

SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Thursday, 19th February, 1959

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT :

Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

Chief Secretary, Hon. M. S. Porcher (acting)

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

Financial Secretary, Hon. F. W. Essex.

} *ex officio*

The Honourable **Dr. C. B. Jagan**—*Member for Eastern Berbice*

(Minister of Trade and Industry)

„ **B. H. Benn** —*Member for Essequibo River*

(Minister of Community Development and Education)

„ „ **E. B. Beharry** —*Member for Eastern Demerara*

(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).

„ **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*

„ **S. M. Saffee** —*Member for Western Berbice*

„ **Ajodha Singh** —*Member for Berbice River*

„ **J. N. Singh** —*Member for Georgetown South*

„ **R. E. Davis** —*Nominated Member*

„ **A. M. Fredericks** —*Nominated Member*

„ **H. J. M. Hubbard** —*Nominated Member.*

Mr. I. Crum Ewing — Clerk of the Legislature

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

ABSENT :

Mr. R. B. Gajraj.

Mr. B. S. Rai.

Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.—on leave.

The Clerk read prayers.

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on Wednesday, 18th February, 1959, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

ORDER OF THE DAY

APPROPRIATION BILL

BUDGET DEBATE

The Financial Secretary (Mr. Essex): I beg to move that the Council resolve itself into Committee to resume consideration of the Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to appropriate the supplies granted in the current session of the Legislative Council.”

Question put, and agreed to.

COUNCIL IN COMMITTEE

The Chairman: When we adjourned yesterday we had got as far as Head 12 and 12A — Education.

EDUCATION

GRANTS TO AIDED SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Mr. Tello: I beg to move that Subhead 1, item (20) — Grants to Aided Secondary Schools—be reduced by \$1, in order to enable me to make a few comments. I see that there is an appreciable increase in this vote and, possibly, it will be in keeping with the statement made by the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education some time during the last session. Be that as it may, it has been brought to my attention that because of Government's policy in the grants to aided Secondary Schools and in spite of its assistance to meet the salaries of qualified teachers, the unfortunate development is that tuition fees have increased from \$5 upwards per term.

I note with interest and gratification that the Ministry of Education has provided for scholarships in the higher grades. I also note that special attention

will be paid to science. This is a very good policy to pursue, but the important thing is, how will students reach the upper grades and forms in order to qualify for this type of scholarship? It must be remembered that the change in Government's policy has made entry into Secondary Schools more difficult for the small income group. Honourable Members of the Government know that people have been clamouring for an increase in scholarships so as to make Secondary education available to a greater number of children whose parents are in the small income group.

I recall reading in one of the official releases of the Majority Party that it would advocate for free secondary education for the people of British Guiana. I cannot reconcile the promise of free secondary education with the move on the part of the Government to make secondary education even more expensive to the general public. It is a positive fact that, even with the aid from Government, the secondary schools have found it necessary to increase their tuition fees. All of these secondary schools are charging a higher fee than the two Government schools.

I was under the impression that the whole programme was intended to raise the standard of education in the secondary schools and to enable the employment of qualified teachers. I thought it was intended to raise the standard of education, but at the same time keep the cost within the reaches of the poor man. I will agree that the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education has succeeded in the first part of the programme, that is, making qualified teachers available for these aided secondary schools, but the most important thing is that the money would be taken from the taxpayer, and the parents of the children would not have been called upon to pay higher fees. I feel that the taxpayer has received the worst part of the bargain.

In order to raise the standard of the schools, Government is using about \$150,000 — the exact figure I am not prepared

to quote, because it has not been broken down. Perhaps the hon. Minister of Education will explain to us exactly how the amount is distributed.

The position is that the taxpayers' money is being used to increase the quality of secondary education and the taxpayers should benefit from the results.

I said yesterday that the Government has not expressed its educational policy here, but as far as I can see a part of Government's policy is to offer secondary education to those who can afford to pay for it. The change in Government's policy has made it obligatory on the part of secondary schools in their own economic interest to raise their fees, and that has defeated the object of the scheme. I have raised this question because I know that the Members of the Government have so much responsibility on their shoulders that certain things may escape them. If this matter has not escaped them, then the whole objective is wrong, and they will be perpetuating a policy that they themselves have always argued was wrong — the most benefit for the smallest number.

I sincerely hoped that when this Government went into office it would have reduced the cost of education gradually, through a progressive programme, until such time as it had reached its objective when the rich and poor man alike would be able to enjoy the benefit of free secondary education. We now find that the machine is in reverse, and education has been made more expensive. It is quite true that Government has made arrangements for the top level people who can pay to qualify themselves, but this new avenue cannot be followed by the people who are unable to pay. This is the unfortunate position in which our progressive and socialist Government finds itself.

This Government seems to have forgotten that the reason why the people were clamouring for more secondary scholarships was because of the fact that they were unable to pay the low fees obtaining at the time. It is known that the

fees for secondary schools were lower than they are nowadays. The people were looking forward to a progressive Government to make secondary education free to all. The people were told that this was part of the P.P.P. programme.

So far as the training of teachers is concerned, the same type of treatment is meted out to them. While a previous Government has made available to teachers certain allowances to enable them to meet their out of pocket expenses, the present Government has changed that policy and has made the new development in the training of teachers available only to those who can afford to meet their out of pocket expenses themselves. The poor youngster who is ambitious, who has aptitude and ability may not be able to undergo this training and meet his out of pocket expenses himself. In spite of the fact that this Government is using the taxpayers' money to subsidize secondary education, it has gone out of its way to make secondary education more expensive to the people in this Colony.

I would say that the two things coincide: the preparation of the present Government's programme for secondary education, and the rise in the minimum cost of secondary education in British Guiana.

This is not a trivial matter. It is a fact that every one of those secondary schools that has received assistance has lost pupils. While it is true that these schools are overcrowded, it is nevertheless overcrowded with people who can afford to pay.

The small man is hit by indirect taxation more than anybody else. I say to the Minister: the object of making new avenues to higher standards of secondary education is laudable; do not defeat this object by making these avenues available only to those who can pay.

Many of the pupils attending secondary schools, as can be seen if one looks around, come from humble homes, and this is a demonstration that some of the

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best material which, if developed, will ultimately be in the interest of the country, lies in the humble home. The hon. Minister is possibly and probably closing the doors to these pupils.

But it is not late to do something about it. I think all people who are qualified to speak authoritatively as individuals and as organizations on this issue agree that it was a mistake on the part of Government to differ and to change from the original agreement, that the actual amount of aid was intended to assist in the payment of salaries to qualified teachers. The Government blundered there, but it is human to err; it is human to make mistakes, but it is also one of the essentials of statesmanship to correct one's mistakes when the opportunity presents itself.

I am not trying to make a political issue of this matter. My hon. Friends know my political interest is very little, but I am reminding them that it is the duty to make secondary education available to the poorest, and the policy embarked upon has the reverse effect. Hon. Members know it is true that every one of those secondary schools has, by sheer necessity, put up its fees. I do not believe it was the intention of the Minister himself to cause this, but he did not have sufficient knowledge of the economic facts of secondary education.

But time and experience have brought the facts forcefully home to him. A survey among the schools would confirm that education has now become more expensive than before, when the original intention was to make it cheaper, for the benefit of the small man. I plead with the Minister to make a survey, otherwise the best of intentions will be defeated.

Mr. Jackson: I join with the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, in his plea to the Minister of Education to reconsider this matter. The parents of the children attending these schools never anticipated that when help was given to these schools, the cost of secondary education

would have risen as high as it is now. The situation affects not only the children resident in Georgetown, but also those who travel from as far as Mahaicony to Georgetown, and from the West Coast, Demerara. The parents of these children have to pay travelling expenses back and forth every day and provide additional meals.

It might be said that meals or a snack can be prepared for these children early in the morning, so that they can travel with it; but if it is considered that the train from Mahaicony leaves between 5.30 a.m. and 6 a.m., and the children usually have to travel about half a mile from their homes to the railway station, the difficulty would be seen. Some parents in town and country, have more than one child attending secondary schools, and Government can see to what extent a rise in tuition fees would affect the parents who are trying to fit their children for the rôle of citizenship in this country.

Mr. Tello: I hope the Minister is not going to treat this matter with disdain, and he is going to tell us something. I am certain he is far too interested in his Ministry and in his Education programme for that.

If my information is correct, he himself has been a teacher and he is very much interested in secondary education. I know that if there are a few points he is not aware of, he is not going to lose the opportunity to look into them, when they are presented to him. It is said that the additional provision under this item is for the provision of seven laboratories and one Home Economics Department, normal increments, improved qualifications and three new schools. I am certain that in the new term fees will be increased, and these things worry us. I am confident that the Minister will see our anxiety in the matter; I take my seat and await his reply.

The Minister of Community Development and Education (Mr. Benn): I did not rise earlier because I wanted to hear

as many points of view as possible expressed on this important question of aid to secondary schools. The hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, said that something was inserted in the provisions in the memorandum on aid to secondary schools which caused the expenditure by the schools to go up, and led to an increase of school fees. I would say that secondary school fees have been going up year after year. I have been a teacher in a secondary school for more than 10 years, although the hon. Member thinks I know nothing about secondary schools.

Mr. Tello: I just said that I knew you were a secondary school teacher.

Mr. Benn: There was nothing inserted in the memorandum to cause secondary school fees to go up. In other words, it did not become obligatory. Government aid to secondary schools for the past year has been to the extent of 50 per cent. of the amount that a school spends on teachers' salaries, and Government has not instructed any of those secondary schools to increase their fees. The hon. Member is possibly referring to the fact that it was recommended in the memorandum that the schools should pay the first \$76 of the salary of a teacher, and a graduate teacher at that, and the present Government increased the amount to \$100 per month.

In spite of that revision it still became necessary for Government to vote additional sums of money for that purpose. I think the vote was exceeded to the extent of about \$5,000, and Members would realise what would have happened if Government had allowed the figure to remain at \$76 per month; the increase would have been considerable.

It is true that in the election manifesto of the People's Progressive Party it was stated that one of the aims of the Party was to provide free secondary education for all. That was the aim, but I do not imagine that the hon. Member would expect that in its very first year in office any Government could carry out all its aims. For instance, this Government hopes to be able to drain and irrigate

all lands in this country, but I do not think that will be possible within the next 15 years, in spite of the large sums of money being spent in that direction.

The hon. Member said that secondary education has become more expensive, but if the secondary schools knew that they were being aided to the extent of so many dollars and they did not want to raise their schools fees they should not increase the number of their teachers and carry out all the improvements at once. Government is not in a position to provide all the money necessary to reduce the cost of secondary education, and some of the secondary schools have very commendably improved their staff. They have also improved their buildings and put in laboratories, for which they have received a certain amount of assistance from Government, but if Government gave a school \$10,000 for a laboratory and one was put in at a cost of \$50,000, is Government to be blamed for the excessive cost?

When we consider the amount spent on secondary education we cannot divorce it from the other problems of education. I think that in his Budget Statement the Financial Secretary pointed out that 10 per cent. of the Colony's expenditure was on primary school teachers' salaries. A few days ago we made certain decisions with respect to school buildings, and a few hours ago hon. Members on the other side of the Table were saying that teachers in outlying districts should be paid station allowances, with which I agree most heartily. One hon. Member also suggested that Government should provide funds to enable students from the countryside to come to the City for courses in secondary education. How many of these things can Government do with the limited funds at its disposal, and which should it do first?

The fact is that it is not the policy of this Government to put secondary education beyond the reach of the ordinary people, and it is not true to say that there has been a drop in the number of students in the secondary schools since the scheme

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for aid to private secondary schools was started. It is true that many secondary schools which do not receive aid have raised their school fees, and I think they have all increased their fees. I think the hon. Member did admit that there has been considerable improvement in secondary education in this country, but I want hon. Members to know that secondary school fees in British Guiana are much below what they are in the West Indies. The hon. Mr. Tello did say that the fees at the two Government secondary schools are much below those in the private secondary schools which are aided by Government, but that has been so for some time, even before aid was given to private secondary schools.

Mr. Tello: That is not my information.

Mr. Benn: That is my information, so that Government cannot be blamed for what has happened in that respect. What has also happened is that before aid was given there were 35 graduate teachers in private secondary schools, and as a result of the aid the number has gone up to 47. In the case of non-graduates the number has been increased from 69 to 97, while the number of laboratories has been increased from 5 to 10. There have been other considerable improvements but it is not possible to give free secondary education unless we get money from somewhere, and Government has not suggested the amount of fees that people should pay in private secondary schools.

Mr. Burnham: I appreciate very keenly the dilemma in which the Government finds itself at the moment with respect to secondary education, but it seems to me that that dilemma could have been avoided if Government had a clear policy and had expressed it to the public—whether there is a scale of priorities in one sector as against another sector, and what is the scale of priorities within each sector. It is a little disappointing to find that since yesterday, on every occasion on which an item has been questioned we have heard the “tape recorder” repeating “We have no money”. I cannot find out yet what this Government has money for,

since we have been discussing the Head “Education”.

If perchance the hon. Minister of Education had said that we have no more money available for increased aid to private secondary schools because a certain percentage of our allocation to Education is being expended for the improvement of school buildings and primary schools, the training of teachers and the erection of a college, perhaps we would have understood, perhaps sympathized and given our fullest support, but, unfortunately, we cannot see any particular aspect of education on which the Minister is concentrating, and I am particularly concerned about the question of education.

We talk a lot about independence and about freedom. I believe I am as vocal as any other so far as those two concepts and ambitions are concerned, but we may well find ourselves, having achieved independence or freedom, as the case may be, with a system of education which does not turn out the technical men, administratively and scientifically, who are needed to make a reality of our independence. I am led to believe that it is the view of this Government, not definitely announced in this Council but I believe it can be recognized, that a welfare service or social service like Education should not have too much money expended on it, but rather there should be a distinct concentration on what this Government would describe as economic projects; money-bearing projects.

That is the school of thought which has existed. May I point out to the Government that you may produce all of the wealth, but if you do not have the trained personnel the wealth could be squandered, or in any case for the administration of the country Government will have to continue bringing in persons who will have no particular enthusiasm or love for the country and whose interest will merely be to get as much as they can for their services. Even in the production of the wealth of the country there is a marked necessity for having trained per-

sonnel, trained nationalist personnel, people who are interested in their country and its progress.

I do commend to the hon. Minister, with whom I sympathize because his portfolio is very heavy and includes subjects like Community Development, Local Government — we will soon have Local Government Reform—more careful thought on our education. He has my sympathy for the burden which he carries, but I commend to him to give more careful thought as to what is the object of our educational system not merely in the direction of free education for all, but in the light of the difficulties which arise under this new system.

May I also commend to the hon. Minister a much more careful study of his subjects and the spending of much less time politicking. Education is a most important portfolio in a country like British Guiana. I know that some people think that this portfolio is not sufficiently attractive to aspire to, but my submission and contention are that it is a most important portfolio. I wonder whether the Majority Party recognizes the importance and, as a result of that recognition, appointed the hon. Member to be responsible for Community Development and Education.

Now to the specific subject of Grants to Aided Private Secondary Schools. I would like the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education to condescend to details regarding this rather vague statement which I find in the Annexure to the Governor's Speech, from the Throne in December, 1958. Writes the hon. Minister, or it was written on his behalf as follows :

"Provision has been made for special grants to provide secondary schools extensions and improvements to existing buildings and for the building of modest science laboratories. Government has also approved of a scheme for the training of teachers from private secondary schools for a University degree with an accent on Science subjects, and it is expected that three more scholarships will be awarded in 1959".

I would be most grateful if the hon. Minister were to tell us something more about this scheme that has been approved. Tell us how many scholarships have been awarded or provided for. It is alleged that there will only be three scholarships. I know that three and nought make three. I would like to find out where we are starting from so that we can recognize how many scholarships we will have in 1959. What provision has been made for the training of these teachers who are being prepared for a University course?

Mr. Benn: The number of teachers to be trained under the Secondary School Scheme this year is three.

Mr. Burnham: Then we have been misled by the Government. The Annexure states "... it is expected that three more scholarships will be awarded in 1959". We accept and understand the difficulties of the Government, but be frank with us and tell us the truth. If you say that you will start with this scheme in 1959 with three scholarships; then put on the tape recorder and say "we cannot give more than three scholarships because we have no money", we would have understood the position. Someone looking at this statement would say "what a wonderful Government; it has been in office twelve months, but within a few months it has started this scheme". Honesty, I think, is a prerequisite of Ministerial success.

Mr. Benn: We gave three scholarships in 1958, and we will give three more in 1959.

Mr. Burnham: It is a good thing the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education has his Permanent Secretary here to help him. What he is trying to say is that there will be three scholarships in 1959.

The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan): rose—

Mr. Burnham: I see the knight in shiny armour and skirts, has risen to defend. We now hear that three scholar-

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ships were awarded last year and three more will be awarded this year. May I be told exactly what the scheme is all about?

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member read from the Annexure to the Governor's Speech and he should be able to understand it.

Mr. Burnham: I still have not been blessed with a reply with respect to this scheme. Are you talking about the three scholarships in 1958, or the three in 1959? Where is the scheme to be implemented; where is the training to take place? Is it to be at Queen's College, the Private Tutorial High School, or the University College of the West Indies? Is it at some other institution of higher education outside of British Guiana at which places have been found? It is not a proper scheme until you have laid down everything in a proper manner.

I do not want to embarrass the hon. Minister, and he should not be so short in his answers. I am encouraging the Minister to be a little more explicit, so that we can understand what he has in his mind and the public can understand how far we are going.

The Minister of Communications and Works (Mr. Ram Karran): You do not know!

Mr. Burnham: I know how far the hon. Minister of Communications and Works is going, because the roads are going nowhere.

I repeat that I have some sympathy for the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education. There is some sort of *camaraderie* because I, myself, have been a teacher in the elementary and secondary schools. I would like him to explain something more in this vague scheme which is referred to in the Annexure to the Governor's Speech.

It is safe to assume that there is no scheme, because if there had been a scheme it would have been explained — I do not credit the Minister of Education with such incompetence as to be unable

to explain a scheme if there was one. I understand that three scholarships were awarded last year, but Government does not know where the people are going to be trained. Science and Arts range over a long list of subjects: it can be geography, biology, or astronomy, I suppose. I want to emphasize that once again we are seeing the difference.

I started off with coaxing the hon. Minister to defend his portfolio. My attitude was to coax and encourage him to tell the people about his plans. He cannot say because he, like so many other Members of the Government, has at last found out that there is a difference between a policy at a street corner and the application of the same policy. At the street corner we can say that we propose to give scholarships for training, but when you come here you have to be specific. You have to put up a scheme which must be such as can stand the light of day, but if you have no scheme there is nothing to stand the eye of scrutiny.

In the circumstances, there is a perfectly safe and logical assumption that there is no scheme, and the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education was guilty of false pretences when he wrote what I have referred to in the Annexure to the Governor's Speech.

Mr. Tello: I am grateful to the hon. Minister for attempting to answer my queries, but I am afraid that he has not fully satisfied me. My investigation has revealed that, through Government's amendment to the recommendations in the Resolution passed in this Legislative Council to provide aid for secondary schools, and through using the money in the vote other than for its true purpose, it is now necessary for secondary schools to find about \$3,600 a year to be spent on qualified teachers.

Government's action has a two-fold result. The Secondary Schools had either to curtail their original programme for the engagement of qualified teachers thereby reducing the standard originally aimed at, or to increase school fees. That is the information I have received. As

a result of Government's policy the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education made a statement that Government would pay 50% of the salaries of teachers. Probably he is right and I am wrong. I do not know what the percentage would have been if the Government had to meet that \$3,600. Possibly it may have been more than 50%. I am told that one of the schools had to curtail its laboratory programme because of the reduced aid it received from the Government.

I am prepared to accept the explanation by the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education as far as percentages are concerned, but I must accept that something must have gone wrong somewhere. If the hon. Minister says that the mistake is not on the part of the Government, then it is his obligation to investigate the matter and offer some sort of guidance to the administration of private secondary schools in order to keep the cost of education down to a minimum. But I see that the Minister has no such intention, because he has already expressed the opinion that the cost of education is not high, compared with our neighbours, the West Indian Islands. But possibly, he is not worried, and he takes the attitude that we should be contented.

We spend 10 per cent. of our Budget on education, and I know that in a small island like Barbados as much as 15 per cent. is spent. I am not up to date on the scale of tuition fees in all the Islands, but even in Barbados they range between 50 to 65 per cent. of what has been paid in British Guiana. Are we not going to lead at some time? Are we not going to show that we propose to work for the ultimate target of free secondary education and what is more, that we are taking steps towards that?

Mr. Jackson: I want to make an appeal to the Minister of Education to attempt here this afternoon to give us some indication of his policy as regards the scholarships to which he, and later the

hon. Member, Mr. Burnham, referred. How can one apply for a scholarship—what are the conditions? How does one know that it exists? It is the Minister's duty to give us information just as it is our right to come here and ask for it. Sitting there quietly is not going to solve the problem. Give us information so we can know where we stand and where we are going.

Mr. Benn: The scholarships which the hon. Member referred to were first awarded last year, and they were advertised in the papers. Three persons took up these scholarships and went to the University College of the West Indies. If the hon. Member does not have an opportunity to read the newspapers which give him all the publicity, he must not blame me, when teachers are sent to U.C.W.I. and he does not know. The teachers take their training and they are under an obligation to return home, after they have completed the course, and serve in one of the Government-aided or Government secondary schools for a period of three years. These scholarships are intended to improve the standard of teaching in secondary schools.

Mr. Jackson: In spite of the very generous attitude of the Minister, we find we are being insulted. Are we on this side of the Table to depend on the newspapers for our information? Where policy is concerned, we have a right to know, and we protest against the Minister's attitude that we must find our information in the newspapers.

Mr. Benn: They were advertised in the Official Gazette, as well.

Mr. Jackson: Whether that is so or not, we have a right to know, as we are part of the machinery that finds the money to carry out schemes and policies, and we are entitled to know by way of memoranda.

Mrs. Jagan: Perhaps my colleague, the Minister of Education was not able to give information which Members of the "Opposition" have at their fingertips, or

[MRS. JAGAN]

had no recourse to confidential files from which to quote verbatim. We have to assume they would have all the information, too.

Mr. Jackson: As to whether we have access to files or otherwise is not material to this issue. What we are saying is, if there is a policy with respect to education, we in this Council must know, and we must all know before it gets to the newspapers. It is no use being childish in this respect.

Mr. Burnham: Red herrings are being drawn across the trail. Every political party has its *gestapo*, if it is worth anything. Some people were able to get confidential drill manuals when they should not have, and nobody quarrels about it. A political organization without a means of getting confidential information will wither away and die. But in any case we are not talking about confidential information.

We are talking about policy statements. Assuming we had access to a red file, we would still need more information to piece together a general picture. In these red files you do not have a policy. No need to be frightened about it.

The Minister must not mix up a politician's ability to get confidential information—and this is an art we learned from those over there—with a request for a policy statement. I want personally to appeal to the Minister, I want to persuade the Minister that it is not a feeling of hostility that prompts the asking of these questions. It is not a desire to embarrass, but a desire to get from the Minister an authoritative statement for the benefit of ourselves on this side and the benefit of the public who, I think, after all, are entitled to know exactly what the plans are.

If only, Mr. Chairman, the Minister were to answer at least a few of my questions, we would get on smoothly and we would be able to have definite pronouncements. When we have that, then we shall

be in a position to give advice how he should carry out his duties, or as to whether we think the policy is gravely or slightly wrong and also, as the Minister may be assured, to offer commendation where commendation is justified.

The Minister must understand that the cut and thrust of a legislative assembly is not of the level of personal animosity. It is not the sort of thing to draw from the Minister sullen silence when we try to elicit very important information or some information which is necessary.

Mr. Tello: When we closed last night we promised to keep the atmosphere healthy. The hon. Minister himself promised that. If we now seek statements of policy, it is not because we want to rope the Minister into an argument, but because when the principle of the Bill was being discussed the Minister refused to give us the necessary guidance. We were however advised by the backbenchers that we might break down these things into small bits, and that is what we are trying to do. I would withdraw my Motion with a plea. After all, this is one time of the year when we can get lots of information and explanations. This is the one time that gives us some licence, and the hon. Ministers must understand that it is their duty to have complete information before them. Let us carry on in that spirit. I beg to withdraw this Motion.

GUIANESE HISTORY AND CULTURE WEEK

Mr. Campbell: I beg to move a reduction by \$1 of subhead 21 — Guianese History and Culture Week, \$2,500—which is a new allocation. I am not asking Government about its policy but a straightforward question about which I want to be enlightened. I understand what is meant by Guianese History, but a Culture Week I do not know, for the word "culture" is so elastic that I do not know what it means. When we say that a person is cultured we know what that means. Am I to understand that the schools in British Guiana have not been teaching Guianese history, and

that there is need for a special allocation now to teach Guianese history? I thought the teaching of Guianese history was part of the curriculum of our primary schools. But "Culture Week," is more puzzling still, and if the hon. Minister can enlighten me by giving an outline of what that means I would be much obliged.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member voted a similar sum last year in Finance Committee for the celebration of a Guianese History and Culture Week. The primary schools in British Guiana do teach some Guianese history, and the sum asked for here is intended for celebrations all over this country to let Guianese know more about their country, more of what has gone before, and to instil in them an ardent desire to work for the improvement and betterment of their country. Last year the programme for this Guianese History and Culture Week was hurriedly drawn up and did not go over as well as it might have done if there had been better planning. We hope, now that the Council will vote the money much earlier in the year, we will be able to hold a pageant to inspire people to realize that Guianese must strive for the day when we will be one nation and one people.

Mr. Burnham: This is one occasion on which I unreservedly congratulate the hon. Minister upon his original idea. It is a good thing to see that this Government sees and recognizes the necessity for having a Guianese History and Culture Week. It is necessary, however, for me to observe that the Minister admits that last year's arrangements were rather hurried and haphazard, and I desire to commend to him that he use his influence and weight in the Government to have this amount, not doubled but at least trebled. It is absolutely impossible. I think, to make a real success of a Guianese History and Culture Week with a sum of \$2,500. I think it is misguided parsimony to attempt to do it with this sum. I imagine that not only the people on the coastlands must take part in such a nationalist

and national exercise but also those in the deep interior—people from the Rupununi and from the far reaches of the Moruca River and the southernmost tributaries of the Corentyne River. We must have a representative pageant, and it must be conceded that the obvious site must be the capital, and to keep all those people in the City and to get enthusiastic teachers and other officials to go to them to make preparations for the pageant is an impossibility on the sum of \$2,500. I would recommend to the hon. Minister not merely that he admit that last year's preparations were hurried, but that he should start immediately to make preparations, if they have not already started.

The Minister may reply that it would be possible to come to the Council for a supplementary provision to increase this sum, but that has one obvious disadvantage, for if a stranger comes to British Guiana and looks at these Estimates and sees an item of \$2,500 for a Guianese History and Culture Week he may be impressed with the absence of patriotism and nationalist feeling on the part of ourselves and the Government, because supplementary estimates are not represented on the Estimates. I wonder if the hon. Minister could have a quick *tête-à-tête* with his colleagues to see whether he cannot find himself in a position this afternoon to earn the highest regard of the "Opposition" and the undying gratitude of all true thinking Guianese.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member knows that last year was the first time such celebrations were carried on. The hon. Member is suggesting a huge sum but he knows very well that I am not taking him seriously.

Mr. Burnham: What does one say about casting pearls before what? I went out of my way to make a suggestion, and I was taking what I was saying seriously, and I was expecting that the holder of the portfolio of so important a subject as Education would have extended to me the elementary courtesy of taking seri-

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ously what I had said, and even if he disagreed with it that he would have told me why he disagreed. This is not a controversial political matter; it is a matter on which I am *ad idem* with the Government and merely proffering some advice from my limited experience, to the effect that \$2,500 is insufficient. Seeing that we are in a good mood on this side of the Table this afternoon, if the hon. Minister would listen to our suggestion, even if his answer were that it is a little impracticable because his colleagues are not all present, but he would give consideration to it and perhaps move the re-committal of the subhead, I would be satisfied. I think we are deserving of some courtesy from the Minister, especially the Minister of Education who, as I understand, is responsible for culture.

Mr. Tello: To assist the hon. Minister may I suggest that we leave this subhead uncommitted and move on to something else in order to give him an opportunity to consider the very valuable suggestion made by the hon. Member for Georgetown Central?

The Chairman: I do not see any justification for leaving the item uncommitted.

Mr. Tello: It would avoid the necessity of having to recommit the item.

The Chairman: I do not think I can do that. The Minister has said emphatically that he is not taking the suggestion seriously. What justification would I have for putting the item down for recommitment?

Mr. Tello: We have the right also to make that plea. This is not the sole interest of the Minister. I thought that the suggestion was sprung upon the Minister and I suggested that he might be given time to consider it and arrive at some sober decision. Any Member has the right to ask for a recommitment.

The Chairman: I do not mind whether the item is recommitted or not. I have not stopped the discussion on the subject at all, and if the Minister would like to continue the discussion time is at his disposal.

Mr. Jackson: The hon. Member for Georgetown Central has already replied to the hon. Minister's remark that he was not taking him seriously. The Minister himself has admitted that last year the programme was hurriedly drawn up and the celebrations did not go over as well as he would have liked. Therefore it is safe to conclude that there was no proper basis upon which he could have made his estimate for this year's Guianese History and Culture Week. His reference to a pageantry brings to our mind a colourful display and the extent to which the participants should be drawn from all parts of the country. It brings to our mind children from all the schools in the country taking part in a mighty pageant which is going to bring home to young Guianese minds that there lived Guianese people whose work is of some importance to Guianese of today who will become the men and women of tomorrow.

It brings to my mind a picture which ought to be as great as what we had when H.R.H. the Princess Margaret came to this country last year. How much money was spent on that occasion. Her Royal Highness left with us certain impressions, but those impressions are not the same as those we want to have of a Guianese History and Culture Week. Guianese will be Guianese. They talk about Guianisation and of making a country with about five or six races one people. How can \$2,500 be a proper basis to work on? We talk about people and of culture and so on, but some people on the other side of the Table are so cultured that they will not even listen to what this side has to say. The Members on that side of the Table keep talking among themselves while the Members on this side are addressing the Chair. I believe that is the sort of culture they want to pass on to the people.

Mrs. Jagan: Shame!

Mr. Jackson: They have no manners and it is time we tell them so. We came here to talk to people who can understand. We are saying that the money which is provided for Guianese History and Culture Week is too small. We are

not accusing the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education and his colleagues of anything. We are merely saying that the vote will not meet the needs of the programme which the hon. Minister has in mind, and we feel that it should be increased. We feel that it would be better to increase the vote now than to come back later this year with supplementary estimates. It must be remembered that this will be an event which is supposed to put something in the minds of Guianese to aspire to.

Mr. Tello: I want to join in this plea. I am not going to quarrel with anybody today because I do not have the ability to quarrel. When Her Royal Highness Princess Margaret visited this country, Finance Committee voted the sum of \$100,000 to do all sorts of things, but for the celebration of Guianese History and Culture Week we are asked to make 2.5% of that amount do. Surely there is something radically wrong, if you are asking us to make \$2,500 do what could not have been done with \$100,000.

I know that the hon. Minister's heart is in this matter. Last year he made a try at it, and he agreed that, because of hasty preparations and possibly lack of money, the celebration was almost a failure — it was only the people's will and desire to have such a celebration that made it look like something. Now that Government's attention has been drawn to the fact that the amount is too small to do the job properly, I think Government should accede to the wishes of hon. Members on this side of the Table and vote enough money that will do something to the credit of the country.

If visitors look on at this celebration — they will not know that merely \$2,500 has been voted — what impression will they leave this Colony with? They will leave the Colony with the impression that British Guiana is not loyal; the people are not mindful of the history of the country; they care nothing about its culture, and with regard to patriotism they have none. That would be the result of a wrong conception by people who are

penny-wise and pound foolish. I thought it was apparent to the hon. Minister that this is something which will go down as one of the bright pages of the history of British Guiana when he conceived this idea. Let us make the occasion something we can be proud of, so that when the history is written it will reflect the sincerity of the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education.

Do not be like the miserable conservatives. This is an occasion for spending money to let the world know that you are proud of your history, and you want the world to know that you rejoice in the thought that you have made history. Is this the behaviour of the reactionaries among progressive people? We love our country, but we do not want to spend a few dollars to celebrate this worthy occasion.

I do not ask the hon. Minister to spend as much as \$100,000 on this occasion. Whilst the suggestion is very generous and the thought behind it is very good, I do not think it is fair to expect him to arrive at a decision today. I hope the hon. Minister will assure this Council that he did not mean to say that he was not taking us seriously. We take him seriously when he makes a statement in this Council. That is why we are having this argument here today. We do not believe that a responsible Minister would come into this Council and say something that he did not mean.

In England, the hon. Member for Georgetown Central would have drawn a special salary as Leader of the Opposition, and his word would have carried as much weight as any Minister in charge of a Department. The Leader of the Opposition is a very important person in any parliament. I do not think it is good to have it recorded that a Minister in this Council is not prepared to take the suggestions of the Leader of the Opposition seriously. I think this is a bad thing in our political history.

I am suggesting that the hon. Minister of Community Development and Educa-

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tion should correct his statement at once. This will be a blotch in the political history of our country and I am taking the hon. Minister seriously. This statement will be written against him, and our Hansard will record that he was not prepared to take the suggestions of the Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues seriously. I suggest that if the Minister has made a hasty statement he should correct it now. I ask him to accept the advice of a humble Nominated Member, have this matter postponed, consult with his colleagues and then make his decision.

Mr. Benn: I was not aware that there was a Leader of the Opposition in this Council. Today is the first time that I have heard that.

The Chairman: There is no such office here.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member was speaking about the "Leader of the Opposition". He knows that we have spent several days in Finance Committee over these matters. We went through all of these heads in Finance Committee, and my Permanent Secretary as well as myself answered the questions asked by hon. Members. In Finance Committee the hon. Member raised another argument for the increase of this vote.

The Ministry believes that the amount of money which has been provided in the Estimates will be enough to take care of the celebration of Guianese History and Culture Week in 1959. I wish hon. Members would appreciate that the Ministry of Community Development and Education knows what it is doing.

Mr. Tello: I am very sorry the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education referred to what took place in Finance Committee, because I am going to make a statement now: every recommendation that was made in Finance Committee from this side of the Table was turned down. Perhaps it was felt that it would have been better for us to make our recommendations in this Council. It

is no sense talking about what was done in Finance Committee. In Finance Committee the Financial Secretary is the Chairman of the meeting, but that is not the practice in parliament.

The hon. Minister of Community Development and Education says that his Ministry knows what it is doing. Very often people do not see all sides of a picture, but very often when their attention is drawn to certain things they change their decisions. I agree that, officially, there is no "Leader of the Opposition" in this Council but in practice it has been so.

Mr. Burnham: I speak as an Elected Member for Georgetown Central. I am very disappointed today to imagine that in the second half of the 20th Century British Guiana can produce a Minister of Community Development and Education who believes he can run a pageant to exemplify the history, the modes of life and the traditions of a set of people spread out over 83,000 square miles on \$2,500. I think this justifies the statement I made some time ago that his Government is running its business like a salt-fish shop. Some people do not understand that we do not want any two-by-three people running around the corner, or croaking voices over Radio Demerara during Guianese History and Culture Week.

Due to the limitations of the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education—he has never travelled further than Trinidad — if he had heard about places like Edinburgh, or even witnessed a carnival in Trinidad he would have been able to appreciate what a celebration means. If he had seen the National Celebrations in Ghana he would have understood what it means.

Father forgive them! The Minister says "We know that \$2,500 can do". \$2,500 can barely pay two Private Secretaries for a year. If to scribble on a piece of paper and make appointments to send people in to a Minister costs \$2,400, how can \$100 more provide a proper

pageant? The Minister must remember that the celebration is not for one day but for a week.

It is a sign of largeness, mental capacity and adroitness to recognize that at first you might have misunderstood or you might have under-estimated the proportions of what was intended. Such largeness of personality, such adroitness I had unfortunately and inaccurately credited our Minister of Education with.

The Chairman: We have been on this for an hour and a half. Mr. Campbell do you wish me to put your Motion?

Mr. Jai Narine Singh: On this matter I am myself taken aback at the smallness of the vote for "Guianese History and Culture Week". Now our history is a comparatively young one, and Guianese culture consists of a variety contributed by various races, and if the celebration of Guianese History and Culture Week is to be done in some effective manner so that children will look forward to it as some important event in their lives a considerable sum will be required to do it. On the occasion of the visit of Princess Margaret school children were given free drinks, biscuits and what not. But that was only a visit from a person living outside of British Guiana.

Here we are setting a pattern for the future of a nation. The children of today will be the men and women of tomorrow, and they will rule the country. Let them be able to look back on Guianese History and Culture Week as something they liked and were impressed with when they were young people.

I do not think \$2,500 can even meet the obviously required refreshment — sugar cake and mauby, which are bound up with our culture.

The hon. Minister should reconsider the matter. We on this side of the Table are saying these things in the interest of the very observance which the hon. Minister is so worthily fostering. Let it be grander and greater, and it would be

more outstanding in our memory that he was the person who started it.

Mr. Ram Karran: I beg to move that the question be now put.

The Chairman: Do not worry about that: it is in the discretion of the Speaker.

Mr. Campbell: I beg to withdraw my Motion, adding a few more remarks. Last year when Guianese History and Culture Week was celebrated it made no impression on my mind at all—there were some steel bands in the streets of Georgetown and a few talks on the radio. That is why I asked the Minister in charge of it to explain to me just what it meant. After hearing the various speakers here on what it ought to be, I am now interested.

If it means colony-wide pageantry, something like the one we had for the visit of the Princess, then it would mean bringing home to the people of Guiana something to be proud of, something to generate loyalty to this country, and something to make the young generation look back upon as wonderful. If it is to bring home the fact that we are all citizens of this vast country, if it is to build this country to take its place among the nations of the world, then I am afraid that Culture Week is still far away from those objects.

The Western world has had over a thousand years of Christian teaching — and I fancy I hear somebody saying 'old Campbell is going to preach.' Christianity is the one culture, the one ideal that will bring real peace and prosperity to Guiana. Under the guise of longing for freedom, the pratings of political parties for independence and what not have caused a state of affairs of lawlessness, more crimes, less manners; in other words, their freedom means this, to do exactly as you like at the expense of your neighbour.

If we really want to get culture, we really have to delve deep in the matter. We cannot bring it about by beating a

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few tom-toms about the place. It has to be beaten into the hearts and heads of Guianese. I hardly knew what a hornets nest I would disturb when I asked just what was meant by Guianese History and Culture Week. From the explanation of the Minister of Education, I gather we will have a week of festivities and something about the history of Guiana. But the results they hope to get will not be gained from the paltry vote of \$2,500.

The Chairman: If that is all, I shall put the Heads 12, and 12A.

Mr. Burnham: May I inquire, Mr. Chairman, if by that you mean up to page 25 of the Estimates?

The Chairman: Up to page 29. They are grouped together in the Schedule, at the figure of \$5,971,047. We finished 12 and went on to 12A, and we are still on 12A and we have just finished with sub-head 21. We will go right on to sub-head 49.

GOVERNMENT TRAINING COLLEGE FOR TEACHERS

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move that sub-head 22 — "Government Training College for Teachers" — item (1) — "Principal" — be reduced by \$1. I do so to make reference to a matter that has caused me great concern over a number of years, that is, the erection of a new Government Training College for Teachers.

It was early in the 50s that the idea was first mooted. I think it will be agreed that we should have a new Government Training College for Teachers, and that the present arrangement of two buildings, one in Main Street and the other in Camp Street, is most unsatisfactory. I believe also that it is accepted by educationists and educators that to have a Training College in the heart of the City, as ours is at the moment situated, if not wholly unsatisfactory is certainly not ideal, and I have no fear of being contradicted when I say that the atmosphere and the surroundings in which one gets one's training has either a good or a bad effect upon one's personality or professional compet-

ence. Further, I am not unmindful of the fact that British Guiana has the least number of trained teachers in the British Caribbean area. When I total up all these facts and some of these unanswerable arguments I suspect that the Minister of Education must be anxious as I am, or should be as anxious as I am, to see a new Government Training College for Teachers.

I should therefore, in the circumstances, like to find out from him, the spokesman for his Government on this subject, whether there is any truth in the allegation that a large area of land considered ideal by the Town Planner who would know, and also considered ideal by his technical professional advisers—whether it is true that that large bit of land just outside the City, in the vicinity of Vryheid's Lust, was offered to Government at the ridiculously low sum of \$1,000 per acre, and that this Government turned down that offer for the alleged reason (I say alleged because I am not anxious to believe something so unflattering about our Government), I am told, that the Government said it could not afford to build a Training College. At this stage I am not inclined to offer any criticisms, for I may yet find out, when the Minister replies, that those criticisms are based on inaccuracies. Consequently, I wonder whether the Minister would enlighten me on this question.

Mr. Benn: Government was offered land at Vryheid's Lust on the East Coast, but Government has not taken up that land in order to build a Teachers' Training College because it has an alternative site at East Ruimveldt which the Town Planner and my technical advisers have visited, and which they have agreed is very suitable for a Government Training College. The land is in the possession of Government now.

Mr. Burnham: There is a fine distinction between considering something ideal and considering it suitable, but a very real one. Will the Minister tell us whether his technical advisers and the

Town Planner consider the Vryheid's Lust site ideal, and have not shown the slightest degree of enthusiasm for the site at East Ruimveldt? Isn't it true that both of his technical advisers and the Town Planner have stated clearly that the site at Vryheid's Lust is eminently superior for that type of activity—for the building of a Training College — rather than the one at East Ruimveldt, which is going to be part of the City? The ground space is going to be less, and what is more, Ruimveldt is going to be a crowded built-up area. Not only would I ask the Minister to answer those questions, but I would also ask him (1)—what was the reason for rejecting the offer at Vryheid's Lust and deciding to build the College at East Ruimveldt? (2) Is the amount of land at Ruimveldt as much as that which would have been available at Vryheid's Lust, and (3) when will building operations start?

Mr. Benn: The land at East Ruimveldt is admirably suited for building a Teachers' Training College. It is nearer the City and nearer to the schools in the City where the teachers in training will be able to attend to get practice. I have said before that the land is Government land and the Education Department can get as much land as it wants for building the College. There are over 700 acres of land at East Ruimveldt which belongs to Government. Government has also taken into consideration the cost of transportation up and down to a site as far out of the City as Vryheid's Lust in relation to the building which it hopes to put up at East Ruimveldt. One other useful purpose of having the College as near as possible to the City is that those teachers who are not internal students would be able to secure lodgings not too far from the College.

Mr. Burnham: First of all I would like to observe that Vryheid's Lust is nearer to the centre of Georgetown than East Ruimveldt. I have driven to both points and I know that one has to travel a greater distance to East Ruimveldt. I therefore cannot see that there is greater proximity to the City so far as East

Ruimveldt is concerned. But the hon. Minister has refused to answer my point, or I do not know whether he appreciates the distinction I was making. I said that my information was that the Town Planner and the Minister's technical advisers were enthusiastic about the Vryheid's Lust site, which enthusiasm they have not expressed with respect to the East Bank site. I also asked the Minister when he proposed to start building.

The Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan): It would appear that the hon. Member, who is not now in the seat of the Minister of Education, wants to make decisions for the Minister of Education. When he gets into that seat he will then, if he so desires, accept the advice of his technical officers. We know that officers give advice, and many officers sometimes think in cadillac terms. Ministers do not have to think in cadillac terms but in terms of what is practical and what is necessary and suitable to the needs of the country. The hon. Member is desirous of going into the whole mechanics of this scheme. It is for Government to decide where and how the College should be built.

The "Opposition" should be interested in questions of policy. If the Ministers of Government have decided that the College should be built in a certain way regardless of the advice of its technical officers, then it should be done in that way. Their advice has been given consideration; it is not that we have relegated it to the waste paper basket. It was given consideration, and in view of the fact that the site at East Ruimveldt is nearer to the City of Georgetown, and because of the desirability of training more students, not necessarily all residential, the Ruimveldt site has been considered more suitable than the one at Vryheid's Lust. The site at Vryheid's Lust is obviously much further away.

There are no houses for students who want to reside outside, and so far as this Government is concerned, what is desired at the moment is to train more teachers and to train them as

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quickly as possible. If that can be done in conjunction with a residential College by having students living outside, by all means that method will be adopted, and I see no reason why the hon. Member should raise a series of objections.

Mr. Burnham: It is unfortunate that the Minister of Education should have to have as his defender today that jack-of-all-political-trades, the Minister of Trade and Industry, who knows as much about education as I know about Greek. Instead of leaving to the Minister of Education the duty of explaining, in equally inept terms, his reasons for making his decision, the Minister of Trade and Industry says that I want to be Minister of Education. The Minister of Trade and Industry knows as well as I do that after the 1957 Elections he offered me a coalition which I refused. I am not interested in Ministerial office *per se*, and it is not that I want to usurp the functions or take on the headaches or carry the burdens of the Minister of Education.

It is merely that, according to my way of thinking, from the information I have at my disposal the site at Vryheid's Lust is a superior site, and I would like the Minister of Trade and Industry to understand that it is not parliamentary conduct to tell the "Opposition" that "Government has decided and you have to accept it." We do not have to accept it because we have our democratic rights here.

It is not for the Government to tell us "You must accept what we do". The Government has not yet assumed the role of parent to a little child. It is within our rights to question the Government. I agree that in any event a politician has to make the decision. A politician is entitled to disregard the advice of his technical officers. That is what he is there for, but it shows the simplicity of the minds that operate on the other side of the Table. We are politicians too, and are entitled to our own opinions whether it conflicts with that of the technical officers or that of our fellow-politicians.

We are told about the lowering of the level of the debate. I have been discussing all afternoon the question of a site. It is the duty of the Government to show that it was not the best site. I may or may not be convinced by the explanation. I do not want to be a pedagogue to these political infants. Our straightforward questions have been answered mostly in monosyllables, and most of them have not been answered by the Minister of Trade and Industry who cannot run his Ministry but wants to run the Ministry of Education.

I would like to know when will the Centre be built? That question has not been answered. If, instead of indulging in personalities, we had received answers, I am sure that the gratitude from this side of the Table would not have been singular.

Mr. Benn: The Teachers' Training College will be built as early as possible.

Mr. Burnham: When is "as early as possible"? What time and on what date? That reminds me of the lady who used to wash——

The Chairman: Do not bring in ladies here.

Mr. Burnham: What are the considerations with respect to the building? Why have you not commenced building operations? When do you expect to have your plans completed? Those are the things you must be able to show us. The old type of Government used to give that type of answer to a certain Member who used to be the Member for Central Demerara, and I used to agree with him that such answers were evasive and dishonest. I do not want to so describe the last answer given to me by the Minister of Community Development and Education. I would like him to break down in terms of years, months, days, minutes and seconds what is meant by his phrase "as early as possible".

Mr. Benn: I would like to assure the hon. Member that everyone in this Council, including the strangers, is

amused and satisfied with his performance this afternoon.

Mr. Burnham: There is one thing that can be said about the hon. Minister of Natural Resources, even if you do not agree with him, he tries to give you an answer. Why indulge in personalities and talk about performances? I ask the hon. Minister a very simple question: What do you mean by "as early as possible"? Abuse is the shroud with which some people veil their ignorance.

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member has been absent on several occasions when I rose to explain certain things. I wish to draw the hon. Member's attention to the fact that Abraham Lincoln said that "not every jackass that can turn its ears up can become a Minister of the Government".

Mr. Burnham: I do not intend to go down to the level of the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education. I am not interested in the Ministerial Offices. I am merely asking him to tell me what he means by "as early as possible". We want information on this side of the Table. I do not want to go into the gutter to meet the Minister. I have disagreed with the hon. Minister of Natural Resources on many a point, but I must say that he attempts to give us answers when we ask him questions. I think some of his answers are worthless, but he certainly attempts to give us answers. It would not be a bad thing if the Minister who is responsible for culture followed his example and give us answers.

Mr. Jackson: There is a society for the Refinement and Culture of School Children, and I recommend strongly that the Minister who is now holding the portfolio of Community Development and Education should join that Society and learn something about refinement. He has demonstrated this afternoon that he lacks refinement in every degree, and that he does not have the culture and refinement which one expects from the Minister of Education. If he is responsible for educating our people, and he

comes into this Council and behaves himself like an ignoramus, then all of our people will become ignoramuses.

We came here this afternoon to do a certain job, and we were told that it was not ready. All of this confusion is due to the ignorance displayed by the other side of the Table. The hon. Member asked a straightforward question: When are you going to build a Teachers' Training College? Will it be built at Ruimveldt, the Garden of Eden or Mon Repos? Mon Repos is far away from the city—

The Chairman: I do not think anything has been said about the Garden of Eden or Mon Repos.

Mr. Jackson: The Minister says that the College will be built as soon as possible. That is not a proper answer from a Minister who holds a responsible position. He must know what project he has in mind. He should be able to tell us whether the building will take two or three years to build, and whether he is going to start on it tomorrow morning. We know that the intention is not to build the College immediately, and it is intended to transfer the female teachers to live in the Labour Department near the Sea Wall, a place which is very questionable. We also know that the intention is to remove the Labour Department from the present site to somewhere else and to put the Teachers' Training College there. They say it is a temporary measure, and that is why the Minister of Community Development and Education cannot say when the College will be built. He is afraid to give us a straightforward answer.

The hon. Minister is aware that \$½ million was reserved in the Development Programme for the erection of the Teachers' Training College, and he knows that the money has been utilized for other work. There is no policy with respect to the building of the College. Those of us who frequent the Sea Wall—perhaps the hon. Minister of Community Development and Education does not go

[Mr. JACKSON]

there—know that it would not be a good site for the erection of a College for housing teachers. If he does not know what happens on the Sea Wall he should ask someone who knows.

The Chairman: I do not think that question arises here. As far as my recollection goes—

Mr. Benn: The hon. Member is merely—

The Chairman: I hope hon. Members will understand that when I am speaking I must not be interrupted. As far as I can gather, there is no question about the Sea Wall or any site near there. The names of the two places which have been mentioned are Ruimveldt and Vryheid's Lust. I understand that a building is to be erected at Ruimveldt. In answer to your question as to when it will be built, the Minister of Community Development and Education said "as early as possible". I have not heard anything said about a site on the Sea Wall. I wish hon. Members would be precise.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Member must have seen another file.

Mr. Jackson: I understand that the building which is now used by the Labour Department will be used by the teachers who are undergoing training. I know that is a fact. The Minister of Communications and Works is unable to carry out his duties to the advantage of the general public, but he is still performing the duties of "Minister of Humour". From the time he entered this Council we have never heard him giving any positive approach or answer to any problem. I know that the reason why the Minister of Community Development and Education will not give us precise information or any specific date as to when he intends to put up the new College at Ruimveldt is due to the fact that he intends using the building now used by the Labour Department for housing the teachers.

Mr. Benn: Government is considering

the use of the building now occupied by the Labour Department for another purpose. The hon. Member's sleuths are doing good work. A new building for the Teachers' Training College is to be sited at Ruimveldt. It is proposed that an enlarged teachers' training scheme should commence in September, 1959, and it is hoped that an alternative building will be chosen to house this Teachers training scheme. The building of the Teachers' Training College will go on at East Ruimveldt as soon as Government has the money to carry it out.

Mr. Davis: I have no pretensions to culture, and it is with a certain amount of trepidation that I now rise, for, as our creole proverb goes: "*When fowl cock got dance cockroach na got no business deh*". I also heard from a reliable source that the College was to be placed, as a temporary measure, at the Labour Department building in Kingston, and I heard further that the young male and female teachers were to be placed in the same building. Maybe it will be a futuristic sort of training, but when I heard of it, I was concerned a great deal.

Mr. Burnham: May I ask whether or not the exact site has been chosen?

Mr. Benn: The technical officers of the Department visited the site on Monday and the site has been chosen.

Mr. Burnham: Well, now, may I ask whether the plans for the building have been drawn?

Mr. Benn: The plans of the building have not been drawn as yet.

Mr. Burnham: May I then ask how soon it is proposed that plans for the building be drawn?

Mr. Benn: As soon as the architects are able to draw them. I arranged with the architects that as soon as the site was chosen they would start the plans.

Mr. Burnham: I apologize to the Min-

ister for causing him some embarrassment, but, as I understand it, plans for the building could have been drawn independently of the site. That I understood was possible. Anyhow, I take his word for it—you must get the site and you must get the land. I accept that. Well, Mr. Chairman, I know the Minister cannot say when the plans will be drawn, but I would like to know from the Minister if he, as Minister, has set an approximate time by which the plans should be put in.

Mr. Benn: I do not know that I am under cross-examination here this afternoon. I did everything possible to answer the hon. Member's questions. Now I think he is being unreasonable and childish, and I do not intend to answer any more.

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Chairman, in the Scriptures it is written, "and a child shall lead them". If I were cross-examining the hon. Member he would have been in a much more uncomfortable position. But I am not here as a lawyer. I am here, having been elected by the people of Georgetown Central, and I am trying to elicit some information. If the Minister has decided that he will not enlighten me, and he will not answer my childish questions, I shall go no further, and leave the public to judge.

I shall remind him that I have never heard in other chambers I have visited—and there are many more—the Ministers refusing to answer such straightforward questions. It is not a matter of childishness. I merely want to get information. It is a matter of urgency as far as I am concerned. The present arrangement is a makeshift one, but where you have a makeshift arrangement I am particularly worried because the original siting of part of the Teachers Training College in Camp Street was a makeshift arrangement. Makeshift arrangements in British Guiana have a way of perpetuating themselves into permanency. But if Government has decided to build at Ruimveldt, it is fruitless for me to quarrel, and if he says it is going

to be expeditious, my fears about these makeshift arrangements would vanish. That is why I tried to find out from the hon. Minister if the matter is being expeditiously treated.

Only on Monday the technical officers looked at the East Ruimveldt site. The Minister does not know when the building will commence. These people are experienced architects, and you can fix a deadline. I know the Minister is not an architect, and I know he cannot say when the architects will finish, but surely he as Minister giving instructions to his Permanent Secretary can say whether the architect or architects have been instructed to have the plans done immediately. But the Minister is not prepared to answer my question; that represents an attitude, to my mind, which makes necessity of wisdom; it is not that he will not but he cannot.

Mr. Tello: Will the Minister say whether it is intended that the building will commence this year at all?

Mr. Benn: A site has been chosen. The architects do not draw their plans until they have seen the site. They hardly ever do otherwise. As soon as Government has the funds for building a new Teachers Training College, the new College will be built. In view of the necessity of increasing the number of trained teachers, even although a new Teachers Training College will be built, it will still be necessary to have additional accommodation for training teachers.

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Chairman—

The Chairman: I thought the matter had been fully ventilated.

Mr. Burnham: May I indulge my privilege of speaking as many times as I may, in Committee?

The Chairman: The Minister has said he is not answering any more questions, and that he has given his best answers. I thought you said just now that you were not going any further.

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Chairman, the last answer raised another question, because the hon. Minister said that even if the new centre is erected, it will still be necessary to erect accommodation otherwise.

The Chairman: He said that before.

Mr. Burnham: I want to ask whether it is not possible to plan for such a building as will take care of all trainees say, within the next 20 years. That, as I understand it, is planning. Either you provide enough space in the building, or so plan the building, from the architectural and aesthetic point of view that you can make additions easily and rapidly. I am addressing that point of view to the Minister so that his will not be the necessity of having to provide extra accommodation elsewhere, outside of East Ruimveldt. I am trying to be helpful.

The Chairman: Is that all under Head 12A? If so, I will put the question—

PRINCIPAL (TECHNICAL INSTITUTE)

Mr. Tello: I beg to move the reduction of sub-head 28—"Principal" (Technical Institute)—by \$1. Interest in technical education is growing at all levels. I do not want to detain this Committee, but only to ask if the hon. Minister has any plans, future or immediate, to cater for the technical education of children leaving the primary and entering the secondary schools. At the moment the arrangement is to have the largest amount of entries from young people who are already at work earning a living, and they are recommended by their employers. I would also ask the Minister if there is to be any provision for a technical school in the rural areas.

Mr. Benn: Presently, there are students from the primary schools doing courses at the Technical Institute—students who have done a preliminary course and who have shown an aptitude in metal work or wood work. There are no plans presently for setting up an-

other Technical Institute in this country. The idea is to build up the present one and see how it works. It is a young institution, and I believe hon. Members will agree with me that we should give it a chance to settle down before rushing it.

As I said yesterday, wherever possible we hope to be able to build not only wood work centres, but wood work and domestic science departments. In smaller areas, Government has a plan to put up domestic science centres and wood work centres.

Mr. Tello: I am very satisfied with the reply, and rather than move a reduction of the item I might ask another question. How does the Minister reconcile this plan to improve the Technical Institute with no provision in the Estimate for any increase in the vote for equipment and books? If the Technical Institute is to assume greater responsibility and the standard of its work is to be elevated, one would assume that there would be need for more equipment and more books. Of course that is only a layman's point of view.

Mr. Benn: The amount put on the Estimate is sufficient to carry out the plans we hope to carry out this year. The same sum was used up last year and we hope to use another \$24,000 this year to carry on the good work which is being done at the Institute. The sum on the Estimate is considered sufficient to carry out improvements at the institution.

Mr. Kendall: I beg to move a reduction by \$1 of subhead 37—Wages of subordinate employees, \$100—in order to ask the Minister the reason for the decrease of nearly \$24,000 on the approved estimate for 1958. He indicated last year that the reduction under this subhead was based on the assumption that he was going to train students in Home Economics to fit them for better positions in life, and because of that there was no space at the Carnegie Trade School, and that the money would be

used for training girls in Home Economics. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether, since he has caused the dismissal of those subordinate employees at the Carnegie School, the money saved was diverted to this training as he envisaged.

Mr. Benn: As a result of the reduction of the amount some students were able to be taken into the School. The course at the School has been enlarged to a three-year course, and whereas before it was mainly one of domestic science, the girls are now doing such things as arithmetic, English and other associated subjects, of which they may not have done sufficient in the primary schools. So that there has been a considerable expansion. In addition to that the hon. Member knows that we have awarded some scholarships in honour of the Royal visit, and in a few days' time, probably tomorrow, a new batch of teachers will be taken into the Carnegie School of Home Economics for training to go into the country areas to take charge of the centres and departments which we hope to set up as time goes on. We are training more teachers and more students, and the period of training has been increased to three years. They are doing more subjects, so that there is a considerably expanded programme at the institution. Most of the persons who were employed before this scheme was introduced have been absorbed in other places, and one or two of them, I understand, have been accepted for training under this Teachers' Training Scheme.

Mr. Kendall: Quite laudable, but I do not think it is reflected under this subhead which shows a decrease of \$23,000. I do not know if the Minister can show me where he is spending this money for this accelerated training. The Carnegie Trade School for Women has always taken in student teachers at certain periods for a course in Home Economics, but those who have been trained cannot find jobs in the schools to demonstrate the training they have received. In New Amsterdam there

are a few trained teachers from that School who are still ordinary teachers. There is no need to accelerate the scheme when those who are already trained cannot be absorbed into the type of job they were trained for.

Mr. Benn: The amount shown on the Estimate is satisfactory for accelerating the training of the additional 14 teachers. With regard to the point made by the hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Kendall) that there are teachers who have been trained at Carnegie but do not have an opportunity to use their training in the primary schools, I wish to say that the great problem with us is that we are not too happy over removing so many of those teachers from their normal teaching duties to do domestic science all the time, and what we hope to do is to get a few teachers to specialize in Home Economics, so that it would save the time and training of those teachers in other class work — training for which we need so many in the classes today. We do want to get as many of our teachers who are trained, and who have the higher Teachers' Certificates, in the class-rooms, because unless we base Home Economics, wood work and secondary education on a sound primary education then all is lost after they have left the primary school. So it is necessary to train those teachers and keep the best teachers in the primary schools.

Mr. Kendall: I take it that the hon. Minister's intention was to effect a saving by the dismissal of those subordinate employees who had been working at the Carnegie School for years, but that saving is not reflected in the Estimate. He has not been able to carry out his plan, and my point is that until he can absorb those who have been trained already, why train more?

Mr. Benn: I did not say that the savings would be used. I said that the space would be used; that a portion of the Tailoring, Dressmaking and Embroidery departments will be used to provide more accommodation to train girls to do addi-

[MR. BENN]
tional work, and to take in part-time teachers. I did not say anything about the money.

Mr. Jackson: I seem to gather that there are two aspects of this training scheme which have been referred to by the hon. Minister of Education, one with respect to students and the other with respect to teachers, and that the students are now being given a 3-year instead of a 2-year course. We also gather that not only are they being taught domestic science but they were also going to a primary school for the purpose of building up their educational standards and requirements. That is commendable, but it seems to me that if that is being done — and I assume it has been done since last year — it must involve an expenditure of money to employ additional teachers who were on the staff of the Carnegie School but were not at the time capable of teaching the 3Rs which are now being taught. So that Government must have employed additional teachers at the Carnegie Trade School. But we have not seen any reflection of expenditure under this Head.

We do not know how many teachers are now employed for the teaching of primary subjects at the Carnegie School, or whether they are provided from the staffs of the primary schools to perform that task. If they are employed on a full-time scale then the expenditure for the salaries of those teachers must be reflected in the Estimates. On the other hand, if those teachers are drawn from the primary schools it seems to me that in order to carry out this laudable project some other place is suffering, because we know that the primary schools are short-staffed and that the teachers have very large classes

to handle. So that if teachers are taken from the primary schools to teach at the Carnegie School an injustice is being done to the primary schools. We expect the hon. Minister to tell us exactly where the money is coming from to pay the teachers who are now teaching the subjects added to the curriculum at the Carnegie School.

The hon. Member for New Amsterdam (Mr. Kendall) brought to light the very important point that there are already several trained teachers who have spent more years at the Carnegie Trade School and have gone back to their primary schools, but cannot put into practice the things they have been taught. This is something which has been mentioned on this side of the Table on more than one occasion. You send people to be trained, and when they have been trained and sent back to their substantive posts they find it impossible to put their training into practice. It is clear that there is no policy with respect to this subject, and that the Minister of Community Development and his technical officers have not yet been able to find a scheme to take care of the situation. It is now five o'clock, and I might as well end at this stage.

The Financial Secretary: I beg to move that the Council resume.

Question put, and agreed to.

The Council resumed.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Speaker: This Council stands adjourned until tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock.

Council adjourned, at 5.05 p.m.