

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME I]

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

4th Sitting

Friday, 24 June, 1966

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Speaker in the Chair]

Present:

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. A. P. Alleyne

Members of the Government

Ministers

The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.	<i>Prime Minister</i>
The Honourable R. E. Cheeks	- <i>Minister of Local Government</i>
The Honourable E. F. Correia	- <i>Minister of Communications</i>
The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin	- <i>Minister of Education and Race Relations</i>
The Honourable L. John	- <i>Minister of Agriculture</i>
The Honourable R. J. Jordan	- <i>Minister of Forests, Lands and Mines</i>
The Honourable M. Kasim	<i>Minister of Works and Hydraulics</i>
The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C.B.E.	- <i>Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation</i>
The Honourable D. Mahraj	- <i>Minister of Health</i>
The Honourable C. A. Merriman	<i>Minister of Labour</i>
The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.	- <i>Attorney-General and Minister of State</i>

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. D. B. deGroot

- *Parliamentary Secretary,
Prime Minister's Office*

Mr. O. E. Clarke

- *Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education
and Race Relations*

Mr. J. G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.

- *Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and
Hydraulics*

Mr. C. V. Too-Chung

- *Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Finance*

Other Members

Mr. W. A. Blair

Mr. T. A. Sancho

Mr. J. Budhoo

Mr. R. Tello, Deputy Speaker

Mr. P. Duncan

Rev. A. B. Trotman

Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley

Mr. H. M. S. Wharton, J.P.

Dr. J. K. M. Richmond

Members of the Opposition

Mr. B. H. Benn

Mr. H. Lall

Mr. Ram Karran

Mr. M. Khan, J.P.

Mr. R. Chandisingh

Mr. Y. Ally

Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard

Mr. L. Linde

Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.

Mr. R. D. Persaud

Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye

Dr. S. A. Ramjohn

Mr. E. M. G. Wilson

Mr. M. Bhagwan

Mr. J. R. S. Luck

Mr. G. Bowman

Mr. D. C. Jagan

Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)

- Mr. E. V. Viapree

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)

- Mr. F. A. Narain.

Absent:

Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid, Minister of Home Affairs - on leave

The Honourable P. S. d'Aguiar, Minister of Finance - on leave

The Honourable N. J. Bissember, Minister of Housing and

Reconstruction (Leader of the House) - on leave

The Honourable J. H. Thomas, Minister of Economic

Development - on leave

Mr. C. F. Chan-A-Sue - on leave

Mr. H. Prashad - on leave

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

Mr. A. Chase

Mr. C. V. Nunes - on leave

Mr. M. Hamid, J.P. - on leave

Mr. M. Poonai

Mr. E. M. Stoby

Mr. S. M. Saffee.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

LEAVE TO MEMBERS

Mr. Speaker: I have to announce that Mr. Hari Prashad has asked to be absent from today's sitting.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE
BUSINESS OR SITTING OF THE
ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY A
MINISTER

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): Out of abundant caution, I move under Standing Order 9 (5) that the Motion in my name be exempt on this day's sitting from the provisions of paragraph (2) of Standing Order 9. I have reason to believe, having spoken to the Acting Leader of the Opposition, that we should be away before that nine o'clock.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL PAPER
NO. 1 OF 1966

"Be it resolved that the Committee of Supply approve of the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1 of 1966 - Schedule of Additional Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending June, 1966, totalling \$2,471,927."
[**The Minister of Communications for the Minister of Finance.**]

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Correia): I beg to lay on the Table the Cabinet's recommendation as regards Article

80 (2) to enable this Motion to be proceeded with.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

Mr. Luck: I wonder if I correctly heard the acting Minister of Finance. He said Article 82. Is that correct? [**Mr. Correia:** "I said 80 (2)."]

Mr. Correia: I also propose to move an Amendment to the Schedule to provide for an increase of one dollar. Copies of the items provided for in the increase have been circulated to hon. Members (page 11). I also lay on the Table the Cabinet's recommendation with respect to this increase.

The Chairman: We are considering the Schedule page by page.

2.10 p.m.

Mr. Ram Karran: I wonder whether the hon. Minister can give us an explanation regarding Head 1? I notice that \$1 is requested to provide for salaries to former members of the disbanded Volunteer Force pending terminal arrangements. As I understand it, according to law, the Volunteer Force is no longer in existence. What are the terminal arrangements to which the hon. Minister refers? Have these men, who have been engaged in the Volunteer Force, not been paid? Do we owe them money?

The Prime Minister: The Volunteer Force was in fact disbanded on the 22nd May, 1966, but there were certain persons who were employed and in receipt of salaries which were also provided

[THE PRIME MINISTER]

for in the Estimates. Unless we renew the Head merely by providing \$1, we would not be able to pay them. For instance, one officer will soon be retired, but he is under contractual arrangements. You should note that it is only \$1 and no additional sum at this stage. It is possible that more money may be needed later.

Mr. Ram Karran: This shows that somebody has not done his work. This is a case where a man was engaged on a fixed salary, and the Ministry of Finance, or the people in the Accounts' section of the Volunteer Force, should be able to tell us how much money is due to this man. The hon. Prime Minister refers to a staff officer. It will be recalled that the hon. Minister of Finance in previous debates often criticised his former opposite number for not providing up-to-date records in such matters. The previous Minister of Finance used to submit more information than we are getting today. The first Item on the Financial Paper asks for \$1 to pay off men who are no longer in the Volunteer Force.

Mr. Correia: That is why this dollar is here. The men's services will be terminated, but we do not know how much money we will have to pay them at the moment.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Minister does not seem to realise that, in accordance with the law, this organisation does not exist.

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Prime Minister's Canadian/American tour

Mr. Luck: With reference to Item 2 Sub-head 13 - (New) Hospitality expenses in connection with the Prime Minister's Canadian/American tour - \$15,000, I observe that the Note states: "To meet special expenditure in connection with the Prime Minister's Canadian/American tour in July". I am alarmed if my understanding of what is written here is correct. Am I to understand that this sum of \$15,000 does not cover the cost of the tour of the hon. Prime Minister and his "Dopos"? Those of us who read the *Guyana Graphic* will understand the story of Garth and Fulton. We know that the inter-space madman's ego was so much that he had to employ "Dopos" in order to maintain his sanity. This means hospitality to the Canadian people, and it does not mean the expenses of the tour. Is this item a special gift to the hon. Prime Minister, his Personal Secretary and "Dopos", to spend on the pleasure of females on the North American continent?

The Prime Minister: So far as the Prime Minister is concerned, he is not in the habit of expending sums on females unlike the last speaker. That is for those who are unable to do otherwise. The head of the Guyana Government is going on an official visit to Canada and the United States. There are certain things which go with the head of a Government's visit to a country. There are things like an entertainment given by the head

of the Government or the head of State to those who were his hosts. That is obligatory. There are things like exchanges of personal gifts. There are things like having other forms of entertainment for political officers of the host country, members of the Press, etc. Unless my hon. and learned Friend is given an opportunity to travel at that level he will not understand these things. The head of a non-independent country in 1961 spent \$10,000. Am I not worth half as much as that again?

Mr. Luck: Before the Members of this House can approve of this expenditure, we are entitled to know how this money is going to be spent, because we have a Prime Minister who is very expensive. What will be the total expenditure on this trip? Does it include the cost of two special airline tickets for the Prime Minister who has to sit in two airline seats at the same time? [Laughter.] I see my hon. Friend laughing. It seems as though we will have to provide an empty seat in keeping with the swell way in which the Prime Minister likes to travel. This involves taxpayers' money, and we would like to know how much money we are going to spend on this tour. Will \$15,000 be spent on reciprocal hospitality only? Before we can vote for this Item, surely the House is entitled to know why the sum of \$15,000 is set aside? Tell us how much is involved in hotel expenses, and so on.

The Prime Minister: If the hon. Member knew anything about procedure in this House, he would know that his question need not be answered. He is dealing with

the question of trips abroad, but this Item deals with hospitality. I am not here to give details of expenditure in a hotel, because that matter is not under consideration today. "Trips abroad" is not under consideration today, and the hon. Member's question is entirely out of order.

2.20 p.m.

LEGISLATURE

Coat of Arms

Mr. Ram Karran: May I ask a question on Item 5. The sum of \$2,900 is required to provide for the cost of designing the National Coat of Arms and to pay for the painting and registration in the United Kingdom of the Coat of Arms and Royal Warrant. What is this registration? This is an independent and sovereign nation. Are we asking somebody in the United Kingdom to register our Coat of Arms? Are we still subservient to somebody? Perhaps the members of the Government can explain to us what this is all about.

The Prime Minister: I can understand the difficulty of the hon. Member. It is the first time he has acted for the Leader of the Opposition. When the hon. Member, Mr. Brindley Benn, acted for the Leader, then Premier, of British Guiana, in 1961, he minuted in a file the necessity to have certain things done in preparation for Independence. One of the things was to register our Coat of Arms and Flag in an International Registry. The Coat of Arms is registered so that other persons may not encroach on it.

[THE PRIME MINISTER]

This is an international body for registration of armorial bearings etc. Of course, since it is only recently that my hon. Friend has been raised to the high estate of leading his party, he would not have seen this file in which his colleague, Mr. Benn, had minuted on this same matter and proposed to the then Premier that he should have a look at it when he went to the United Kingdom in 1961.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Prime Minister refers to armorial bearings. I imagine that he will tell us something about the feudal past. On previous occasions he has referred to the colonial mentality of the members of the last Government. I cannot imagine that someone who has often referred to the colonial mentality of others will today follow in the footsteps allegedly made by a comrade of mine, and go to the United Kingdom to register our Coat of Arms. It does not speak very well for the mentality of the hon. Prime Minister and his ideals when he adheres to the so-called "colonial past".

Why is it that we cannot have the registration done in our own free country? Can the hon. Minister tell us whether the Taiwan Government had its registration done in the United Kingdom?

Mr. Correia: The hon. Member amuses me when he makes such statements. We would like to hear something better from him.

Mr. Ram Karran: I said nothing about semi-literacy, nothing at all.

Mr. Correia: The hon. Member should know that international bodies register Coat of Arms and Flags.

ATTORNEY-GENERAL

Salaries

Mr. Luck: May I refer to Item 6. Once more we are called upon to increase the salary of one of the officers in the Attorney-General's Chambers. I wish to draw the attention of the hon. Members to the fact that the salary of the Solicitor-General was \$10,560 as late as 1964. In 1965 he received an increase of \$960. He is now to receive an increase of \$480.

The salary that changed the background of salaries was the salary of the Attorney-General. His salary is now in the vicinity of \$5,000 per month. Being a modest gentleman, he had to increase by a Supplementary Estimate the salary of the Chief Parliamentary Counsel. Then he had to increase the salary of the Senior Parliamentary Counsel.

Before we pass on from this Item, I would like some indication as to whether we shall be called upon in the near future to approve further increases for officers in the Attorney-General's Chambers.

[No reply was offered.]

The Chairman: No explanation is forthcoming so we move on to page 2.

Mr. Hubbard: We are entitled to an explanation.

The Chairman: We are on page 2. We go in sequence. c

**MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT**

Industrial Officer

Mr. Ram Karran: I am a little bothered by Item 7, particularly the note. It seems that the provision is for the creation of one post of "Assistant Secretary" and for the transfer of one post of "Industrial Officer".

I do not like to refer to officers individually as I believe in the principle of dealing with the public service on questions of principle. On this occasion, however, I have to refer to an officer. I do not know whether it is the officer who fills the post of "Industrial Officer". I understand that the Industrial Officer is Basil Thakoor. Is he referred to?

I met Mr. Thakoor in the United Kingdom and he told me he had applied to return home on the Prime Minister's invitation only to find that he was dismissed. This officer sent a medical certificate saying that he was ill and was promptly fired as was done in the case of several officers the colour of whose eyes apparently does not fit in with the policy of the Government.

This gentleman, Mr. Thakoor, has applied for employment in the United Kingdom to find that he cannot be employed because of his illness. I understand that he is likely to be cast out without being paid his gratuity and pension, to which he is entitled, and which is being, in some cases,

paid to other officers who are not liked by the present Coalition Government.

2.30 p.m.

I wonder whether the acting Minister of Finance can enlighten us about this officer who is now stranded in the United Kingdom in the bitter cold with a very large family. This officer is being deprived of the opportunity of earning a living in his own country, in a Service in which he undoubtedly served faithfully in his youthful days.

Mr. Correia: The hon. Member should table a written Question because it is not possible to answer any question which has to do with the Public Service Commission. It is unfair to ask a question like that here. The officer he is talking about owns a property in London.

Mr. Ram Karran: While I appreciate the hon. Minister's difficulty, I must say that the ownership of property, by this officer, in the United Kingdom, has nothing at all to do with this matter. Perhaps that is how hon. Ministers are thinking. This officer should not be deprived of what he is entitled to in the Civil Service of Guyana because he owns a property in the United Kingdom. I have never heard of such a thing; I raise this question because it appears, from the Estimates, that an effort is being made to substitute another post.

This is an appropriate time for the hon. Minister to withdraw this Head - it is just a token amount of \$1 - until this House

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can be given some satisfaction, some guarantee that this Guyanese officer who wishes to come back to British Guiana -- [The Prime Minister: "There is no such place."] I am sorry; so many things are done in the colonial way that I keep forgetting that we are living in an independent country. I am strongly urging that this Head be withdrawn until such time as the hon. Minister can tell us whether this officer will be deprived of his pension and gratuity in order to effect this change which the Schedule seeks to do.

Mr. Correia: I am not in a position to answer that question. Perhaps the officer might have resigned.

Mr. Ram Karran: I did not ask a question. The hon. Minister said that he cannot answer the question. I am asking whether -- [The Prime Minister: "You are not asking a question?"] I am urging that this Head be removed until such time as the Minister is in a position to deal with it.

Mr. Luck: Item 8, Head 23 - Ministry of Home Affairs. I see here 12 posts of "Probation Officers"--

Mr. Ram Karran: I am again appealing to the hon. Minister to withdraw this Head before irreparable harm is done to an individual.

MINISTRY OF-HOME AFFAIRS

Probation Service

Mr. Luck: Twelve posts of "Probation Officers" are to be

created and I notice that these officers are now to be called "Probation and Welfare Officers". I wonder whether the intention is to give employment to party hacks who cannot possibly qualify as Probation Officers, and so the term "Probation and Welfare Officers" is used. Thus we would find "Madam So-and-so", with long experience in life and affairs, would be appointed as a Welfare Officer. I should like the assurance to be given that there is some qualification attached to this post of Probation and Welfare Officer and that the change in the name is not deliberately intended to provide jobs for necessitous party workers.

The Prime Minister: I can assure my hon. and learned Friend that neither madams nor mothers will be appointed. There is a slightly different emphasis. In the past, the emphasis was almost exclusively on probation work. The emphasis now will be not only on probation work but on preventive services, child care and welfare work, even after the period of probation.

I am informed that, to be appointed permanently, a course will have to be gone through, and to get beyond a certain bar, a further course will have to be pursued. The emphasis in these days is not merely on probation work or what was formerly probation work, merely on punishing or disciplining, but also on preventive services, attempting to take care of the environment, etc. of persons who are likely to become delinquents. Therefore, the new concept is reflected in the addition of the word "Welfare".

Mr. Benn: The Government ought to be congratulated on this improvement. I wonder what would be the functions of the Probation Hostel Warder, Probation Hostel Assistant Warder and Probation Hostel Cook. Where are these hostels? Since the Prime Minister is telling us that there is going to be an extension of the activities of the Probation and Welfare Officers, what is going to happen to the other persons who were known as Social Welfare Officers? How will their work be integrated with community development?

The Prime Minister: To answer the last question first, the persons who were formerly designated Social Welfare Officers have now become Community Development Officers, and that was something that was done prior to 1965.

Now the hostel is going to be provided by Government and you will have to have the officers for the hostel - warders, assistants, etc. There were some cases, in the past, where there was no place to which to send delinquents for supervision but the Essequibo Boys' School, which was not only very costly but not always suitable in particular cases. [Mr. Ram Karran: "What about the Botanic Gardens?"] I have a menagerie in which I shall put my friend Mr. Ram Karran. Therefore, this not only saves money but provides somewhat superior surroundings to those previously provided in the Essequibo Boys' School. There is nothing ulterior about this.

[Mr. Benn: Is the hon. Prime Minister telling us that the

Government is now going to set up a hostel?

The Prime Minister: Yes.

Mr. Benn: I cannot remember having seen such a proposal.

The Prime Minister: It would be in the Development Plan as a capital item. This is consequential on capital expenditure.

2.40 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 3.

Essequibo Boys' School

Mr. Luck: Item 9 - Ministry of Home Affairs - Essequibo Boys' School, 1 - Personal Emoluments, \$5,000. You may recall that when the vote for the Essequibo Boys' School was debated, I did draw the attention of the House to the disparity between the number of teachers and the number of officers at this alleged Boys' School. There were 19 so-called officers to 5 teachers. I see here that there is some attempt to remove this imbalance and create posts for more teachers.

First of all, I notice that the sum to be voted is still pitifully small. We have here at least 10 new posts for teachers with effect from 1st January, 1966, and the sum to be voted is \$5,000. I want this House to be assured that Prison Warders are not being christened and baptised as teachers. I want to make this point very clear; if we are going to move away from the concept of the "Essequibo Boys' Prison" to the Essequibo Boys' School, we

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must move away from the officers who were in the prison. These officers should be precluded from being appointed as teachers now because it would be a disgrace to the concept of the profession of teaching for men who were involved in the prison itself to be now called teachers. This is the only explanation I could find why the 10 teachers to be appointed will cost only \$5,000. A possible explanation is that the Prison Officers are to be baptised and christened as teachers, and this is not good at all. I want some assurance to be given that this is not being done and that these positions will be advertised.

Mr. Correia: The hon. Member will see that \$77,599 was the amount originally provided. The \$5,000 is to supplement the \$77,599.

Mr. Luck: Surely, the Government should provide somebody who can understand. I have here the Capital and Current Estimates for 1966. We are told here that this vote of \$5,000 is to provide for the following, with effect from 1st January, 1966:

4 Housemasters, each of whom would be getting in excess of \$4,000 a year.

2 Teachers on the salary scale A25/A31, and that is equal to \$3,600 a year.

4 Assistant Housemasters - another \$3,000.

Regrading the posts of Headmaster and Deputy Headmaster higher up will cost \$5,000 a year.

I demand that the Government find somebody to explain how 10 men, each of whom will be getting \$4,000 a year, will be getting \$5,000 in all. The explanation probably is, as the hon. Mr. Correia rightly pointed out, that there was a vote of \$77,599 which included 19 officers, picked because of their strength and brutality, to be appointed as Officers to beat up the people there.

I am saying that none of these men should be awarded the dignity of being called a teacher, a profession which the great Socrates and others have followed. I hope some assurance is given because I feel very strongly about this, and I believe, with all immodesty, that this thing has been done on account of criticisms raised in the House by the Hon. Dr. Ramsahoye and myself. You cannot have a school with 19 Officers and 5 Teachers. That is a boys' prison. But worse than that is the christening of a brute and calling him a teacher. I want some assurance that these 4 Housemasters and 2 Teachers will not be recruited from those 19 Officers who are entirely without qualification.

The Prime Minister: I have noted that the hon. Member alleged with some inaccuracy that this Government is more sensitive to individual criticism than its predecessor. I wish to remark, for the sake of the record, and to inform my hon. and learned Friend that this Government did not recruit a lot of brutes, it found them - if brutes they are - in office after his friends had been in office for 7 years. He might have, perhaps, shown a little more social sense.

The Housemasters, sir, are not merely going to be teachers, but persons trained in relevant welfare work. So also will be the 2 Teachers. They will, in that way, be Officers. There will be Trade Instructors. In spite of the aspersions being cast by the hon. Member, there will be cases amongst those who were formerly called Officers of Prisons, who are capable of being trained at the Technical Institute as teachers to instruct the boys. Where they are not of proper material, they will not be Trade Instructors. If, amongst the Officers at the moment there are persons who are capable, after training at the Technical Institute or any such institution, of becoming suitable persons to be Trade Instructors, naturally the opportunity will be available to them. But the intention is not merely to rechristen Officers This Government, unlike its predecessor, does not appoint criminals as Headmasters of schools.

MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS AND MINES

Miscellaneous

Mr. Ram Karran: Item No. 11 - Ministry of Forests, Lands and Mines, 3 - Miscellaneous, \$1,000. This amount has gone up 100 per cent and it is stated in the note that an amount of \$400 has already been advanced from the Contingencies Fund. As I understand it, miscellaneous expenditure is for things such as toilet paper, and so on. I wonder if we have gone up 100 per cent in the toilet paper industry?

Mr. Correia: There again, I have to excuse the hon. Member.

Miscellaneous covers everything miscellaneous in the Forest Department, for instance, paper, sandpaper, ink, stationery and a multitude of things.

Mr. Hubbard: To a point of order! The Hon. Minister should not mislead us. He comes here and tells us that Miscellaneous covers stationery.

Mr. Correia: I am surprised to hear the hon. Member referring to Miscellaneous as toilet paper.

2.50 p.m.

The Chairman: Page 4.

MINISTRY OF FORESTS, LANDS AND MINES

Superintendents of Works

Mr. Ram Karran: With reference to Item 14, 37 - Ministry of Works and Hydraulics, 1 - Personal Emoluments \$2,413,949, the note states: "To provide with effect from 1st July, 1966, for the creation of (a) four (4) posts of 'Senior Superintendents of Works' on Scale A7: \$5,136-\$6,336 per annum in substitution for four (4) posts of 'Engineers' on Scale A4: \$4,656 - \$7,776 per annum'. When certain Members of this House were in the Opposition they used to talk their heads off about the need for skills and trained people to do the work. Today, in an independent Guyana, they come to this House as the Government and say that they are going to substitute for four posts of Engineers four Senior Superintendents of Works. The title "Superintendent of Works" may sound impressive to some people,

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but I hope that the hon. Minister, or whoever speaks on the other side of the House, will not try to bamboozle people by making them believe that a Superintendent of Works is anything higher than a skilled technician.

We cannot experiment at this stage of our country's development if we hope to go forward. I hope that the Government does not wish to delay the development of Guyana by removing from the Estimates Engineers and substituting Senior Superintendents of Works in their places. There can be no excuse for this, and I hope that the Government will give us more information regarding this matter.

The Minister of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Kasim): Due to the shortage of Engineers and the additional work now placed on the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics, we have had to remove certain Engineers in the districts and put them to work on the Atkinson Field/Mackenzie Road. That is why we are creating these posts.

Mr. Ram Karran: I have never heard anything like that. Because of the shortage of Engineers and the need to transfer them from the fixed Establishment, or from the Department to certain other important jobs, we are taking the backward step of removing from our Estimates a number of posts for Engineers and substituting for them posts of Senior Superintendents of Works. If they hold the Higher National Certificates they are Engineers. If it is the intention to remove four Engineers and baptise them by putting them in a lower category,

then I would like to know the reason for so doing. You have a number of people in training who are now Higher National Certificate holders and they are Engineers.

I wonder whether the Government would wish to withdraw this Item until it can tell us something sensible about the matter? This Government can have no excuse whatsoever for removing from the Estimates four Engineers and replacing them by Senior Superintendents of Works. Let us keep the Engineers.

Mr. Hubbard: Before the hon. Minister rises to attempt a reply, I would like to point out that the Senior Superintendent of Works will be given a higher starting salary than the Engineers who are being removed. I am wondering whether this is a device for providing increments without going through the whole process of regrading of salaries. Here the starting salary is higher although it is a shorter grade. The Engineer goes on to a much larger maximum salary, but he begins at a lower salary. I must say that, if all of our coastal schemes are to be placed in the hands of a man who gives us the kind of ridiculous explanation offered by the Minister of Works and Hydraulics, I tremble for this country.

Mr. Kasim: My hon. Friend knows what he is thinking of, and that is why he is trembling. These Engineers have practical experience; they are working in the Ministry, and they hold Higher National Certificates. They do not have their Associate Certificates.

Mr. Ram Karran: I cannot sit here and allow the hon. Minister to mislead this house and the country. If, as he says, these gentlemen hold Higher National Certificates, then it is obvious that they are Engineers. There are two methods in the training of Engineers: one is an apprenticeship system where the trainee works under a qualified Engineer in an approved school for 7 years. He obtains his ordinary National Certificate and then moves on to the Higher National Certificate, after which he is allowed to take his Associate membership examination. The other course of training is at a University leading up to the B.Sc. degree.

If the Minister says that the gentlemen who are working at the Ministry hold Higher National Certificates, then I have no alternative but to move that the Head be increased to 8 Engineers instead of 4 Engineers in substitution for the 3 Senior Superintendents of Works. No Engineer in the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics or in any Ministry in this country should be referred to as a Senior Superintendent of Works. I formally move that the 4 posts be increased to 8, in order to give the Minister an opportunity to call these people by their accredited names.

3 p.m.

Mr. Hubbard: I will support the hon. Member, Mr. Ram Karran, on this. The Minister tells us that the Superintendent of Works is an engineer, someone who holds the Higher National Certificate. I do not know whether the Minister will categorically declare that

every person whom he proposes to appoint as a Superintendent of Works will have a certificate at the level of the certificate required for an engineer, or will have the B.Sc. which is an equivalent qualification.

The Superintendent of Works is to start at a higher salary than the engineer. I am beginning to think that some persons are prepared to be called "Superintendent of Works", although they are engineers, in order to receive a higher starting salary and that the Minister, instead of being frank with this House and with the Public Service and the country, is coming to this House and employing devious means for regrading people without declaring that he is doing so.

There appear to be persons with equal qualifications who are in the same grade. This post of "Superintendent of Works" is intended not to provide cover for starting one set of engineers at a higher salary than another set of engineers. It is provided for a different purpose altogether. I want the Minister to tell us categorically that every person who is going to be appointed, or has been appointed, will or has been a person possessing a Higher National Certificate in Civil Engineering or Mechanical Engineering as the case may be.

If such a person is to be appointed, or has already been appointed, then I hope we will know what the situation is. I think this is an engineer's post and should be so stated.

Mr. Kasim: There are two persons in that category and we are expecting to appoint two more.

Mr. Hubbard: I want a categorical statement.

The Chairman: If the Minister does not make a categorical statement what can you do about it? Page 6.

MINISTRY OF HOUSING AND RECONSTRUCTION

Mr. Ram Karran: May I ask the hon. Minister of Finance, acting, to tell us what is a "Principal Administrative Officer" as described on page 6, paragraph (c).

[*The acting Minister of Finance (Mr. Correia) offered no reply.*]

The Chairman: I am moving from page 6.

Mr. Ram Karran: As usual, the hon. Minister cannot give an explanation. A large number of posts are being created under this Head, Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction. The persons who were employed in the former Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing, ought to be adequate, with perhaps a few additions, to take care of this new Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction.

I have no quarrel with the Government for employing people. In fact, it is a good thing. Is there no explanation, however, for this wholesale creation of posts, for the wholesale regrading of staff, which we have found in this Schedule?

Under pressure from the hon. Members who once sat on this side of the House, I have repeatedly said that it is a dangerous thing

to attempt to regrade the Public Service piecemeal. Only recently a Commission was appointed to investigate salaries in the Public Service, and went into the matter in great detail. It is true that the present Government has more or less rejected the decisions of the last Government with respect to superscales and has accepted the Guilleband recommendations, but even this acceptance does not justify what we see here.

What is the explanation? Someone ought to rise and tell us what is the explanation for all this regrading and for the creation of new posts which we see in this Schedule six months after the Estimates were presented. It is certainly not good for legislators to come here and regrade salaries, because anomalies are created and in the long-run more dissatisfaction is created in the Public Service.

The Prime Minister has not yet turned grey. I do not know whether he has a headache, but there is a bit of advice I would like to give him. I advise the members of the Government not to regrade posts in order to satisfy their personal friends. Let regrading be based on some principle so that the entire Public Service will be satisfied and all public servants will work to the best of their ability.

Mr. Correia: This is not a regrading of posts. This is a completely new Ministry, the Ministry of Housing and Reconstruction. If the hon. Member would look at the Schedule he would see that completely new staff was required for the

Minister. And if the hon. Member would go further and look at the last paragraph on page 6 he would see that "this expenditure will be offset by savings from the Personal Emoluments vote of the Heads shown above".

Page 7.

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Special Visits and External Conferences

Mr. Luck: Item 19 is a rather extraordinary item inasmuch as \$75,000 was voted for the entire year and now, before six months of the year have elapsed, the sum of \$93,000 has been spent on special visits and representation at External Conferences.

This Government has boasted that it does not work by "guessimates". One wonders what sort of estimate was this when \$75,000 was voted for the whole year and not six months have passed and the sum of \$93,000 has already been spent. You will notice, Mr. Speaker, that the previous vote was \$75,000 and we are told in the note that \$18,000 was spent in addition to the \$75,000. I have been going through in my mind the number of visits involved.

3.10 p.m.

We are a poor country and we go abroad begging for aid. There are two ways of getting aid. One is the cheap and demagogic way of raising the scare of terrorism and communism in Guyana. Another way of getting aid from worthy Governments would be to project the image of a country that is

hard working, that is frugal, that is striving to create a good life for all. But I apprehend that the scale on which the representatives of this Government live abroad must induce other countries to feel that these fellows come from a very wealthy country, and so they are unable to project the sort of impression, as I have indicated, which would lead to some assistance being given. This Government feels impelled to raise the scare of terrorism, communism and emergency.

I should like to severely criticise the members of this Government for these expenses because they are leading this country to grave difficulties in human relations. How can you spend, in all conscience, \$93,000 on a handful of people for a few days? Mr. Chairman, as an old teacher, you must know that not only do we have to look at the number of men, but we have to look at the number of days. I want to believe that the sum of \$93,000, which has already been spent on External Conferences, represents an expenditure, per person, in excess of \$300 per day. It is very easy to see that \$93,000 works out to \$300 per day for 310 days, and if ten of them went it would be 31 days. I am positive that the sum already spent for representation at External Conferences amounts to more than \$300 per person per day. This is even more than is spent by much wealthier countries.

Surely, these expenses are too much for a country where men are being laid off daily because of lack of funds. Today, 183 transport workers are out of jobs,

[MR. LUCK]

and that is a small part of the matter. \$150,000 per year would mean permanent employment for at least - if they were to be employed in agriculture, according to the figures of Professor Arthur Lewis - 100 men, and if they have large families, it would mean happiness for at least 500 people. When the object of their trip is to beg for aid, who do our envoys impress when they spend \$300 per day? Just as a prudent householder, from a most humanitarian point of view, must take a dim view of a beggar who is well clothed and apparently well fed, so the wealthier countries must look askance at those representatives of poor countries who go to beg for aid, spending \$300 per day.

If this vote is passed, six months are still left to run on only \$57,000 and I want to wager that, on the October Conference alone, if \$15,000 is to be spent on hospitality expenses, at least \$30,000 must be spent on the hon. Prime Minister, his Dapos and advisers, and nothing will be left. Three months from now we will be asked to vote another \$75,000. I will move the deletion of this Item when it comes up. I do not say that these visits should not proceed. I do not say that we must not send representatives abroad, nor do I say that when we send representatives abroad they must be harried from one Y.M.C.A. hostel to another. For myself, I have lived in a Y.M.C.A. hostel and nothing is wrong with that. But where will it end? Six months have not passed and \$93,000 has been spent - \$300 per person per day.

I should like the hon. Minister to give us some indication of the number of men, days and conferences that are involved in the sum of \$93,000 which has already been spent.

Mr. Hubbard: Before the Minister rises to reply, I wish to draw attention to the way this note is prepared. The note previously stated: "Voted provision inadequate, owing to the great number of conferences to be attended by Members of Parliament and Government Officers." Then the word "great" was taken out and the words "increase in" were substituted to make it look a little better. The 1966 Estimates came before the previous House and were passed in April of this year. Three months have not yet elapsed. At the time they were presented, although I deemed the then Budget an Interim Budget, the Government led us to believe that it was satisfied that the provisions were adequate.

The members of this Government cannot say that they did not expect to get Independence because that was a settled matter and they knew that they would have a number of additional commitments in consequence of Independence. In less than three months they have come here to ask for 100 per cent increase in this vote, and they tell us that they have already spent a portion of the amount that they are now asking for.

I support the demand of my hon. and learned Friend Mr. Luck that the Minister should give us some indication as to what these Conferences have been costing us per person. For instance, the

Minister of Economic Development (Mr. Thomas) has gone to Formosa to look at the development of industry which pays fifty cents per day for skilled labour, and he is trying to translate those conditions there. Of course, he gets there and beats the anti-communist drum. We now have Ministers travelling with their secretaries - I do not know if their wives travel with them as well - and they are even being accompanied by Members of Parliament who are not attached to their Ministries in any way.

3.20 p.m.

We want to know, bearing in mind the retrenchment that is taking place - some of it is in the open - what spending money is given to each of these men whom they are sending abroad on junkets.

Mr. Correia: Before I answer the two hon. Members on this Head, I should like to tell the hon. Member who referred to the discharge of 300 transport workers -

Mr. Hubbard: No number was mentioned in this House.

Mr. Correia: The workers who were put off by the Transport and Harbours Department were workers who were employed in development programmes. Carpenters, masons, and so on, were employed, but since we did not have any more development programmes, they had to be laid off until we commence our Development Programme for 1966.

Mr. Hubbard: I should like, before the hon. Member - -
[*Interruption.*]

Mr. Correia: I am on the Floor. There are many factors which led to the increase of this Head. For instance, the change of status of the country; visits to the United Nations, visits to the United Kingdom in connection with the change of status of the country and visits in connection with our 1966-1972 Programme. Because of the increase in the number of visits the amount was not enough. We have, therefore, come to the House for an increase of \$75,000. The sum of \$18,000 has already been spent.

Mr. Luck: The hon. Member has not properly directed himself to my question. I should like to know how many persons. Is it not true to say that this \$93,000 works out on an average to \$300 per person per day? The point, I am making is that this is extravagance. I am not saying that the visits should not have been made.

Mr. Correia: I did not go into the mathematics of the question. The trip by the Minister of Economic Development and Mr. C. Chan-A-Sue was paid for by the Taiwan Government and not by this Government.

Mr. Hubbard: I wish to challenge something that the hon. Minister said here. It is not the first time that a Minister has come here and told us what is not true. The hon. Minister told us that the persons who have been dismissed or retrenched from the Transport and Harbours Department have all been persons who were connected with development programmes. But some of these men were employees from the Workshop Department and were not in any way connected with any development programme. The workshop is

[MR. HUBBARD]

not a part of the extension of the wharf. When the Ministers come here we expect them to tell us the truth. I hope that the hon. Minister of Communications will tell us the truth and reveal what is actually taking place with regard to that matter.

I think that the Minister is a very hard-headed businessman because he cannot understand what is put to him. What we want to know, sir, is how much per head was the cost. We do not know how many persons have gone and how much was spent for each person.

Mr. Correia: The amount spent includes the cost of civil servants in their official capacity travelling with Ministers.

Mr. Lall: Your Honour, it is regrettable to see —

The Chairman: Are you speaking on the same Item?

Mr. Lall: Yes, Your Honour. It is regrettable to see that this Government is asking for more money to go on trips abroad, while in Guyana workers are being retrenched every day. In the Corentyne the other day, we saw that 83 road workers were retrenched. In Georgetown and its environs, we saw that policemen were hounding poor people who cannot get work, taking away radio "shells" and saying that they were not paying licences. Over 1,800 people were charged. I wonder if this is the way the Government intends —

The Chairman: That is not on this Item.

Mr. Lall: Yes, Your Honour. The poorer classes are suffering. Workers are being retrenched. Policemen are hounding the poor people who do not have as much as a meal per day. I am trying to show how this Government is wasting the taxpayers' money. It is unbelievable! Within six months \$93,000 has been expended for passages abroad. My friend the hon. Mr. Luck said it is costing the taxpayers of Guyana \$300 per man per day. It seems as though cognac and whiskey in these hotels were flowing like the water of Niagara Falls while the Prime Minister was telling the people to eat less, sleep less, and work harder. How can you run a country like this? I am advising the members of the Government to cut this amount by half and let them see how they can tighten their belts when they go abroad, so that some of the money they spend lavishly abroad could be used to help the poor Guyanese people at home.

3.30 p.m.

My advice to the Government is that it should do something to help these people. Do not ask people to eat less, sleep less, and then when you go abroad you spend the poor people's money as you like. You must show a better example by spending half of what you are spending now. I am asking that this expenditure be reduced by half the amount.

The Prime Minister: There has been a certain amount of politicking in this matter, and it is absolutely necessary, when expenditure like this is being discussed in this House, that hon. Members should know that,

as an independent country, we will have things like the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference, which will have to be attended by the Prime Minister. There are certain international bodies like the W.H.O. and I.L.O. of which we are now full members. There is also another international body, F.A.O. The expenses we incur in attending these conferences are part of the consequences of our achieving independence and membership of these bodies. There is little point in accepting membership, if you are not prepared on certain occasions to be represented at meetings and conferences.

As a result of our attending these conferences, in many instances we are likely to receive benefits which accrue to the various countries - benefits not only by way of technical assistance, but also by way of exposure which our expert officers get when attending, and exposure which can result in an appreciation of new techniques. The knowledge gained by our officers can be applied in the carrying out of their tasks in Guyana. I appreciate the fact that members of the Opposition must say something. I was sitting on that side of the Table some time ago, and I may have to sit there again, but there is a certain point at which a sense of responsibility or realism is necessary. Absolutely immaterial is the question of radio licences. I do not know to whom my hon. Friend was referring or seeking to appeal - certainly not the Gallery, because, try as he may, he will not get 1/100 of those votes. He will have to go to the Corentyne and make his appeal.

There are a number of my trade union friends who will be going to Peking, Cuoa and so on shortly and it is useless talking unnecessarily.

Mr. Luck: Having listened to the hon. Prime Minister, one must wonder whether this sum now being voted will be sufficient. The Prime Minister has given us a list of the Conferences which have been attended and will have to be attended, but the \$93,000 involved does not include some of the things he has enumerated. Therefore, since the sum of \$57,000 remains and a lot of Conferences are still to be attended, the point I am making is that I hope this is the last time I will have to vote for this money with blood in my eyes. The Prime Minister and his friends must spend less and live on a less lavish scale when they go abroad.

We hear all sorts of stories about money being spent at hotels costing \$100 a day for the room alone. I have heard from persons who were present that suppers costing hundreds of dollars have been given for a man and his friends. We on this side of the House urge the Government to cut out this lavish spending of the taxpayers' money. I urge the hon. Prime Minister to lead the way by foregoing the luxury of having two first-class plane tickets for himself alone whenever he goes abroad.

The Prime Minister: I think the hon. Member ought to be informed that I take one first-class plane ticket for myself alone, and I have always travelled by that facility.

Mr. Hubbard: I would have appreciated the hon. Prime Minister's statement if he were presenting the annual Estimates. But there is not one word that he spoke which was not known to his Cabinet and to the office of the Minister of Finance at the time that the Estimates were prepared, because provision was set aside to take care of this matter since November. I remember charging that we were having presented to us an Interim Budget, and here is proof of it. The hon. Prime Minister has come to us and put forward all the arguments which the hon. Minister of Finance, if he had dealt with this matter, would have taken into consideration when he arrived at a figure which he inserted in the ordinary recurrent Estimates.

Today, less than three months after the hon. Minister of Finance came here, the hon. Prime Minister is asking us to take into consideration questions which we must presume the Minister of Finance had already taken into account in arriving at his figures. I do not think that this is a satisfactory state of affairs. I feel that the rights of the Opposition should be preserved, and I think that we have a right to know what it is costing this country per person for the persons who have been on the visits which have so far taken place. I also feel that we should have more information on the Estimates before us today.

I would urge Your Honour to insist upon the Minister supplying us with the necessary information. He has his circumlocution officers at his command; they have the information and

they can present the figures. I am asking you to preserve our rights.

The Chairman: If the Minister is not in a position to give you the information which you require, or if he refuses to give you information, there is nothing that can be done about it. If he volunteers the answer all will be well and good, but if he refuses to answer I cannot compel him to do so. It is a question for him. I think I heard the hon. Prime Minister say, during the course of his remarks earlier this evening, that it is not possible to divulge certain information.

Mr. Correia: If the hon. Member wants an answer to a question like that, he must put it in writing.

Mr. Hubbard: I appreciate the hon. Minister of Communications' invitation to put the Question on paper.

3.40 p.m.

We did that during the whole of the last Session and we did not get any Answers. Over 100 questions remain unanswered.

The Chairman: That is not correct. Answers have been forthcoming this afternoon. It is not possible in every case for an answer to be given to you.

Mr. Hubbard: If the Minister does not wish to answer I would like him to make a categorical statement that he refuses.

The Chairman: Page 8.
[After a pause] Page 9.

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND
RACE RELATIONS**

**Regrading of Salary Scales for
Instructors**

Mr. Ram Karran: I would like to refer to Item 26. The note reads:

"To provide with effect from 1st January, 1966, for the regrading of the posts of 'Instructors' from Scale A26/A 10 to Scale A26/A21/A10."

I do not understand what this means. [Interruption] The hon. Member, Mr. Joaquin, who can only speak when he is sitting, says it is a bar, but in the Public Service certain signs are used to indicate bars and increments. It seems to me from this that certain people have been demoted. In any case, I think it deserves an explanation.

Earlier, when I was complaining about regrading on an *ad hoc* basis, the hon. Minister said that he did not see any cases of regrading. I would like to draw his attention to this page. The whole page deals with regrading officers in the Public Service.

The Minister of Labour (Mr. Merriman): There are three different grades, A26, A21 and A10. There is no question of demotion at all. If anything, there would be upgrading.

Mr. Ram Karran: Will the hon. Minister explain what the symbols mean?

Mr. Merriman: Scale A26 to Scale A20 to Scale A10. There are three sets of Scales here.

The Chairman: Page 10.

Mr. Ram Karran: The hon. Member, Mr. Hubbard, spoke earlier about the fact that the Estimates were presented only in April and a few months later we are presented with a Schedule for additional provision. I am particularly concerned about Item 3, Division XIV, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics. I propose to speak on it.

Mr. Luck: I would like to speak on Item 2.

Mr. Ram Karran: I would like to give way to my hon. Friend.

MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS

Independence Celebrations

Mr. Luck: I want to believe that Item 2 on page 10 represents a flagrant abuse of the processes of this House.

Mr. Correia: Before the Member speaks I should like to make a slight correction. The number of the sub-head should be 21 not 20.

Mr. Luck: Thank you. I have already alluded to the fact that this is a poor country. The total national budget is much below \$100 million. Some time ago the Government used its majority in this House to pass an allocation of \$750,000 for Independence under Item 21, Details of Capital Expenditure, Miscellaneous. The actual expenditure in 1964 was \$564. The Government was very kind to give us a

[MR. LUCK]

note at the time on this expenditure. The note stated, "to provide for the Independence Celebrations".

We are all busy men, I suppose, and we are here to protect the taxpayers' money and to subject to public scrutiny and debate the Government's expenditure. Not so long ago the sum of \$750,000 was to be spent and absolutely no information was provided to members of the Opposition and to hon. Members on this side of the House.

Here again we see the sorry spectacle of a Government which boasts of consultative democracy and yet comes and makes a mockery of the whole processes of this Parliament. The Government is now asking for \$850,000 and the only explanation that it has designed to give is similar to the explanation given when it last sought money for Independence Celebrations.

All hon. Members must have been most annoyed at the lack of proper preparations for the Independence Celebrations. I maintain here, without any fear of contradiction, that the financial arrangements for the Independence Celebrations, which involved the expenditure of \$1,600,000, were in greater confusion than the debacle over the invitations.

This Item will be passed because the hon. Prime Minister boasts that it will be passed. But how can we be said to be discharging our duties as guardians of the interests of the people when \$1,600,000 is being spent and no explanation is given other

than the word "Independence"? The word "Independence" holds no magic for me or for anybody. It is not a magical word. Under the guise of "Independence Celebrations" the Government cannot throw away \$1,600,000.

• This House is entitled to know how this money was spent. The manner of voting is well known. All that the Members have to do to keep their jobs is to vote properly. That is not the way to discharge our duties. It is a perversion of the concept of Parliament that a sum exceeding 2 per cent of the national income should be spent and not a single detail placed before this House.

At the time the Budget was presented I asked for details under the provision of \$750,000 for the Independence Celebrations. It might have been argued that it would be extremely difficult, due to the pressure of time to itemise the details of this expenditure, but this money has now been spent. I would wager any amount of money that if the papers were put before me in one night I would be able to present to anybody some rough estimate as to how the money was spent.

3.50 p.m.

In round figures, since the amount is \$1,600,000, I would have been accurate to the nearest \$10,000. The whole process of this Parliament is a farce. Large sums are appropriated without a single word of explanation.

It is a fact that the arrangements for the Independence Celebrations fell down very badly. This is known to this country and

to the whole world. Invitations went out improperly. I am positive that the financial arrangements were even worse. As you know, invitations to the most important functions were subsequently found in the drawers of officers. What about the money? How do you preserve the facade of a Parliament when so much money, from out of so little, is spent without a single word of explanation? On page 55 of the Current and Capital Estimates for the year 1966 - Subhead 21 - Independence - the legend states: "To provide for the Independence Celebrations." And this Government has the impudence to come before this House and ask for an additional sum of \$850,000 and just say: "Voted provision proved inadequate".

How can we, in all conscience, be said to be exercising any control over the expenditure in this country when \$1,600,000 is spent and not a single word of explanation is given? I received a serious shock today. It will be contrary to my most deeply held convictions for me to say that I believe in parliamentary democracy but it will be equally true to say that, in spite of many reasons to do the opposite, I came here to try to contribute to the establishment of some sort of democratic and parliamentary Government.

There are very many good and weighty reasons why I ought not to have come here, but I came out of some sense of duty and out of some immodest belief that I may be able to contribute, sensibly, to a growing dialogue between the Government and the Opposition. To ask for \$1,600,000 without a

single word of explanation is to be discourteous not only to the Opposition but it is to be insulting to the very Members opposite, who are here - as Gilbert said - only to vote for their salaries. Is this the real purpose of a Parliament? If the two-party system is going to lead to this perversity of a Parliament, then it ought to be abolished.

This vote will not be the end of the matter. As everyone knows, most of the chauffeurs have not been paid. The waiters have not been paid. If you hold a dance, or even if you run a fair - the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Finance (Mr. Too-Chung) knows about this - bills come in several months after. What about a big affair like the Independence Celebrations? Is the Government going to say that this is all it is going to ask for? Surely, the Government cannot say this. It will come for more. There are many matters on which I have to take serious consideration because I did not come here to be told that \$2 million is to be spent and not a word of explanation is given. I would not lend my presence to such a farce, and this is farcical.

I will tell you the total of the Budget in one moment. As I said, if you spend \$10, I would think it is well spent; I would not argue on it. In the Budget Debate, I would hardly argue, unless on a matter of principle, on an amount under \$10,000, but surely, one must argue on an amount of \$2 million. I insist that some accounting must be given. How is this money to be accounted for? I would think that an auditor would find this

[MR. LUCK]
 thing scandalous. How could you say that the appropriation under this item was overspent? I really want to know how this vote was checked. Who controls it? Did they have items and allocation of funds? Such was the confusion during the Independence Celebrations that one may assume that the members of the Government did none of these things, but by now they must have had their bills. People have been paid. They must know how this money was spent.

In Peking, if used well - as all money is there well used - this amount of \$850,000 would have been able to build five large factories. Having got \$750,000, this Government now comes for \$850,000 and we are not told a single word, not even to the nearest \$10,000. Did the State Ball cost \$100,000? How do we check up on this money? Are we not, as Members of this Assembly, to know about these matters? We ought to know because, by knowing, we would have a means of controlling, and I want to believe - and I say it with the utmost gravity - that the reasons why a very full and ample statement --

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Speaker: This sitting is suspended for half an hour.

Suspended accordingly at 4 p.m.

4.36 p.m.

On resumption --

Mr. Luck: At the suspension I was saying that the failure of

the Government to give any details of this vast expenditure, might give one the impression, not only that there were many irregularities in connection with the expenditure, but that these irregularities were condoned and connived at. [Mr. deGroot: "Cite a case."] I am called upon to cite a case. The hon. Member who asked me to cite a case knows that furniture, cutlery, beds, and other things were supplied to dozens of individuals. He also knows that none of these items have been returned from whence they came. Are the taxpayers of this country to be saddled with the cost of providing beds, linen, Dunlopillo mattresses, and so on? My understanding in this matter is that 4 sheets were supplied for each bed. I know of a case where three beds were supplied and that would mean 12 sheets were supplied. None of these have been returned.

As a Member of this House, I call urgently on the Government either to supply details of this expenditure, or what is even better, to order a public inquiry into this matter and the expenditure of funds on the Independence Celebrations. What happened to that \$1,600,000 staggers the imagination.

4.40 p.m.

The Prime Minister: The hon. Member really does not understand the procedure. Now the sum of \$1.6 million does appear here. There was a senior civil servant who was the accounting officer. The accounts will have to be submitted, which in turn will have to be audited, the report on

which will be available to the Public Accounts Committee for examination. If my hon. and learned Friend had even a passing association with Government or any big organisation, he would not at the moment expect detailed accounts.

Let us also note immediately that a substantial amount, which I cannot at the moment point out, was capital expenditure. For instance, money has been spent on floodlights, landscaping of the the National Park, the preparation of the Open Air Theatre where we had one of the most splendid artistic performances ever seen in the Caribbean. Of course, the professional boycotters did not see it. Then there is a stand erected at the Merriman Promenade. All of that is capital. There is another stand at the National Park which can accommodate about 2,000 persons or more.

In this sum of \$1.6 million one finds an appreciable expenditure on capital goods as distinct from mere services. One has also to face the fact that Guyana had no hotel accommodation sufficient to meet the needs of the guests and visitors who came to this country. Naturally, housing in these circumstances is more expensive than merely housing the people in hotel rooms. It may be true that the domesticated Member of the Opposition has discovered some racket about sheets and beds. I am not that domesticated; such matters are looked after either by the female member of my family, or by my staff. [Laughter]. I have no female member of my family at the moment so it will be a matter for my

staff. I suppose that my hon. and learned Friend has not yet acquired a staff to deal with such matters.

Let us be frank. There has been a certain amount of irregularities. Certainly the public servants responsible are seeking to minimise the number of irregularities, if they exist. Let us also ask ourselves: Can the disappearance of a few sheets account for this expenditure? Certainly not. This expenditure was on much more important and substantial items. It included the passages that we paid for some of the invitees, which again is according to tradition. My hon. and learned Friend has not yet attended any independence celebrations. It is to be hoped that when next this Government receives an invitation that it will be generous enough to send him, so that he can get some experience. Therefore he would not understand the expenditure incurred in paying the passages of invitees. [Mr. Luck: "You were invited to Goa"']] I was never invited to Goa. My passage was paid, and so I do not think there is any need for us to make a big debate about this matter. The time for the debate is when the audited accounts are before us.

I must, of course, extend my deepest sympathy to the hon. Mr. Ram Karran whose enforced absence, as a result of illness, caused him not to recognise that during this year the audited accounts had been brought up to date for the first time since 1957. [Interruption.] As I was saying, this expenditure can be discussed when the details are available.

[THE PRIME MINISTER]

I will now ask my hon. and learned Friend to await the proper opportunity to discuss the matter. Naturally his new-found solicitude for public economy can be further expressed by his reporting the irregularities of which he is aware to the proper authorities, and help us to ferret out those rascals who might have attempted to rob the public treasury.

Mr. Luck: Do I understand the hon. Prime Minister to be saying that the linens, cutlery, furniture, beds, mattresses, and so on which were supplied to certain people are to be returned? Has it been decided that, since the people concerned are very friendly with the Government, they may keep the articles? Is the hon. Prime Minister saying that those people who retain these articles are doing so fraudulently? Is it true that he has told the people to keep the articles?

Mr. Hubbard: The Prime Minister has very ably demonstrated the reasonableness of the request of the Opposition. The Prime Minister has listed a number of items about which the Government has certain knowledge and which constitute a substantial portion of the expenditure on Independence. He has mentioned stands, floodlights, and he has even informed us that the money we voted for the landscaping of the Queen Elizabeth Park in honour of the visit of the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty was, apparently, insufficient and therefore they had to stick their hands into the independence funds in order to fix up what had been started for Her Majesty.

It seems as though a considerable amount of work has been done unknown to the members of the Opposition, if we may, on this occasion, take the Prime Minister at his word. It is dangerous to do so. Let us say we will take him at his word. There is a precise amount of information available to the Government, and there must be some nominal or nearly right cost that can be attached to these big items.

4.50 p.m.

We are not making an unreasonable request when we ask for something more than a legend to the effect that the voted provision was inadequate, as the voted provision was less than what is now asked for as a Supplementary. We are not being unreasonable to say, "Let us know something about it".

The Prime Minister has told us that it is not unreasonable. He has enumerated a number of items on which he knows money has been spent, but he does not bother with such expensive things as linen and cutlery that we buy for him. When we ask for such information it is clear that Government has the information and if the Government does not want to give the information but holds it back, then we must assume that many of the rumours we heard around that time have some basis in truth.

We have heard all sorts of rumours and we would like to have some clarification. We would like to know about it. We hope that on this occasion the Minister responsible is going to

stammer and stutter, get red and get white again.

Mr. Wilson: I heard the Prime Minister favouring us with some details and making references to matters of capital expenditure, which have made it necessary to seek this amount, but I noticed that all the things he mentioned are allocated in Georgetown. I wonder why the Prime Minister is suggesting that Georgetown is Guyana. I wonder whether he would favour us with information about capital expenditure in the rural areas, in order to show that he does not regard Georgetown as the whole of Guyana, as a large number of people are inclined to do.

My second observation is that the allocation that is being sought has put me more or less in an ironical position. As a Member of this Parliament I am responsible not only to those people who voted for my party but for all the people in Guyana. When I say "all", I mean "all". My position is not like that of the Prime Minister. When he says "all" one has to look underneath to see what he means by "all".

I would like to inform the Prime Minister that a large number of his supporters are indignant at the fact that the Independence Celebrations did not seem to be for the Guyanese who remained in this country and bore the brunt of the day. **[The Prime Minister: "Your terrorism."]** That was not the only struggle for Independence. That is what you created, violence and terrorism. That is how you gained Independence. You began to squat and you began to sabotage and loot.

I would like to tell the Prime Minister that his supporters are annoyed and indignant at the way in which Guyanese were kept out from the Independence Celebrations. The Celebrations seemed to be intended only for expatriates; visitors and strangers.

Another matter that is causing great dissatisfaction is the question of overtime pay. Some people, particularly in the Transport and Harbours Department, were told that if they worked on certain days, Independence Day and another day, they would receive an extra day's pay. They worked on those days and only received a half day's pay for overtime. I would like the Minister of Communications to look into this matter.

On the question of passages, the Prime Minister said that the Government had to pay the passages of those who were invited for Independence Celebrations. I would like him to know that when I attended the Independence Celebrations of Malawi my passage was not paid. I would like to bring this matter to his attention, because I have been waiting a long time to have it settled. The officers at the Ministry of Finance deducted overweight charges in connection with my journey. The trouble is that they are being spiteful. They say that I was not entitled to overweight.

I totally disagree with this expenditure because what sort of Independence do we have? Guyana is just an American colony. For that reason I vote against this expenditure.

The Prime Minister: This country is eminently a democracy, and the hon. Member is entitled to cast his meagre vote against the Schedule.

I shall undertake to look into this question of the overweight charges which the ex-Minister had to pay when he went to Malawi. I would say here that my Government ought not to emulate its predecessor which made me pay overweight charges when I went to the Independence Conference. I am ashamed of my Government. If it is shown that the ex-Minister's complaint is based on fact I shall have to remedy it and give him the necessary relief which he needs so much.

Now, with respect to the question as to whether the Independence Celebrations were for the people or not, this is something which ought not to be discussed by the hon. Member because he and his party refused invitations to all but two events, and at one of the events which they attended they were the mascots of Independence.

It does not lie in the mouth of the hon. Member to criticise who was invited and who was not invited. The members of his party were not interested. Having attended other Independence Celebrations I am convinced that there was the utmost participation. Let me concede that there were difficulties with the invitations, for which we apologise. I have seen, at other Independence Celebrations, equal difficulties. Government delegates usually do not have the difficulties. We are human

unlike our predecessors and I admit mistakes have been made.

If I may attempt to lecture: the most sensible contribution made by the hon. Member was with respect to the location of capital goods which form part of the expenses. The floodlights are movable and can be moved to any part of the country. The proposal has been made that some of the capital goods can be taken to other parts of the country, for example, to Berbice.

5 p. m.

Further, he ought to have known, were it not for his self-imposed blindness, that all the local authorities who were prepared to take part in the Independence Celebrations - and that was the overwhelming number including Sheet Anchor and Cumberland - were given grants out of this amount for the Celebrations. There was no attempt to restrict the Celebrations to Georgetown, but Georgetown still is the capital of Guyana, until we will have decided to change the capital of Guyana, and naturally, in the capital one must find the biggest Celebrations.

I repeat that the accounts will be available. the accounts will be audited, and any information which the Opposition can give, less personal than overweight, to assist the offices in tracing down any frauds or attempted frauds, will be most welcome.

Mr. Ram Karran: I persist in this question of the proposed debate in the Public Accounts Committee. I do not want to prolong this business at all

because I appreciate the need to save time. I am not going to bother about sheets, knives and the amount that is owed to Fogarty's. The taxpayers will have to pay Fogarty's for sharpened table knives returned after Independence.

A Motion was tabled in this House which limits the period during which anything can be done with respect to ministerial allowances, etc. It must be ten months since that Motion was tabled by me and I see nothing in the Order Papers to indicate that it was brought before the House. It is one thing to spend money but it is another thing to have these accounts made up. The hon. Prime Minister gave us the assurance that an opportunity would be given to the House to debate these ministerial allowances, and up to now - I have been through all the Order Papers - nothing has been done about it.

Friends and party supporters have drawn very heavily from the taxpayers of this country under the guise of Independence Celebrations, and I ask the hon. Prime Minister to let the Public Accounts Committee debate this matter at a very early date.

MINISTRY OF WORKS AND HYDRAULICS

Sea and River Defences

While I am on my feet, I should like to say something on Item 3 - Sea and River Defences. The note states: "Voted provision inadequate owing to unforeseen emergency repairs to be done on sea and river defences." I need not repeat that it is only

three months since the Estimates were prepared. The sum of \$1,400,000 is now required for Sea and River Defences, owing to unforeseen emergency repairs to be done on sea and river defences. Will the Minister say where these repairs will be done? Are they to be done because of obstruction to traffic on the East Coast, particularly during the peak period, or does the emergency exist in his imagination, somewhere along the upper reaches of the Demerara River?

I have heard of no emergency, but I have seen tons and tons of earth being thrown there at periods when it can have absolutely no effect. In the very heavy rains, soft mud was thrown to fill up the trench, and heaven knows how much water is below there to further weaken the defences rather than strengthen them. I cannot understand how this Government finds money to throw down the drain. This Government's friends are wasting the taxpayers' money when jobs should be found for people. What is this?

There are people living on the East Coast where the sea defences are and nothing is done there. But if you look carefully, you will see that all the money that is spent on sea defences is spent in the vicinity of the sugar estates, on areas where Bookers own all the lands. I thought we had changed our name from British Guiana to Guyana; I did not know that we are still "Bookers" Guyana. Will the Minister kindly tell us where is this emergency?

Mr. Correia: Unfortunately, the hon. Member was away for most of the year and he is not aware of the breaches on the East Coast and on the Buxton foreshore. If he would take a walk along the coast he would see that earth work is being carried out to strengthen the defences throughout the coast, commencing from Kitty right on to Clonbrook. I am afraid that if the hon. Member does not take walks on the coast he would not see what is happening with the sea defences. The entire sea defences from Georgetown were in a serious condition. There were breaches all over the place and if burnt earth was not thrown quickly, we would have been swimming now instead of talking.

Mr. Hubbard: Now that the hon. Minister of Communications (Mr. Correia) has stammered out his misinformation, can we hear from the hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics (Mr. Kasim)?

Mr. Kasim: I am glad that the ex-Minister who sat in his chair most of the time, during the regime of the last Government, is fully aware of the difficulties and problems with which we are faced with our sea defences. This might be politics, but the hon. Member must realise that the sea defence is the bulwark of our economy in this country. Fortunately, I pay for my own sea defences in the Pomeroun and I am not a burden to the taxpayers of this country.

The hon. Member mentioned that we are throwing earth by the sea defences at Subryanville. I am sure that, with his experience, he would have seen that water was

seeping through beneath the sea wall, and we had to reinforce that area as the erosion was all over the coast. We are not spending money because we want to waste it, we want to spend wisely the money obtained from the poor taxpayers of this country.

5.10 p.m.

Mr. Hubbard: The hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics is annoyed because we have asked him to tell us why he selected for emergency repairs those areas which are known to provide big expatriate — [Interruption.]

Mr. Kasim: Before the hon. Member got up I was speaking. I was not given an opportunity to make an explanation. It seems that he likes to talk but does not like to listen. He got up and I sat down. They are saying that we are protecting the sugar belt but this is not so. Is Buxton a sugar belt? I have seen Reports where the Officers of the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics made repeated requests to the past Government and those requests were thrown on deaf ears. Nobody paid attention to the sea defences and today this Government has a millstone around its neck in trying to protect all those rivers and sea defences in the country which were neglected in the past. As a matter of fact, even Government buildings were neglected. We had to renovate them and then they say that we are wasting the taxpayers' money. There is erosion taking place on the West Coast of Essequibo and Corentyne and on the Berbice River. I am surprised to hear Members say that we are only protecting the sugar belt.

Mr. Ram Karran: If erosion has been going on on the West Coast, in Berbice, West Demerara, and on the East Coast, when did this erosion start? If the hon. Minister is saying that advice by technical officers had not been carried out by the past administration, where does the emergency come in? Sir, this hon. Member is going to be given the task of speaking twice as he was given during the term of office of the Chair of your illustrious predecessor, when he stumbled and stammered for one hour.

What I am charging is that the Government is deliberately trying to mislead this House. The hon. Minister of Finance - I am sorry that he is not in his seat - passed a Resolution about the release of the detainees, and then ran away. The Minister of Works and Hydraulics got \$2,400,000 for the maintenance of sea and river defences. Now, 4 months later he comes for \$1,400,000. That, in any language, is a lot of money. He told us that it was due to the emergency. He said that erosion is going on here, there and everywhere. Certainly, erosion has been going on in somebody's head.

Will the hon. Minister of Finance tell us on item 4, the last item on this page - I am sorry, sir. May I give way to my friend Mr. Harry Lall, he wants to speak.

Mr. Lall: May I ask if it is true that bulldozers have been hired from Bookers, and if the cost of hiring these bulldozers is \$50 per hour? It is an important question.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Luck: The hon Minister does not seem —

The Chairman: Move away from page 10.

Mr. Luck: Surely, we could have been given some idea of how this \$1,400,000 is to be spent. We could have been told that \$50,000 is to be spent "here", \$500,000 "there" and so on. We were told that this \$1,400,000 is to be spent on repairs. How could this be adequate information for the purposes of a debate? No wonder we waste a lot of time debating foolishness!

May I ask through you, sir, for an answer to my question. In the interest of the taxpayers of this country, I am asking if \$50 per hour has been paid by this Government for hiring a single bulldozer from Bookers?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

The Chairman: Page 11.

SUPREME COURT AND DEEDS REGISTRY

Mr. Correia: I beg to move the insertion of a new item which is set out on page 11: Supreme Court and Deeds Registry. I - Personal Emoluments, \$1.

Dr. Ramsahoye: I would be grateful to learn whether it is the intention of the Government to have the full complement of Judges appointed before this Court sits on the 4th of July, when it is rumoured it will be

[DR. RAMSAHOYE]

sitting. I should also like to learn whether any of these Judges have been appointed, and if so, who have been appointed? I would be grateful to learn as well, the situation of this new Court, that is to say, in which part of the city of Georgetown or elsewhere will this Court sit? These are very important matters which I think the public should be made aware of as early as possible.

As far as the staffing is concerned, provision has been made for an Assistant Registrar, a Clerk to the Chancellor, and a Registry officer, among other posts. Perhaps the hon. Attorney-General will tell us whether professional qualifications are required for any of these positions, and if so, whether professional allowances will be paid to persons who are professionally qualified? If not, I should like to know what principles were applied in providing the salary scale.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State (Mr. Ramphal): The hon. Member knows quite well, I think, that the answers to some of the questions he has asked ought not, properly, to come from the Government. The Chancellor has been engaged over the last few weeks in arranging the establishment of the Court of Appeal. He has been good enough to discuss with me, some of these arrangements, and I have every reason to believe that in the very near future an announcement will be forthcoming from the Chancellor's office, with regard to the date on which the Court will sit for the first time, and the place where it will sit.

5.20 p.m.

All Members of this House will share the feeling which, I think, my hon. and learned Friend expressed, that the Court of Appeal should begin its very important functions without delay, and I can assure him that on our side we shall do everything to promote that.

So far as the posts are concerned, I can say that professional qualifications will be required for each of the two senior posts, that of Assistant Registrar and Clerk to the Chancellor. The question of professional allowances does not therefore arise directly, since the posts are graded on the professional scales and will be remunerated accordingly. The post of Clerk to the Chancellor is a new post. I think it is right that I should take this opportunity of saying that the hope is that out of this post will develop a new institution not unlike the truly successful arrangement which is used in the U.S. Supreme Court where young men out of law schools identify themselves in their early years with the work of one of the superior Courts. It is an arrangement which the Chancellor has sought and in which I think there is much promise for development. The Clerk to the Chancellor will be able to assist the Chancellor and the Justices of Appeal in the many ways in which this type of assistance can be of great value to an appellate Court. It is a good arrangement; we shall have to see how it works, and I am sure that all hon. Members will wish the venture well and bless the new

Court of Appeal with a resolution of goodwill from this body as a whole.

Dr. Ransaboye: If we are to vote money for this Court, we must know these things. It may be that the Government is having difficulty in making appointments to the Court of Appeal. I understand from the Attorney-General's reply that nobody has been appointed for this Court. If people have been appointed other than the Chancellor, we should be told. If one appointment has been made, - and one has been made - I can understand the Attorney-General. There is no reason why this blanket of secrecy should be around the appointment of Justices of Appeal. We are entitled to know who the officers of this Court are. I cannot conceive of any reason why there should be this blanket of secrecy on any appointments to this Court.

I know that in this country men who are not qualified aspire to the highest posts in the State as a matter of accepted principle, and I have no doubt that this is the reason why independence came on the 26th May. This is the 24th June and the appointments to the Court of Appeal have not been fully made. It may be that a lot of jockeying is going on. I warn the hon. Prime Minister again that it is necessary for this Government to be strong to resist the encouragement of men who are not qualified for these posts and who assert themselves in the hope that they will aspire to the highest posts in the State when they are not qualified for them.

The people who will have to be baptised as Judges are not the people for this kind of work. Some of these cases may have to go to the Privy Council. From my experience in the Legal Department, there is difficulty for the Government to get qualified people. If an appointment has been made, then the Government should disclose it.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State: There is no blanket of secrecy over these appointments. The Constitution has entrusted this very important function to a Judicial Service Commission which exercises executive authority. When that body makes appointments and the necessary instruments have been promulgated, the proper notices will be issued in the Gazette.

Mr. Luck: Truly the answer by the hon. Attorney-General leaves much to be desired. Surely this House is the highest authority in the land. [Interruption.]

The Chairman rose —

Mr. Luck: I was saying that the Attorney-General's reply is far from satisfactory. Some people are trying to create the illusion that the appointment of Justices of Appeal are beyond the scrutiny of the common people or the representatives of the common people. We pass the laws on which the Courts have to adjudicate, and we can say that we wish to be told if Judges are appointed or when they are to be appointed. Somebody is boasting about laws being made by imperial command. The work of the Judges must be scrutinised here. It is

[MR. LUCK]

my fundamental view that we would be abdicating our functions if we became so credulous as to allow men of doubtful learning to fool us in this matter.

I want to believe that the qualifications for our highest Judicial Court should be a reputation for honesty, a reputation for wisdom, and some knowledge of the law. Advantage is being taken throughout the old colonial world by men who claim to be Masters and Doctors of Laws. We have numberless experts in the law and no observance of any law at all.

I have come from a country where there is no stealing because - I do not refer to places where conditions are such that people must commit crime - as soon as you commit a crime punishment follows very swiftly.

5.30 p.m.

While discussing this phenomenon with a gentleman I said to him, "Comrade, you do not know as much as I do". But, somehow or other, in that country the laws are obeyed. In this country, as I had to tell him, there are the best experts in the world, men who will address the Commonwealth lawyers, and at the same time we have absolutely no respect for nor observance of the law.

I want to make my contribution. I have the minimum qualifications and looking at the desert that is our judiciary I would hope that this Prime Minister for once would be serious and not indulge in a sense of fun

and arrange that men should be promoted, or elevated, when he himself has said that they are no good.

I say in this House that I would respect the Court of Appeal if there were honest men there who tried, whatever their limitations, to arrive at the truth. My own estimate of the legal profession is that it is even poorer in quality than here, and I speak as one who has been around. Without a doubt, the poverty there is greater than it is here.

The Government and those in authority ought not to limit their purview to the few individuals who may possess high academic qualifications and who gained their qualifications merely by shutting their minds to all literature and so on. I have no sense of inferiority as against someone with an LL.M. or a Ph.D. If they studied as my friend there did, like him, they would know more than I do, but my friend who keeps his mind to books only, he is not learned; he has book learning.

I want to make this point. We are going to make a great error if we limit our purview in appointments to these high offices to a few candidates. If the qualifications were made a little lower we would get a different, and I think a better, set of men. It is an intellectual desert over there because of the present system. I make no apologies for saying it.

Question:

That the Committee of Supply approve of the pro-

posals set out in Financial Paper No. 1 of 1966 - Schedule of Additional Provision on the Current and Capital Estimates for the period ending June, 1966, totalling \$2,471,928.

put, and agreed to.

Assembly resumed.

Mr. Correia: I beg to report that the Committee of Supply has considered Financial Paper No. 1 of 1966 and passed it with one Amendment. I now move that this Assembly doth agree with the Committee's Resolution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

EXTENSION OF PROCLAMATION OF EMERGENCY

"Whereas by proclamation No. 2 of 1965 made by the Governor of the former Colony of British Guiana and published in the Gazette on the 6th July, 1965, it is declared that a state of public emergency exists for the purposes of article 14 of the Constitution of the former Colony of British Guiana;

And whereas the former House of Assembly in pursuance of the provisions of sub-paragraph (c) of paragraph (3) of the said article by Resolution No. XLVII of the 1st April, 1966, resolved that the said Proclamation shall continue in force until the 15th July, 1966, unless sooner revoked;

And whereas section 5(3) of the Guyana Independence Order 1966 provides that if a proclamation of emergency is in force under article 14 of the Constitution of the former Colony of British Guiana immediately before the 26th May, 1966, by virtue of a resolution of the former House of Assembly, the proclamation shall, as from that date, have effect as if it had been made under article 16 of the Constitution of Guyana and as if its continuance in force to the date referred to in that resolution had been approved by a resolution of the National Assembly;

And whereas in pursuance of the Constitution of Guyana the said Proclamation will expire on the 15th July, 1966, unless the National Assembly sooner resolves that it shall continue in force for a further period, not exceeding six months, beginning on the date on which it would otherwise expire;

And whereas it is necessary in the public interest that the said Proclamation shall continue in force for a further period not exceeding six months, unless sooner revoked:

Be it, therefore, resolved that Proclamation No. 2 of 1965 made by the Governor of the former Colony of British Guiana and published in the Gazette on the 6th July, 1965, and having effect by virtue of section 5(3) of the Guyana Independence Order 1966 as if it were a Pro-

clamation declaring that a state of public emergency exists for the purposes of article 16 of the Constitution of Guyana, do continue in force until the expiration of the 31st December, 1966, unless sooner revoked." -
[The Prime Minister.]

The Prime Minister: Under paragraph (2) of Standing Order 23 I have received your consent to have this Motion standing in my name placed on the Order Paper and to proceed with the debate thereon.

On the last occasion when I moved before what was then the House of Assembly of the British Guiana Legislature that there should be an extension of the period of the Emergency, I said that Government was carefully considering and anxiously reviewing from time to time the security situation as a whole, with a view to assessing the position and coming to a decision as to when the Emergency should be lifted and/or when those who were in detention under the Emergency Order might be released.

I also intimated to the Legislature, at that time, that Government proposed to bring before this House a National Security Bill which would provide for certain measures directed to ensuring that explosives were safely kept and that there was no lawless use of firearms.

The proposed National Security Bill was intended to deal also with the question of, and make permissive provisions for, preventive detention. Of course, I

remarked then and I remark again that preventive detention is permissible under the new Constitution. I did say on the occasion, when I was moving the Motion for the extension, that the Government considered that the terms of the Emergency Order were so wide that they could have, in some cases, provided a temptation to some over-zealous peace officers, whose actions would be covered with a curtain of legality, for making otherwise illegal intrusions into the citizens' privacy and property.

5.40 p.m.

I said then that the Government was taking a very keen look at the Order, the Regulations and the situation. We have studied the situation with anxiety because, congenitally, we in the Government are not in favour, in principle, of the restrictions which an emergency means, but, as a Government, whose duty it is, in the final analysis, to protect [Mr. Ram Karran: "Terrorists."] - the life, limb, peace and order of the community, of the nation, we have to take such action, no matter how unsavoury it may be emotionally, as we may consider necessary in pursuance of our duty.

The National Security Bill would ordinarily have been before this House prior to the 15th July, on which date the emergency would have come to an end, unless earlier renewed by way of Resolution. I may note *en passant* that, under the new Constitution, the period of extension by Resolution can be six months instead of the previous three months. I said that the National Security Bill would have been before the

House, but apart from certain minutiae which had to be considered, and certain details which had to be settled, as Prime Minister, I was minded not to introduce that Bill in this House at this time, in the unavoidable absence of the Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan) and the leader of the other party which forms part of the Coalition Government for, in Guyana, the questions which were going to be dealt with in the National Security Bill were new, if not novel.

In my view, it is necessary that when such legislation comes to be debated in this House, the actual seating membership of the House should be as representative and politically authoritative as possible so that, in the tradition of democracy, it will be possible to have all points of view fully heard and all aspects of the subject fully debated. In the circumstances, therefore, it has been decided by the Government to postpone, not indefinitely but for some time, the bringing of that Bill for debate before this House.

One has got to be realistic, and I do not think that there are any who can be counted amongst the sane who would not agree that there ought to be certain provisions, similar to or identical with those existent under the Emergency Order, to take care of the situation so far as explosives are concerned - that explosives ought to be carefully controlled, that there should be provisions for their safe custody - [Mr. Ram Karran: "Where is Fairbairn?"] - and also that there should be a careful look at

the situation with respect to firearms, bearing in mind, at the same time, the reasonable complaints which are made, on occasions, about the havoc that animals are wreaking in some areas, in the absence of firearms.

We have considered all these things carefully and, in the circumstances, I have been deputed, nay mandated, by the Government to move this Motion which stands in my name. The Motion seeks, under the provisions of the Guyana Independence Order and the Guyana Independence Constitution, to extend the State of Emergency until the 31st December, 1966. But may I immediately state that the date 31st December, even though not representing the end of the six-month period from the 15th July, is, on the face of it, a date quite distant from today and the 15th July, and that date was selected *ex abundanti cautela*, out of abundant caution, so that one can be sure, the House can be sure, that there was enough time to get through all of the details with respect to the National Security Bill and also to ensure a fully representative Parliament for the debate of that Bill.

Though the emergency, in theory, will be continued to the 31st December or such earlier date on which it may be revoked if this Motion is passed, in point of fact, 41 Regulations made under the Emergency Order will be immediately revoked - [Mr. Luck: "Release the detainees."] - by decision of the Government, and by Thursday, 30th June, 1966, at midnight, the nine persons who are still detained at

[THE PRIME MINISTER]

Sibley Hall will be released.

[Mr. Luck: "Why not now?"]

5.50 p.m.

I should like to say that the decision has been arrived at by the Government, after a careful study and assessment of the security situation, and the primary purpose for which, in the meantime, there will subsist the Emergency Order will be to deal with explosives and firearms. In the circumstances, sir, I move the Motion standing in my name and commend it to my colleagues in this House.

Dr. Ramsahoye: I wish to say first that, on behalf of my colleagues on this side of the House, we welcome, although at this late hour, the release of the detainees. I understood the hon. Prime Minister to have said that the detainees will be released on or before the 30th day of June, 1966. I hope the detainees will not have to wait until the 30th day of June, 1966, but that they will be released as soon as the necessary arrangements can be made, and I do not conceive of such arrangements taking more than 24 or 40 hours.

But we are still going to be under a State of Emergency, even though 41 Regulations are to be revoked, and I must again express the disappointment of those of us on this side of the House who must again witness the passing of another Resolution to extend the State of Emergency to the 31st December, 1966. The arguments against the existence of a State of Emergency have been repeated in this House over and over again,

and it may not be necessary for this ground to be traversed in much detail. However, I think that the Government should recognise that the existence of a State of Emergency in this territory, whatever it is doing to fundamental human rights and freedom, also has its effect upon the national image and upon our economic and social development.

I have had occasion to observe over and over again - and I must repeat again - that people who normally invest money would take a thing of this nature into account in a very serious way, in determining whether they should put money in this country or not.

The State of Emergency existing in the country carries with it a snag, and a suggestion of instability. We on this side of the House reject this. The country is in a situation of ostensible peace. The Government is slow in recognising that in the conditions which at present exist, it is best for the entire State of Emergency to be removed. It is a matter of regret that members of the Government have taken a very long time to recognise this, but they have redeemed themselves substantially by agreeing, even at this late hour, to return the freedom to those men who have been ostracised from society, some of them since June 1964, under a British Order-in-Council which was put in the hands of the Government, providing powers which were used very resolutely to detain Members of the Assembly, and it was strongly resolved that the Members of the House of Assembly who were in detention were not to be replaced until very near election time.

The wounds of those days should be quickly healed and I think that this Government, having set itself to do so with respect to the detainees, ought to continue the process with respect to all other matters, and of course, with respect to the emergency itself.

One must remember that while public peace and security must be preserved, farmers are entitled to preserve their cattle, farmers are entitled to preserve their crops, and people are generally entitled to protect their property. In this country today, despite the conditions of ostensible peace, there are two or three areas which I know of, at the back of Victoria on the East Coast and certain parts of Mahaicony, where people cannot go to their farms, their cattle are being stolen, their coconuts are being picked, and they have no means of redress. They fear, of course, the police most of all. Many of the farmers who are in those far-flung areas had weapons. The existence of those weapons used to be a deterrent. Now that they are defenceless, people have been taking advantage of them, and it is, of course, absolutely necessary for the Government to take immediate steps to enable those farmers to have their firearms back, so that they may protect their cattle and their farms. We live in an agricultural community, and in these outlying areas where police activity cannot be considerable, our farmers should be placed in a position where they can help themselves.

6 p. m.

I have had occasion to say that the Police have a Force

which is being supplemented in strength today and they should endeavour to make sure that the preservation of the public peace becomes easier by applying the strength of their Force and by applying the intellect of the various officers who are stationed in the districts towards peace and security. The assumption of extraordinary powers is something which can only be justified under conditions of the gravest disturbance of peace and security. Such conditions do not exist in this territory. They have certainly not existed for a very long period and they have certainly not existed during the life of this Government. The time is ripe when action should be taken to ensure that there should be no more protests from this side of the House in connection with this matter.

I had thought myself that when the last Resolution was passed for the extension of the emergency that it would have been the last time that we on this side of the House would have been called upon to voice our protest. Now, despite the explanation of the hon. Prime Minister, the fact remains that we are passing another Resolution to carry the emergency to the end of the year. This is not satisfactory. It is not satisfactory not only from the point of view of those of us who are here, but from the point of view of the national economy. Conditions of peace and stability cannot be voiced merely in the Press and through the mouths of political leaders. Peace and stability depend upon certain objective conditions, and we cannot maintain that all is well in the country if we ourselves

[DR. RAMSAHOYE]

know that there is a national emergency. We should therefore endeavour to bring this State of Emergency to an end.

I do not object, and I do not think that anyone in his right senses would object to legislative measures which are being taken with respect to explosives and firearms but this Government must not attempt to introduce legislation in this country to make preventive detention a permanent institution. The United States has a constitution which would certainly not permit preventive detention in time of peace, and there is no need for Guyana to be burdened with an institution of this nature in time of peace. I hope that this Government will reconsider its position. Any law authorising preventive detention is law which will be on the Statute Book forever and it is going to institutionalise something that is not necessary.

One must remember that the coercive power of the State is not normally used to ostracise people from society without a confrontation by evidence given by witnesses in a court of law. The men who are detained without trial do not know what evidence there is against them; they are not permitted to challenge the credibility of any witness; they are not permitted to obtain proper representation, and when they are incarcerated, they do not know for how long they will be incarcerated.

Under this new Constitution a tribunal will sit to determine whether detention should be pro-

longed for more than three months but a man who is incarcerated at the moment is not in the same position. He will be denied confrontation, and he will be left in detention without knowing what the charges are against him. There is no substitute for the process whereby a man will be taken before the normal courts of law with whatever evidence there is against him and whereby he will be allowed to put up his defence and challenge the credibility of the witnesses and the evidence against him.

We have not had on any occasion any reason to be dissatisfied with the arrangements whereby, during the history of the administration of criminal law, men have been put before the criminal courts on charges and they have been allowed to cross-examine the persons who have given evidence against them. We should not lightly deny ourselves of this right. It is possible that the people who did the incarcerating, having never been incarcerated themselves, cannot really feel the shame of what detention really is. There are many persons on this side of the House who have experienced that shame. Others of us like myself do not have to experience it to be able to understand what it is like. I think that people all over the world have voiced, time and again, their dissatisfaction with this method of preserving the public peace.

The United Kingdom joined in making the statute which established the Council of Human Rights in Europe but to this day they have resolutely refused to recognise the Human Rights

Commission which was established to look into matters relating to the deprivation of human rights, and they have refused to recognise the tribunal even though they themselves approved it. As a result of that, preventive detention has gone on in Africa and in British Guiana. While this country was a colony, no one had the right to go to the Council of Europe to ask for redress. Today we are no longer a colony and we no longer adhere to that treaty, because Great Britain is no longer responsible for us and we are not part of Europe.

Today we have our own opportunity to abolish this institution, and I would sincerely wish that an effort be made to abolish it from our land. There has never been evidence and there will never be evidence forthcoming, if some people are determined not to bring alleged offenders before the ordinary courts of law. Some people prefer to detain persons without bringing them before the courts for trial. We are now in a vicious circle with the Police who are very quick to incarcerate a man without taking on the burden of making investigations into certain allegations, which will be thrown open if they have to face a tribunal and be cross-examined on the evidence adduced. That is the sort of tribunal we harbour by allowing this sort of thing to take place in this country.

6.10 p. m.

I agree fully with that. I have no quarrel to make in advance with the proposal by the Government to regulate the use of

explosives. I do, however, say in advance with respect to firearms that Government must take into account the needs of farmers, people who have had reason to feel that under this Government their interests are not being cared for, because it is well known that a substantial part of them voted for the People's Progressive Party and not for the parties which make up the Coalition Government.

The duty of the Government, therefore, becomes more onerous. The Government should put itself in a position where it could clear itself of charges that it is partisan when dealing with the interests of that community. The burden is twice heavy because of that fact, and the Government does not need to tell this side of the House otherwise. It need only reflect upon it to see the validity of that observation.

This marks another period in the history of this country. As I have said, it is a mixed feeling to welcome the release of the detainees but to have to face the continuance of the emergency for another period. It must be remembered that one cannot expect an uncomplaining submissiveness to the promulgation of the institutions which offend fundamental rights and freedoms.

Therefore, it is necessary for us to voice the protests of all those people in our society who will feel that under conditions in which communications are not disturbed, medical and food supplies are not interrupted, where the ordinary courts of the land are functioning, institutions, of the nature which the

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Government is about to create, are not necessary in our society.

It is to be hoped that the Government in the coming period, because it has the votes and can extend the emergency, will take some time - but time is passing and the national interests are not served by these measures - to reflect upon the situation which is now being generated by the continuance of an atmosphere of instability by this legislation.

If people are to be interested in development, they must feel that there is a broad concurrence among all the people. This will lay the foundation for the development of business, mining and agriculture and all the things which are associated with prosperity. If people are made to feel that there is concurrence of opinion they will become interested, but if they are made to feel that there are such divisive influences in the society, that it has become so unstable that it is necessary for a Government in office to live its life through an emergency, they are not likely to want to render any help. Certainly they will not want to put any funds from private sources into a country which is under a State of Emergency.

It is tragic that in present conditions we cannot see our way to function as we had functioned immediately before the troubles which led to the declaration of Emergency in 1964, for in those days we functioned according to the ordinary laws of the land. Nobody was incarcerated.

The hon. Prime Minister said that this is not the time to apportion blame, but we cannot explain present events without reminding ourselves of their development. I would wish the hon. Prime Minister to remember that there are many persons who made trouble in this country between 1962 and 1964 who are now ready to begin it again and yet no arm of the law is being extended to them.

Why then must the Government be developing institutions to inconvenience, ostracise and punish other people? Let there be equality. If one is not to endeavour to apportion blame at this period then, having regard to the ostensible reasons, give every man his freedom. Make sure that there is peace and stability. This is part of the duty of Government. Let no one deflect the Government from its course, but remember that there is not going to be peace and stability by using sledge hammers which violate the interests of innocent people, people whom the Government is in no position to change, people to whom the Government owes a duty which it does not fulfil.

Those people should be left severely alone to tackle their problems without any hindrance from a Government which is using legislation with which to deny fundamental rights.

We cannot but express dissatisfaction with the proposal to extend the emergency. We cannot but express dissatisfaction with the constitutional arrangements which are made to permit this detention, and we cannot but

reflect on the seriousness of the detention of a Member of this House who should be released at once, who should have been released this night to enable him to take part in this debate.

It is essential to the working of the democratic process that every Member of Parliament should be permitted to sit and to represent the people who have voted for him. It is as essential to the democratic process as newspapers are essential, as radio broadcasts are essential, as freedom of discussion about public affairs is essential.

I think that this Government has lost its opportunity to further this gesture when it refrained from ensuring that simultaneously with the announcement by the Prime Minister we saw Mr. Vernon Nunes coming into this House. However, be that as it may, I hope that this Government will ensure that our colleague will be able to come to the next meeting and that this Government will reconsider its position and use its numbers to ensure that the entire State of Emergency is put to an end.

In making its new legislation the Government should abolish all ideas about preventive detention and should make sure that in future no Member of this House should be detained on the basis of arbitrary detention to prevent him from fulfilling his parliamentary duties, which he owes to this Legislature. [Applause.]

5.20 p.m.

Mr. Luck: I have listened with consternation to the speech of the hon. Prime Minister. All

along I felt that the continuation of the emergency was a grave illegality, but when challenged by the hon. Prime Minister to raise this matter in a court of law, one link in that chain of proof was missing. Those who exercise constitutional power are expected to act in good faith, and this presumption that people who exercise constitutional power act in good faith is very difficult to disprove.

Any Government may, in its own judgment, proclaim an emergency and any Government may, under that emergency, detain persons. One ground for a successful appeal to the courts is that the good faith of the Secretary of State, or the person signing the Order, can be impugned. Tonight we hear that the Government, having assessed the security situation over several months, has come to the conclusion that it now warrants the dismantling of the emergency state, but the men detained will still be held in detention until Thursday. Is this not punishment for the detainees, punishment rather than justice? If the security situation today is such that one can predict that it would be all right to release the detainees by Thursday, I say that the security situation now is such that they should be released at once.

We on this side of the House will remember that whenever the hon. Prime Minister speaks on this matter - in very conciliatory tones - he says that these men will be detained not a day longer than is necessary. I think it is rather absurd for anyone to say that they will be

[MR. LUCK]

detained not later than Thursday. Why not now? How do you come to the conclusion from now that between now and Thursday these people will be detained? It is clear that these men are being held not for purposes of security. In his speech, the Prime Minister has stated, beyond all contradiction, that the purpose of this Motion, the maintenance of this emergency state, has absolutely nothing to do with security.

I made a careful note of the Prime Minister's speech and he said that this emergency is being sustained to enable the Government to introduce the National Security Bill. He gave two purposes. He said, "Look, we are going to retain this emergency not because of anything, but we have to have the power of preventive detention, and until we get such a power, we will continue the emergency". If this is not bad faith in the exercise of constitutional power, I do not know what else it represents.

In all the celebrated cases on the detention of people under the emergency laws, the Judges say that these Orders may not be challenged unless the Secretary of State acts in bad faith. If the Secretary of State gives a false reason, that is ground for impugning the Secretary of State's action. In the signing of the Detention Orders, the Governor has to say that, in the opinion of his Government, the freedom of these men represents a threat to security and a threat to law and order. But what do we see here today?

I would have thought that, except in the hearts of lawless men, one would be examining, every moment throughout the day, whether these men ought not to be released. I would not have expected that, having accepted that the men should be free, a person trained in the law, a Queen's Counsel at that, would come to this House and announce in a most patronising manner, "I will free the detainees between now and Thursday", and expect that, in making this announcement, the gentlemen on this side would consider such a position reasonable. It is no secret that the Prime Minister and I when young, were close collaborators, and I have always told my colleagues that he is a man not only of ability but of some reason.

Today I had some foreknowledge of this announcement and I was told that I, as well as all reasonable men, would be satisfied with the announcement. I concluded that the detainees were being released at once. I could never have imagined - and I would think this is entirely without precedent - a situation where men are detained under Emergency Orders and an announcement is made in Parliament that the situation is such that the men will be released within the next week. I think this is unparalleled. It shows a remorseless and callous nature. I make no apologies for saying this. How do you play with a man's liberty like this? What vainglory does this presuppose?

Only yesterday I was troubled. A friend of a friend's friend was in the Brickdam lock-up and I was asked to intervene in a matter.

I gave very sound legal advice and I told the friend^c to go there with \$10.

Mr. Speaker: This sitting is suspended until 8 p.m.

Suspended accordingly at
6.30 p.m.

8.10 p.m.

On resumption

Mr. Speaker: An agreement has been reached between the hon. Leader of Government Business and the hon. Leader of the Opposition that this sitting proceed until midnight.

Mr. Luck: At the suspension I was speaking on the value of freedom, and the lengths to which poor people go to set their friends and relatives free, even if it is only to be free for a day or a night. The ordinary people go to extreme lengths to free their families. I reiterate my shock and sorrow that the hon. Prime Minister, in relation to the nine persons who have been detained so long, is using the emergency as a punishment and not as a means whereby an emergency situation can be controlled. If a genuine emergency situation now exists, it would be impossible for the Prime Minister to predict with certainty that by Thursday he would be able to free these men. The only reasonable conclusion, the inevitable conclusion, is that there is no emergency and that these men ought to be set free at once. But the Prime Minister in his arrogance, in his contempt both for the Constitution and the civil liberties of the subject, is using these

sweeping powers as a means of punishing political opponents.

For the moment, leaving the nine detainees who are being unlawfully detained until not later than Thursday, we come now to the question of extending this emergency until the 31st of December, 1966. What are the reasons for this extension? As his reasons for wishing this emergency to be continued, the Prime Minister said that he proposed to introduce a National Security Bill which would: (1) control explosives, (2) control the use of firearms and (3) provide for preventive detention. He told this House that he would remove the emergency as soon as this law is passed. In all my life I have never heard such a reason advanced for the continuance of an emergency!

The Constitution of Guyana has many guarantees and all of these guarantees in relation to liberty, and so on, are set aside when an emergency is declared. The only human right that subsists in an emergency under our Constitution is the right to property. The Constitution provides, too, that the declaration of the emergency is in the discretion of the Government. This is right. But as I have said over and over again in this House, an objective emergency situation must exist. Not only has the U.F. declared for an end to this emergency, not only has the Trades Union Council called for an end to the emergency, but today the hon. Prime Minister advanced reasons which are not sound and legal for the continuance of the emergency.

Mr. Richmond: To a point of correction. The U.F. did not declare for the end of the emergency, but for the release of the detainees.

Mr. Luck: My friend has drawn a distinction without a difference.

Mr. Speaker: Did you hear what the hon. Member said?

Mr. Luck: Yes, sir. I said it is a distinction without a difference. So far as I am concerned, and I think that so far as all persons knowledgeable in this matter are concerned, it is clear that this Government intends to set aside these constitutional guarantees. The continuance of the emergency for reasons which do not justify a declaration of emergency, is a clear act of --

Mr. Speaker: You said that already this afternoon.

Mr. Luck: I go on now to the whole question of preventive detention. That is what we are really debating here tonight. The emergency is to continue until preventive detention is introduced, or a law providing for preventive detention. Who can look forward with equanimity to the day when a law justifying preventive detention is introduced? All Guyanese must look forward anxiously to the day when this Emergency Proclamation is removed. But we are now told that it will be removed only when a law providing for preventive detention has been passed by this Parliament. I have said over and over again in this House that in the difficult circumstances of Guyana, what we need is goodwill,

good faith, charity as defined by Saint Paul, not meaningless charity, but charity in its widest concept and toleration.

We, on this side of the House, will not be deterred from pursuing such a course as we believe to be right, in the interest of the people of this country, by preventive detention, by emergency rule, or by lawless terror. If I have fears, one of my fears has never been the fear of death. That has never been one of my fears. But as I stand here in this House, let me confess that I have a genuine fear that one day I may well discover that what we have been striving for so hard and so sincerely - those higher views of life - are impracticable in Guyana.

6 p.m.

That is my fear, because, were I to come to such a conclusion, it would mean that many of us have wasted our lives. What can a man believe when he sees that the fight for freedom has been misconceived by his own comrades? So far as I can judge from the facts at the present moment, several people have been fighting for the right to do the wrong things which were formerly done to them. They have been fighting for the right to do wrong things to others. It appears that I will now have to come to the conclusion that human nature is such that a man is capable of doing anything but what is right. I, honestly, pray that I will never have to come to the conclusion that human nature is such that oppression is the natural order of the day. I think that some people are striving to oppress rather than be oppressed.

Looking at this Government, I see only arrogance and the desire to oppress other people. In the circumstances of this country preventive detention is the aim of this Government. The members of my party have groped their way out of darkness to try to arrive at some dialogue with the Government. We grope our way, but what do we find? We find that the attitude of this Government is: I will keep you detained until you rot; after long protests, I will keep you there until Thursday, and then I will keep you detained until 'neverary' morning.

Sometimes I feel that I have misled myself by believing that an accommodation between the P.P.P. and the P.N.C. is possible. We may have to arrive at the view that no accommodation is possible. Let us say that we came to that view. The natural thing to do would be, first, reflecting on things gone by, not to have attended the Independence Celebrations. The hon. Mr. Bhagwan thought that would have meant psychological partition, whatever that means. In spite of every reasonable attempt by the Members on this side of the House to come to some compromise with the Government, if we conclude from every action of the Government that no agreement or sensible accommodation can be reached, then it would be our duty to announce this to our followers, to the country, and to the world at large.

I promise for myself, that I will announce my position as soon as I have come to that conclusion and what follows must follow. As a Guyanese - I will

be very frank in this matter because Guyana is my only home - such a declaration would be one of desperation. I have a deep sense of obligation to the people who have placed us here; I am sure that my colleagues also have that sense of obligation, and we should not mislead the people.

I warn the Government that the most reasonable man on this side of the House - we have many reasonable men on this side - must be examining very carefully whether whatever is to happen must happen, and whether every action of this Government is meant to subdue and to ignore the views of Members on this side of the House. If such action is continued by the Government, then the necessary action from this side will follow which will render nugatory any preventive detention. I hope that we on this side will continue to examine this matter very carefully and not rashly declare that Guyana itself and the whole state of things is nothing but a fraud.

Mr. Bhagwan: It is very interesting to hear from the lips of the hon. Prime Minister that 41 Regulations will be revoked and that 9 detainees will be released on the 30th June. I would have thought that the Prime Minister himself would have succeeded in grasping the great importance of this step which has been taken. I must say that it is definitely a step in the right direction, and none of us here can fail to give credit to the Government for behaving as it should and responding to a very long campaign of popular pressure demanding the release of people who have been wrongfully detained.

[MR. BHAGWAN]

It is one of the fundamental principles of government that the Government must keep its ears to the ground and listen to the views of the people expressed at various levels and in different forums, and to react speedily to popular demands and pressures. I remember that, just before Independence on May 26, there was a march organised by the P.P.P. which climaxed with the presentation of a petition to the Prime Minister signed by, I think, about 75,000 persons calling for the release of the detainees.

8.30 p.m.

There was an appeal in the Press by prominent citizens of our country fervently requesting that the detainees should be released. I saw a petition from the United Force making a similar demand on the Government. I had hoped that the Government would have considered it expedient, or politically wise, to release the detainees on or before May 26, so that on that memorable day some effort would have been made to create new conditions and to ease the tension which we all know exists.

Without indulging in recriminations, I would say that the Prime Minister and his Cabinet made a very serious blunder to have let slip by a very magnificent opportunity, whereby they could have created a much better atmosphere for the celebration of Independence. Now that the Government has decided a few weeks after Independence to release the detainees, we can see that the conditions that obtained at the time of Independence were

such as would have permitted the release of the detainees.

The fact that the detainees were not released before or on May 26 suggests that either the Government was guilty of political misjudgment or of treating a very fundamental issue with some amount of contempt and indifference.

I say these things not in any way to detract from the gesture that has just been made by the Prime Minister, but to point out that there are times when advice given by other sections and other groups of people in the community should be heeded and should be thought about seriously.

I am aware of the fact that one of the reasons why the detainees were not released before was due to the consideration of the question of political tactics of face-saving. This attitude of looking at fundamental issues from a very personal and narrow point of view can have very serious repercussions in our society.

Now that this significant decision has been taken and now that we are in a situation where the detention camp set up by the British Government will be empty and there will be no bones rotting there, at least, for some time to come, I think we should understand certain manoeuvres and factors that form the basis of this whole process of detention.

We are aware of the fact that the British Government had become very skilful in the use of the weapon of detention as a weapon in its political armoury for the

destruction or distortion of political movements. We cannot fail to remember that the British Government, through its local representatives and its official representatives, managed to utilise this weapon with some effectiveness, when in 1954/55 many of the leaders of the then Independence movement were detained.

The significance of that act of repression and suppression was that it paved the way for the first stage in the degeneration of the People's Progressive Party. It brought about a very vicious political combat between the present Prime Minister, Mr. Forbes Burnham, and the present Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Cheddi Jagan. That political struggle embroiling these two leaders of our country has had disastrous and tragic consequences for the people of our country. It is of no credit to these two gentlemen that that quarrel has existed beyond 15 years and, to some extent, still bedevils the political stability and political hopes of our people.

It is not without significance that 34 people were detained on June 13, 1964, on the authority of the British Government through Sir Richard Luyt, and that the majority of the people who were detained were members of the party then in power, the People's Progressive Party. It is more significant that the members of the People's Progressive Party who were detained were involved in a very serious inner party conflict.

Among those members of the People's Progressive Party who

were detained were some who were uncompromisingly against the manoeuvres and stratagems of the colonialists, who understood what they were about, who understood the tactics they were employing, and who resisted these tactics very strenuously.

It is not surprising that as a result of those detentions enormous and prodigious changes occurred in the political situation in Guyana. It is not surprising that the People's Progressive Party once more, as consistent with earlier developments in the 1950s, became transformed and certain vital changes took place.

The intention of the British may not have been directly to give aid and succour to the People's National Congress or to the United Force, but it was consistent with a systematic, calculated and very cogently thought out plot, going way back to the 1950s, to bring about the destruction of the People's Progressive Party.

The efforts of the British Government have taken very many forms. The constant changes that affected the People's Progressive Party passed it through stage after stage of degeneration, so that by the time we reached 1964 and these detentions took place, the People's Progressive Party had about entered into its final stage of degeneration.

Some of the acts, including the detentions, allowed certain forces to dominate the development of the People's Progressive Party and to take it on a course which has spelled its doom as a

[MR. BHAGWAN]

party along the lines it developed in the earlier period.

8.40 p.m.

Now it is no more than an opportunistic electoral machine. Now it is no more than a racist conglomeration. Now it is no more than a band of dogmatic and sectarian ideologists whose position in that sense is completely irrelevant.

The British Government has played upon the credulity of the leadership of the P.P.P. and allowed the leaders to make mistake after mistake. History will show that some people have been manoeuvred by the imperialists into making mistake after mistake. One review of the *Mirror* stated that the fault resides not in their stars but, in fact, in their capacity for political misjudgment and also in their ability to allow themselves to be taken for a ride by those who are supposed to be their enemies.

On the other hand, at the time of the detention, I remember clearly that the P.N.C. and the U.F. actually clapped their hands in full support of the act of detention which was directed against certain Guyanese. The circumstances, in those days, were such that if people were to be detained on any grounds whatsoever, then it would have meant that all would have been detained. It would have meant that partisans of the P.P.P., the P.N.C. and the U.F. would have been detained. But the fact that only a small number of the members of the P.N.C. were detained and no member of the U.F. was detained,

suggests, without the shadow of a doubt, that the detentions were discriminatory and were directed primarily against one political party in the country.

These two parties have been in close association with both American and British imperialists and have been in constant alliance with them towards the internal projection, in our country, of a policy that is very, very conservative, of a policy that smacks of colonial subservience to might and power. It is significant that, in his public statements and expressions, the Prime Minister has always been very, very silent on the question of the detainees, even when a few members of his party were detained in 1964. It is very significant that the leaders of the U.F. were most enthusiastic about the detention of their fellow Guyanese because those Guyanese happened to have different political views and attitudes. That notorious newspaper that calls itself the *Evening Post* used to carry a column revelling in the fact that the British Government saw fit to detain Guyanese.

Governments have changed since these people have been detained. The imperialists have succeeded in their working, at least in a short-term period. A new Government took control of governmental office and the Government continued these detentions. While we say a good deal to the Prime Minister now that he has announced his intention to release the nine detainees, this must not be forgotten and should always be treated in the context of an act that was continued in the tradition of British im-

perialist repression. This Government had the power to release these detainees since it assumed office in December 1964. However, it did nothing and history will have to state, categorically, that that was an act that did not suggest any sense of priority in terms of the problems of a country.

Only recently we have found that the U.F., which has taken a most peculiar position in politics, was calling for the release of the detainees. By that time, certain fears were being generated in the country. Members of the U.F. were themselves afraid of what was likely to happen. Some of them were afraid for their own skins; some of them saw the direction in which the wind was blowing; some of them realised that popular pressure was building up for relaxation and for easing of tensions, and they who, more than the P.N.C., when the first act took place, were strenuously, vigorously, desperately in favour of the British Government's decision, are now, hypocritically, as if to make political capital out of a situation, coming out like angels and saying, "Let us release the detainees and help create a state of stability".

It we are to be objective political analysts in this country we will realise that the United Force has been responsible, more than any other party within recent times, for the degeneration of the political situation in this country. The members of the U.F. have introduced an element of hysteria - the communist phobia. They are the people who have injected, very suddenly, more and more

tensions between the two political parties and now they attempt, hypocritically, to benefit from a certain trend over which they had no control and, in fact, which they did not encourage and promote.

The members of the U.F. have taken a most dishonest position politically. They who are in control of some Ministries in which vast sums of money are being wasted and in which there is no proper supervision and management, they who have been guilty of extravagance as much as anyone else, have suddenly been hinting that the only people who are responsible for extravagance and squandermania are the members of the P.N.C. Similarly, on the question of political repression and the building of political fears and tensions in the society, the members of the U.F., at this last moment, when they have seen the handwriting on the wall, have come out in order to appear before the public as if they, more than any one else, have been rooted on democratic tenets. [Mr. Luck: "You should be ashamed. You should fall down dead, truly."] [Laughter.]

Day by day, the machinations and hypocrisy of all three political parties are exposed. We should, therefore, sit down and think again because we have a situation where the leaders of all three political parties, having contributed, in various ways, to a most tragic situation in this country, are now taking up the position of being angels in every sense of the word.

8.50 p.m.

What is the situation now?
There is a Motion before this

[MR. BHAGWAN]

House for the extension of a State of Emergency. The Prime Minister comes before us and, as if he has done this country a great favour, as if he is guiltless, as if the question revolves completely around the nine detainees, introduces a Motion for the extension of a State of Emergency; that the Prime Minister should call for the extension of a State of Emergency is immediately an admission of failure on the part of his Government to create conditions which would allow for a peaceful transformation of the situation now.

The Prime Minister said that he needs a State of Emergency so that he can control explosives and firearms, and also because he is now in the process of preparing a National Security Bill which will give Government the powers to control explosives and firearms. Nobody can deny that in this situation such control is unnecessary. The Prime Minister has not been able now and at any previous time, to give clearly the reasons which would justify the extension of a State of Emergency. He has made many speeches on the emergency and he has not yet been able to say that the conditions in this country specifically warrant the extension of the State of Emergency. The fact that he has to bring a National Security Bill before this House does not justify the continuance of a State of Emergency.

There has been in this country a trend towards peace, a trend which the Prime Minister constantly emphasises. He is dealing with a problem that is both racial and cultural, and the

mere fact that it cannot be solved by the use of force will suggest that other courses will have to be taken by the Government if we are to arrive at the stage about which we are all speaking. In these circumstances, the State of Emergency is merely a political safety valve. The State of Emergency is nothing but power politically manoeuvred. The State of Emergency is merely a psychological lever that accentuates the position of power, always allowing at any moment, the use of extraordinary powers which are at the command of the Government. The revocation of so many Regulations does not mean that these Regulations cannot, at any time in the future, be reimposed.

I do not know what fears are circulating at the back of the Prime Minister's mind. I do not think that he, himself, believes that there are practical conditions which warrant the existence of a State of Emergency. I believe that he has confidence in the security forces operating under the existing laws, and that the existing laws, except for the question of firearms and explosives, would allow for the prevention of any acts that some people may be thinking about at this stage. The state of Emergency in the circumstances, can only be interpreted as a sword of Damocles hanging over the heads of Guyanese.

There are many steps which the Prime Minister can take that will avoid and preclude the use of these measures of force. I am very certain that the people in this country would be willing to give practical assistance to any

Government that is prepared to demonstrate that it will bring the people together.

The National Security Bill which is to be brought before this House is going to be used, as the Prime Minister said, for the control of firearms and explosives, and for preventive detention. Knowing what happens in underdeveloped countries, knowing the problems of these emergent states, knowing that crises are things which we must accept in principle, in certain circumstances preventive detention can be justified. What I should like to hear from the Prime Minister is a fair and comprehensive justification for the need for a National Security Bill which aims at preventive detention.

In this country, what we have is a problem of Indians and Africans not living together as Guyanese. There is the problem of conflict between the Prime Minister and Dr. Jagan. There is the conflict between the P.P.P. and the P.N.C. There are all kinds of manoeuvres in which one is attempting to destroy the other. I wonder if the Prime Minister is suggesting to us that these conflicts at so many levels can only be solved by the passage of a Bill for preventive detention! I should like to know from the Prime Minister if he thinks that moving from one stage of power to another, that is, from a State of Emergency to preventive detention will, in any way, create the conditions for the reunification of the people in the country.

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Bhagvan: I do not wish to take up much time. Just two

minutes more and I shall conclude my speech. I will suggest that the restrictions which are still being imposed upon those who have recently been released - and I hope that no restrictions will be placed on those who are to be released - would be removed immediately.

9 p.m.

I do not think that the retention of these detainees is consistent with what has been said by the Prime Minister. I feel that the security forces, operating under the laws which exist, can take care of any trouble which may arise in the community. I advocate that we get down seriously to the task of assessing priorities. The priority in this country at the moment is to find some method of getting all of the people to work together.

What is very vital is that this Government, if it wants to prevent any further clashes or conflicts, must arrange for its Ministers to go among the people. The Ministers must go from district to district to find out what the rice farmers think, and go all over the country in an endeavour to solve the problems facing the people. If this is done, then there would be no need for attacks and counter-attacks, and things will work to the benefit of the people and the Members of this House.

Mr. Hubbard: Every time I enter this Chamber I hope to find some evidence that the Government is moving in the direction of wisdom. I do this even against my better judgment; I keep

[MR. HUBBARD]

hoping, and my hopes are always frustrated. This afternoon is no exception. I came here in a mood of tolerance, even though I knew that we were to be required, at short notice, to deal with a matter of grave importance without our Members who live far out in the country having an opportunity of being aware of the nature and gravity of the business we have to deal with today. I, nevertheless, tolerant and hopeful, thought I would find some evidence of wisdom on the part of the Government. I have found no evidence of wisdom. I have found what has been apparent all along, a great emphasis upon formality, and a great desire to create an appearance designed to deceive the imagination.

We are discussing a Motion for the extension of the State of Emergency which has been in force in its present form since the South African, Governor Luyt, sent some of my colleagues to detention as a Queen's birthday gift to the people in this country in 1964. From then onwards there has been a great amount of interference in our constitutional system.

This afternoon the hon. Dr. Ramsahoye asked a very serious question when we were discussing the Financial Papers. He asked a question concerning justice. He wanted to find out what was happening regarding the provision of staff for the High Court. Up jumped the glib hon. Attorney-General, and he talked about constitutional impropriety. It

would be a constitutional impropriety for this House to discuss a matter like that, but it is not a matter of constitutional impropriety to ask us to provide the money for the staff!

But this same Attorney-General did not notice the constitutional impropriety which had allowed a police officer to sign an order to incarcerate my colleague the hon. Mr. Wilson when he did not have the power to do so, because the order which was used to incarcerate Mr. Wilson for eight days was an order to empower the police to hold a person while carrying out investigations. The police were not carrying out any investigations when they held Mr. Wilson. They held him because they thought that, with him out of the gaol, the preparations for receiving Her Gracious Majesty in our country might have been spoiled.

This returned exile is concerned about constitutional propriety in a matter in which this House has a right and a deep interest. It is of the gravest concern to all the people in this land when he talks about constitutional propriety, but he did not know anything about constitutional propriety when it came to the incarceration of a Member of this House unlawfully on the basis of an order signed by a police officer!

We come to this House and time and again we are asked to agree to the expenditure of money,

and when we seek reasonable information it is denied us. Some Ministers do not know what to tell us. The Prime Minister usually gives us some lie; he guesses now and then, like the time when he said that the members of the coastguard were taking training in the bush on the first night we discussed the Estimates. We hear words about democracy, but when we come to the facts we find there is no such thing. This afternoon the hon. Prime Minister was talking about democracy, but our democratic rights to know about the things we are asked to judge were not met and we were not given the information we required. No society can exist on the basis of institutions which are purely formal.

9.10 p.m.

That, I submit, is the great evil, the great sickness, that pervades our body politic at the present time. We are like Alice in Wonderland. Nothing is what it appears to be. I am sentenced for the life of this House to see in front of me the picture of the Prime Minister, which was presented to this country as a gift to the people by a firm which began its early life in this country as a licensed pirate of the Crown, as slave-owners, and I am condemned to sit and look at the picture which reminds me of early piracy for the balance of whatever little time I have until the Prime Minister decides to put me in detention.

No society can be better than its institutions, and just as our

Parliament has been made a mockery through the cavalier way in which the Government has treated the Members of Parliament, in the same way that this empty chair of a front bench member of the Opposition has been looking at the opposite side for more than a year - I believe that it is a year today or will be a year in a couple of days - so there is an emptiness in the institutions that we have.

When, therefore, the Government comes to this House and confesses that it cannot administer the affairs of this country unless it is given powers which are not normal to the kind of society which it says it emulates - I remember the hon. Member, Mr. Budhoo, told us something about following the pattern of the Westminster model - when your Parliament is an empty institution, then it follows that the Government cannot possibly govern the country without some extra institutions which it does not have to operate at the democratic level.

When there is a request for an extension of the Emergency, there is another confession that the Government has failed. When the Government tells us that it intends to set up ordinary law which will give it powers that it now has in a State of Emergency, it is doing no more than confessing that it cannot see the possibility ever of governing this country in the traditions and according to the practices of democratic government.

[MR. HUBBARD]

We heard much about this Constitution before we had the privilege of seeing it and, as I said, we hear much about law and constitutional propriety and justice. The Attorney-General and Minister of State was telling us this afternoon in effect that the Courts and Judges are all sacrosanct, that we must not have anything to say about them, but under the law which the Government proposes to enact, it will be provided that a person detained under the law must appear before a tribunal within a specified time.

Mr. Speaker: Which law?

Mr. Hubbard: The Preventive Detention law.

Mr. Speaker: You are anticipating it.

Mr. Hubbard: But the Constitution provides certain —

Mr. Speaker: Are you allowed to discuss it before it comes before the House?

Mr. Hubbard: The hon. Prime Minister referred to it as one of the substantive —

Mr. Speaker: I am asking whether you can discuss any part of it before it is tabled in this House?

Mr. Hubbard: I am merely following the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker: I rule that you must not make reference to it.

Mr. Hubbard: I bow to your ruling. I cannot speak about the preventive detention law which the Prime Minister brought before this House, but I can speak on some other matter which is relative to our political situation at the present time.

Mr. Speaker: Speak on the Motion before the House.

Mr. Hubbard: The Government has been ruling by Emergency and along with detaining persons who are all of one political persuasion, namely, the People's Progressive Party, — nobody else has been detained since the Government let out members of the P.N.C. at Christmas, 1964, — the Government has been conducting a campaign against the persons who support the People's Progressive Party.

The latest instance of this took place just a couple of weeks ago at Beterverwagting where some people who had been refugees from the village had set up their market. They thought it was safe for them to be there. They were driven out because they refused to go back to the market and to pay rates and taxes. I do not know whether the hon. Minister of Local Government knows anything at all about the matter. Perhaps like his colleague, the new Member, he does not see what is going on. He just gets a vision in his mind and puts that out.

What the hon. Members are governing are not inanimate masses of sculpture. What they

are governing are human beings. I think that part of the trouble of the Government may well be that some of its leading members, unlike some hon. Members who have spoken before, put all the blame on the Prime Minister. The Prime Minister can persuade his colleagues, but if he is a jailer, so is every other member of his party. I am of the view that the Prime Minister is principally responsible, but so are his colleagues, all of them.

The trouble is, I think, that a number of leading personalities in this Government are not aware of how human beings respond in certain circumstances. We know that in matters of security the Government is guided by reports submitted by an expatriate officer, who I believe had considerable experience in an unfortunate country called Malaya. These persons receive their training in a manner that makes them forget what human responses are. They know that if one takes a dog and wants to train it in a certain way, one can keep hitting it over the nose and it will behave as desired if one hits it a sufficient number of times.

9.20 p.m.

Human beings do not behave in that way. Terror will produce submission up to a point, but terror can never educe co-operation from anyone. Terror may produce submission in some, but it is a destroyer of initiative.

At this moment in our history we need positive rule, positive

responses and the whole-hearted co-operation of all the people. I am not one of those visionaries who believe that there can ever be a society or a situation in which everyone agrees with everything that is done. That I am right is evident from the fact that the hon. Member Mr. Bhagwan is able to get a few persons to co-operate with him. We should establish a wide consensus over the majority of the population, and with that wide consensus we can take fruitful, positive action and go forward. This is not the time when we must have action which perpetuates division.

It may be that division is essential to keep certain people in office and to keep others out of office. If the maintenance in office of a particular group is the essence and purpose of the Government, then we have not got anything positive. What we have got is something negative and something that is completely sterile. We have seen that the operations of the Government's policies, based on objectives which are obscured, have led to the impoverishment of a large section of our population. You cannot elicit co-operation from people whose property has been destroyed, whose hope for the future has been destroyed and who see no escape from an economic trap.

The Government would be well-advised to forget about the emergency. The hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye spoke wise words this afternoon when he said that a

[MR. HUBBARD]

special institution like the emergency lends itself to abuse. Just about a fortnight ago - yesterday was a fortnight - we saw where the hon. Member Mr. Wilson and some of his colleagues were arrested by the police, taken to the police station, kept there for several hours and told to return in a fortnight's time to find out whether the Police had been able to discover a law under which they could be charged. [Mr. Lall: "Cowboy law."] I think it was D.M. Pritt, the eminent British lawyer, who first brought the phrase "cowboy justice" to this country. That is the level to which our institutions have degenerated at this time. I make bold to suggest that our degenerated institutions are part of the golden handshake which the Crown has left us with.

Another aspect of this measure which disturbs me is the manner in which it is linked with reports from certain social quarters that pressure for the continuation of a State of Emergency has been brought to bear on this Government by the Ambassador to the United States because it would be a suitable background for the visit which is soon to be made to the U.S.A. by the Prime Minister. Now that gentleman recently risked his diplomatic career by going to the U.S. Congress and recommending our Prime Minister as a suitable person for the U.S. Government to support. This is an indication of the influence which the U.S. Government exercises and I shall

be most unhappy to feel that, having got rid of one set of rascals, we are to be subjected to another set of rascals. These are foreign influences.

The United States of America is governed - a large section of it anyway - according to principles which can do us no good. Even now, in the southern state of Mississippi, human beings like ourselves, who have the misfortune of being pigmented in a way that some do not like, are being brutally treated. This has been going on for more than a century, since the abolition of slavery, and it is painful to me to feel that that kind of barbarian is to be the counsellor to this Government. If that is the kind of counsellor that this Government has, then it is perfectly understandable why this Government can see no way ahead for governing this country except under a State of Emergency. Those people themselves, although their institutions do not provide for it, live under a State of Emergency.

9.30 p.m.

I have had the privilege - it is a privilege - of having driven in a train through the Southern States of the United States of America, and I have seen that - believe it or not - on a platform no bigger than one section of this table there was a division: on one side was marked "White" and on the other side was marked "Coloured". Absolute lunacy! In a few places they have progressed. People like Dr. Richmond can go to school. People like Mr.

Cheeks can go and eat in a certain place where they serve things like old ladies' butter-milk. In another two centuries they might reach a level of civilisation. But, as I said, if these people are to be our mentors, then there is nothing to be surprised at when it is proposed that we should permanently live under a State of Emergency, or when it is proposed that a special law that gives extra power should become normal to the country. Finally, I should like to mention --

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Mr. Speaker: How many more minutes do you require?

Mr. Hubbard: Perhaps two minutes. I shall just wind up.

Mr. Speaker: Proceed.

Mr. Hubbard: I am grateful. I should say that the wise do not add insult to injury, and I should like to suggest to the Government that its progress towards national reintegration, its progress towards acceptance by the population as a whole, would be made easier if it would soft-pedal on its pronouncements about democracy and fairplay, while it is unable to restrain the vandalism that keeps producers from reaping their produce. Do not be hypocrites and people will respect all of you.

Mr. Lall: It is really a blessing in disguise to hear from the lips of the hon. Prime Minister that the unfortunate children whose fathers have been locked up for years and months will once

more have the guiding care of their beloved fathers. Those aggrieved wives will have the opportunity of having the caressing care, and feeling the caressing arms of their husbands. It is unfortunate to learn that the situation warrants the release of the detainees on the 30th June, but it does not warrant the release of the detainees tomorrow. What is the motive behind all of this? Is it to show that you have power?

There were many great kings who had power and they had the makers of laws on their side, but they all diminished. The hypocrisy that they practised has been washed away just as the sea washes the sand away. There is a proverb: "The evil that men do lives after them".

I shall advise this Government or any of its law-making agencies to do whatever they are doing without favour, fear or partiality. Do not discriminate against human beings, for one day the same treatment shall be meted out to you. That is why I should like the Government to advise my dear friend, the Prime Minister to give the wives their husbands, to give the children their fathers, to give the mothers their sons tomorrow, instead of the 30th June. Let justice not only be done but let it appear to be done.

We must at all times remember that no repressive measure can suppress the conscience of an individual for it is said that

[MR. LALL]

prison doors cannot suppress the conscience of the nation. Therefore, I should like to advise the Government that whenever it is going to do something, whenever it is going to apply a measure, it must first try to find out whether it is right or wrong.

9.40 p.m.

I spoke to the hon. Prime Minister the other day when I went with my union's delegation to meet him. I appealed to him to release the detainees. A few days after I was very happy to learn that he had released three detainees. But what happened after that? He released them, but he restricted them to the area in which they are living. How must these people gain a livelihood? Is this justice? [Interruption.] Unfortunately, the hon. Deputy Speaker cannot remain in his seat and hear what I have to say. I am asking the Government not to restrict the detainees who have been released to any particular area or to the areas in which they live. They must be given freedom to go where they want.

I was once detained and charged for telling the people: "We shall pass through this world but once, and anything we can do to save humanity from exploitation and poverty let us do it now, for we shall not pass this way again". I was charged with sedition for uttering these words, and the case was dismissed in the Magistrate's Court. Fortunately or

unfortunately, I was ordered to be tried in the Supreme Court. Truth and justice triumphed and I was released by the learned Judge. No doubt I will be charged again.

I am saying that these repressive measures and these injustices do not always bear fruit and they boomerang. That is why at all times we must do everything that is right. I always take the opportunity to advise my colleagues that we must always try to do the right thing in this honourable Parliament, and we must do something tangible for the people of Guyana. I have heard the hon. Prime Minister making reference to legislation for a preventive detention Act. That is not necessary in a democratic country. As long as you govern the country in keeping with the tenets of democracy, you can rest assured that the people will adhere to and abide by the principles of democracy. But if you want to administer cowboy justice in the country, then, of course, you will meet with retaliation.

We saw what happened in Guyana, and we read in the Press about what is happening in the African countries. We can follow the example of the United Kingdom where democracy is being practised by the Parliament. That is what we need in this country. We must not plant fear in the minds of the people by introducing a preventive detention Bill. I can remember a Minister telling me: "Harry boy, I am afraid that

within the next few days myself and another Minister will be in the detention camp." I will not call the names of those Ministers. [Hon. Members (Government): "Call their names."] If a Minister is afraid of detention, then what next? Let me warn all of you over there that once you are puppets, you have to remain as puppets otherwise you will be placed in detention. You will always have to be like the submissive little boy, or you will be sent to the detention camp. The members of the P.N.C. call it the "inglorious pen".

Arguments may be adduced in this House that India has a preventive detention Act, but India is the only country that has that Act today. Maybe they cannot govern the people because it is a country with 350 million people starving, and they believe that they can rule these people only by this preventive detention Act.

9.50 p.m.

There is a population here of a little over half a million people and the great giant the Prime Minister, who is called by the false name of "the Kabaka", cannot rule half a million people without a preventive detention Act. What a shame and disgrace! I do not want to be in a country and in a Parliament that is going to pass a Bill like that. It would be an indignity to occupy a seat in this House and to have a Bill like that passed in this Parliament.

We want measures that can benefit the ordinary people; we

want measures to give employment to the unemployed; we want laws to give security to the working-class people of Guyana; we want laws that will provide social insurance for the working-class people; we want laws to give family allowances to the working class. We do not want a preventive detention Act.

No tyrannical laws can suppress the militancy of the working-class people of Guyana. Maybe it is the intention of the Government to bring legislation to scare the working-class people of this country so that they cannot ask for progressive measures. Today what do we find in Guyana? The Government realises that there are some weak-kneed leaders, especially in the trade union field. It knows that the introduction of this type of legislation will drive such leaders into their shells.

Workers are sacked every day and trade union leaders are apologising for the Government. Why? Because the Emergency Order is still in force. The leaders think that if they are militant they will be sent to the inglorious pen at Sibley Hall. I have been there and I can return there tomorrow as long as I am sent there for speaking the truth, but I warn the Government: the leaders are not leading the people now; the people are leading the leaders. The people are beginning to see that the leaders are becoming backward and the people must now push them.

[MR. LALL]

Sooner or later the working-class people are going to find out their weak-kneed leaders and are going to push them one by one. The Government will then be confronted with a working-class rebellion. That is why I advise the Government to make laws that will help the working-class man. It is inconceivable that a Guyanese cannot spend more than two weeks in Trinidad without being deported, yet we are receiving West Indians with open arms. Before deporting them we say, "Go to the interior", then they return to Georgetown one by one.

Do hon. Members know what happened at the waterfront the other day? The workers there were being underpaid for unloading a ship, but the West Indians said "Two of us can unload it." I said, "Put your hand there, and you will see what will happen". This Government is enacting laws to protect the capitalist class by every means. I warn the Government that the vanguard of people will be marching. Be on the lookout! Prepare yourselves, or you will be swallowed by them.

Once again I advise this Government to withdraw, without delay, the Emergency Order and let us go ahead to build a democratic country in which we all can live and work in peace and happiness.

*Sitting suspended at 10 p.m.
10.17 p.m.*

On resumption

Mr. Wilson: I think it will be generally agreed, even by the

most fanatical supporter of the Government, that this Motion brought here today, by the Prime Minister, seeking to extend the emergency to 31st December, 1966, is doing a great disservice to the newly independent Guyana. Of course, the Members on the Government Benches are impervious to the emotion of shame and are able to disguise the torture, I should say, which is passing through their minds because of this disgraceful act of extending the emergency when conditions do not warrant it, when there is peace, harmony and stability, and when we are seeking to have the nation and the people united under the slogan: "One people, one nation, one destiny." Isn't the Government doing a great disservice to this country?

I should have a feeling of happiness for the sake of the nine persons who are to be released. We must sympathise with them, put ourselves in their places and feel a sense of happiness because they will soon get the opportunity - we hope - of being reunited with their families and of getting the necessary medical attention. The health of these detainees has deteriorated during the period of detention. I do not know whether a special drug was put into their meals. The hon. Member Mr. Nunes is very ill in hospital. Anything can happen at any time. Anyway, we are happy that he will be able to see an independent doctor and perhaps have his health restored.

We are unhappy over the delay in releasing the detainees. As

the hon. Member Mr. Lall said, why not release them today or tomorrow? How graceful it would have been if, simultaneously with the announcement, the detainees were released! But, of course, you do not expect better from people with colonial mentalities. There is a *penchant* for a bombastic show of power. "I can release you now, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, or next Thursday. It lies within my power to say when." This is the mentality of colonialists. The delay in releasing the detainees illustrates the state of mind of the members of the Government.

There must be great doubt, in our minds, because of this delay. Now what are the reasons for the doubt?

10.25 p.m.

It is a patent fact that the Prime Minister is highly "ambiguous." The word ambiguous means that when something is said it could have a double meaning and both could be correct. For instance, the detainees could be released or they could not be released. Mr. Burnham has said it. Was it not the same person who said some time ago, "The Constitution shall be removed over my dead body"? Did he allow his body to die or did he run like a scared rabbit? He hid himself safely away from the hands that would have brought death to his body. Was it not the Prime Minister who said that he would not be seen under the same roof with a certain Governor? But he was seen under the same roof with

this Governor! Was it not he who said, "Let us call in arms"? He told the people that all arms should be turned in, and after the arms were turned in, arms were found in his possession. Arms were found at Elizabeth Guest House under his control, and at Mahai-cony, in the possession of someone who was working under his orders.

First, we must look and see if there is not some trick under the surface of the ambiguous Mr. Burnham. Was it not the same person who, a week or so ago, said in the Caribbean, in Barbados I think, "The emergency will be lifted in July"? That is next month. Now, when this emergency should have been allowed to die a natural death on the 15th of July, the Prime Minister is seeking to have it extended to the 31st of December. How contradictory!

Was it not the Prime Minister who said that everything was going to be done to rehabilitate the displaced persons, while at the same time everything was being done to cause confusion among them, to oppress them by spiteful acts? How are we to know that during this period, from now until Thursday, agents connected with the Government are not going to perform certain acts which will be used as reasons for not releasing the detainees and, as a matter of fact, for putting some more people in detention? When someone wanted to slaughter several people at Wismar, he got his agents to murder two old people at Buxtom.

[MR. WILSON]

A representative of the United Force rose on a point of correction to say that the United Force did not say that it wanted the emergency to be lifted, but that the detainees should be released. Members of the United Force would like the detainees to be released because they want to save their own skins. They know that recently certain people have been saying, "When we are done with one set we are going to turn to another set", and the supporters of the United Force are in fear. The supporters of the P.N.C. have always been greedy for blood. By trying to bring an end to this question of detention, members of the United Force are thinking of saving their own skins, it is a matter of self-interest to them.

Let us look again at this question and see if there is any reason for doubt. On two previous occasions when the emergency was to be extended, one of the reasons was that the situation did not warrant it, and the other was that an attempt was made on Polo's life. On another occasion, Akbar Alli was murdered, therefore the emergency had to be extended. This time the emergency must be extended because the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the United Force are not in the country. How naive! The first time, the situation did not warrant it! The second time, an attempt had been made on Polo's life! The third time, Akbar Alli was murdered! Now, it seems that the Leader of the Oppo-

sition is going to be annoyed if he comes back and finds that the emergency has been lifted! [Mr. Jordan: "You are past salvation."] But a Government that has come into power by fraud, by force, by subversion, and by violence, cannot act otherwise.

This Government is afraid of what may happen to it. It is seeing through its own eyes what it did when it was in the Opposition. It used force, fraud, violence and subversion. It used C.I.A. intrigue and money.

10.35 p.m.

While we are glad to hear that the detainees are going to be released, we are sorry to find that the history of the pages of this new Independence Constitution will be blotted by this act of keeping the emergency in this country. There is no good reason for continuing the emergency. I do not know whether the members of the Government will be amenable to a few positive suggestions. Now that they have done so much harm, would they consider it reasonable to offer compensation to the detainees for having detained them from their jobs and their wives for years? Will they pay compensation to wives who have been deprived of their husbands, and to children who have been deprived of their parents? Would they consider giving compensation to the farmers who have been deprived of guns and ammunition and have lost their crops? That would help to ease the trouble in the minds of these people.

On the other hand,^o would the Government consider giving compensation for the loss of health which some detainees have suffered? Practically every detainee has suffered so far as health is concerned. Every detainee has been suffering from either his eyes, stomach, liver, kidney, or heart. The hon. Mr. Nunes' feet were swollen because his kidneys are bad. What about compensation for the deterioration of one's health? I feel that these things should be taken into consideration by the Government.

After we have spoken, I think that the Government will see the wisdom in not pressing for the retention of the emergency. The members of this Government must do things in keeping with the status of an independent country and not as colonialists.

Dr. Ramjohn: We on this side of the House are indeed grateful that the Government has finally yielded to pressure from the Opposition together with public opinion, and has decided to release the detainees. I suspect that there is also another reason which was never mentioned by the Prime Minister, and that is the deep-seated disagreement among the coalition parties of the Government on this issue.

We have spent many bitter hours protesting against the wrongful detention of our colleagues. We, therefore, rejoice, but as previous hon. Members have said, I regret that the Cabinet, having taken a decision to re-

lease these men, will not be doing so until some time during next week. I do not see the reason for this. It seems rather strange to me that when the Government wanted to detain these people it did so very hurriedly and very efficiently. I recall that one Member of this House was actually arrested in his underclothes, and before he fully realised what was happening he was in the detention camp. I can see no reason why, after this decision has been made, these men should still be kept in detention.

All of the men who have been kept behind barbed wire were living under rigid conditions for many months - over a year in some cases - and the hon. Prime Minister did not think it fit to give a reason why they should continue in detention until next week. I suspect that there is a reason, but I feel that the hon. Prime Minister should think of the feelings of the men who are imprisoned and, at least, mention his reason for prolonging the detention. Perhaps he has left the reason until he is summing-up. I hope he will give us a good reason.

Although we rejoice to hear that the men will be released, I did not hear the hon. Prime Minister say that the particular sections dealing with preventive detention are being revoked. What is to prevent the Government, having released these men on Thursday, from locking them up again on Friday or a month after-

[DR. RAMJOHN]

wards? Nothing. Therefore the Emergency Regulations are to continue in force for another six months and the repression will continue. The Government is merely releasing these men as a result of public opinion and pressure from the Opposition.

I also suspect that the hon. Prime Minister has been somewhat dishonest in giving his reasons for the continuation of the emergency. It is an open secret that there is grave disagreement among the members of the Coalition Government. I refer now to the United Force's Charter, and I should like to read a section from it which was reprinted in its official organ *The Sun*. It states:

"We believe that the rights of the People are:

- (1) Full education for citizenship and leisure.
- (2) Participation in Government by the exercise of the franchise at definite periods.
- (3) Participation according to their talents in the productive effort of the community, and a fair share of the fruits of such effort.

10.45 p.m.

- (4) Freedom under law of association for political, economic, religious, Trade Union and other

purposes, and freedom of expression in speech and writing.

- (5) Freedom from arbitrary arrest and imprisonment, and from inhuman police and penal procedure.
- (6) Trial by an impartial and independent judicature."

This is the Charter of the United Force and yet members of that party will sit on that side of the House and vote for the continuation of the emergency and for the provisions of arbitrary arrest and imprisonment. This matter goes very deep, we cannot treat it as lightly as Members on the Government Benches would like to have us do. Depriving an individual of his liberty is a very important matter and even the smallest erosion must be protested vigorously at the outset or the time will come when we will not be able to protest at all.

I submit that the members of the United Force are being gagged from expressing their true opinions on this question and I challenge the Government to allow a free vote. I should like to quote from the official organ of the United Force, one of the coalition parties forming the Government. It is a letter published in *The Sun* of April 23, 1966, on page four. I quote:

"The Editor,
The Sun.
Sir,

"It was with some disappointment that I noticed

that there had^e apparently been no comment from a United Force Representative when the motion to extend the Emergency was debated in the House. While it is true that our Ministers are in the straight-jacket (sic) of Cabinet responsibility, there seems to have been no good reason why our back-benchers could not have spoken up to put the matter in proper perspective. Unhappily Government statements on the matter have been little more than emotional irrelevancies.

"The State of Emergency and the use made of it are things apart. To be ready for trouble is one thing, to use the apparatus of readiness as a substitute for adequate police work and to by-pass the courts is another. The State of Emergency was declared in the face of wide-spread civil disorder, and its maintenance at this time might be justified if there were reasonable grounds for supposing that this might recur in the immediate future. The reports coming from the Tri-Continental Conspiracy recently held in Cuba and attended by the Leader of the Opposition might indeed convince a prudent government to hold itself in readiness. It might be held to justify maintaining the Emergency until the Guyana Defence Force was at its assigned strength and presumably able to deal with

any extensive disorder that might arise.

"Unhappily, this has not been one of the several lines taken by the Minister of Home Affairs. Emergency is regarded not as a means of preparedness but as a tool for detention. The Minister of Home Affairs on the occasion of the extension before last explained that the detentions had to continue since those inside had the techniques and those outside the plans. How many years will it be before the techniques are forgotten and the plans mislaid? For some, it has not been supposed to have happened in two years. Will it be in twenty? In forty?

"The murder of Ackbar Alli was for the Minister proof of the need for the detention to continue. His argument was a bit obscure. Obviously the detentions had not saved Alli, and one could only wonder if the Minister was condemning himself for having released him.

"It has been said that our courts now work so bad that these extra-judicial techniques are essential. It is quite true that our judicial system has fallen into disrepute. Since we were concerned about this, our Party proposed to Mr. Anthony Greenwood that the ICJ investigate not only the red herring of imbalance, but

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the substantive problem, the breakdown of the administration of justice; the activities of the police, of juries, lawyers, magistrates, judges and all others concerned. Our proposal did not find favour with our colleagues.

"It is now proposed to end the State of Emergency, a temporary restriction of our rights, and install in its place a preventive detention law, a permanent violation of habeas corpus. The argument is that there is present need. But this proposal is no temporary expedient; it is to place in pawn the very future of our country. Let there be no mistake about it. In the small emergent country preventive detention has been the consistent first step to one-man rule, and to jails bulging with detainees. We cannot assume that ours will be the exception.

"On entering the Coalition we pledged to our members that we would never compromise the basic principles of the United Force. The right of habeas corpus is part of our credo. We must not break faith. We must see to it that the twenty-sixth of May marks the birth of a new freedom, and not the death of liberty. I urge that we of the United Force unitedly oppose the

introduction of any preventive detention bill."

I quoted this in its entirety from the official organ of the United Force, *The Sun*. It is written by the hon. Member, Dr. J.K.M. Richmond. I regret that Members on the opposite side are not to be allowed to voice their opinions on this subject.

Irrespective of the opinion of the hon. Member, Guyana is to continue under a State of Emergency for another six months. The Prime Minister is reported to have said that it will end next month, but so often in our experience we have found that one thing is said and another is done. We have no means of knowing whether it will end or whether it will continue to some indefinite time, but we must reflect on the grave harm that is being done to our country.

10.55 p.m.

The Development Programme has been put forward by the Government. It has been heavily criticised, but if the Government wishes to make it a reality, surely, it cannot do so by putting fears in the minds of a large section of the community.

Only a few days ago I have been most unfortunate in having to attend to a very small child, nine months old, from one of the squatting areas on the East Coast. The child was unrecognisable as a human being; his skin was peeling, his feet were swollen, he

had looseness of the bowels and I could not possibly see what could be done to save the child. When I asked the mother what she was feeding the child, she replied, "Doctor, I am giving him one spoonful of Lactogen, one spoonful of sugar, one cup of water". This is roughly one-tenth of the diet which the child should get. The child died within twelve hours. I have seen many such cases.

Many people are unemployed and under-employed. I know of one man who is earning 50 cents per day on the sugar estates. Some people are victimised, some are brutally treated in the hospitals, and some are denied assistance by the Government. One wonders what the Government is up to. It is one thing to detain grown men behind barbed wire, it is another thing - and I do hope I am mistaken - to have a deliberate policy which can bring about the death of such children.

The Government asks for co-operation and unity. How can it expect to get co-operation and unity when it discriminates against, drives fears into and coerces a large section of the community? One of the methods of doing these things is by promulgating the emergency. The Prime Minister has mentioned the matter of arms. On several occasions we have referred, in this House, to the plight of farmers - their livestock being destroyed by tigers, their crops being destroyed by cattle - and, on those occasions, our words fell on deaf ears. The Prime

Minister has mentioned something about this, even though he has not said what will be done to remedy the situation. Is the Prime Minister going to set up a committee to decide who shall have guns and who shall not have guns? Are these guns in good condition? Will the Government pay compensation if the guns are not in good condition?

I have said, on a previous occasion - and I am more convinced of it now - that the greatest dishonesty with regard to the emergency measure is this: The emergency is necessary not because you are a threat to security, not because the Government fears rebellion - this can be handled by the police and the Army - but because the economic policy of the Coalition Government is a policy which is detrimental to a large majority of people in this country, and if the people are to speak with a free voice, if they are to put aside all prejudices, if they are to examine the economies of our country in the cold light of reason, then they will see that the Government's policy is ruinous to the nation. A perpetual State of Emergency is absolutely essential so that the Government can ram its policy and its unpalatable measures down the throats of the members of the public.

I have said it before, and I say it now, that this is the real reason why this emergency is being extended and I strongly urge the Members on the other side to think over carefully what

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they are doing. A measure of power does not mean much today. History has a way of ferreting out the heroes and the scoundrels. I have no doubt that, in the end, justice will triumph.

Dr. Richmond: I had no intention of addressing the House on this matter. However, since the hon. Member Dr. Ramjohn has done me the honour of quoting a letter written by me, I should like to make a brief comment. In that letter I proposed, through my party, that certain action should be taken. I do not propose to take credit for what the Government is now doing but it appears to be identical to what was proposed by me. The hon. Member obviously approves of it, so I can see no reason why he objects to what Government now proposes.

My proposal was simply this: first, that the detainees be released. As the Prime Minister has said, they are now to be released. Secondly, I said that any prudent Government should remain in a state of readiness if it has any reason to believe that there might be disturbances. I pointed out, following the statement of the Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan) after his visit to Cuba to attend that infamous conference, that any prudent Government should be in readiness. This prudent Government has decided to stay in readiness. Why should the hon. Member object? Lastly, I urged that preventive detention should not be introduced. Let me remind the hon.

Member that there is, at this time, no Motion in connection with preventive detention before this House.

Mr. Linde: We on this side of the House are very happy to hear the Prime Minister's announcement that the detainees will be released. We have been campaigning, for a long time, for the release of the detainees and an end to the emergency. We hope that, through this act, there might be the opportunity of enabling the Members of this House to participate more fully in matters that come before this House. I should like to call on the Prime Minister to put meaning to the promise he made to release a prominent Member of this House immediately.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps you might add your contribution by suggesting that the Government does this. I should like to quote from *The Parliamentarian*, Journal of the Parliaments of the Commonwealth. This appears on page 128, under the heading "The Impartiality of the Speaker":

"... he may be called upon to make a decision which either hurts or benefits an individual or a group. Such a decision must be known to the whole country to be made judicially."

11.05 p.m.

Sir, in your capacity as Speaker, I should like to ask you to suggest to the Government that this particular individual should be

released. [Applause.] We will be looking forward tomorrow to his release.

Mr. Persaud: The Government must be congratulated for announcing at last that the detainees will be released. This will be a great relief, not only to those persons who were there for a very long period, but also to their relatives, wives and children. While I think the Government should be praised for making this decision, I want to say that the manner in which the detainees are being released should be condemned. It was said earlier by another speaker that people - particularly those who are in detention - were taken away in the early morning, under extreme circumstances, from their bedrooms and what not, and within hours they were at Sibley Hall. But I think it is a form of torture for a Government to announce that a person will be released and then that person has to wait several days before he is really released. I wish to suggest to the Government that consideration should be given to this question to have these people released before the date announced by the Prime Minister. This is not an unreasonable request, and it is not a case where it has to go back to the Cabinet. The decision has already been made to release the men. Why keep them until Thursday? [The Prime Minister: "To celebrate Wilson's sabbath."] While I thank the Government for the announcement to release the detainees, I also condemn the man-

ner in which they are to be released.

Guyana is a new nation. We have a number of problems and if we are to help to heal the wounds that have been inflicted some time ago, I think it is necessary for us to feel that Government is sincerely setting the lead for us to do this work. I want to believe that every Member of this House would like to see Guyana make progress, but I do not like the Government's system. For over a year the Opposition has been campaigning for the release of the detainees. There was a demonstration, with persons drawn from the length and breadth of this country, for the release of the detainees, and the Government, I assume, in response to these appeals and protests decided that it will give one and take one. That is to say, it will release the detainees and it will ask for the continuation of the State of Emergency. This is not the right attitude. This attitude is for school boys.

I have read in the newspapers and perhaps other Members have said this before, that the Prime Minister said that the State of Emergency will come to an end next month. It is very unfortunate that he has come to this House tonight to ask for the State of Emergency to continue until the end of the year, that is, the 31st December. It will mean that for the balance of this year there will be an atmosphere of fear. Government must not approach the problems of this country in a negative way. We

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need a positive move by the Government to curb these problems, and this can only be done if the Government will truly demonstrate its willingness to have progress in the country.

What is very disturbing, sir, is the fact that persons who committed offences, persons who were put on trial and were sentenced, were released to celebrate Independence, and persons against whom Government could not find evidence to prosecute, but who were detained under the State of Emergency, are now told that they are going to be released on the 30th of June. This is very unreasonable. It appears to me that those persons who commit offences will get a better deal with the Government, and those persons who are not supporters of the Government will be victimised. I spoke often of fears because there is justification for fears.

The Government has an important duty to all the people of this country. If it fails in discharging its duties in the best interest of the people, then Guyana will take a very long time to progress. I have often said that we have the potential to make this poor nation prosperous in a short time.

11.15 p.m.

It is a fact that a large number of people in this country, are in a state of doubt as to whether they should participate in the promotion of the economic

interests of this country. Many who would wish to invest their money, and many who would wish to work here in order to build up the economy of this country, are wondering whether it is worth-while. If they work or use their finances to help develop Guyana and after making their contribution they feel that they will be discriminated against, then it will be a waste of their time to do anything for the good of the country.

This gesture of releasing the detainees is good, and it will be a means of helping people to believe that the Government is seeing the light of day. The trouble in this House is that the Government takes more than a year before an hon. Member of the Opposition can get it do something. It took more than a year before the Government agreed to release the detainees. I wonder how long it will take the Government to make a decision to revoke once and for all the existing State of Emergency in this country. This State of Emergency must affect the economy of this country.

Mr. Speaker: That argument has been coming up again and again, and I am tired of hearing it.

Mr. Persaud: This matter has been before the House so often that one tends to feel that the arguments exist all the time. We are prepared to come here and do constructive work in order to help the nation, but we are faced with things that make us afraid

to do anything constructive for the country. When a man feels that his liberty will be restricted and his freedom tampered with; when he feels that there is freedom for some people and no freedom for others, you cannot expect him to co-operate. Therefore those of us who are Members of this Assembly will have to express our views so that the Government will be able to appreciate and understand our feelings in this matter.

If the hon. Prime Minister had said that he would bring the State of Emergency to an end, and he would release the boys by midnight that would have ended the debate. In view of the fact that we have not heard much from the Government Benches, we have to talk in the hope of convincing hon. Members on the other side of the House that what we are saying is right. That is the reason why we have to say things over and over again.

I understand that the question of firearms was raised in this House. It is unfair for the Government to continue to keep under its control the firearms that were purchased by people with their hard-earned money.

Mr. Speaker: The question of firearms is an old argument. Do you have anything new to offer? I do not want a repetition of speeches.

Mr. Persaud: My point is that the guns should be returned to the people immediately. The Government has made a decision to release the detainees and another

decision to extend the State of Emergency. I am asking the hon. Prime Minister in his reply to tell us clearly whether the Government has any intention of returning the guns to the people. If the Government does not intend to return the guns, then what compensation does it propose to give the people for their guns? I wonder whether anybody is taking care of those guns.

Another question I would like to ask is this: Why did the Government release a few detainees some time ago and then restrict them to certain areas of the country? For instance, Ramlall has been restricted to the Corentyne area. Mootoo, the trade unionist in the G.A.W.U., has been restricted to Leonora. Since the Government has taken a decision to release the remaining detainees, then it ought to make a statement with respect to the partial freedom of the detainees. We do not want partial freedom for these people; we want full freedom. We were told that the detainees would be released, but we have not been told whether they will be restricted. Will the hon. Prime Minister tell us whether these men who have been detained will be deprived of their freedom after they have been released? That is the point. It is unfair to deprive the people who have been released of their freedom.

For instance, I live in Grove, but I spend most of my time in Georgetown. If I were detained and released and the Government confined me to Grove, then my freedom would be restricted and I

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would be unable to do anything to make a living. I would like the Government to tell us what is the position of the detainees who have been released? The Government can issue a statement tonight so as to give the detainees who have been released full freedom. The Government must also tell us whether it proposes to give the detainees who will be released on the 30th June, or earlier, their full freedom.

This question is a burning issue. I feel that the State of Emergency is one of the measures that is unfair, and it is interfering with the progress and full participation of the people in this country in certain things. We are now an independent country, and the people are supposed to be free. If we are free, then there should be full participation in things. But if we are not free, then there can never be full participation and co-operation.

With regard to the Independence Celebrations, only one section of the Guyanese population attended. [An hon. Member (Government): "That is not true."] During the Independence Celebrations we did not see any happiness in the faces of the majority of Guyanese.

11.25 p.m.

Some participated, others kept away because they felt they were restricted. Obviously the Government is the body that is guilty of restricting the liberty of the people of this country. I

sincerely hope in the interest of national unity, in the interest of Guyana as a whole, Government will reconsider this decision, discontinue the State of Emergency and release all the detainees before 30th June.

If the Government does this, it will be the first step towards a prosperous Guyana. Let me read from a paper in which the Prime Minister is appealing to the people. He says, "You have to work hard; you have to do more. We must try together to build the economy of this country".

Speaking as a member of the Opposition, I would wish to contribute to the building of the economy of this country. I would wish to encourage the supporters of this party to do likewise, but we can only do so if we feel satisfied in our minds that this Government is genuinely interested in the welfare of all people, and not in the welfare of one section alone.

It must be conceded that evils preceded the Independence Celebrations and even now that this country has become Independent we are left to wonder whether Government is really interested in all the people of Guyana. The manner of employing people, the unnecessary retention of a State of Emergency, these are the main factors that hinder progress in the land.

If Guyana is to make progress, if the Prime Minister's call for the building of the economy of this country is to become a re-

ality, then he himself will have to demonstrate to all people in this country that he is genuinely interested in all. The consensus in this country is that the Prime Minister speaks and, when he is finished speaking, there is nothing in his speech.

I hope that tonight there will be substance in his speech so that those of us who sit on this side of the House will feel that he is genuinely interested in progress. To such progress we would all like to make a contribution.

Mr. Ram Karran: Tonight reminds me of another historic evening when, under similar circumstances, we met in this House to debate a similar Motion. On that occasion, sir, your illustrious predecessor, now Lord Mayor, was extremely tolerant as you are tonight. He allowed every single member of the Opposition party on this side of the House, and every Government member to speak.

I have said before, how sorry I was for my hon. friend the Parliamentary Secretary. He had to pass through the torture of making two speeches in one evening. [*Interruptions.*] On the previous occasion, the Opposition successfully filibustered and prevented the passing of very important legislation for the carrying out of certain basic responsibilities for the distribution of foodstuff, medical supplies and other necessities. Nevertheless, we were able to manage our affairs.

The walls of this building have never reverberated to the word "freedom" as it is doing at this juncture of our history. We notice that the walls of this Chamber are graced with the portrait of our Prime Minister alongside that of the British pirate. It is a fitting setting for our present disorders. I do not think that in those dark days, when our ancestors were treated to the whip, the word "freedom" was sounded as much as it is today.

The reason for that is that the statue of one of our real freedom-fighters is outside of this building but the picture of the Prime Minister is beside that of the pirate of the past. It is very distressing for all descendants of past fighters, not only in Guyana, but all over the world to witness what is taking place in our land.

I remember sitting in the House of Commons listening to the debate on the Bill which was to make our country free. It was an historic occasion in the sense that all the speakers supported either the Bill or an Amendment that was moved by several Members of the Labour Party. That was different from all other occasions when Bills granting Independence to other countries were debated.

My hon. Friend, the Deputy Speaker, shared my interest in the debate. What is significant is that the mover of the Amendment to the Bill, Mr. Julius

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Silverman, and the seconder, Mr. Hugh Jenkins, created history in another sense by having it recorded for all time in the reports of the House of Commons that all those who grace the walls of this Parliament are indeed terrorists, for our Prime Minister, believe it or not, headed a list in a secret document issued by the Police in this country. He headed a list of terrorists and it is ironical that he should sit on the other side of the House to limit the freedom of Guyanese people, who have been taken as scapegoats in the place of the real criminals who still masquerade as freedom-fighters in this country.

As I sat here and glanced across the Table and saw some of those persons like wolves in sheep's clothing, some with grey hair, who have been transporting dynamite from Kwakwani to Georgetown, I thought it was a shameful thing.

11.35 p.m.

We have heard all sorts of imputations and suggestions. We are asked, "What is your attitude to people who kill witnesses?" Obviously, we object to people who kill. It is shocking and disgraceful for anyone to murder. We feel strongly about this, as strongly as we feel about the woman who took an axe and struck a legislator.

I am glad that some of my friends who have been kept behind bars, with much detriment to their

health, are going to be released. I have listened in vain to the hon. Prime Minister trying to justify the further detention of these men, particularly a Member of this House, up to 30th June. I have pleaded with the Prime Minister privately. What is the difference between releasing them today and releasing them on the 30th June? Like myself, Mr. Jordan, the hon. Minister of Agriculture - [The Prime Minister: "He is not the Minister of Agriculture."] - the hon. Minister of Forests, Lands and Mines will tell you what it feels like to be in gaol. Like myself, he will appreciate what it means to be released a day earlier.

We all remember that, in 1953, when a Restriction Order was placed on Mr. Burnham, as the Prime Minister then was, he broke all the records, the needle on his speedometer went beyond the gauge. He does not know and cannot appreciate what it is to be locked away from one's family. My hon. Friends on the other side say that a couple of days are not anything. They ask, "What is going to happen in a couple of days?" The hon. Prime Minister used to say a lot of things when he was on this side. Is it that the members of the Security Branch of the Police Force are going to terrorise our boys at Sibley Hall? What do they want from them? Are they going to work on them a little more to get them confused? Is that what they want? Are they going to get these boys to sign statements stating that the hon. Members Mr.

Chandisingh and Dr. Ramjohn were involved in violence? What is the difference between midnight tonight and midnight on the 30th June?

Is it a question of bringing the men from Mazaruni? You can bring them all down at one time. There are helicopters and the hon. Prime Minister has his plane. I cannot understand. I think it is heartless to tell a man today that he is going to be released six days hence. At this stage, I appeal to the hon. Prime Minister once more, in public, in this honourable House, not to be so cruel like a little boy who plays with his game and tortures it before he kills it.

I feel that the time has come for the hon. Prime Minister to realise that freedom is even more important than many of the things which he and the members of his party place in important and high positions. Freedom is dear to all of us and the hon. Prime Minister must realise that he is not going to sit on the other side of the House forever.

[The Prime Minister: "I will not live forever."] Your party will not be there forever. I hope that when those Guyanese people who are slightly confused at the moment -- [The Prime Minister: "Like Bhagwan."] Yes. When those people turn their backs on you, I can assure you that the treatment meted out to innocent people is not going to be liked at all. [Interruption.] Your Prime Minister has already shown how fast he can run. [The Prime

Minister: "Your Prime Minister too."] Our Prime Minister.

The Members on the other side talk about security. The hon. Prime Minister has been heckling about the killing of witnesses. Heaven knows whether the Government's own terrorists have not been responsible for the killing of witnesses. Every year, nearly 100 people are being killed on the roads of this country. Is the Government continuing the emergency to save those innocent people who are slaughtered on the roads in motor accidents? I read in today's newspaper that, in the North West District, two people have been mercilessly killed. People are being killed all over the place. Do we need an emergency to save these people? This thing is becoming ludicrous, especially when the hon. Members talk about security. Security of what? Is it security to prevent the people from criticising them for the masquerade and squandermania which they are indulging in? That would be the only reason.

Before I sit, I wish to place on record, at this late stage - because I doubt whether the opportunity will be presented to us - our thanks to those very many people, inside and outside of Guyana, who have contributed to the state where these detainees are going to be released. I wish to give special thanks to my colleague Mr. Wilson, those Members of Parliament whose names I have already mentioned, the Movement for Colonial Freedom and a

[MR. RAM KARRAN]

committee of former colleagues of my colleague Mr. Nunes who worked with him in Birmingham, people who have done a tremendous lot to persuade the hon. Prime Minister.

I wish to thank Mr. Ennals who told me that he could not rely on the Prime Minister. He said that the Prime Minister told him that he would release the detainees. He sent him a letter but he received no reply. The Prime Minister is ashamed to reply to him. That is the impression that people from abroad get because the Prime Minister behaves in such an irresponsible manner. He made a promise to a very eminent individual. He said, "I will release your friends". Then he comes back here, sits down, is goaded by his terrorist friends, and refuses to release the hon. Member Mr. Nunes. He sets up people to say that the detainees should be released, and even the innocent Member Dr. Richmond is getting involved and embroiled in this situation.

11.45 p.m.

Before I take my seat, I wish to ask the hon. Prime Minister to release the men tomorrow, and to ensure that they are not restricted when they are released because they have to make a living.

The Prime Minister (replying): The detainees will all be released by midnight Thursday, 30th of June. There has been a suggestion that the details which have to be gone through prior to

the release of the detainees should all be completed within a few hours. But according to my information, that is not possible. However, I promise the hon. Members of the Opposition that these gentlemen will be kept in detention no longer than is necessary to complete the details.

We have witnessed a very interesting performance this evening. Members of the Opposition did not know whether to thank, whether to be happy, whether to abuse or whether to be unhappy. They were in an obvious state of disarray. But I should like to assure them that this Government is prepared to accept the asseverations and pledges given by them this evening. This Government will be prepared to take the Opposition at its word, and this Government is looking to the Opposition to support it in the preservation of law and order and the continuation of the peaceful circumstances which now exist.

On behalf of the Government, I seriously say that there is no intention to call into use again the power to detain, provided peace remains and no group, inspired or uninspired, seeks to disturb that peace. We agree with the hon. Member, Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud that this is the period for the new nation to move forward, this is the period when it is in the best interests of the country that all the energies of the people be harnessed in the battle for conquering poverty and lifting our country's economy.

The Government, however, would like to emphasise the fact that the ball is now in the court of the Opposition. We may have our political differences, we may have our quarrels, but I should hope and imagine that we are all wedded to the idea of maintenance of peace, law and order. It is a little difficult sometimes, to get the Opposition to admit that this Government has, from its very accession to office — [Mr. Ram Karran: "By fraud."] Who am I to question an archangel of fraud! As I was saying, sir, it is a little difficult sometimes, to get the Opposition to admit that this Government has, from its very accession to office, sought to reduce the number of persons detained.

Let us be realistic, sir. This Government is not going to spend its time discussing the grounds on which persons were detained. It is not going to spend its time discussing the facts and admissions which it has in its possession. This Government hopes that we are now about to enter into a new phase. Those who have run foul of the law and the Constitution can be assured that this Government, so long as I am associated with it, will not hold their past misdeeds against them because it is the opinion of the Government that every human being has a capacity and an opportunity and the ability for rehabilitation. [Mr. Ram Karran: "I sincerely hope it happens to you."]

What has been announced today has been described even by our most trenchant critics on the

Opposition Benches as a good gesture. I hope that the gesture is appreciated, and I hope that the undertaking that Government will not hold the past misdeeds against those who have run foul of the law in the past will be seriously taken because we want to re-establish peace. But we must emphasise that in the final analysis, Government has a responsibility which it will not shirk.

I want to congratulate the hon. Members of the Opposition for the charm and lack of conviction which they showed in their criticism of the Government.

11.45 p.m.

Question put.

Assembly divided: Ayes 20, Noes 10, as follows:

Ayes	Noes
Mr. Wharton	Mr. Bhagwan
Rev. Trotman	Dr. Ramjohn
Mr. Tello	Mr. Persaud
Dr. Richmond	Mr. Linde
Mr. Field-Ridley	Mr. Lall
Mr. Duncan	Mr. Jagan
Mr. Budhoo	Mr. Luck
Mr. Blair	Mr. Wilson
Mr. Joaquin	Mr. Chandisingh
Mr. Clarke	Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. deGroot	- 10.
Mr. Merriman	
Mr. Mahraj	
Mr. Kasim	
Mr. Jordan	
Mr. John	
Mrs. Gaskin	
Mr. Correia	
Mr. Cheeks	
Mr. Burnham	- 20.

Mr. Speaker: The Motion is carried.

**BILLS - SECOND READING
COPYRIGHT (REPEAL) BILL**

A Bill intituled:

"An Act to repeal the Copyright Ordinance." - [The Prime Minister.]

The Prime Minister: We have a very short Bill here which the Acting Leader of the Opposition assured me a few days ago would not be controversial. It is the Copyright (Repeal) Bill, 1966.

Mr. Speaker: Does the hon. Acting Leader of the Opposition have any objection?

Mr. Ram Karran: No, sir.

The Prime Minister: I beg to move the Second Reading of the Copyright (Repeal) Bill, 1966. This Bill merely seeks to repeal the Copyright Ordinance, Chapter 341. Originally the 1941 Copyright Act of the United Kingdom applied to British Guiana, but there was also an Ordinance which dealt with a few points which had not been covered by the British Copyright Act, 1911. As a result of the Geneva Convention of 1952, the British Copyright Act, 1956, was passed and that was extended by Order made locally, earlier this year, and that British Copyright Act, 1956, covered fully all of the subjects including those which originally had been covered by the 1911 Act and the

local Ordinances here. This Bill is merely a tidying operation. It is not so much a piece of British legislation, but it is introduced on the basis of the International Convention to which I referred earlier.

All this Bill seeks to do is to repeal the British Guiana Ordinance, Chapter 341, and put us in line with most countries of the world. I therefore beg to move the Second Reading of the Copyright (Repeal) Bill, 1966.

Mr. Ram Karran: I am hesitant about disposing of this Bill tonight, even though when I discussed the matter with the hon. Prime Minister I did say that there was nothing controversial about it. What is strange is that we are asked here tonight to pass a bit of British legislation, allegedly, because it suits the International Copyright business; but we are strangers to this bit of legislation. Has the hon. Prime Minister seen this British Copyright Act to which he refers? Has any of the lawyers in this Chamber seen it? I have not seen it. We are being asked to pass something which is unknown to anybody over here. I think that out of courtesy the Government should have supplied copies of this bit of legislation to hon. Members so that we would know how to proceed.

This Government which claims to be responsible, which claims to be efficient, which claims to be on the ball all the time, is taking us for a ride tonight. I am sorry that my colleague the

hon. Dr. Ramsahoye is not here to make his contribution to this Bill. I hope that the Government will, in the absence of this bit of English legislation, defer further consideration of the Bill to the next sitting of this House. However, if the English legislation is available we need not do that.

Another question I would like to ask as a layman is: Are these International things included in the United Kingdom legislation? We were told that our Crest, Court of Arms and everything else have to be registered with this unknown feudal repository in the United Kingdom. Does it include things relating to patents and so on?

The Prime Minister: No. There are two distinct things.

Mr. Ram Karran: Does the United States register its copyrights in the United Kingdom? Whose copyrights are we protecting?

Mr. Speaker: Are you against proceeding with the Bill?

Mr. Ram Karran: That depends on whether the hon. Prime Minister is in a position to let us have copies of the English legislation which we are going to enact as our own legislation.

12.05 a.m.

I was referring to the number of people who will be affected by this Copyright (Repeal) Bill, and I would like to make the observa-

tion that our Attorney-General is a very highly paid technician. Even if, for form's sake, he had copied a Bill word for word, comma for comma, and had presented to this Assembly a Bill as coming from the Government, one would have understood that, but to come and say to us, "You people with a colonial mentality, we are going to copy from the legislation of the United Kingdom" is an insult to the integrity of the Guyanese.

The Prime Minister (replying): I cannot understand one who gives an undertaking and breaks it. The position is that the 1956 Act is already law here as a result of the British Guiana Copyright Order which, in compliance with the provisions of the United Kingdom Act, could only have been made with the consent of the Government of British Guiana as it then was. The 1911 Act was applicable here.

If the hon. Members do not wish to pass this Bill tonight or at any other time, it still means that the 1956 Act is applicable until there is repeal legislation, until there is a new Act passed by this Parliament. This is merely a cleaning-up operation. In other words, there is Chapter 341 providing for certain matters dealing with copyright, as it were, and criminal offences which can be committed for a breach of copyright under the 1956 United Kingdom Act. It was published in the *Official Gazette* and was made available to every single Member of this Parliament.

[THE PRIME MINISTER]

The Act was promulgated locally. There is no doubt in my mind, but some people who are literate do not read and some people cannot read because they are illiterate. If the members of the Opposition do not want to go ahead with this Bill, then do not go ahead with it. It does not make any difference for whether they go ahead or not, the 1956 Act is already applicable. This is merely to clear away a little flotsam and jetsam. I have exercised my right and ask that the Bill be read a Second time.

Mr. Luck: To a point of order. I would like to speak on a small matter. It will not take more than five minutes. As the Prime Minister rightly said, this is a tidying-up operation, but consequent on the grant of Independence to British Guiana the British Government sought to protect Englishmen and in February of this year, although it was clear that we would have our own Parliament, Her Majesty in Council passed an Order under the Copyright Act of 1956 extending it to British Guiana. In my view it was clearly an abuse of the powers of Her Majesty in Council.

The Prime Minister: I cannot sit here and allow Mr. Luck to say that. I have already stated - and I ought to know - that the Order was passed with the consent of the Government of Guyana. The provision in the Act states it cannot be extended to any one of Her Majesty's Dominions without the consent of the

Government of that Dominion. We consented and the Order was published.

Mr. Speaker, I object to those who have only a passing knowledge of law speaking on this matter.

Mr. Luck: I have the Act in front of me, and it does say that this Act can only be extended to Dominions with the consent of the Governments of those Dominions. Do I understand "My Lord" Burnham to be claiming --

The Prime Minister: I am no "My Lord".

Mr. Luck: In 1956 was British Guiana a Dominion? I understood the Prime Minister to say we were a Dominion. If British Guiana was a colony the consent of Mr. Burnham was only relevant under the Order.

I rose only to make that point. I would certify that the legislation is not worth debating save on the point made. The acting Leader of the Opposition surely has the right, and each Member should be allowed, to consider carefully each measure that comes to the Legislature and should be allowed to weigh it. He should not be bullied and browbeaten.

Mr. Speaker: The Leader of the Opposition agreed that we go into this matter. He agreed. There is no bullying; it was agreed to by your Leader.

I want to be clear on this matter.

Mr. Ram Karran: I have no objection to proceeding. I had hoped, however, that the hon. Prime Minister would have been in a position to let us have copies of the legislation. I thought it would be unfair for us to deal with the matter without having copies of the legislation in question.

Question put, and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

Assembly in Committee.

Bill considered and approved.

Assembly resumed.

Bill reported without amendment, read the Third time and passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until a date to be fixed." - [Mr. Merriman.]

Adjourned accordingly at 12.13 a.m.