionable as not to rise to the occasion. I cannot believe that. Under the Sugar Welfare Fund the very sugar estates are now removing the shacks and barracks which housed their workers and have outlived their time. Go to Pln. Blairmont and there you feel you are traveling along an English countryside.

Leave the sugar estates. What has Government done to negotiate with the small proprietors? In law a man who owns 20 acres of land is a landlord. These very people were originally tenants, indentured immigrants and ex-slaves. What has Government done to negotiate with them? I must come to the point. I am reliably informed by the owners themselves that in the case of Henrietta, etc., Government actually as the result of inspection made their own offer and soon after the owners accepted Government's offer. There was no question of the owners trying to be impossible. It was Government's own offer. The owners accepted it, and then Government turned around and said it was not going to buy anything. It cannot be said that the small landlords are trying to be impossible. I cannot believe that unless the facts I have stated are denied, and I know that no one dares to deny them. I think in all fairness to the hon. Mover of the motion I should state that he referred to those estates—Vrouw Anna and Henrietta in Leguan.

It has been suggested that the necessity for this Bill has arisen as the result of private landlords trying to be impossible and asking for fabulous prices. I think the hon. Mover was developing the question of the steep rise in prices in land. I do not wish to mis-

quote the hon. Member or to mislead this Council. But, the impression given was that as a result there was a steep rise in prices. Inflation is the world over. No one is responsible for the upward trend of prices. It is extraordinary that Government seeks to anchor the small proprietors and allow at large the big ones. Everyone strives to get the maximum price for the minimum of what he has. Everyone in purchasing strives to get the maximum of commodity for the minimum price.

My point is—and I will ask my hon. Friend (Sir Frank McDavid) to correct me if I am wrong—that it has never been the policy of this Council to refer to individual cases to show that in any approach by Government to private landlords they were found to be unreasonable or impossible, thus necessitating the introduction of this legislation. There is absolutely no precedent for it in any of the Commonwealth countries or in any democratic country on the face of the earth. As I have said before, the only place where such a precedent would be found is behind the Iron Curtain or, perhaps, in Communist China. The people of this country—many of them descendants of slaves—have been able through their thrift, industry and co-operation to acquire certain villages from their slender earnings—and I refer to places like Buxton and others which are today prominent communities in the Colony. Similarly, some of the East Indians were given lands in lieu of back passages, as was done in the case of Windsor Forest and a few other places. Through their own efforts these people have been able to improve the economic conditions in which they found themselves, and I would ask whether it is reasonable at this stage for Government to vest itself with power to pounce upon any land which a landlord might possess and say: "We want this for land settlement, we will give you the economic value for the land

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]—

but we will dispossess you." Is that fair, Sir?

In order to complete my point I wish to refer to the speech which the hon. Mover of this motion made in his very able address at the opening of this debate. In order to bolster up the Bill which the hon. Member has brought forward,—I respectfully submit, without any justification,—I repeat what I said yesterday; this Bill is an amazing piece of strategy. The hon. Mover's speech abounds with rhetoric and will be one of the records of our time. But, Sir, rhetoric is not logic.

On page 13 (of the circulated copy of Hansard report of the Hon. Mover's speech) we find the following remarks being made:

#### **Powers of Land Acquisition**

I wish to confirm the verbal request I made some weeks ago that we should consider amplifying Government's powers for land acquisition. In my last Colony we did this by expanding the definition of 'purpose' to cover land settlement, housing, etc. and I imagine this may be the simplest way here. If I remember correctly, the proposals that Government should exercise powers of acquisition where justifiable was preferable to any particular form of taxation designed to cause the relinquishment of land not beneficially occupied, I think in Mr. Benham's Memorandum. In any case, the future seems to me to demand that Government be in a position to initiate land settlement and housing schemes in places where conditions make it desirable, rather than only where land comes into Government hands by accident on sale by owners.

'That was written as far back as 1943 and it was as the result of that Minute that we passed the Ordinance which is now Chapter 180. Under that law the power to take land compulsorily relates back to the use of the other Ordinance, Chapter 179, which is the Acquisition of Land for Public Purposes Ordinance. Consequently, the basis of compensation

which has to be used is essentially the market value of the land. That is the position now. It is the law that the Government has the right at any time to acquire any land for land settlement purposes compulsorily, by using the Acquisition of Land for Public Purposes Ordinance, but in following that procedure the compensation to be paid must be the market value.

In the immediate post-war period another Ordinance was passed in respect of housing. I refer to the Housing Ordinance of 1946 which is now Chapter 182, and that Ordinance gives power to the Government to acquire land compulsorily for housing, slum clearance, or for re-development of areas. There the more modern formula which was developed in England in the post-war period was used. Under that formula compensation is determined by reference to the 1939 value of land, plus a percentage to be fixed by the Governor in Council. That formula is included in the Housing Ordinance. I do not think that the power to acquire land compulsorily under that provision in the Housing Ordinance has ever been used, nor indeed has the power under the Acquisition of Land (Land Settlement) Ordinance been used . . . "

I submit that there is absolutely no necessity to put this machinery in to force because on past occasions Government was able to negotiate and get whatever land it wanted, not only for land settlement but for other purposes also. Why should we proceed to lay down another statute of this nature, encroaching on the proprietary rights of citizens — something that is completely undemocratic and without precedent anywhere in the Commonwealth?

I would like the hon. Mover of this Bill to tell this Council—perhaps after second thought and consultation with his advisers—about the occasions when proprietors with whom they desired to negotiate failed to show any sense of reason or responsibility. I feel that this Bill is the result of the view held by a few revolutionary peo-

ple in this country with respect to ownership and the production of land. When the situation is examined it will be found that 90 per cent. of the area of this Colony represents privately-owned land. Experts have discussed the question of development within the five-year period in view and have stated that development work had been hampered owing to the present system of land tenure, but if Government proceeds along the lines set out in this Bill they are going to ruin the whole economy of this country.

The Development Programme calls for a number of things including the building of roads and houses, but Government has been obsessed with the idea of spending large sums of money on land settlement, and also by enormous expenditure on drainage and irrigation, since by means of drainage and irrigation these lands could be preserved for the use of Government. At present, 55 per cent. of the land being used in the Colony is at the mercy of the weather, so far as the problem of drainage and irrigation is concerned, and I cannot understand why we are seeking to put an Ordinance such as this on the Statute books. To the ordinary man in the street it would appear that this Bill is intended to interfere with the interests of private landlords particularly.

My point is, that if the tenants escape, proprietors are deprived of a piece of land, they have lost something; but where the tenants after years of toil have set up their household and have got to give up this and accept whatever the Government gives under this new system of computing compensation, these tenants have lost all. It has been urged, and it has come to me that

this Bill is only categorised—it is a popular argument, and I am sure that I am not in failure in making this point—that is certain sections of this Colony, East Indian people own estates, and it has come to me that this is a move to liquidate ownership of lands by East Indians.

I cannot accept this argument, because equally so, not only East Indians own large estates but other concerns, but the man-in-the-street—and you can put your ear to the ground—feels that this Bill is calculated to liquidate East Indian landownership. I must say that I cannot subscribe to this view. This Bill must not be put on our Statute Books, not only because of the landlords, but at the hands of such a lawless Government you are making this Council a participant of this Bill. This Council would be providing a dangerous weapon which can be used indiscriminately by a lawless, unconcerned Government, organised particularly to ruin the economy of this country.

At this point I must refer to the concluding remarks of the hon. Mover of this motion when he said "I now invite the Council to pass the second reading of this Bill and I would like to add that it be given a place on our Statute Books." I appreciate the channel of thinking of the hon. Mover, on this motion. I do not share the view as has been expressed that this Interim Government has been a failure. No Government can bring manna to the people of this country and satisfy them and their friends. The good things I share and also the bad. Things are seemingly bad because thinking makes them so. We have done our part. What is the hurry to put this Bill on the Statute Books of the Colony? Our life seems to be a matter of weeks. What shall be the charge against this Interim Government if they do not pass this Bill?

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

The representatives of Soviet Russia tried this out in 1951 and at that time, their aim was only directed towards one section of land owners in this country—the sugar estates. They never took the liberty to talk of the entire Colony. Their argument, principally, was that sugar estates had a lot of land by a system of bargaining which meant that more lands were available. That was their negotiation in compulsory acquisition.

I want to tell the hon. Members of this Council that indeed they must have the courage to throw out this motion. Let not our fair names hitherto be smirched. Let it not go down at the climax of our career that we sat here and put such an unnecessary, unwarranted Bill on the Statute Books of this Colony. Let those who seek to do so take the full responsibility. Already Her Majesty's Government has acknowledged certain measures for us to remain in a state of abeyance until we have got what we might describe perhaps, as a stable Government, representing the views of the masses.

I ask this Council to treat this Bill as equally important as the Bill I referred to. It is equally important in that it strikes at land ownership throughout this Colony, and I say if there is justification for the postponement of such an important matter, there is justification for Government to gracefully withdraw this Bill. I do suggest to Government to withdraw this Bill, and if the hon. Mover of this Bill still chooses to place it on the Statute Books of this Colony, we shall have lost the laurels for not helping to put it there against the proprietary rights of this country.

I have a book "Land Reform in China". It is a very small book which deals with land acquisition. It shows how the feudal system in England gradually gave way to land ownership after

the French Revolution, and it shows how this Revolution started long before any Communist effort at land ownership—

**Mr. Speaker:** The proper procedure would be for you to give the name of the author. You must always, in making references, quote the name of the author and the publisher.

**Mr. Sugrim Singh:** The publisher is the "Betchworth Press", and it was written by a person called "Oriens" with a foreword by David Mitrany. It is a book which is against the system of the distribution of land by the Communists. It deals with land distribution in China. At page 18, the writer referring to an article gives this description of the way land has been acquired in Communist China—

"The article laid down three precepts for land reform:

(1) Peaceful redistribution of land is a contradiction of the Marxist theory of social revolution; (2) the landlord class will not disintegrate of itself, but must be knocked out; (3) the more violent land reform is, the more successful it will be.

'Land reform is a systematic and fierce struggle. Land reform is to shake the foundation of a feudal system that has a history of over two thousand years, to shatter the old order and establish a new one, to pass the countryside from the hands of the landlords to the hands of peasants, to turn feudal rule into a People's Democratic Dictatorship. In other words, land reform rewrites history, as it were, by turning heaven and earth upside down. "Peaceful redistribution of land" is in essence a sort of reformist idea, incompatible with the revolutionary methods dictated by Marxism-Leninism during a social revolution.'

This method of compulsory acquisition, as I have mentioned before, as the way in which it is done, has no precedent except as I have said, in Communist China. The idea is to play up to the tenants to compulsorily acquire lands in order that Government can secure whatever lands they may desire.



However, I do not say that the hon. Mover has any such enterprise as was the intention in Communist China.

Only recently I had the privilege of spending about 2 days in Capetown, South Africa. In Capetown, in South Africa, as everyone in this Council Chamber knows, there is very painful and objectionable legislation. In South Africa the owner of the land cannot even go on the land that belongs to him because of this legislation. But even in South Africa they have not interfered by compulsory acquisition or otherwise with the ownership in spite of their peculiar legislation objectionable to the Christian world, and indeed to every decent human society by which the landlord is debarred from inspecting his own land. They have maintained a branch of the way of life in England—that age old proposition—“A man’s house is his castle.”

Why without any justification should this Government try to encroach on private property? I am reliably informed that upon the large blocks of land in this country which can be categorised as Crown Lands, Government can easily resume and put them in condition for immediate land settlement. We have an island which bears the rather objectionable name of Hog Island. It is larger than Leguan and Wakenaam. There is another island called Liberty Island. Only recently I had the privilege of making representations to the Lands and Mines Department and to the Governor in Council in connection with this island. That island was turned over to residents in Wakenaam who are now planting crops. How much more can Government not do with the aid of agricultural credit in turning over those vast areas of land to farmers—not white collar farmers who merely sit down and sing the slogan “I want land,” but who have never in their

whole lives held a shovel or an agricultural fork. I prophesy that on the completion of the Torani, Boerasirie and Tapacooma schemes Government will find itself in a difficult position to find people to occupy the thousands of acres of land which will be made available for settlement. That will be the acid test. We will see how many of the white collar “farmers” who infest the streets and shout “We want land” are going to leave the bright lights of the City for the riverain lands and other settlements to pursue farming. The hon. Mover of the Bill has given us figures of the thousands of acres of land which will be made available. I would like him to go further and assist this Council with some figures as to the approximate number of farmers who are in need of land and who would proceed to occupy those lands as soon as they are made available. I would also like to know how many of those farmers would be prepared to give up their homes, if they have any, and go to those areas and do the spade work.

There is necessity for land, I agree, but what is the hurry? Garden of Eden is not yet in cultivable condition. An effort has been made to settle the unemployed people of Port Mourant at Mara. Onverwagt is still there. Let us proceed gradually. Wherein lies the hurry to put this legislation on the Statute Book? I am indeed grateful to the hon. Mover for the point he made in his opening remarks on the Bill. Yesterday I developed the point that Government should not seriously deem privately owned lands to be not beneficially occupied when Government has been unable to provide adequate irrigation and drainage facilities. All the reports on land settlement and agricultural development in this country

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

stress the absolute necessity for adequate drainage and irrigation facilities. I made the point yesterday that, particularly on the Essequibo Coast large estates have been lying idle and not beneficially occupied in the strict sense of the term, due to no fault of the proprietors but because of the lack of drainage and irrigation, and I am glad that in his opening speech on the Bill the hon. Member made this statement:

“The second item of this programme reads as follows—

‘Engineering studies for future reclamation projects to be undertaken after 1958 should begin promptly in view of the complex character of such studies. The most promising areas for future schemes appear to be in Berbice, south of Providence, embracing about 80,000 acres, and south of Crabwood Creek, with a further 50,000 acres. Additional study may also indicate that an extension of the Boerasirie scheme south of the Bonasika and south of Wales would be feasible.

‘I have nothing to say on that. It is quite true that the staff of the Drainage and Irrigation cannot now find the time to make these studies. So far they do not have the staff to engage in engineering studies of such magnitude.’

We are all agreed that these Departments are short staffed, and that it is not perhaps due to any fault of the Government but through lack of funds that these drainage and irrigation projects have not been carried out before. But with the completion of the schemes in progress Government is going to find it difficult to find people willing to occupy the lands thus made available unless we go slowly.

I have spoken at great length on this Bill. I am fully convinced that it is not necessary at this time, and I would describe it as a sort of anachronism, completely inconsistent with all that Government has done and has stood for. In this Bill we have this

curious position: that for land required for housing Government will pay the market value which includes inflation, but for land required for land settlement it is proposed in this Bill not to take it over at the market value but at what I would describe as the economic value. Will there not be houses on these land settlements?

I am asking Government to withdraw this Bill. I must concede to the hon. Mover that the Housing Bill was the first encroachment on proprietary rights, and as a matter of fact it should never have been, because the hon. Member himself has said that the Ordinance has never been used. If it has never been used the obvious conclusion to be drawn is that there was no necessity for it.

It is provided in this Bill that Government may (not shall) appoint two Commissioners to consider the reasonable requirements of the land-owner. If the Commissioners decide against a proprietor he will have absolutely no right of appeal, such as is given to the occupier of even a small tenement room.

Here we have the curious position — thousands of acres of valuable property can be acquired and the owners are in the awkward position of not having this right of appeal. I would like the hon. Mover to tell this Council where in the whole British Colonial history, in the whole of the Commonwealth, in the whole of the democratic countries, except unfortunately I have to refer to them — undemocratic countries, there has been this flagrant incursion on people's property without any right of appeal. I must take my seat within a few minutes. I have tried my best to point out, if I may say so, the case for the Opposition against this Bill. I am sure other hon. Members will have much to add to the case against this Bill. They are volu-

minous. Briefly I will summarize the arguments advanced against this Bill as follows —

(1) This Land Acquisition Bill seeks by compulsion to claim the *bona fide* lands privately owned and make those lands available for Land Settlement, paying compensation not on the market value of the land but on the economic value. Whatever that means, it must be less than the market value.

(2) Suitable lands are necessary for the purpose of land settlement so that small farmers can have these lands to increase production and the economic position of the Colony.

(3) Government owns 90 per cent, of the area of the Colony, around 74,700 square miles. Only 10 per cent, of the area of the Colony so privately owned—chiefly by business concerns since the days of the Dutch along with a few hitherto tenants who have, by their thrift and application, owned small estates.

(4) That in the 90 per cent. owned by Government, the experts have pin-pointed several acres as being most suitable for cultivation from the point of view of fertility, proximity, drainage and irrigation, and transport.

(5) That there is a Crown Lands Resumption Ordinance which has already been used, and there are also clauses in the Grazing and Agricultural Leases issued by the Lands and Mines Department, which will bring thousands of acres of suitable and fertile lands into the hands of the Government for re-distribution.

(6) That Government should first move to occupy its own land rather than introduce this undemocratic Bill to compulsorily acquire the private property of citizens.

(7) That Government would not have to pay any purchase money for its own land, whereas, in acquiring

private lands Government would have to pay large sums which it does not have, and a possibility of not having in the foreseeable future, there being other important projects requiring funds.

(8) That privately owned lands have not been beneficially occupied by their owners, due principally to the Government being unable to provide efficient and adequate irrigation and drainage facilities resulting in the position today of 55 per cent. of the rice lands having to depend on the mercy of the weather.

(9) If Government compulsorily acquire these very private lands not beneficially occupied due to lack of irrigation and drainage facilities, would not Government first have to provide this as a prerequisite for cultivation of any type of crop? Would not the position remain the same, and can the owners be blamed for not occupying beneficially when Government charge heavy drainage rates especially on the Essequibo Coast and provide absolutely no such drainage resulting in large estates having to be sold to meet drainage rates?

(10) That Government, in embarking on the Torani Canal project, the Boerasirie project and others, have tacitly accepted the principle of drainage.

(11) That there is therefore no necessity to acquire privately owned lands and no necessity for such a Bill. Government has all the lands it needs and the projects—Torani, Boerasirie and others—will very soon place at the disposal of Government nearly 60,000 acres of land.

(12) That Government must be consistent and cannot buy privately owned lands for housing at the market value and buy similar lands for land settlement not at the market value, but at the "economic value". This is a most illogical position and cannot be justified from any angle and if Gov-

[Mr. Sugrim Singh]

ernment accepts that these lands be acquired at the market value, then there is no necessity for this Bill, as this is already covered by the Bill for acquiring lands for housing.

(13) That this Bill is contrary to the recommendations of the report of the International Bank for Reconstruction, and also to the recommendation of Frank Brown's Report on Land Settlement Problems.

(14) That peaceful negotiations between the Government and the owners have proved successful, Mara being purchased at \$50 per acre and Garden of Eden purchased at \$70 per acre, and this should continue. The owners of the estates of Vrouw Anna and Henrietta, I am reliably informed by the owners, accepted the offer made by the Government and then Government decided to withdraw.

(15) That Government, by negotiations, could acquire thousands of acres of sugar estate front lands, properly drained and in close proximity to human habitation, in exchange for Government lands occupied by these sugar estates, and on which substantially their cane cultivation is carried and for which they only pay 5 cents per acre. I refuse to believe that the sugar estates with the proper approach would turn down the call of Government? What has been done so far on this?

(16) That both Africans and Indians by the sweat of their brows pooled their earnings in the most trying times and acquired the lands which their descendants now enjoy, and it would be a travesty of justice and breach of faith for Government to seek to give itself the power to acquire compulsorily, when there is no necessity for it.

(17) The hon. Mover has himself

stated that both the Ordinance, Chapter 179, and the Housing Ordinance, Chapter 182, have hardly been applied, from which it is clear that Government has secured all their housing lands and the lands for public purposes by negotiations. Why put another such Bill on the Statute Books of the Colony?

(18) Apart from the law governing ownership of immoveable property, recognised and respected throughout the Commonwealth of Nations it was a solemn covenant when the Dutch capitulated to Great Britain in 1803, and sealed by the Treaty of 1814 "(1) that the inhabitants of the Colony should enjoy the free use of their properties". Would Government not be guilty of a breach of this Treaty to pass this Bill, as stated in other words, by this very Government in the debate in 1951, when efforts were being made to move into the sugar estate lands?

Sir, I respectfully in all seriousness wish to ask Government to withdraw this Bill. I think I voice the sentiments of all Guianese in their objection to the Bill and the consensus of public opinion. In conclusion I do say that passing this Bill would put an unexpected climax to the hitherto unblemished career of this Interim Government.

Mr. Jailal: Mr. Speaker, I do not feel equal to the task of keeping up with the pace my hon. friend on my left (Mr. Sugrim Singh) has set me, but I do want with all the vehemence at my disposal to join hands with him in opposing as strongly as possible this measure, which I classify in the same group as the one I classified a few weeks ago as being iniquitous. But, I will go further and classify this Bill as being most iniquitous though some of the provisions of the original draft have been withdrawn.

I know that it is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the subject of Land Tenure. In the industrialized civilization of the West and North people have many sources of income, but in the British Colonies land is in the most part the only form of capital. Land, therefore, is something of a sacred character, and one's rights over land are more jealously treasured than any other form of rights. It is clear that the problems relating to land in the Colonies are complex and, indeed, sometimes pressing.

I agree that there is need for a closer study of our system of land tenure in order to bring into being a more positive policy in the planning of land use, the preservation and if possible, extension of community rights. I agree also that there should be a suitable system of agricultural credit, greater protection for tenants and the extension of the principle of compensation for exhaustive improvement and for the general building up for good husbandry.

If Government in selling a land policy embodies all these philosophies, then it necessarily follows that the present occupiers of land would not be in a position to exploit their trust. Although, strictly speaking, we are concerned with one factor of this many-sided problem involving the general bearing which this somewhat new aspect of land tenure would have on the utilization and development of production, I must advise that this matter involves wide implications affecting the social no less than the communal life of the people, and its study demands a broader and in some sense a more fundamental approach than the one now being adopted by our administration. Having opened with those words I wish to say that I would copy the dogma set out in the Bible "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's goods."

This was repeated by public opinion just a few days ago when one local newspaper referred in a leading article, to the question of one coveting his neighbour's vineyard. The entire problem, Sir, that we are debating, carries four different aspects — one historical, one social, one economic and the other legal. One cannot address his mind to the subject without having regard to each of these aspects in its fullest details, and I propose to present, as fully as possible, the case under each of these sub-divisions in this debate. British Guiana, indeed and in fact, has no real indigenous system of land tenure. I say so because British Guiana, for the most part, is being developed or colonized by one method, whether it is by the individual of today or otherwise.

The Colony has been in the hands of the Dutch for a number of years and they proceeded to work the land in terms of agricultural pursuits. Their installations merely took the form of negro settlements or others closely allied to them. For the most part, these settlements were on the coastal fringe, some of them being as far as 50 miles up in our main rivers. As time went on the Dutch capitulated, and my hon. Friend, the last speaker (Mr. Singh) has made the point that on this capitulation the Dutch and the British Governors made certain promises to each other, one of them being that whatever lands were held by the inhabitants of the Colony — whether freehold or leasehold, the titles were to be recognised by the new Government.

I do not wish to repeat what the last speaker has said, but I do want to emphasize that it would be a serious departure from policy if we attempt to break faith with these people. Having said that I will now pass on to the system of development as we know

[Mr. Jailal]

it when the English people started their work of colonisation here. It is not like colonisation in any other part of the Colonial Empire. At first, the great sugar "Barons" — the planters — came down and found that they would need labour and so they took it upon themselves to import slaves of African descent. When emancipation came into being they had to divest themselves of that labour since the slaves themselves got out of the estates and the planters had to seek a new form of labour. It is then, I am told, that the Portuguese were first brought in, but they "shot their bolt" very quickly and refused to settle on the land. The planters sought other forms of labour after Portuguese labour became an utter failure, and as time went on we saw that the Portuguese became the shopkeepers of the country; they became the traders in Georgetown and also in other parts of the country. It also became necessary for the planters to look farther away for labour. The Chinese were then brought in, but the landlords and the planters failed to get enough labour out of the importees to maintain their work on the land, and so another set of people passed off the stage of agriculture. They (the Chinese) also did not settle on the land; they took up a similar attitude to the Portuguese and today we find that the majority of the business places in this country belong to these two sections of the community—the Portuguese and the Chinese.

The East Indians came along under a system of indenture and they served their time under conditions that were not by any means pleasant or cultural. Through their toil, their tolerance and their thrift, however, they have given the most successful type of lab-

our that has been employed on sugar estates in the Colony, but in spite of extended services, including educational and other social facilities, and a single policy for the development of these Colonies, the East Indians themselves started to flee from the estates. There is a large number of these labourers who have long thrown off the mantle of indentureship and who are now free labourers, if we may term them as such, on what remains of the sugar estates.

I am trying to examine the social structure of the Colony in ancient times in order to show that many East Indians have removed from the sugar estates because of the harsh conditions and the oppression which they experienced at that time. Because of their very impropitious past they decided that they would try to own their own lands as a sacred right and they formed themselves into little groups with that object in view. The result was that by co-operative efforts they were able to procure portions of old sugar estates which have become villages and other communities of today — and I cite as examples, such places as Buxton, Ann's Grove, Beterverwagting, Plaisance and others. For some time these people experienced great hardships, but they would have absolutely nothing to do with sugar estates. As time went on, however, and by force of constant economic pressure, they started slowly to go back and work for "sugar". This country had nothing to offer them and as time went on the younger workers especially realised that by means of improved education they were able to get better employment and they began, one by one, to drift away from the villages which their forefathers had established. They drifted into the towns and industrial centres, and they have undoubtedly become the skilled artis-

ans of the country. That is because they were able to change their identity for something new.

Local history shows that within recent times the African people only were responsible for the education of the masses in this country, and that is because in their earlier stage they were willing to accept education as a premise for civilization. They were willing to serve long apprenticeships; they were willing to continue in service for little money in order to be able to rise. As a result they took on the role of educators. I pay tribute to their patience and tolerance. I am no racialist; I have lived above that plane. The Indians are today still unemancipated from the land, but the time is coming when they also will flee from it because it is useless; it holds no future for them. They probably will be forced to flee from the land by legislation of this kind. They are the last vestige, the last hope of our agricultural economy, but I warn this Government and any other Government that this slow march away from the land is the result of Government's failure to help the people concerned.

I do not wish to decry the work of past Governments; I know the trial, the toil, they have had. It has been a perennial fight against floods with little money with which to do it, but the failure is still at the feet of the local Government and the Imperial Government. The sugar estates were able to stand up in some form through the prop built up by the sugar magnates outside of this country, but they found it difficult to run the industry at a profit and fight the flood waters at the back and keep the sea from breaking in on them from the front. It was only when those magnates got together and were able to organize them-

selves into larger companies, putting all their reserves in, that they were able to withstand the pressure of the difficulties of this country.

There are abandoned in the Essequibo at least three islands which once contained sugar estates and within my time at least two of those estates stood. I knew the Essequibo Coast when there were still two sugar estates there. I knew it then as a beautiful countryside with a thriving economy but today I lack courage to speak without having the feeling that I want to cry for the people on that coast. It is because sugar has been withdrawn. But out of all these difficult circumstances, as if Nature had not piled it on sufficiently, they had to fight malaria and other diseases of the swamp. Yet there emerged people with courage and the will to make of this country something of which we can all be proud.

There is no doubt that within the country there is a semblance of fusion at the present time, whereas in times past it was very patent that there was no fusion but merely groups of people. I ask the question: if we must join the various races together, if we are going to fuse a community of one people, are we going to put obstacles in the way in the form of legislation which will ruin those things which have taken an age to build up? It is common knowledge that racialism has existed here; we know that it still exists in some people. It is something that we should stamp out, but if we introduce in this country any form of legislation which would in the slightest degree bring about a parting of the ways between the racial groups we would be doing this country a greater injustice than the philosophies which we condemned at one time.

This Bill can have most serious

[Mr. Jailal]

political repercussions. I know it will be argued that it is designed to provide land for the landless.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** The hon. Member is going on to speak politically. He had introduced an extremely important aspect when he said that the Bill was connected in some way with racialism. He has introduced that aspect himself, and I was waiting to hear in what way the provisions in this Bill have any influence whatever on racialism. I think he should examine it and let us see if there is anything in it to justify his conclusion.

**Mr. Jailal:** I am quite capable of making my points. I believe that in this Council whenever I do make a point I make it very clearly. I propose to take every bit of the time at my disposal to follow up my points. I shall show this Council how this Bill would foster racial antagonism. I propose to do so, but I will do so in my own time.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think the hon. Member who intervened wishes to discourage your doing so.

**Mr. Jailal:** Interruptions interfere with my trend of thought. I was saying that it was said (and this is no political influence) that this Bill is designed to provide land for the landless. Which land, and for what landless? British Guiana comprises 89,000 square miles. I was taught that from the day I was at school under the father of the Hon. P. A. Cummings. One thousand square miles are under agriculture. Assuming that 50 per cent. are rivers and sand, what has happened to the remaining 44,000 square miles? One hon. Member provided us with literature yesterday which showed that many thou-

sands of square miles of good earth were occupied by a handful of people in reservations. Even in this country we are building reservations. Starting from Plaisance on the East Coast we find about 400 acres of land lying useless, and in every village between Georgetown and Enmore there are no less than 400 or 500 acres of land growing absolutely nothing. At Cove and John there are approximately 700 acres of perfect rice lands. I would accept no other opinion on it because I know it is good rice land as long as "busy busy" grows on it. I have known that since I was a child. That is the criterion by which the Indians have planted rice in this Colony, and they have done so successfully. There we find 700 acres of leasehold land which Government has not looked into. In fact Government knows nothing about it, because at a recent meeting I was told that Government did not know how many acres of land there were, and had made wrong charges to the lessees, and therefore it would have to remit a certain amount of money to those people. That is the condition of our leasehold lands. Those are the conditions under which lands were examined by experts. I ask the question: can an expert from this Chamber examine the lands of this country and give expert advice? The answer is "No." For him to examine the details of the lands that lie useless in this country he has to spend years. No expert can sit in this Chamber and revise land policy for us. We have grown well past that, and I feel it is wrong. It is simply an attempt to fool the people into believing that they have been given technical advice. I would not say that the Land Adviser is not a man of high calibre; I would be absolutely wrong. But what I do say is that the method used to perpetrate this crime on the people of this country is one that is like a sieve; it has many holes.

At Mahaica people were given lands in lieu of back passages to India,



and they are fully occupied because Government has seen to it that the water conservancy supply passes through Mahaica. There is good drainage and irrigation at Mahaica and every acre of land is occupied. Although sugar has gone from that area the people continue to live far better than they did on the Essequibo Coast. I have no hesitation in making that statement.

We go along the coast and see the land beyond Mahaica. Between the bridge at Mahaica and the bridge at Mahaicony, a distance of about 15 miles, for about three miles out to sea there are about 45 square miles of land which, except at times like this, were of absolutely no use to anybody. Even cattle changed their colour as a result of the sea water.

Those are the lands that stand there. Great edifices of the past administrations. They stand out as monuments to the world of the work done here. We have not been able to implement what we have promised the people. We are still fooling around with one machine. We do not have sufficient experts and machinery to do 45 square miles of land. We have not succeeded in erecting one koker. If those frontlands had been drained, if we had channels by which to take the water away, we would have been able to relieve some 10,000 acres of good land. It is good land, because if you went there when the weather is good and look at the soil you would do exactly what I did—stand up in reverence. That is how it enthuses you — 10,000 acres of land all of which ought to be gainfully occupied. Those are lands that in yester-years the people were forced to graze their cattle on and because of its wide expanse some people were able to eke out a comparatively miserable existence.

We move on to the private landlords adjacent to the Abary, and there

we find the same existing conditions—rich and poor together sharing alike the troubles of bad drainage. A man is planting 800 acres of rice lands there with \$50,000 debt and a wife and children on the salver, and we stand complacently aside and say "Take the land away, he is not using it beneficially. If that is neglect, then what is not? Not one trench dug, not one koker built that would relieve the land of the water that stand there. There was a chance of drainage there. Instead of going seaward they could have gone creekward too. I still feel that the answer to the problem there is the mighty river.

We leave there and go on to the lands between the watershed of the Mahaicony and Abary Rivers. The drainage conditions there are absolutely the same as the other places. I was a little boy when I went into the Abary area with the late Rev. A. Cropper. We had to change about twelve pairs of oxen before we got to our destination. There the conditions remain the same. It is only where the Mahaicony and Abary Development Company has empoledered, there is some hope of security of crop. As regards the others it is a matter of chance and a gamble with the elements and finally insolvency, because that is what faces the majority of large farmers. The small peasants live in a condition of a hand to mouth existence. How long their patience will continue before falling under, I do not know. From time immemorial across the Abary Bridge as far as the eye can see there was bush and swamps indicating wonderful rice lands. What did we do about it—Nothing. We sit down and say "Well, if X wants to do, let him go ahead and do it." But where is he going to get the money from to do it?

In my very opening remarks I said that I would agree with all these things if there was greater production in terms of planning an agricultural system. No one can tell me that we have laid out an agricultural chart in terms of the Credit

[Mr. Jailal]

Corporation. We have not done so. We have put up some facility by which people are able to get loans, but we have not put out a full and wide credit system at all. Indeed, it is only the Shylocks referred to in this Legislature who are still taking a chance in lending money to the farmer. With the coming into being of the Rice Marketing Board the Banks are willing to lend certain people in the industry, but in the absence of a perfect system of credit how would these private landowners be able to put their lands in order? They have had to fight just as the big estates have fought. A man buys 1,000 rods of land but has no money to do the drainage as a whole; he therefore has to do it inch by inch. We have the Land Rehabilitation programme, and we spend huge sums of money to rehabilitate those lands. Have we lent money to the private landlords to do their land? I have asked that before and the answer has been "No". Instead of lending money to them to put their land in order, Government taxes them in terms of drainage rates for the land.

I saw an unusual act a few days ago. Another landlord was going to be taxed off the land for irrigation and drainage. After at least three years they are now seeking means to sell his land. That is the philosophy of the British Guiana Government. What do you expect? Political chaos must follow. No one has any confidence in any Government that does those things, because there are no facilities, no security. You cannot build up confidence on such a basis. On the one hand you are handing out a £5; note and on the other hand you wait with a stick to whack the receiver on his fingers. As we go on with this examination I am trying to draw a map of the situation.

We go on until we reach such horrible places like Lovely Lass.

What do we find? The people are living in houses on stilts and water is everywhere, even the backlands are flooded. The people cannot occupy the lands there beneficially and have to find themselves at Onverwagt. They are trekking to the Government empoldered lands. It is Government's policy to force those people into such conditions. We pass on and visit another village. Bush Lot, which has also risen out of a Christian settlement. It is a wonderful village with wonderful people. Why Bush Lot has become the centre of most political troubles? It is because it has become a centre or hive of activities and of disgust. There is a reason behind it. The sluice channels are completely blocked; the people have asked Government for three years to do one simple thing—put a little bit of burnt earth on a pathway that would take them to the railway line—but this Government finds it nearly impossible to make that roadway so that the people can come to Georgetown. That shows that this Government refuses to put a few tons of burnt earth down for the convenience of the people and cannot be so good and fatherly as to take away somebody else's land to give them.

That is the policy of our Government. That village as I said, has expanded, and indeed it has opened up its lands up to the Abary Creek. What do we find? The people at Bush Lot do not contend that they have not enough land. The Bush Lot Expansion Scheme own a large proportion of the land. They suffer from frustration. Government has not been able to help them completely empolder and drain those lands. Silting is an every day occurrence. There is no method by which they can relieve their surplus water. What do you expect in circumstances like those?

It is such circumstances that breed adherents to Red Russia. We have to be very careful that we do not by our own actions from time to time so incense people that they follow the wrong path.

Next we have Bel Air and Hoptown proper. This is another of the wicked things Government is doing there—forcing its own thoughts upon the people. Hoptown is divided into two parts—one, a small section is under a Local Authority, and the other part is outside the Local Authority. There is another private estate also outside the Local Authority. There are two private estates on the one side. The second estate has been called upon by Government to the fears of the other to become a part of the Local Authority, and it is about to become so. But what do we find? Hoptown itself does not, even with all the money and the benefit of what Government has been able to do for it—drainage and irrigation and sea defences—have one acre of land under cultivation. The people of Hoptown find themselves over to the other section which is privately owned to do cultivation because that landlord by dint of hard work and careful living was able to dig his trenches and ensure proper drainage. The area has no irrigation facilities but they still take a chance. That man was forced to go into the Local Authority and his property was assessed for rates at \$2,000. Small wonder that oppression is rife.

**Mr. Farnum** (Member for Local Government, Social Welfare and Co-operative Development): I do not think that information is quite correct. The particular estate, the hon. Member refers to, has very imperfect drainage. At one time Hoptown drained through that particular area—Annadale, so

much so that Hoptown is now asking for a check sluice to prevent the water from the neighbouring estate going back on the village.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thought the hon. Member was challenging the \$2,000 assessment for rates.

**Mr. Farnum:** The place was assessed for taxation. One can never tell how that assessment was fixed. It may be on land as well as on buildings.

**Mr. Speaker:** The point is, are you in a position to correct the statement or not?

**Mr. Jailal:** I may tell the hon. Member that I am not referring to Annadale. I know it is not a bad case. But this is one of the three sections of Hoptown, the most westerly section, the one that produces all the rice. That is going to be assessed, and for once the man will have to pay \$10 per acre. I would be very interested to know, if and when this Acquisition Bill comes into force, how we are going to arrive finally at the price of that land.

**Sir Frank McDavid:** Using this Bill to buy occupied rice lands! There is nothing further from the truth than that.

**Mr. Jailal:** I say so without any shadow of a doubt. It may not happen in the hon. Member's time. These villages are also expanding, and while Government may not be able to go on their own lands for the expansion, they would be able to take away a man's private lands for the purpose.

We go on to Bath Estate. There I would take the greatest delight to see Government occupy the front lands. For a long time past I was wishful that Government would try to exercise itself on those front lands. I pass on to Cotton Tree.

[Mr. Jailal]

**Sir Frank McDavid:** The hon. Member may tell us why Government may take the front lands at Bath.

**Mr. Jailal:** For years those people had Cotton Tree. It is another Church Settlement, a tribute to the Canadian Missionary Church. They started out with their little coconut farms and have built their own sea dam. Those are not things the experts would hear about. The experts are on a very high level and I am a very lowly fellow. I have walked on the sea dam. The people built their houses up to what they called the sea dam. Now the experts have advised that the sea dam is no good and they have to retire it or bring it forward, with the result that those houses would be unprotected from the sea.

We go on and examine more and more places as we go along that coast up to Rosignol. We find that the people want a few acres of land to build their houses, and want to live there so as to be near the sugar estate. They do not want to live under any form of indentureship. The question is, how long would it take those people to get permission from Government to go and live in the swamp. They were told "Oh no, if you live there you and your children would perish," but the people still went and built their homes there, and today I have heard their homes referred to as lovely little homes. They have planted their little gardens there.

I know that these lands could be worked well under expert advice or with what one might call "horse sense." Is it because someone or some group of persons felt that certain lands were being kept for certain people that this Bill has been brought forward? Or is it that Government having nothing more substantial, thinks that there should be a way out and that they should take over these lands while Government

themselves have over 5,000 acres of land under their control?

**Mr. Farnum:** If I may, I should like to point out that the hon. Member's facts are not correct as regards Ithaca (Berbice). It has been suggested that a large sum of money has been spent there but, so far as I know, there has been the construction of a new koker for \$20,000 and the facts stated by the hon. Member, Mr. Jailal, are not correct.

**Mr. Jailal:** I am referring to the little bit of Social Welfare work that has been done there. I am not referring to the few cottages erected by the villagers there as a result of their own little efforts. The people there are working on land that was left there by their forefathers and they have had little or no help from Government. Let us go across the Berbice river and examine the situation there; what do we find? Except for Mr. Blanchard's estate in the Canje district and a little housing scheme in New Amsterdam, there has been nothing done to assist the people. All the lands at Sandvoort and other places have been left without any improvement, as everybody knows. I see my hon. Friend, Mr. Tello, looking at me as if he desires to correct me, but what I am trying to show is that there is very much Government land lying idle in various places. There are a few people who have been able to help themselves from the land—places like the lower Canje—but the land in those places needs a lot of empoldering and the river (Canje) often overflows its banks. All these are Government lands which are going waste and which could be utilised even for the purpose of cutting wallaba, if one could get on them. From the Crown lands in the Canje district I would pass on to the East Bank, Berbice, district.

Up to a few years ago the lands lying near to Plantation Providence were little more than a

jungle, but today they form a bright area with comfortable homes along the lines of a land settlement. I am very grateful that some of my own ideas are being reflected in a small way in this area and I hope that the efforts relating to land settlement would obtain further success. There are certain areas of land which this piece of legislation would affect and they include places like River Dam and Highbury. The people who own lands there have been developing them for nearly 20 or 30 years, doing a really fine job. In these areas one can find shining examples of what has been done by the private enterprise of the small man. Just across the River from Georgetown there is an excellent example in the case of Vreed-en-Hoop which is owned by Mr. Abdool Rayman. The land was little more than a farm when it was purchased and it has taken the owner nearly 30 years to develop it.

**Mr. Speaker:** So far as I know, he bought it for only \$6,000.

**Mr. Jailal:** I am saying that the proprietor experienced difficult prob-

lems similar to those which exist today. I have had considerable experience with land settlement and I can tell this Council of what private enterprise has done. You have stated, Sir, that Vreed-en-Hoop was purchased (by Mr. Rayman) for \$6,000 but it is known that what was worth \$6,000 in 1912 might well be worth \$150,000 today.

**The Chief Secretary:** It is now time for the adjournment and I would suggest that we resume on Wednesday next which is a normal resumption day. It is important that we should proceed with the business of the Council, and there are a number of other important matters to come before the Council during the remainder of its life. I want to suggest to hon. Members that this is an opportunity to finish this debate. Perhaps we could adjourn until Wednesday next week and, if necessary, we could sit beyond the usual time that day in order to achieve that.

**Mr. Speaker:** Council is adjourned until 2 p.m. on Wednesday next, April 24th.