

# SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Wednesday, 2nd November, 1960

The Council met at 2 p.m.

PRESENT:

**Speaker, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson**

**Chief Secretary, Hon. Major I. O. Smith, O.B.E. (acting).**

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

**Financial Secretary, Hon. W. P. D'Andrade.**

} *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 Natural Resources)
- „ „ **Janet Jagan** —Member for *Western Essequibo*  
(Minister of Labour, Health and  
Housing)
- „ „ **Ram Karran** —Member for *Demerara-Essequibo*  
(Minister of Communications and  
Works)
- „ „ **B. S. Rai** —Member for *Central Demerara*  
(Minister of Community Development  
and Education).
- Mr. W. O. R. Kendall** —Member for *New Amsterdam*
- „ **R. C. Tello** —Nominated Member.
- „ **F. Bowman** —Member for *Demerara River*
- „ **L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.** —Member for *Georgetown Central*
- „ **S. Campbell** —Member for *North Western District*
- „ **A. L. Jackson** —Member for *Georgetown North*
- „ **E. B. Beharry** —Member for *Eastern Demerara*
- „ **S. M. Saffee** —Member for *Western Berbice*
- „ **Ajodha Singh** —Member for *Berbice River*
- „ **Jai Narine 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, Nominated Member—indisposed.

Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E., Nominated Member—on leave.

The Assistant Clerk read prayers.

## MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Council held on Friday, 28th October, 1960, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

MR. GAJRAJ ILL

**Mr. Speaker:** Hon. Members, I have to announce that the hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, has asked to be excused from today's meeting on account of ill health.

## ORDER OF THE DAY

## TIMBER CONCESSIONS TO CUBA

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman) to move the following Motion:

"Whereas the leader of the Majority Party of the Government in a press interview on Friday, 10th June, stated that as a result of the recent visit of the Cuban delegation, Government was considering entering into a partnership with Cuba to exploit the timber resources of this Colony;

And whereas the majority of the inhabitants of this Colony are at present opposed to the idea in view of the present political situation in Cuba:

Be it resolved: That this Council recommends that Government should not enter into any negotiations with the present Cuban Government, Cuban companies or individual Cubans for timber concessions in this Colony".

**Mr. Bowman:** Never before in the history of this country have the minds of the people been so agitated and perturbed as they are today about the future prospects of this country, and it is this general struggle for survival and disturbance of mind that has given rise to this Motion. The Minister of Trade and Industry and his Party are at this moment considering the question of whether they should give the Cuban Government timber concessions, and perhaps other concessions in British

Guiana. We in this country know from reports we have read in the newspapers, of what is taking place in Cuba today, and it is because of that that the majority of the people of this country are opposed to the idea of Government entering into any kind of partnership or giving any kind of concessions to the Cubans.

The people of British Guiana have no aversion to Cubans as such, but conditions in Cuba today are not normal. Under normal conditions all of us, perhaps without a dissenting voice, would agree to admit Cubans to assist us in the development and exploitation of our vast timber resources. But apart from those who consider Dr. Fidel Castro as an idol and extol him as a great liberator in this hemisphere, most Guianese have an aversion to violent revolution as a means of achieving independence. We know that independence is in the offing. The British Government has given us an undertaking, and we are at a stepping stone towards the achievement of complete internal self-government, yet we hear today Ministers of this Government, at several public meetings, telling the people about arming themselves and fighting for independence. [**A Member:** "Fighting fire with fire".] What I am saying I have read in the newspapers. If I am wrong then the newspapers have reported me incorrectly.

We are opposed to anyone who would train our thoughts towards revolution, and we believe that if any sort of concession or partnership is to be entered into with the Cubans, revolution is going to be imported into this country. Later on I shall quote from "The Daily Argosy" to show that only last week an attempt was made in Venezuela at violent revolution. I read in the newspapers where certain Venezuelan industrialists promised to develop secondary industries in this country. I have my fears about that also, because these industrialists may be wolves in sheep's clothing. I know of

certain people in Water Street who recently came to this country posing as merchants, but they are really wolves in sheep's clothing.

All Guianese, except the few who consider Castro the best man that has lived on this Continent and in this century, would like to give not only concessions but other things to all who genuinely desire to come in and assist in the development of our country, but we know that if Castro's Government, or any Cuban company, were granted timber concessions here, aeroplanes would be bringing in their supplies, and those planes are not going to land at Atkinson Field. They are going to build their own airfields in the interior and guns and munitions are going to be brought into this country. It is this, and perhaps much more, that my former friends had in mind when they told their audiences about arming them.

Our minds have never been so disturbed as they are today. We are faced with danger, and if we sit here with our eyes wide open, after hearing of what is being said by Members of the Government, and allow concessions to be granted to the Cubans, then God be with us.

I have some quotations to make, Sir, with your permission, concerning some of the promises made by Castro's Government—some of the things which have been said by Castro who has not lived up to one-sixteenth of the promises he has made. The men who assisted Castro to power are today shivering in their boots, and some of them are fleeing the country. My former friend, the Minister of Trade and Industry, said the other day that they have friends with money and rockets. These are clear indications of what these people have in mind for British Guiana. We have always had peace in our country. We have had our little ups and downs, but Guianese have never thought in terms of revolting, especially for independence.

We believe in the principle of the British Government that they are prepared to train their Colonials to take on the responsibilities of Government. Today we see in the various countries that have been given self-government and independence that the British Government are really honest; they are not saying what they do not mean. Whenever they promise you anything it will be implemented. [Mr. Benn: "Kenya too?"] I see no useful purpose in people—even the Ministers of this Government—arguing about the question of independence now.

I read in the newspapers that some Members are clamouring for independence before 1961. It is now 1960, and they want to get it before 1961! Is this not empty agitation to fool the public? Guianese cannot be fooled for long. We have been ruled by the British for 100 years. How long will it take us to reach 1961, when we are now in 1960? How long do you expect the British Government will withhold independence from us when the principle of independence has already been offered to us? These outpourings have been made by certain people, because Elections will be taking place next year. That is a slogan which they feel will catch the imagination of the people. That may be a catch-slogan for some of our friends, but we are thinking in terms of the economics of this country. We are thinking of the bread and butter of the people, and of those who have money and would like to come here and invest it.

Since last year when I left the P.P.P.—[Mr. Ram Karran: "You were kicked out."]—I tabled a Motion asking that this Council increase tax concessions in order to give greater incentives to people inside and outside of this country who desired to invest their money here. I subsequently tabled a Question asking Government when they would debate my Motion. The Question has not been answered, and the Motion has not been debated. What

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we on this side of the Table are thinking about is the bread and butter of the people. We are thinking of the economic and general development of the country. Some people are thinking in terms of revolution, because revolution is a catchword; it is a high-sounding electioneering slogan. The British have offered us independence. I cannot remember everything in the Constitutional Report, but the gist of it was that after the West Indies shall have obtained independence, two years hence, or within a short time we could go to England and discuss the question of independence.

Well, my hon. Friends are sounding loud tambourines and shouting "Independence before 1961". Whom are they trying to fool? Coming back to the big question of Castro and Cuba, I will now quote from a reliable source. This is what has been said at a certain conference of American States. I propose to quote from a news item from the Inter-American States at the last conference which they held.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not know what you are quoting from.

**Mr. Bowman:** This is a document which was loaned to me by a friend. It is a document from the Inter-American Conference held at Costa Rica very recently. [At this stage Mr. Bowman handed a document to the Clerk for transmission to the Speaker].

**Mr. Speaker:** It appears to be a document from a Conference. You may continue.

**Mr. Bowman:** Yes, Sir. The document states:

**The Promise of the Revolutionary Government of Cuba**

When the Government headed by Dr. Fidel Castro Ruz assumed power in Cuba on January 1, 1959, the press and people of the entire Hemisphere hailed

the event. Recognition of the Government was granted by all the American states by January 8, 1959, and it was evident that there was a sincere desire to give all possible friendly support to the new Government and to welcome it to the community of western democratic nations and to the organization of American States.

Dr. Castro's role in the Sierra Maestra mountains of Cuba had captured the imagination and raised the hopes of millions of freedom-loving Americans. Many of the pronouncements and initial acts by leaders of the 26th of July Movement gave hope that Cuba would assume its position as a leader in the fight for freedom, representative democracy, the dignity of man, opposition to all forms of tyranny, and belief in those ideals which are the roots of our mutual American heritage.

Coming after the developments of a democratic nature in other countries of the Hemisphere, the advent of the new Cuban Government was viewed by many as a further important step which would help to establish more firmly democratic institutions and procedures throughout the Americas.

This hope of the American community did not seem to be unrealistic at that time. Dr. Castro, in his defense before the Emergency Tribunal of Santiago de Cuba on October 16, 1953, when he and his followers were tried for attacking the Moncada Army barracks, had been described by writers as "a solitary figure consecrated in body and soul to defend the truth." He had been further lauded in the book, *History Will Absolve Me*, by his then friend, Luis Conte Aguero, as one who "is keeping the promises that the rebel made. He does not break his pledges. His acts are true to his words. He is democratic, humanist and humanitarian."

Among the five "revolutionary laws" set forth in Dr. Castro's defense plea in the Moncada trial, one "would have returned power to the people and proclaimed the Constitution of 1940 the supreme law of the land, until such time as the people should decide to modify or change it . . ." At that time and subsequently, Dr. Castro has consistently deplored atrocities committed by previous regimes in Cuba's history.

Then, on July 12, 1957, Dr. Castro's "Declaration of the Sierra Maestra" was issued. Its general lofty tones also gave those who welcomed the Revolutionary



Government hope that democracy would be restored to Cuba. The first eight points of the Declaration are particularly worth recalling.

"1. Immediate freedom for all political prisoners, civil and military.

"2. Absolute guarantee of freedom of information, both of newspapers and radio, and of all the individual and political rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

"3. Designation of provisional mayors in all municipalities, after consultation with the civic institutions of the locality.

"4. Suppression of graft in all its manifestations, and adoption of measures which will tend to increase the efficiency of all the organizations of the State.

"5. Creation of a Civil Service.

"6. Democratization of union politics, holding free elections in all unions and industrial federations.

"7. Immediate beginning of an intensive campaign against illiteracy and of civic education, emphasizing the duties and rights which the citizen has both in the society and the Fatherland.

"8. Establishment of an organization for agrarian reform to promote the distribution of barren lands and the conversion into proprietors of all lessee planters, partners and squatters who possess small parcels of land, be it property of the state or of private persons, with prior indemnification to the former owners."

Those are the 8 Declarations. I am going to quote further:

"In an address to the Cuban people on January 2, 1959, just before Dr. Urrutia was sworn in as Provisional President, Dr. Castro said that one of the first acts of the Government would be to restore constitutional guarantees of all types. The new Government would also protect the economy of the country and Dr. Urrutia would be Provisional President and supreme authority in all respects until elections were held.

On January 5, 1959, in Camaguey, Dr. Castro made clear his opposition to press censorship by stating:

"We want the press to function here. There won't be any more censorship as there was under the tyranny. Only a Government which has something to hide imposes censorship".

On the same day in reply to a question, President Urrutia replied:

"My Government will never impose measures of coercion on the press. There cannot be healthy democracy in a country not well informed".

In Santa Clara on January 6, in response to a question on relations with Russia, Dr. Castro was quoted as saying that he:

"...reiterated his personal opinion that Cuba should not maintain diplomatic relations with any dictator".

I am going to read further, Sir:

In a publicized interview given early in January, 1959, Dr. Castro expressed the opinion that:

"The tyranny having been defeated there were automatically re-established all civil rights, including the right to dissent and to make opposition".

President Urrutia in a press interview on January 7 said:

"Cuba will always exert the minimum effort to assure that in our country there are no dictators. Cuba wishes to respect international law and not intervene in the internal problems of other countries and intends to present to international organizations the question of respect for human rights. I believe when this occurs there will be no more dictators".

"On May 21, 1959, Dr. Castro said:

We wish to free man from fear, we want to free man from dogmas, to free him socially and economically, without dictatorship of any kind. "

**Mr. Speaker:** You are not going to read the whole of that document?

**Mr. Bowman:** No, Sir. I am only going to read a portion. I will read a few paragraphs which will tell you of the rise of the dictatorial pattern of that country:

"The close association between the Revolutionary Government of Cuba and the Sino-Soviet bloc, and the encourage-

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ment by the Communist powers of revolutionary movements patterned on the Cuban model in other Latin American countries, give particular grounds for concern over developments in Cuba that have a bearing upon principles and objectives of the American Republics set forth in the Charter of the Organization of American States.

The Revolutionary Government of Cuba came to power with the sincere applause and good wishes of the peoples of the United States and other friendly countries who were impressed by the valour of the revolutionaries and by the lofty aims professed by the 26th of July Movement. The almost immediate recognition granted to the new government made evident the sincere desire of other governments in the Hemisphere to give it all possible friendly support.

Many of the pronouncements and initial acts by leaders of the 26th of July Movement gave hope that Cuba would assume the position of a leader in the common struggle of the peoples of America for freedom and representative democracy, and for the economic and social reforms necessary to build a better human life. Dr. Castro was acclaimed as a new figure on the American scene who was genuinely interested in the welfare of his people, who was dedicated to a programme of democracy and economic betterment, and who would seek ways of strengthening the bonds of Hemispheric solidarity by giving renewed vigour to principles and objectives which underlie the Inter-American System.

Unfortunately the opposite has taken place with reference to the political structure being erected in Cuba by the Revolutionary Government. Instead of building upon the basic elements of a democratic system as set forth in the **Declaration of Santiago**, the Cuban Government has increasingly followed practices, and adopted formulas, typical of dictatorial political systems.

In the **Declaration of Santiago** certain of the main principles of the democratic system in this Hemisphere were set forth, with no attempt to be complete, "so as to permit national and international public opinion to gauge the degree of identification of political regimes and governments with that system, thus contributing to the eradication of forms of dictatorship, despotism, or tyranny, without weakening respect for the right of peoples freely to choose their

own form of government". A recital of the facts of political developments of Cuba in relation to the principles of the **Declaration of Santiago** is included in the body of this document. These developments have all been publicly proclaimed. The record clearly demonstrates, among other factors, the absence of any move to hold elections, the virtual prohibition of political opposition, the practical elimination of freedom of the press and other violations of fundamental human rights.

Repeated statements by Prime Minister Castro and his associates have impugned the value of democratic elections and have indicated a clear intent not to hold elections in the foreseeable future. Thus, the Revolutionary Government of Cuba perpetuates itself in power without an electoral mandate or any fixed term of office.

Political opposition has been virtually eliminated. All opposition parties have been driven underground or eliminated and many of their leaders have sought asylum in other countries. Only the **Partido Socialista Popular** (Communist Party) is permitted to act openly.

Freedom of the press, radio and television has been virtually extinguished. There exist in Cuba today almost no independent organs of public opinion. Newspapers and radio and television stations have been taken over; and editors and publishers who did not conform to the official views of the Revolutionary Government have been forced to seek asylum and flee to other countries. Outstanding among these was the recent case of Miguel Angel Quevedo, editor of the internationally known magazine **Bohemia**, who had been one of the most enthusiastic and powerful supporters of the revolution. The text of the impressive statement made by Dr. Quevedo when he sought asylum in the Venezuelan Embassy in Havana is included in the body of this document.

Individual liberties have been suppressed by military trials and summary executions, imprisonment for political activities, forced exile and the arbitrary imposition of penalties for crimes vaguely described as "counter-revolutionary" which has generally meant any opposition to the Revolutionary Government. Anti-Communism has been defined as counter-revolutionary. The labour movement has also been deprived of its democratic character and converted into an instrument of control by the Revolutionary Government in disregard of the expressed will of the membership of labor organizations."

I think I have quoted enough to bring clearly to the minds of the Members of this Council that any Member who, after hearing these quotations, think that they should support the intention of this Government to grant any form of concession to the Cubans or to the Cuban Government especially, can be regarded as an enemy of the people of British Guiana.

We know that, with the exception of a few, the majority of people are opposed to giving the Cubans any sort of concession. These quotations may sound long and dreary, but I would like to remind this Council of the various confiscations that take place in Cuba every day. I have a few clippings which tell of the various confiscations and the thousands and millions of dollars that have been confiscated by Cubans—all private property; and I wish to tell this Council what takes place in Cuba today can take place in British Guiana tomorrow.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I will quote from a few newspaper clippings. The first incident to attract my attention concerning the confiscations that are going on in Cuba took place on the 10th of March, 1960. I will read it:

"The Cuban government today confiscated 22 companies owned by two brothers, Burke and James Hedges, which include the country's biggest textile firm.

The government charged the firms with "illegal enrichment at the expense of the government in connivance with tyranny" (the overthrown Batista regime).

The seizure of the Hedges companies, followed 24 hours after the confiscation of all property, comprising 33 companies, owned by Italian millionaire Amadeo Barletta.

Today's seizure was ordered by the Ministry for Recovery of Misappropriated Property.

Burke and James Hedges were born in the United States but Burke became a Cuban citizen.

Burke was a member of the Batista's "Consultative Council" and in 1958 he was named as Ambassador to Brazil.

Millionaire Barletta took refuge in the Italian Embassy as a "guest" when the government intervened in the running of his enterprises over 15 days ago.

His property is estimated by the government to be worth \$68,568,000".

That was the first confiscation that claimed my attention. The second took place on the 18th March, 1960. It will be more appropriate to quote that later.

Coming to the 25th October, 1960, we read:

"Woolworths and all American-owned hotels were among 167 nationalised by the Cuban Government today. The firms, worth an estimated total of 200 million dollars (about 71 million sterling), also include 30 insurance and 17 chemical companies, two railways and the Sears Roebuck Mail Order concern."

Cuba had already nationalised nearly the bulk of American businesses in Cuba with an estimated value of about 1,000 million dollars (about 357 million sterling)".

I would not go into details, but just quoted the figures to show the worth of the companies.

I will read now about what took place on the 14th October, 1960:

"The Cuban Government today nationalized all but two banks in the country and 382 companies. . . ."

These are all private enterprises — people who went to Cuba and invested their money; and I am sure that the Cuban people have benefited well. The Revolutionary Government of Cuba today has started to take away all these properties without compensation. There is no promise of any kind of compensation. [An hon. Member: "Not even bonds!"] They are not even offering any bonds — no compensation. That is expropriation. When a company is expropriated, no compensation is paid. That is why I think that if this Government continues to show any inclination to have association with the Government of Cuba, people with money who would



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like to invest in this country are going to keep out. There are thousands of people in this country who cannot get work, but the Members of this Government, who claim to be the champions of the down-trodden working class people, will not encourage people with money to come into the country and invest their money, so that our working class men could get work to support their families. But this so-called people's Government want to associate themselves with Cuba and allow Cubans to bring in guns and munitions to start a revolution. I can assure them that in that event many of them will not live to see the end of that revolution. If they grant any sort of concessions to Cubans and there is a revolution and I am alive, some of them will not live to see the end of it. [Interruption.] I have said that before and I mean what I say.

**Mr. Speaker:** Will you address the Chair, please?

**Mr. Bowman:** Yes, Sir. I would like to make two last quotations. Only last week we read that President Betancourt of Venezuela had declared that left wing elements were trying to put over a Castro plan in Venezuela. I quote from "The Daily Argosy" of the 26th October:

"Caracas, Venezuela, Oct. 25. (A.P.)—Declaring that extreme left wing elements are trying to put over a Castro type programme in Venezuela, President Romalo Betancourt today ordered the army to patrol Caracas streets. The order came after five days of leftist demonstrations.

#### LEFTISTS CHEER RUSSIA

In demonstrations which began last night and continued until this morning, the leftists cheered Russia and Castro's Cuba.

Addressing a group of professional men today, Dr. Betancourt said the Venezuelans will follow their own system, not the Cuban methods, and declared that a continuance of leftist agita-

tion might bring the risk of another military dictatorship. The dictatorship headed by Col. Marcos Perez Jimenez was overthrown in 1958.

Mr. Betancourt said he ordered the schools closed because many boys from 12 to 15 were drawn into the demonstrations by the leftists.

#### Keep Boys Off Streets

The police couldn't move against 12 and 15-year-old boys, Mr. Betancourt said. He urged parents to keep the boys off the streets.

Mr. Betancourt today was pledged the support of the big General Confederation of Workers which claims 1,200,000 members throughout Venezuela. Leaders of the Confederation, the Oil Workers Union and the Building Construction Workers Union called on the President today to offer their support."

We want our own system in this country; we do not want any new system such as Castro's.

**The Chief Secretary (Major Smith):** To a point of order, Sir. Is all this relevant?

**Mr. Speaker:** It is very difficult to say at the moment.

**Mr. Bowman:** I think I have reminded this Council sufficiently of what is going on in Cuba today. Last week there was a ship in our harbour, and according to newspaper reports the Captain, when interviewed, refused to say anything about Cuba, because, he said, he did not want trouble. He was afraid to mention the name of Cuba. I am sure that no Guianese who goes abroad would be afraid to give his views concerning the Government or the people of this country. Let us ask ourselves why is it that the Captain of a ship which recently left Cuba to load timber in this country refused to say anything about Cuba? It is a clear indication of what is taking place in Cuba today. That is why I want to remind Guianese that today we are faced with a dangerous threat—danger within and without. People who are thinking of revolution



and dictatorship are dangerous people, and that is why they want independence now. We have always been a peaceful people. We have never had a revolution in this country and we do not want a revolution. We want to evolve peacefully to independence. I do not want anyone to get the idea that I am opposed to independence.

**Mr. Speaker:** Your Motion has nothing to do with the question of independence to which you have referred several times. Please let us get down to the Motion.

**Mr. Bowman:** With respect, Sir, I think these things are really necessary.

**Mr. Speaker:** But this is not a debate on independence. You have referred to it about a dozen times already.

**Mr. Bowman:** I do not want to argue with you Sir, but I am referring to independence because of the threat to this country, and I know it is a threat. I am trying to prevent it, and that is the reason why I brought this Motion. I have been approached by many Guianese in every walk of life, urging me to bring this Motion. They feel, and I feel also, that if this Government gets away with the idea of granting concessions to the Cubans our country will be invaded in the process of time. They believe that "fifth columnists" will come into this country in the guise of technicians and so forth, and that the same tactics which have been employed in other countries will be employed in British Guiana.

This Government is thinking in terms of bartering. The other day these people told us that they wanted to borrow \$5 million.

**Mr. Speaker:** In speaking in this Council please do not refer to Members of the Government as "They say" and make such references as "The other one, the other day". Reference to another Member of the Council, who-

ever he may be, must be respectful. Such references as "the other one the other day" and "the so-called so and so" are improper.

**Mr. Bowman:** I do not remember making such remarks, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** If I heard you wrongly I am sorry, but twice I heard you say "the so-called so and so".

**Mr. Bowman:** I did say "the so-called Government".

**Mr. Speaker:** You referred to "the so-called people's Government" and you go on repeating it. If any Member should refer to you in that way I would stop him in the same way.

**Mr. Bowman:** Do you wish me to take my seat, Sir? I was referring to the Government. These things usually put one off one's trend of thought. I shall reserve some of what I have to say for my reply. I say that this Government is bent upon bringing revolution to this country, and that is why I am opposed to the idea of granting any sort of concessions to the present Cuban Government. If there are any Members on this side of the Table who support the Government in its desire to give concessions and allow foreigners to enter this country in the guise of technicians and otherwise, I say that posterity will look upon such Members as traitors to the people of this country.

**Mr. Beharry:** I beg to second the Motion and would like to show why British Guiana should not enter into any trade agreement with the Cuban Government. This Motion seeks to recommend to Government that it should not grant any timber concessions to the Cuban Government, but I think the hon. Mover should have gone a little further and included in his Motion a recommendation that Government should not accept any loans or negotiate any trade agreement with the Cuban Government. No country should tie its economy with that of another nation or

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group of nations. British Guiana's economy today is tied up with the free enterprise system of the Western nations. This country cries out for large capital investment for its development and to provide employment for its large army of unemployed people.

Prior to the revolution the economy of Cuba was tied up with the free enterprise system of the Western nations. It cannot be denied that the two basic economic systems in the world today are the communist economy and the free enterprise economy. We will have to decide whether we will adopt the communist system of economy, or the free enterprise system. I know it will be argued that nations who have a free enterprise system of economy are also trading with communist countries. I would like to deal basically with our tie to the economy of the Cuban Government prior to the revolution. The Cuban Government had the free enterprise system, but after the revolution we have seen that they have merged their economic policy with the communist bloc of nations.

If this country wants to encourage capital, I cannot see capitalists or any nation having capital in the free enterprise world allowing their capital to come to British Guiana in order to help our unemployed, while the leader of the Majority Party claims to uphold the Cuban leader, Dr. Fidel Castro, as a liberator. It is obvious that the leader of the Majority Party has agreed that the Cuban leader is liberating his country economically by adopting the principle of confiscation rather than nationalization.

There is a difference between confiscation and nationalization. We have seen Nasser of Egypt who has nationalized the Suez Canal, but he paid for it. We have seen Egypt trading with the communist world; we have seen the Leader of that Government condemn commun-

ism in no uncertain manner. In British Guiana we see an entirely different pattern; we have our leader upholding communism as being the most ideal system for our people rather than condemning it. You can always hear him giving praise to the communist economic system, unlike the Leader of the Egyptian Government.

Cuba is tying its economy more and more with the Russian system of economy and other communist countries. Dr. Castro believes in Russian Imperialism and he is trading with Russia. I am supporting this Motion, because if we were to trade or enter into any Trade Agreement with Cuba, now that it has severed its economic connections with the free enterprise system, then we will be committing political suicide for we will be tying our economy to that of the communist world.

I am sure that no capitalist or group of capitalists who possesses capital will invest money in this country in order to provide employment for the people, when our leader upholds the Cuban leader as a liberator and says that the Cuban economic system, as it now exists, is the correct one. Nobody would like to see his capital confiscated, and that is why I have decided to support this Motion.

It is true that Mr. Nehru of India is trading with Russia and communist countries, but unlike the leader of India our leader is entirely different. Our leader will stand up for the communist way of life. Mr. Nehru is not in favour of communism, despite the fact that he trades with Russia. Am I to be told in this Council that when we become a free nation we can trade with anybody? I agree that Colonial countries of yesterday on becoming free are now trading with communist countries and are adopting the economic and social principles of communism. Yes, that may be so. But our leader is different, and I do not believe in communism.

Ghandi has said that the communist system is steeped in revolution and violence; it does not have the pattern or the philosophy to enable the freedom of an individual to develop his personality; it does not give an individual freedom to aspire to any height. Therefore, I say that if we are to be told in this Council that as soon as we become a free nation we will trade with communist countries, I feel that it will be wrong. Our leader is always condemning the free enterprise system as a system which appropriates the earnings of the workers.

I do not see why this country should remove the shackles of imperialism from England, and then accept the shackles of Russian imperialism. We have to tie our economy somewhere; we cannot live in isolation. We must tie our economy either to the Western World, or the Socialist or Communist World. Cuba has tied its economy to the Communist World. American imperialism is now being substituted by Russian imperialism.

India and Ghana are two countries that are always quoted as examples in order to distort the realities of social progress in those countries. Mr. Nkrumah of Ghana quite recently condemned, as a very malicious rumour, the statement that Ghana would nationalize distributive industries by the distribution in Ghana. Ghana has been trading with the Communist World, but Mr. Nkrumah has condemned the communist way of life for his people. That is not the case in British Guiana. In British Guiana our leader condemns the way of life of the Western World and upholds what takes place in the Russian World. There is evidence to prove that, because the leader of the Government refers to Dr. Castro as the great liberator.

The Chairman of the Majority Party that governs this Council said in this hon. Council "You can stop tomorrow, but you cannot stop communism." Should

we trade with Cuba or any communist country? I say no. Every indication points towards this Government tying its economy and social way of life with the Communist World, and no one can deny it. Everything is couched in the distortion of independence, whereas my hon. Friend on my left says that independence is a foregone conclusion. Independence will come to this country whether we want it or not. It is a pledge that has already been given to this country by Britain and they will implement it.

Only a few days ago the responsibility for internal security was handed over to an Elected Minister, and we know that independence will be given to us whether we want it or not. This country has been receiving a dole from England. Every year \$5 million has been given to this country by the British Government as a free grant. We get money to develop our artesian well water which falls under the portfolio of the Minister of Communications and Works. We have been getting \$5 million free from England, but we are hearing a lot of talk about Cuba lending us \$5 million at very low interest. The money from England will stop when we get independence. We have to realize that independence brings with it certain responsibilities, and we have to shoulder those responsibilities—responsibilities in the field of economy and so on. We will have to learn to shoulder the responsibilities that are now being shouldered by the very people who are referred to as imperialist Western nations. Do we want to substitute Western imperialism for Russian or Communist imperialism? I will not agree with that.

I will appeal to hon. Members of this Council to support this Motion basically. I want to make it clear that if



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British Guiana were free today or tomorrow, I would not be against its trading with any part of the world, provided we have leaders running this country who are capable of trading without tying our economy or social way of life with any communist country. I know that excuses will be made in this Council, because this Government is capable of distorting facts. It will be said that since India, Egypt and Ghana are trading with communist countries, why should not British Guiana, as a free nation, have the right to trade with those countries? But it must be remembered that the leader in British Guiana is different from the leaders in the other countries; his outlook and his way of life is different.

I think history will record this Government as a Government of textbooks. Theory without practice is sterile. This Government is frustrated because it believes in certain theories—theories that are impractical in our present way of life. The development of this country is at a standstill. As Guianese, we believe in the freedom of enterprise, and the freedom of individuals who can reflect their personality and dignity in the system that we love. I know that certain Members of this Government are frustrated, because they cannot work this system of free enterprise when their theories are not based on such a system. That is why we have Members of the Government making irresponsible statements, and why capital is not coming into this country.

As an importer of foodstuff, I import split peas from the United States. I understand that a company in the United States is now setting up a split peas factory in Trinidad. Why did not the company install its factories here? Because the people are afraid of losing their capital. Yet we are not concerned with the unemployment in this country; yet we continue to talk callously, loosely and

wildly. I said on the last occasion that certain people dig their own graves.

I know that the Leader of this Government has referred to the Cuban Leader as a great liberator. History will prove that this liberator is a great impostor. But the pity today is that the people of this country have very short memories. We know that the English people, who have taught us, believe that the State should nationalize certain industries, but they do not believe that there should be confiscation. We are going to trade with a country whose Leader confiscates, not nationalizes. If we tie our economy, whether it is in timber or loans or in any other form, to Cuba, which is a country tied to the communist world, I say we are further kicking away capital from this country.

Last week, the employees of a departmental store in Havana, Cuba, were asked if they would like the Government's intervention to take over the store, and 98% voted against. The number of waitresses at the "Hilton Hotel" in Havana has been cut down by 50%. The tide in Cuba is beginning to turn and we should not, in any way, tie our economy, whether in the field of timber or in the field of rice or in any one of our productive sectors, not because we should not trade where we want to trade. I want to emphasize this: A country has a right to trade with any other nation provided it will benefit the country; but if we trade with Cuba, because that country has tied its economy to a communist country, we will be looking for a penny and will lose thousands.

I say that this country must be developed on the free enterprise system. This country must be developed on democracy—Western democracy—government for the people by the people. I am appealing to the members of the Government and other Members of the Council. The Motion may look very



insignificant but it has a lot to do with providing employment for our people. This Motion has a lot to do with the country's development and the purchasing power of the people at present employed whose earnings are not enough. It is only by having capital in this country that our purchasing power can be developed and we can have more employment. I do hope that my friends on this side of the Table will agree that we should not tie our economy with Cuba.

We see that Castro of Cuba was able to confiscate millions and millions of dollars. That is why I referred to this Government as a textbook government. When this Government is ready to confiscate, it will only have poverty to confiscate. We are not like Cuba which has millions and millions of dollars. Our Government can only confiscate poverty and jungle. I do not know why some of us do not live on the earth rather than live in the skies; and I am appealing to Members on this side of the Council to support this Motion. As to the members of the Government, I am asking them to accept the Motion in its sincerity for the good of the country as a whole. I am appealing to this Government to listen to reason so that we can have a flow of capital coming into the country to provide for a bright and prosperous tomorrow.

**Mr. Burnham:** Mr. Speaker, normally I would have preferred to speak on this Motion after I had heard some comments or answers from the Government, but as I shall be asking you, Sir, to excuse me at about four o'clock to keep a 4.15 engagement, I thought I should speak now rather than miss the opportunity of speaking altogether; and lest some misguided person or persons think that I am trying to escape the debate on this subject.

It is particularly interesting, Mr. Speaker, to hear from the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara about the evils of the ideology of the Leader of the Gov-

ernment. I think there is a local saying which goes as follows: "if houri tell you trench bottom got alligator you must believe 'e." The hon. Member for Eastern Demerara is in a peculiarly happy position as a result of his long association with the elected members of the Government, to tell us about these evils.

So far as I am concerned, to attempt to make a communist state of British Guiana is unrealistic, stupid and unpatriotic. So far as I am concerned, to attempt to tie our economy to the communist sector of the world is equally stupid and unpatriotic. So far as I am concerned, I did not have to wait on the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara to appreciate the evils of the communist system. I believe that I learnt these earlier than he and to stop pussy-footing with those who seek to bring them to British Guiana. In fact, there was some conflict of opinion as to whether he forsook the communists or the communists forsook him. That, perhaps, will be answered later but, looking at the Motion realistically, I feel that too many irrelevancies have been dragged into the debate.

I can appreciate the ideological re-orientation and the political sentiments of the Mover of the Motion, as well as those of the last speaker. But the question of trade, I submit, is not a matter that we should weigh simply in an ideological scale. The hon. Member, at last, having discovered the evils tries to persuade the world that we are the greatest non-communist country when, in the past, he agreed and posed with those who were communists. One false premise here, put forward by the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara, is that in the world today a country like British Guiana has either got to tie its economy to the Western Free Enterprise system or to the communist system. That is nonsensical and in the teeth of the facts as we see them in other places like India and Ghana. As a matter of fact, especially after the recent meeting of the General

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Assembly of the United Nations, it has become quite clear that there is no necessity, either political or economic, to take up the position of either being a pro-West or a pro-East. There is the intermediate position of the neutralist politically and economically, that can be reflected in the desire or plan of the nation or nations concerned to carry on trade with both blocs, provided that on each occasion the particular trade deal tends to the advantage of the nation.

We have heard a lot about the free enterprise system of the West. That is particularly interesting, and though it may be a very good pass-word or by-word, I wonder how far it can be established, for there is no such economy in the world—no national economy in the world, including that of the United States—which can be really described as free enterprise. I think that type of economy has passed.

The next point is this: We, as legislators, must approach matters like these without heat, without cant and without shibboleths. The last speaker is guilty of the same type of behaviour as those whom he criticizes are guilty of. If we want British Guiana to sell her surplus products we must consider the matter carefully. I will agree that the Minister of Trade and Industry has made a hopeless mess of this timber deal with Cuba. As a matter of fact I have, here, the typescript of his speech delivered over the radio where he states the amazing position thus.

In effect Dr. Jagan said in his broadcast "I would not have gone to Cuba had I not been on my way to Venezuela, but I went to Cuba because I had two important matters to look into in Cuba." What logic! It is here [*holding up the typescript*]. In other words he had two important matters to look into but still he would not have gone to Cuba in the interest of this country, according to him,

if he had not been *en route* to Venezuela. Of course it is his peculiar form of logic.

Furthermore, the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry has been unfair to this Council on every occasion that he has gone abroad, allegedly to negotiate for loans or new trade relations. He chooses the street-corners, or some place as far distant from Georgetown as possible, to tell the public what he did, what he did not do, or what he failed to do. So the best he can do is to use Government's time on the radio to do his politicking and to make some passing and far from relevant remarks to the particular subjects which are his charge and within his portfolio.

It is interesting, first of all in this timber deal, to notice that the hon. Minister was trying to out-imperialist the imperialists, for when he went to Cuba he told them "We are going to give you concessions. You come in." But his new-found friend had to tell him that that smacked of imperialism. It is amusing to find the self-styled leader of the anti-imperialists being prepared to introduce a new form of imperialism. That is where I think he has opened himself to castigation. He always talks about imperialists coming in and milking the country. Quite rightly. He always talks about imperialists having concessions within a colonial territory, but Castro had to tell him that the proposal he was putting to him for Cuban concessions in timber in British Guiana smacked of imperialism. Let me quote from his typescript lest it be alleged that I have misquoted or misunderstood. It says:

"They said quite frankly to me that these proposals smacked of imperialism."

A little earlier in the typescript the Minister says:

"You will recall that I mentioned some time ago that we will be prepared to consider sympathetically, firstly, the granting of a lease to others, or, secondly,



to form a joint company with the Cubans. The Cuban Government, however, do not want to take advantage of either of these two proposals."

In other words, this champion anti-imperialist had to be taught by the Cubans what imperialism really was. It shows that this Government is only opposed to one form of imperialism but not to another. I continue to quote the hon. Minister:

"They did not want in any way to exploit our man-power or material resources. They were prepared to help as far as they could. They offered to make available over the next two years a loan to the equivalent of about \$8½M. This loan will be repayable over ten years after the project gets underway. The rate of interest will be 2% and payment will be made in timber products. Technical assistance will be provided, if we require it, to help us to work out the details of such a project."

I should feel that if this Government had been able to negotiate this new trade agreement with Cuba, and in view of the fact that for the first time a local representative of the people of this country, as distinct from our British overlords, had been able to carry out negotiations, there should have been something much more thorough than this; there should have been a White Paper and more courtesy shown to the Legislative Council.

As regards this \$8½ million loan which is to be made to British Guiana, first of all Cuba has no money to lend, but so far as I am concerned, if a man is prepared to lend me money, as long as I am sure he has not stolen it I do not care where he borrows it to lend me. Cuba has no money; she has just got \$100 million from Russia and \$42 million from Czechoslovakia. I think that first of all we should have been told what form this \$8½ million loan which, according to the statement by the Minister, is offered at an attractive rate of interest, is to take. Is it going to take the form of actual money with which we can purchase commodities, machinery or equipment in the

Cuban or other markets? If it is not going to take the form of money, what form is it going to take? What exactly are the things that are going to be sent here? We should also want to know if instead of money, equipment and machinery are to be given, that they are not priced at the price of those who are selling, because very frequently in international trade agreements between large and small powers, the large power prices what it sells and prices what it buys. Therefore there is no equality between the two bargaining parties.

I should have thought that the Minister would have condescended to detail. So far as I am concerned this country can trade with satan as long as the particular trade deal which is put through with Mr. Satan, or Mr. Castro, or Mr. Franco enures to the benefit of British Guiana. Personally I do not believe in all this talk about not trading with X because X is a communist. Of course you also have to be consistent and say you must not trade with Franco's Spain because, so far as I am concerned, I cannot see that Franco's Spain is any more of a democracy than Khrushchev's Russia or Fidel Castro's Cuba. The question that must be considered at every twist and turn is whether we get out of the deal the best for the resources, the commodities or the items which we are sending to the other country. The Minister has brought on himself the criticisms from the two Members who have spoken so far, because if he had condescended to details and given us a clean idea of what we were to get out of this deal there would not have been this confused thinking.

I want also to observe that I cannot agree with the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara (Mr. Beharry) who says it is good for Ghana to trade with communist countries, but it is not good for British Guiana to trade with communist countries, because the leader of the British Guiana Government is a communist sympathizer. As to his statements of fact I am in complete agreement with



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him (1) that places like Ghana trade with communist countries, (2) that the leader of this Government is pro-communist if not communist. But certainly that is no excuse for saying that British Guiana should not trade with a communist country or an allegedly communist country. That is to blur and to confuse the issues. If you think, as I do, that the present Government under its present leader is a bane to this country and is carrying this country quickly down the hill, you must do something about it. I warned people like the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara about that years ago, but he did not take heed. I warned him even before 1957, but he did not take heed. His argument has nothing logical in it. What is more is that people like him are doing their best in their own way to ensure that this same Government — a communist Government according to them — gets back into office. That is the contradiction of these political neophytes.

But whether the leader of the P.P.P. is communist or not is not the point. The point is whether or not the item of trade is in the interest of the country and, secondly, whether or not the trade deal will tend to chain our economy to that of another country; in other words, whether we are going to move into a new form of economic imperialism with a new economic imperialist master. The objection I would have to trading with communist countries would arise if a trade deal or bargain was such that a large percentage of our economy was dependent upon our relations with the particular communist country. I would object then because we would be making ourselves slaves to a new master, and in that context it would be no answer to say that Great Britain trades with Russia, because whilst Great Britain trades with Russia, only 2.6 per cent. of her trade is with the Soviet Union. Therefore there can be no question of the Soviet Union exercising an undue influence on the economy of Great Britain.

So far as I know, with a deal of \$8½ million we cannot shackle our economy to that of Cuba, but we cannot say whether it would be in the interest of this country until we know all the details and all the facts. It may well be that we may be able to supply what in the open market is \$8½ million worth of timber to Cuba, and Cuba may be able to supply us with so-called technical assistance. I would like to know more about this technical assistance; how long have the Cubans been forestry experts. It may be that in carrying through this deal with Cuba we may be robbing ourselves of the opportunity to supply other willing and better customers. Those are facts which are relevant and important. Whether it is trade with Cuba or with the United States it does not matter. The point you have to make sure on is that a trade deal is the best deal you can get in the circumstances, and what is more, that it is in the interest of British Guiana.

I cannot for one moment agree with the contention of the hon. Member for Eastern Demerara that if we traded with Cuba those countries in the West which have capital to invest would not want to invest in British Guiana. That is a *non sequitur*. I do not agree with some misguided individual calling another individual the greatest liberator in the world. But that is not germane to the problem. What is germane to the problem is whether or not trade with Cuba or trade with Russia or any communist country would necessarily mean that we would frighten investors away. It has not been the case in other countries, and I do not see why it should be the case in British Guiana. If, as is happening, investors are being frightened away, it is not because of any trade with Cuba. We have not started trading with Cuba or Russia. The reason for investors being frightened away is the attitude and known convictions of the leader of this Government, not the fact of whom the Government trades with.



If the Leader of the Government goes around saying he is a Marxist and he hates private property, what do you expect? Any Marxist who says he did not say he hates private property is in fact saying that he is not a Marxist, or that though he did not say it he does believe it. That is what the "Bible" says. [Dr. Jagan: "That is from an ex-Marxist."] I agree that there is a lot that is attractive in Marxism, but I do not accept it as a whole nor would I be a Stalinist. [Dr. Jagan: "A Titoist?"] These people are always ready with toys. I will tell you more about that when the quarrel between Soviet Russia and Communist China develops a little further. [Dr. Jagan: "Fence-sitting".] Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. It is not with whom we are trading that is going to frighten investors, it is the attitude and the known convictions of the Leader of the Government.

I would say that trading with Cuba does not necessarily mean that we are tying our economy to Cuba or Russia. I would say further that we are not in a position to judge things, because of the incompetence of the Leader of the Government to tell us whether or not the particular deal to which he referred cursorily on the radio is in the interest of British Guiana and, therefore, we do not know what we have. Perhaps when one of the spokesmen of the Government replies, he will be able to tell us what the position is.

If a White Paper had been published the Council would have been in a better position to decide. This Government does not govern in the normal fashion, it governs on street corners, at Press Conferences and it governs during the 1½ hours per day the Government gets on the Radio Station. If this Government is embarrassed by this Motion it is its own fault, and I would seek to have the Government explain in full detail the terms and conditions of this deal with Cuba, so that we can

arrive, after careful thought, at a decision as to whether or not it is in the best interests of British Guiana. If it is an unfair bargain, out with it. If it is a fair bargain, nothing is wrong with it.

**Mr. Campbell:** The hon. Mover of the Motion in introducing it said that the people of British Guiana are perturbed over various things they hear, and one of these things is the proposed deal between this Government and the Government of Cuba for vast concessions in this country. I do not have the eloquence of my colleague on my right, and I cannot understand what he says. At one time he says it is a bad thing, and at another time he says it is a good thing. I cannot understand him. I am supporting the Motion.

The less we have to do with Cuba at the moment the better it will be for British Guiana, for today Cuba is associated with many bad things. They are lining up people against the wall and shooting them. That, to my mind, is not a nice thing; that is something to frighten anybody. I do not think we should have trade dealings with a nation that could take people to court; line them up against a wall and shoot them. This Government says nothing about it.

When 69 Africans were shot this Government made a tremendous amount of fuss here, but when certain people are shot daily in Cuba and elsewhere nothing is said about the matter. That is the kind of thing I cannot understand. If it is wrong for South Africa, it should be wrong for Cuba and everybody else in the world. There is nothing in democracy, liberty and freedom which gives people the right to kill people under these names. Let us raise our voices in the name of democracy whenever things are going wrong. Why should people be allowed to shoot others and do all manner of things? I cannot understand it.

[MR. CAMPBELL]

If you permit me, Sir, I propose to read from a section of "Time" magazine. Everybody reads it in British Guiana, and I think it indicates a little bit of what is going on in Cuba today from the economic angle. Some people may say that it is merely propaganda. The Magazine is dated 24th October. It comments on the U.S.A.'s answer to the 4-hour talk Mr. Castro gave to the assembly in the Security Council. It states:

"The U.S. need not worry that a strategic embargo will damage private industry in Cuba. It no longer exists." Whatever it was the matter is now dead. The magazine goes on to state:

"Rising from an all-night Cabinet session last week, Castro's Puppet President Osvaldo Dorticos announced: "The full economic development of the nation cannot be achieved without adequate planning of the economy." With that the government nationalized 382 businesses in 26 categories, including 105 sugar mills, 13 department stores, 18 distilleries, 61 textile factories, eight railways and all banks, save the Royal Bank of Canada and the Bank of Nova Scotia. Next day it abolished ownership of apartment houses in effect, by decreeing that tenants who continued paying rents for another five to 20 years (depending on the buildings' age) could hereafter take permanent possession.

Thus ended Cuba's long association with free enterprise. Having already expropriated 80% of the \$1 billion U.S. investment in Cuba, the government now dropped the axe directly on local Cuban-owned businesses. Many had already been intervened on a "temporary" basis; now the takeover was declared irrevocable.

**Out Go the Lights.** The move all only intensify the chaos in Cuba's economy. For some time Havana has been exchanging its prosperous Western look for Iron-Curtain drab. Street lights go out and stay out for lack of light bulbs; hotels are deserted; grocers ingeniously display dwindling stocks to disguise bare shelves, and housewives spend their days in weary search for disappearing necessities, from razor blades to black beans."

When I read things like these I can imagine what is happening to those people. I have not been to Cuba, and I have to depend on what is written in the "Time" Magazine, the Reader's Digest and other papers which come from England and other sources. When I look at the "Thunder" it states everything about the sweetness in Cuba! I have read between the lines; I have learnt to read between the lines; I take the three newspapers: the "Daily Chronicle", the "Argosy" and the "Daily Graphic", and I read between the lines. Of course, they may be inaccurate at times. Then I take the "New Nation", the "Thunder" and so on, because I have an uncanny eye for picking out truth from falsehood. I have done that. I have used my own discretion and my own judgment and have come to the conclusion that carrying on trade, at the moment, with Cuba is not going to be in the best interest of the people of this country. I am convinced of that.

We are part and parcel of the Western bloc. The United States of America has millions of dollars she can throw into British Guiana, but why is it that her capitalists are not coming? They are afraid of our unstable Government at the moment. Canada has millions, too. Foreign capitalists have said: British Guiana has a tremendous amount of natural resources, but we refuse to go to British Guiana to invest as long as there was the present Government messing around the place. That is what the capitalists of the Western Bloc say. I have come to the conclusion that the whole world is divided into two ideologies — one is known as the democracy of the West and the other is called Marxism, Communism, Stalinism or call it what you may. At the moment it is just purely hide and seek.

Since I have been in this Council there has been a lot of talk about independence in terms of self-government,



and I have said: no independence for me now unless the people of British Guiana are ready for it. Are we ready for it? I say not for independence; we are ready to be regimented by dictatorship instead. The Guianese has not started to study his proper politics yet. What do we have in British Guiana today? We have ex-indentured people, ex-slaves and we have aborigines. We have no tradition; we have no culture. All we have is just talk.

**The Minister of Communications and Works:** (Mr. Ram Karran): The debate this afternoon reminds me of the time when the British Emissary was chased out of the Russian Court. History has a way of repeating itself. Today, of course, it is the other way round. We have heard nothing new in this discussion. We have heard the record played over again as is usually the case. Everything has gone on as we have expected. There has been no surprises.

Today, we are told in this Council that we must not trade with the Cubans; tomorrow we may be told we must not trade with somebody else. If Venezuela, for instance, decides to change their form of government, British Guiana must take a firm decision not to trade with Venezuela; and if Brazil, tomorrow, changes their form of Government, we will be told we must no longer trade with them. Why must we stop trading with a country with which we were associated for sometime because somebody is not in agreement with its policy? This attitude reminds me of some people's approach to their neighbourly problems. If we have a quarrel with someone, we are apt to say to our next door neighbour: "Please do not speak to so-and-so because we have fallen out". That is the attitude expressed in this Motion. But it goes further and freedom has been brought in. Freedom is one of the things in which we are very interested.

We have heard a lot of quotations *ad nauseam* from the hon. Member for Demerara River — irrelevant as usual. There were also quotations from the hon. Member for North Western District written by people who, he claims, are in the writing business; but what about the other side of the picture? I am not here to defend Cuba. Cuba is capable of defending herself. Dr. Fidel Castro has demonstrated that; but one would have expected that those who talked about democracy would, at least, have tried, even though it was not their intention, to represent the other side of the picture.

We have heard about Dr. Castro's regime. Have we heard about the Batista regime and the violence that took place? The hon. Member talked about men being put to stand up and shot. I presume he must have done some research in the way in which the Cubans were destroyed in the pro-Castro regime. I do not know whether men were put to stand or lie while they were executed, but I know that the position was black — very black — in the Batista regime. Dictators change very often, but the change in Cuba today is different. Many are the stories about these Latin American dictators. One of them goes like this: "Manuello ran for Mayorship and he made it; Manuello ran for Governorship and he made it; Manuello ran for Presidency and he made it; but poor Manuello, he runs for the border, he does not make it".

As I said, there has been a difference between the Cuban revolution and the revolution in which Manuello was involved in that Cuba's present regime has decided to strengthen its revolution and prevent it from going in the way other revolutions have gone in Latin America. That is what causes the expressions of disgust and fear coming from other quarters. Had Fidel Castro decided, after winning the revolution, to

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share money and jobs around to the limited few then there would have been praises from every quarter. Fidel Castro would have been a liberator to those people. But, unfortunately, Castro decided to play the game properly so far as the workers are concerned and that has brought about considerable criticisms from the former ruling class and their friends.

If my friends had taken the trouble to find out the Cuban situation prior to Castro's regime, even though it was glittering with the beautiful night clubs, behind it were ignorance and poverty and disease. But it did not concern them to go behind this wall. No doubt, that is the sort of thing they would like introduced in British Guiana, where you would have got a beautiful facade of glittering chinas and with American capital being offered and invited to come in but where our own people — the peasants and farmers — would have been living a life of misery and exploitation. That is the tradition we have been advised to retain.

I have heard that independence is just around the corner. Indeed, it is just around the corner; but I wish to assure those Members who had been talking so glibly of it, had it been for them independence would be another century away. Had it not been for the determination of the People's Progressive Party, the principle of independence as enunciated at the London Conference would not have been obtained.

"Why do you have to trade with Cuba?" asks one hon. Member who mentioned that we are getting millions of dollars of free money — I think he said "doles from the United Kingdom". Of course the hon. Member's memory is poor. Did he take the trouble to recall the millions of dollars that go out of this country and have gone out of this country over a century ago? Had he

done so he would know that what we are getting now in the form of C.D. & W. grants are not gifts to British Guiana, but our own money which was sent across the seas to Britain in bygone years, and even to the present. That is why the highly developed countries like the United States of America and Britain have adopted the principle that their wealth, which was obtained by plunder from the small countries for centuries, should be used for the development of those countries today. We all know that the United Nations have accepted the principle that the under-developed countries of the world should be assisted.

Hon. Members should acquaint themselves with the facts before they attempt to use this Legislative Council as a forum to fool the public of this country when they talk about doles and grants made to this country. I repeat that the money which is coming to British Guiana in the form of C.D. & W. grants and other assistance is really money which has been exported from this country over the years.

Not very long ago there was great agitation on the question of Guianization. Our Party accepted the principle of Guianization and Government is working towards Guianization of the Civil Service of this country as far as practicable. But one cannot lose sight of the fact that a lot of money goes out of the country in the form of pensions to imperialist agents and others.

We have been hearing for generations about the "white man's burden" in holding the Colonies. We have heard it said that independence is just around the corner. Why are they opposed to giving us independence now or next year? If we are a burden to them let them cut out their grants and give the people of this country the right to govern themselves. Why do they hold up independence while their agents talk about grants?



We have heard some quotations about what happened the other day in Egypt, Ghana and India, but have they taken the trouble to look a little further? Have they looked across to Trinidad to see what is happening there? Dr. Eric Williams is fighting and making himself very unpopular with certain people by urging the removal of the American naval base at Chaguaramas. The Cubans want the same right as Dr. Williams to have the American base removed from their territory where it has been for a very long time. Why should Trinidad insist that the American base be removed from their island and the Cuban Government should not have the same right? Are these people setting up different yardsticks of democracy in different parts of the world?

I remarked just now that hon. Members had not looked far enough. Had they gone to Japan they would have seen that this philosophy which they would have us believe is so good, has lost out in Japan which has been associated with the Americans for a very long time. It has not only lost out in Japan but in the entire Far East, and what is taking place in Cuba today is something which we must let the Cubans decide whether it is good for them or not. We in this Legislature in British Guiana are not qualified to decide what form of government the Cubans should have.

In his Motion the hon. Member for Demerara River requests Government not to grant concessions to the Cuban Government. Is it suggested that we propose to give the Cubans concessions which we are not prepared to grant to Americans, the British or the Germans? That is not true. Government wishes to have this country's timber and other resources developed, and it does not matter by whom they are developed so long as the country gets a fair deal. How can hon. Members talk about development, the removal of un-

employment and improving the standard of living of the people when in the same breath they say they do not want this and do not want that form of development? The hon. Mover of the Motion has himself moved in this Council that a trade delegation be sent to Venezuela and Brazil. A delegation went to Venezuela, and I would like to know what would be the position if the Venezuelans decided to change their form of government — if socialists, communists, or fascists took control of the Government? Would the hon. Member move another Motion suggesting that British Guiana should not trade with Venezuela?

Two years ago several countries were persuaded to adopt the socialist way of life. In fact it was only in this decade that the great sub-continent of China decided to overthrow the regime of the masters who are now sitting on the island of Formosa, and established a Government which has the support of the Chinese people. Is the hon. Member going to urge this Government not to trade with China? What would be the position if and when some of our traditional markets decided to go socialists? Is the hon. Member going to tell us to trade with the people in the moon? It seems to me that this Motion is not only puerile but childish, and I am sure that this Council will come to the conclusion that the Government of the day must decide whether trade relations offered by any country in the world are acceptable and are to the benefit of this country.

We have been borrowing money from the United Kingdom for a very long time. The situation is now altered in that other people are willing to lend this Government money at cheaper rates of interest. The so-called Defenders of Freedom talk about blood money. Hon. Members are aware of the source of the money we are borrowing today at a high rate of interest. It is coming from people who have exploited the wealth

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and people of this country. The other day when the Minister of Trade and Industry was offered a loan of \$10 million by the Swiss Bank it was suggested that the money had come from the Latin American dictators — King Farouk and the rest of them. It is said that the loan offered by Cuba is blood money. What is the description of the money we are now getting at higher rates of interest? The money which was obtained from the exploitation of countries like India and Ghana is even bloodier than the Cuban money we are hoping to get.

Mr. Telle: I desire to make a brief contribution in support of the Motion, and I am not going to be worried about the ideology of the present Government, and how it is linked with that of the Cuban Government, because I am beginning to be quite certain that this is the Swan Song of the Members of the present Government. What worries me is that in normal everyday business when people enter into trade agreements, whether national or international, they are guided by certain principles, and they use universally accepted yardsticks to measure the correctness of the business venture. They ask themselves "Can good business accrue from what we are going to do? Do the people with whom we propose to trade have a good reputation for honouring their debts?" Is it better to do business for cash or for kind? Has this Government examined carefully the financial capacity of the people or the Government with which it proposes to deal? If it is the Government of Cuba then we should examine the whole economic structure of that country. We are groping in the dark and the hon. Mover of the Motion is perplexed by the same problem. Members of this Council have no more information than the man in the street who heard the broadcast or read in the Press vague references to the broadcast.

I suppose that those who attend meetings at street corners have even received more information than is accorded us here. We know that while it is customary and traditionally accepted that some people will have the right to govern under our constitution, yet the people should not enjoy special rights outside of the Legislature. They must qualify themselves before they are elevated to the more important position of participating in actual administration. I feel that the same tradition that made it possible for certain people to become Members of the Executive Council and make a decision on behalf of half-million people, the same practice makes it incumbent on them to consult their fellow-legislators before committing half-million people to any important decision or arrangement. It is not possible to consult with everybody direct, and this medium has been offered.

Inasmuch as the Government could not have prepared a White Paper for submission to this Council makes one suspicious and indicates that something is wrong—probably the matter is clouded with ideological shadows. My hon. Friends have commented a great deal on this matter, and it is not necessary for me to emphasize certain things. Although I am not a businessman, I want to deal with this matter in a strictly business-like manner. I read in the "Time" Magazine dated 31st August, 1960—this Magazine enjoys a reputation as being regarded as somewhat authentic—"that the economic Czar admitted that there was little cash left in Cuba". Here is this seemingly benevolent Government willing to give loans to us and at the sametime admitting that its own financial position is precarious!

Let us look upon ourselves as a Board of Directors representing the people of British Guiana as shareholders in a Company. The shareholders are the taxpayers, and we are entrusted with the custody of the taxpayers' money. We



have a business proposition before us, and as we look at it we see on the other side of the bargaining table a new Government with little or no experience of administration—a new Government that has publicly admitted that there is imminent danger of its being overthrown by another Government, and has found it necessary to make official complaint to the August body of the International United Nations. You have the same Government publishing in "Time" Magazine that its economy is rather precarious. It does not have money; it does not have the wherewithal to do certain things, it is nationalizing industries, and taking over private enterprises.

If any Government has to embark on a business project, one would say that if it believes in the socialist way of life it would bargain with a Government that is going to honour its bonds. Nationalization is not a bad thing; it is sometimes a very good thing in the interest of the public. I agree that if an investment is too tricky for private enterprise but is of grave interest to the public, the Government should nationalize the industry. But I feel that anyone who lives in that particular country and owns property should not be troubled in mind, if he were satisfied that the economy of the country was such that the Government could honourably enter into nationalization. Does not the something apply if we are going to enter into a trade or bargaining Agreement? Is it not true that we are obligated to the people who sent us here and are the custodians of the taxpayers' money? Before entering any form of International Agreement, we should ensure that the Government of the country we propose to trade with has the type of economy that would enable it to honour the Agreement.

We see things written blatantly before our eyes. The "Time" magazine states that the economy of Cuba is in a very precarious position; the Government is not sure of its future. Do you want to

rush into an Agreement with such people? That would not be in the interest of our country. We should not take that sort of gamble. The United States of America, Russia and people who can afford to lose money can take that sort of gamble. Should we send away the timber we have in this country to Cuba, when we are not sure how we will be paid for it? Should we send away our timber because we have the power and like one man in a Government? Should we take the economy of our country and push it down the drain in one gamble? That is exactly what this Government is trying to do at the moment.

Some of my hon. Friends seem to feel that it is unseen pressure, or faith in an International commitment that propels the Government to move in this manner without the necessary thought and precaution. The hon. Minister of Trade and Industry is also the Leader of the Majority Party, and I feel that he has tremendous influence on the editorial policy of the official organ, "Thunder". I read in the "Thunder" that Russian machinery is necessary in British Guiana to provide employment for our people so that money could be circulated. I agree that we need more money in British Guiana. I would support the Government in any attempt to get more money in order to employ people, but is this supported by facts?

I have with me the Report of the Development Programme up to June of this year, and what do I see in it? Government is aware that up to June this year there has been a tremendous amount of unemployment and under-employment, and it forced Government to seek money from places where money did not exist—from a Government whose financial position at the moment is precarious. The Cuban Government has admitted that it does not have money to take care of its



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own business. The Cuban Government has a reputation for not paying its debts. The situation is of such that we must get money from somewhere.

When I look at the Progress Report on the Development for the quarter ending 30th June, I observe that Government had \$25,967 million and only \$5,903 million was spent. Does that sort of spending demonstrate Government's recognition of the great need for money? Do not tell me that you do not have the materials, technicians and equipment necessary to do the jobs and that is the reason why you have not spent the money. It is time for the Government to resign. Are you going to borrow more money and pay more interest on it when you are not ready to use it? No man in the street would borrow money from a corporation to build a house without first finding out where he is going to get the materials and technicians from.

Here is a Government with \$20 million idling. If you calculate the interest on this money for six months, I believe you will be able to do a lot of things with it. I do not doubt that the Government might have been pressured to move quickly to get money to solve the unemployment problem, but I refuse to believe it now that I have read this Report. No wonder some Members are now saying that the worker's cause has nothing to do with it. This is an International commitment that transcends an ideological system. Perhaps it may be better to keep fraternal ties than to take time to think out what should be done with \$20 million well knowing that it is coupled with 60% of our unemployment. It has now reached an alarming figure of 60%.

And, Sir, as a trade unionist, what certainly hurts me and my movement is the fact that while this \$20 million was idling, people were retrenched from their jobs in the Service. This is the kind of Government we have — fooling the

people all along and seeking cheap money; but the cheapest is not always the best.

My hon. Friend, the Minister of Communications and Works, actually lectured to us that some of this money which is coming back to us is just some of the money which has been exploited. I am not prepared to argue that, but in Washington I saw there, a diagram showing the financial assistance offered by the various metropolitan governments to their colonies by way of grants. I regret very much that I have not got the paper here, but from what I have seen for myself, the British Government was way ahead of any other metropolitan government. Their contribution to the colonies as against the French, Dutch and Spanish was more than 50 times. The next best of them was the Dutch.

What are we talking about? We are talking about human beings. In those days that was the current thought. The people felt that they had a right to own money so that their children could enjoy a better standard of living than they. Our own workers who were appointed supervisors and drivers over their own folks, also joined in the exploitation of their own folks. The drivers accepted as the current practice or a lawful thing to exploit their fellow workers. I am certain if those people were to live their lives over, and meeting this new evolution, they would fit themselves into the atmosphere; and if it were possible for them to be benefited by their experience, they would quicken the pace of progress we are now making.

I am trying to impress upon this hon. Council that, inasmuch as the Government has a right to make decisions on these matters, I also claim that there is a moral obligation on the part of the administration to keep this Council informed, because at one stage they may have to come to this Council in another form—Finance Committee—and ask for money that is contingent to this same



deal. There have been vague references to this deal and from the inadequate information given to us in this hon. Council, I feel that it would be a dangerous thing for this hon. Council to go on record as approving—if we do not support this Motion then we are disapproving—the conduct of the Government in this particular matter. And this is one way in which we can show our disapproval. Can we just give ready approval to something we know little of when the little we know does not recommend itself to us?

I am saying: We cannot liken this Council to a Board of Directors—for that was the proposition presented to us, that we intend to deal with Cuban businessmen—when the Cuban businessmen themselves lacked experience. And I am reliably informed that they do not enjoy a good reputation for honouring their debts. I am also beginning to believe my information that the man who is qualified to speak for the Cuban Government on financial matters has openly admitted that there is little money; then I believe that they had not honoured their debts with Surinam and that there are organizations in British Guiana which are also awaiting payment from the Cuban Government.

Do those things recommend to us that we should embark on larger and bigger matters? We have a responsibility. If we want to be charitable; if we want to pretend that we are out to assist the Cuban Government to get on its feet and build up its own trade, we can go ahead. But we cannot forget the fact that at our disposal is very little to place us on a level economic keel.

I am appealing to this Government to await the time when the Cuban Government, themselves, can say to us: well, we are out of the woods; we have gone through our growing pains; we are bigger boys and can more afford to assist you as we are economically O.K. It is said

that the cheapest is not always the best. Many of us lose our small investments trying to buy expensive things cheaply. How many times are our people not lured by the temptations that face us in British Guiana and have paid heavily because they tried to dabble in something that looked cheap without properly examining it.

I said that the Cubans have not reached any degree of stability yet, for a small country like ours to be embarking on this gamble. This is no trade agreement. This is an out-and-out gamble. It is better you take a chance with some Fabulous Pool, you may get through better. I would not be surprised if I wake up tomorrow morning and learn there is no Castro in Cuba anymore. He is built on propaganda. He cannot float a Government yet, and that is the type of country we are going to deal with.

I know that all over the world there have been people and organizations and governments borrowing and lending money at the same time. Cuba has been in that same position. Cuba has been obtaining grants and giving assistance, especially military assistance. But I feel we should sit aside and see the ultimate result of all these exercises. It is not correct—it would not be proper for us to betray the trust of the taxpayers' money and gamble it with people who are, themselves, gamblers. What are they going to offer us? Since when Cubans are technicians? Up to now they are waiting on Russian technicians. What are we going to get from them?—some propagandists? I am not scared about it, but the position is simply this: if those people have not got any money to trade with us, they are not qualified to assist us technically; and if we are to accept the infallibility of the Press, they are receiving aid from Russia. What they have?

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I have heard that overnight they had become experts on timber resources, timber trade and timber development. I do not think Cuba is a woodland. It is new information that, through this Government, the world is now being informed that you can now find timber experts in Cuba. I think it will be shocking to the Cubans themselves to hear that they have such wonderful talent that they never made nor cannot make use of.

I am saying that we are committed to oppose this thing. If we do not, it means that we approve it and we will be following the Government in betraying the trust of the electors who have put them here. Here is a major question to be decided. They cannot even honour

their own responsibility to prepare a White Paper. Have they not got material to prepare it? Is it a difficult thing to prepare a White Paper and present it to this Council?

Sir, I think I will stop here seeing that it is almost five o'clock.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think it will be profitable to continue when it does not end the debate.

#### ADJOURNMENT

**The Chief Secretary:** I beg to move that Council adjourn until two o'clock tomorrow, Thursday, 3rd November, 1960.

*Council adjourned accordingly, at five o'clock.*