

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 1]

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

14th Sitting

Tuesday, 15th November, 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.	- Prime Minister
Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid	- Minister of Home Affairs
The Honourable P. S. d'Aguiar	- Minister of Finance
The Honourable N. J. Bissember	- Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)
The Honourable R. E. Cheeks,	- Minister of Local Government
The Honourable E. F. Correia	- Minister of Communications
The Honourable L. John	- Minister of Agriculture
The Honourable R. J. Jordan	- Minister of Forests, Lands and Mines
The Honourable M. Kasim	- Minister of Works and Hydraulics
The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C.B.E.	- Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation
The Honourable D. Mahraj	- Minister of Health
The Honourable C. A. Merriman	- Minister of Labour
The Honourable J. H. Thomas	- Minister of Economic Development
The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.	- Attorney-General and Minister of State

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. D. B. deGroot	- Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office
Mr. G. Bowman	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Labour
Mr. O. E. Clarke	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education and Race Relations
Mr. P. Duncan	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Local Government
Mr. J. G. Jaquin, O.B.E., J.P.	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics
Mr. C. V. Tee-Chang	- Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Other Members

Mr. W. A. Blair	Dr. J. K. M. Richmond
Mr. J. Budhee	Mr. T. A. Sancho
Mr. W. G. Carrington	Mr. R. Tello, Deputy Speaker
Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley	Rev. A. B. Trotman
Mr. H. Prashad	Mr. H. M. S. Wharton, J.P.

Members of the Opposition

Dr. C. B. Jagan, Leader of the Opposition	Mr. M. Hamid, J.P.
Mr. A. Chase	Mr. J. R. S. Luck
Mr. B. H. Benn	Mr. D. C. Jagan
Mr. Ram Karran	Mr. H. Lall
Mr. R. Chandisingh	Mr. M. Khan, J.P.
Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard	Mr. Y. Ally
Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.	Mr. R. D. Persaud
Mr. C. V. Nunes	Mr. M. Poonai
Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye	Dr. S. A. Ramjohn
Mr. E. M. G. Wilson	

Clerk of the National Assembly	- Mr. F. A. Narain
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly (Acting)	- Mr. M. B. Henry

Absent:

The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin,
Minister of Education and Race Relations - on leave.

Mr. L. Linde	
Mr. E. M. Stoby	
Mr. S. M. Saffee	
Mr. M. Bhagwan	- on leave.

SUSPENSION OF STANDING ORDER

The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House) (Mr. Bissember): Mr. Speaker, I move the suspension of the relevant Standing Order dealing with the order of the business of the day in order to enable the Representative of the Government and people of India to make a presentation of a Speaker's Chair by the Government and people of India to the Government and people of Guyana.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order No. 12 suspended.

PRESENTATION OF SPEAKER'S CHAIR

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, Assistant High Commissioner for India: Today is a fairly important day in the history of this National Assembly inasmuch as we are gathered here to receive from you, sir, this gift as a token of the appreciation of the Government and people of India for this country of Guyana. This is not a time for speech-making. All I want to do is to ask you, sir, to come forward and make this presentation to the hon. Prime Minister.

The Assistant High Commissioner for India (Mr. Kundan Lall): Hon. Speaker, hon. Prime Minister, hon. Ministers, hon. Members of the Parliament, my colleagues, ladies and gentlemen: ~~It is a privilege and an honour~~

to be here this afternoon to hand over the Speaker's Chair as a gift from the Government and the people of India to the Government and the people of Guyana.

The Guyanese are dear to India for obvious reasons. The people of the two countries are intimately connected not by formal treaties and alliances but by bonds of oneness and mutual affection. Guyana's march to freedom was watched with great interest by the people of India. The respect for Guyana and the people of Guyana stands high in my country.

2.10 p.m.

On the other hand, recently when there was news of distress and domestic trouble in India anxiety and concern was shown here by good Guyanese. That indeed touched my feelings overwhelmingly. No doubt some forces have been at play in India diverting people's minds into wrong channels and trying to pervert the course of national life, but the trouble is now over. The remarkable attribute of the ancient heritage is that the people love peace. Their sentimentalism, if I may say so, is their weakness and that is often exploited. Nevertheless, the people are courageous and capable of making sacrifices for the country or any noble cause.

Evidence of India and of Indian culture is found in abundance in this country, and it is my conviction that the inheritors of a great world heritage will

[MR. KUNDAN LALL]

continue to enrich and ennoble the life of the green land of Guyana. India feels satisfaction in the fact that the Indians who came here under unhappy conditions have worked hard hand-in-hand with other immigrants for themselves and for the country of their adoption of which they are now proud nationals.

Generally speaking, science and technology have brought about a physical unification of the world. Now we have races and cultures belonging to different areas mingling with one another and trying to understand one another. For happiness and peace it is essential for the people in multiracial and multicultural countries to develop in them a sense of belonging to one whole, and a sense that they have common purposes whatever their caste, colour or creed, and that their entire state stands for certain ideals which appeal to the sense of integrity; which appeal to the conscience of the nation. Hostility is not the natural attitude of human beings. It is one of tolerance. The rejection of the past for the sake of the future alone gives rise to mutual respect and makes the achievement of the national objectives easier.

In the context of world relations India's foreign policy has often been declared to be one of working for peace and friendship with all countries and of avoiding alignments with power blocs. We have grown up under many years

and Jawaharlal Nehru who have taught us that hatred and violence are essentially bad and evil, and that anything which promotes hatred, therefore, is bad. The practical choice offered by these two great Indians to the world is to co-operate or perish - peaceful co-existence or no existence at all.

India's friendship with Guyana is bound to be meaningful and practical. I take this opportunity to affirm that the Indian mission in this most hospitable country of yours will devote to the furtherance of co-operative activities in political, cultural and economical fields.

Prime Minister, sir, the Government and the people of India sincerely wish peace and prosperity for Guyana and its charming people. As a token of their love I present on their behalf this Chair for use by the honourable Speaker of this august House.

May I, with your permission, sir, say a Vedic hymn to inspire the future deliberations of this Parliament under the presidency of this Chair and to invoke the blessings of Lord that all power inherent in the land may blossom into love and the country bloom into an orchard:

"— SANGACHHDAVAM SAMVADDAVAM
SAM WO MANASI JANTAM DEVO
BHAGAM YATHA PURVE SANJANANA
UPASATE. UP SERV MATRM
UP SERV MATRM DUCOM

(Rig Ved)

O noblemen! get together
 May the intentions of Assembly be one
 May all the hearts here feel alike.

O noblemen! Follow the path
 blazed by your ancestors
 Who worked and prayed together, and

Serve the motherland with
 devotion and live sacrifice."

The Prime Minister (Mr. Burnham): Mr. Speaker, it is a unique and undoubted pleasure, on behalf of the Government and people of Guyana, to accept this symbolic gift, in the form of a Speaker's Chair, from the Government and people of India to us in Guyana. It would be my duty, on this occasion, while returning thanks to the donors, through their agent-representative the Assistant High Commissioner for India, to observe that we in Guyana feel certain strong bonds with the people, inhabitants and nation of India.

There is, of course, the indisputable, historical fact that a significant, indeed, a large section of our population traces its origin back to that great sub-continent of India. But it is not only the fortuitous fact of origin which binds the nation of Guyana to the nation of India. The struggle of the Indian people, under the leadership of great men like Gandhi and

Nehru, was looked at and admired with the greatest sympathy by many of us who were, at that time, comparatively very young and who were beginning to recognize and realize that Independence was the God-given right of a people.

Success of the Indian Freedom Movement culminating in Independence in 1947 was acclaimed by all of us and, since then, the march of India amongst the independent nations of the world has further earned our admiration. Unless I am sadly mistaken, it was the Indian nation which adumbrated more clearly than it had ever been before, the concept of a truly independent policy on the part of emergent nations amidst or between the Scylla and Charybdis of the two major world blocs. Since her accession to Independence, the status and image of India have undoubtedly improved, if that at all has been possible.

We feel that the saint Gandhi of India is our saint too and the hero Nehru is our hero too. The two countries share the common experience of attempting to lift up a nation out of the ashes of the past, so to speak, a past bedevilled by the imperialist motif, a past which leaves many difficulties remaining over unto the present. We also share with India certain difficulties which arise as a result of certain divisive elements - purposely divisive elements - difficulties which we

[THE PRIME MINISTER]

feel we can overcome in the same way as we see India overcoming such difficulties.

2.20 p.m.

We, on our part, look forward to a much closer association with the Government and people of India. We look forward, as the Assistant High Commissioner has said this afternoon, to a meaningful relationship in other fields. In the circumstances, it is a great pleasure on behalf of the Government and people of Guyana to accept this most charming, ornate but utilitarian gift, the Speaker's Chair.

It must have some further significance, and I venture to believe that that significance lies in the fact that the donors and the donees are wedded to the concept of the paramountcy of the role of the Speaker. May I thank the Assistant High Commissioner of India in Guyana, and may I ask him to convey to his Government the gratitude which has been expressed and which will later be formally expressed by way of note *verbale*. May I also take this opportunity on behalf of the Government and the people of Guyana to present this Chair to you, Mr. Speaker, as the guardian of the privileges of this House, and I hope that for you will be a long and illustrious occupancy thereof.

~~The Leader of the Opposition~~
(Dr. Jagan): I, too, should like to join the hon. Prime Minister in expressing the thanks of this House to the Government and peo-

ple of India for this beautiful gift which we see displayed here today. I think one and all will agree that this gift makes a magnificent addition to this Chamber. The students of architecture will probably say that it fits in and blends in very nicely with the surroundings. And it also shows us the craftsmanship of the Indian people - their high skill in this direction.

When making the presentation this afternoon, the Assistant High Commissioner said that there was much in common between his country and our country. I should also like to underscore this point by referring, not mainly to the fact that there are so many Indians resident in Guyana, but to the fact that India has been one of the countries, indeed one of the very earliest of countries which not only aspired but fought for the ideals which we in Guyana aspire and fight for. India was the country which blazed the trail for freedom and independence and liberty. Many were the days of hardships and sufferings. It was in the 1930's when certain British officials said that they did not foresee the day when India will achieve her Independence. We are glad that India achieved her Independence because in that achievement the seeds of the achievement of Independence for other countries were also sown. Therefore, we in this House and out of this House, owe a debt of gratitude to the people who have suffered and who have made sacrifices in that country to obtain the freedom that they aspired to.

Another thing which we have in common with that country is

the philosophy which its leaders have espoused, the philosophy of not only political independence but economic independence; a policy of non-alignment, of not being caught up with entanglements in the struggle for supremacy. Unfortunately, the cause of non-alignment has suffered a certain amount of set-back on the front as a whole. But we have no doubt that this set-back will be short-lived, with the reactionary forces unable to contain those elements which fight not only for non-alignment on the international front but also for economic liberation and socialism.

Today, a battle is being fought in that country and one can see machinations of outside influences which make this struggle difficult. We have seen certain set-backs in other parts of the world which contribute to some of these difficulties. Nevertheless, we wish that country well, and so far as we are concerned we shall watch with interest and with sympathy the struggles of the people and the Government to achieve the objectives which they have long fought for, and for which tremendous sacrifices have been made.

Let us hope that this Speaker's Chair with its emblem, a balanced scale, will really be symbolic of what the Indian Government and people hope will happen in this country for there are clear signs to the contrary; justice is becoming only a name here; the Parliament is becoming merely a rubber stamp, and the Speaker is becoming merely a creature of the Government. We would hope that Guyana, placed as it is, will really become symbol-

ic of something new as our representatives in the United Nations and abroad are accustomed to saying in these days. Guyana can be said to be an amalgam of the world. We have people coming from three Continents of the Old World - Asia, Africa and Europe. Therefore, I think that if this Parliament functions in the way it is supposed to function, with the background that we have, and our geographical location in this continent, the people who inhabit our territory can certainly create - I would not say a weapon - a society which will be a guiding light to other countries including such countries which are similarly placed as India.

2.30 p.m.

I, too, should like to join with the hon. Prime Minister in thanking the Government and the people of India for this magnificent gift. [Applause.]

Mr. Speaker: I am going to permit two more speakers: one on each side of the House.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. d'Aguiar): Your Honour, the Assistant High Commissioner for India may have already noted, before the sitting commenced, that we commenced it with a prayer; and I am sure he did not miss the fact that this prayer is for us a spiritual reminder of India, because many of the words in it were taken from the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore.

Now, in addition to the spiritual reminder of India, we have a physical reminder of India here in our National Assembly. The motif on the Speaker's Chair,

[MR. D'AGUIAR]

which has been presented to us by the Government and people of India, is one of a balance of justice - a scale - and if we could only balance ideals with realities within the framework of democracy, then we would be trying to do exactly what the Government and the people of India are trying to do today.

A lot has been said about non-alignment. We, I must say, are aligned to the principles of democracy and opposed to dictatorship of any sort. I am sure that the Government of India while not aligned to any of the two major power blocs, is nevertheless, aligned to the principles of true democracy and totally opposed to totalitarian dictatorship as in any communist state.

Your Honour, for my part, I wish to be associated with the thanks offered to the Assistant Commissioner for India in presenting us here in our National Assembly with this token of balanced scales of justice - I would say this token of friendship; this token of a sincere desire on their part to weld our people together in true friendship.

Mr. Speaker: A speaker on the Opposition's side.

[No member from the Opposition rose.]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Prime Minister, hon. Members, I have received this Chair from the hon. Prime Minister for safe keeping. I want to make one or two remarks and to reply straightaway to Dr. Jagan's assertions just now, and

I want to assure him that as long as I sit in this Chair I am neither the tool of the Government nor of the Opposition. The scales to which the hon. Leader of the Opposition referred will serve as a constant reminder and, as in the past, even though at times the members of the Opposition behave like a pack of bad boys when a Ruling is made, I want to promise you that when you behave badly and Rulings have to be made justice will be done.

There is just an instance to which I should like to refer today. The hon. Dr. Jagan came to my Chambers on the last occasion when this House was about to sit and made a certain request. I told him it was my opinion that if I granted his request it would not be fair to the Government, and it would prejudice the action taken by the Government. I, therefore, could not in fairness grant his request.

He returned to my Chambers some time before the House sat, and he brought reinforcement. A member of his party made use of these words: "You, sir, are the guardian of the rights of the minority." I replied to him that I was also the guardian of the rights of the majority and, in that instance, I felt that the rights of the majority would be prejudiced if I acceded to Dr. Jagan's request.

I want to give you the assurance, Dr. Jagan, that that same attitude will be adopted as long as I sit here in this Chair and I am qualified to make a Ruling. Do not be afraid of that.

I feel, with some tinge of pride, that this Chair waited until my term of leadership to come down to this country. There is a great Speaker here today, Sir Donald Jackson, who sat in this old Chair. The Speaker before me, Mr. Gajraj, sat in this old Chair. It is simply a coincidence that this Chair was kept until my term of office before it came down to this country.

I remarked to my wife that, when I sat in the old Chair for the first time, it was a rainy morning. As I sit in this new Chair, again for the first time, it is a rainy morning. I hope that the use to which this Chair is put will redound in no insensible degree to the honour and glory of this National Assembly.
[Applause.]

[At this stage the Speaker took his seat in the new Chair.]

Mr. Speaker: The business of this Assembly is resumed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

LETTER FROM SIR RICHARD LUYT

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Members, I have received a letter from Sir Richard Luyt, which I will ask the Clerk to read to this Assembly.

The Clerk read the following.

"Governor General's House,

Trinidad,
1st November, 1966.

Your Honour,

I am writing to thank you and Honourable Members of the National Assembly for generously holding and attending the meeting on the morning of Monday, October 31. This demonstration of friendship and appreciation on the occasion of our departure will be valued by me and by my wife always.

I send my very warmest good wishes to you and to the Hon. Members and staff of the National Assembly.

Yours sincerely,
(Sgd.) Richard E. Luyt."

2.40 p.m.

LEAVE TO MEMBER

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, leave of absence has been granted to the hon. Member, Mr. Moses Bhagwan, for two months beginning from today.

QUESTIONS TO MINISTERS

ROAD ACCIDENTS

Mr. Persaud: I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Communications Question No. 31 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

- (a) Is the Minister aware of the high and alarming number of accidents which have occurred on the roads of Guyana?
- (b) Will the Minister state if anything is being done to disseminate informa-

[MR. PERSAUD]

tion and advice in respect of the proper observance of the traffic regulations?

The Minister of Communications (Mr. Correia): The answer to (a) is: Yes. The answer to (b) is: Road safety advice is disseminated by the Police through the radio and the Press and in addition policemen visit schools some of which have safety patrols organised. Hand bills have been distributed to all types of road users giving hints on Road Safety and at the present time slides for use in cinemas are being prepared.

Mr. Persaud: In view of the many accidents in which police vehicles are involved, will the hon. Minister tell the House what steps Government is taking to get the police to observe the rules on road safety and to use the roads with due care and attention?

Mr. Correia: I am not aware of any accidents involving vehicles used by the police. [Hon. Members (Opposition): "Shame!"]

Mr. Ram Karran: Is the hon. Minister not aware of the very serious accident which occurred when a police vehicle that was following a motor car failed to stop at a major road and killed a child? Is the hon. Minister not aware of the very serious accident which occurred last Saturday, in which a police vehicle was involved, and which resulted from the failure of the Police Department at Cove and John to hold examinations for drivers?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Wilson: Is the hon. Minister aware that a police vehicle knocked down a house at Industry?

Mr. Ram Karran: It does not seem that we are going to get a reply from the hon. Minister.

Mr. Persaud: The question of the large number of accidents and the deaths resulting from them is causing alarm and the Press and radio have commented on it. Ministers of the Government have also commented and, in view of this, I would urge that the hon. Minister -

Hon. Members (Government): Question!

Mr. Persaud: Will the hon. Minister of Communications tell us what he proposes to do now that I have brought to his attention that police vehicles have been involved in a number of accidents?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Ram Karran: Is the hon. Minister not aware of the very serious accident that occurred when, it is alleged, a pedestrian was walking in a zigzag fashion across the road and was killed, it is said, by a prominent member of the People's National Congress?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

HOSPITAL AT LETHEM

Dr. Ramjohn: I should like to ask the hon. Minister of

Health Question No. 32 standing in my name on the Order Paper: Will the Minister state how soon will Government re-commence the construction of the propose Hospital at Lethem?

The Minister of Health (Mr. Mahraj): The answer to Question 32 is: The construction was re-commenced at the beginning of July, 1966. Two wards have been completed. It was decided to allocate one of the wards (7 beds) to Obstetrics, and the other ward (7 beds) to the care of male cases.

Dr. Ramjohn: Will the hon. Minister state whether these wards are equipped at the moment?

Mr. Mahraj: The wards are in use. They have basic facilities and all hospital facilities are now being examined for improvement.

PURCHASE OF DAKOTA FROM U.K.

Dr. Ramjohn: I should like to ask the hon. Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation Question No. 33 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

- (a) Is the Dakota aircraft recently purchased from the United Kingdom air-worthy?
- (b) On whose advice was this aircraft purchased?
- (c) Is it capable of flying on one engine?
- (d) How many hours has it flown since arriving in Guyana?

- (e) How many of these were commercial hours?

The Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation (Mr. Kendall): The answer to the hon. Member's Question is:

- (a) Yes, sir.
- (b) The aircraft was purchased after it was inspected and reported on by the Air Registration Board, and on the advice of technical personnel of the Guyana Airways Corporation.
- (c) Yes, sir.
- (d) The aircraft has flown 326.36 hours since arriving in Guyana.
- (e) 313.33 have been revenue hours.

Dr. Ramjohn: Will the hon. Minister state whether this aircraft is capable of carrying as much payload as similar aircraft in the service?

Mr. Kendall: The aircraft is carrying a payload to the satisfaction of the Corporation. [Interruptions.]

Dr. Ramjohn: I asked the hon. Minister a specific question: Is the aircraft capable of carrying the maximum load carried by other Dakotas in the service?

Mr. Kendall: There are Dakotas with different specifications.

Dr. Ramjohn: I refer to similar Dakotas.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Mr. Wilson: Will the hon. Minister state whether this aircraft is capable of carrying passengers?

Mr. Kendall: The aircraft is capable of carrying passengers.

Mr. Hubbard: Is it being used to carry passengers?

Mr. Kendall: I am not in a position to answer.

Dr. Ramjohn: I should like to ask the hon. Minister whether it is not true that this aircraft is proving a financial loss because it is incapable of carrying the maximum payload.

Mr. Kendall: That is not my information.

Mr. Ram Karran: Will the hon. Minister say what is the normal payload of a D.C.3 and what is the payload of this aircraft?

Mr. Kendall: That is a question that should be made in writing.

FIRE SERVICES AT ATKINSON FIELD

Mr. Chase: I rise to ask the Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation Question No. 34 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

- (a) Does the Government propose to construct a new

fire station at Atkinson Field?

- (b) If so, will the Minister state when this will be done?
- (c) Will the Minister state how was the computation of \$75.00 per month for overtime for firemen, \$100.00 per month for leading firemen and \$120.00 per month for section leaders arrived at?
- (d) Is Government prepared to grant firemen at Atkinson Field overtime allowances and house allowances retroactive to 1960?
- (e) Will Government make public the recommendations of the Ramprashad Committee regarding firemen at Atkinson Field?
- (f) Will Government grant to firemen at Atkinson Field the same salary scales as firemen in Georgetown?

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Kendall: The Answer to the Question is as follows:

- (a) No, Sir.
- (b) No answer is required in view of (a) above.
- (c) The overtime allowance payable was based on the hours spent on station by the firemen at Atkinson Field in excess of those worked by the personnel of the Georgetown Fire

Brigade. The excess hours were then divided into two classes i.e. those spent on effective duty and secondly on sleeping at Station. Hours spent on effective duty were compensated for at the rate of time-and-a-half and those in the other category were paid at quarter-time.

- (d) A special Committee of Whitley Council under the Chairmanship of Mr. F. Ramprasad, barrister-at-law, has been appointed to look into the matter. The Committee has not yet submitted its report.
- (e) The treatment to be given to the report will be decided upon when the report is submitted.
- (f) The Aerodrome Fire Service Personnel are paid salary on the same scales as their counterparts in the Guyana Fire Brigade.

Mr. Chase: Will the Minister undertake to have a second look at the Fire Station at Atkinson Field in view of reports that snakes sometimes invade the Station?

Mr. Kendall: I am grateful for the hon. Member's observation.

ESTABLISHMENT OF HOSTEL FOR AMERINDIANS

Mr. Chase: I rise to ask the hon. Minister of Local Government

(Mr. (Cheeks) Question No. 36 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

- (a) Is the Minister aware that Amerindians from the Pomeroun and Moruca districts suffer great inconvenience when travelling to Snddie Hospital for medical attention?
- (b) Is the Minister aware that there is no Amerindian Hostel at Charity, Pomeroun?
- (c) If so, would the Minister consider the establishment of an Amerindian Hostel at Charity to serve Upper Pomeroun, Wakapoa, Moruca and surrounding areas?

The Minister of Local Government (Mr. Cheeks): The answer to the Question is as follows:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) Yes, and this has always been so including the period of the last administration.
- (c) Funds have been provided this year for the erection of a Hostel at Charity and work on its construction will commence shortly.

Mr. Chase: Since the provision has been made for expenditure this year, and this year is fast drawing to a close, will the Minister state how soon does he anticipate this "shortly" to be?

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

Dr. Jagan: Will the Minister say whether, in the meantime, the Government will give consideration to the utilization of one of the houses bought from Pauling & Co. as a hostel for use by the Amerindians?

Mr. Checks: That will be considered.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Khan.

Mr. Khan rose --

Mr. Hubbard: Will the Minister --

Mr. Speaker: I called Mr. Khan.

PURCHASING OF MILK FROM LEGUAN-

Mr. Khan: I rise to ask the hon. Minister of Trade, Shipping and Civil Aviation Question No. 37 standing in my name on the Order Paper: Will the Minister say why purchasing of milk from Leguan was discontinued?

Mr. Kendall: The answer is as follows: The purchasing of milk was not discontinued. In August 1965, farmers at Leguan ceased to deliver milk to the Plant after farmers were told that they would not be paid for milk rejected on arrival at the Plant. Following negotiations with the Plant, the delivery was resumed on September 15, 1966, with no change in the condition of payment.

Mr. Ram Karran: Will the hon. Minister say when the dumping of milk will be discontinued?

Mr. Kendall: As soon as the hon. Member is able to absorb it

ESTABLISHMENT OF INDUSTRIES

Mr. Khan: I rise to ask the hon. Minister of Economic Development Question No. 38 standing in my name on the Order Paper:

(a) Will the Minister state what Industries have been established as a result of the efforts of the Government since January, 1965 to the 30th April, 1966?

(b) If none, will the Minister state what Industries the Government envisages to have established, and how soon?

(c) Will the Minister also state whether Government proposes participating in the setting up of any industry? If so, in what industries and to what extent? If not, will the Government set up and manage any new Industry on its own?

The Minister of Economic Development (Mr. Thomas): The Answer to the Question is as follows:

(a) During the period 1st January, 1965 to 30th April, 1966 fifty Enterprises were awarded concessions by Government. Of these, twenty started operation, eleven were at the construction stage, and nineteen were in the

process of being established. Please see Appendix for a detailed list of these Enterprises Further, between January, 1965 and April 1966 because of concessions, the Demerara Bauxite Company, Limited expanded the manufacture of calcined bauxite. The Guyana Merchants Limited also expanded its facilities for processing shrimps.

- (b) This is not pertinent in the light of the answer to (a).
- (c) It is the intention of the Government to participate with private enterprise in establishing industries of major significance to the economy. Other industries are being studied at present with a view to possible participation.

Mr. Luck: I should like to know if the Minister would kindly answer the Question. Will the Minister say what industries have been established? He tells us about fifty enterprises. I should like to know what industries have been established, and, in relation to Question 38 (c), will the Government set up and manage any new industry on its own? That is a clear question; please answer it.

[The hon. Minister offered no reply.]

BANANA CULTIVATION IN THE DEMERARA RIVER

Mr. Chandisingh: I wish to ask the hon. Minister of Agriculture (Mr. John) Question No. 39 standing in my name on the Order Paper: Will Government state what plans it has to introduce banana cultivation in the Demerara River River?

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. John): The Answer to the Question is as follows:

The Government has made certain studies to date with regard to the cultivation of bananas in the Demerara River and is anxious that such cultivation should be carried out initially by the Government in conjunction with people who have experience in the cultivation of bananas for export, eventually paving the way for cultivation to be carried on by small farmers.

Seed has been imported and a seed nursery has been established on the East Bank of the Demerara River. The Government is, however, examining the capacity of the banana market to absorb new sources of supplies in the light of the world position of the fruit at present before launching into full scale cultivation.

Dr. Jagan: Is the Minister aware that, at the moment, there

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is serious competition between the Windward Islands and Jamaica for the banana market? Is the Minister satisfied that Guyana can produce bananas as economically as the Windward Islands?

Mr. John: I am aware of competition of one sort or another. I am also satisfied that bananas can be produced here.

Dr. Jagann: Will the Minister say whether the persons concerned, that is, the people from abroad who were interested in this project, still intend to proceed with this project?

Mr. John: The matter is still being examined.

3 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Mr. Benn.

[Mr. Benn was not in his seat.]

KUNDU REPORT

Dr. Jagann: On behalf of the hon. Member, Mr. Benn, I beg to ask the hon. Minister of Economic Development Question No. 40 standing in his name on the Order Paper: When does the Government propose to lay before the Nation-

al Assembly the Kundu Report on "The Economy of British Guiana, 1960-75"?

Mr. Thomas: The Government does not propose to lay the Kundu Report on "The Economy of British Guiana, 1960-75." The Report is not one for the Government of Guyana, it is the property of the Institute of Social and Economic Research of the University of the West Indies, under whose auspices Dr. Kundu's work on the subject was carried out.

Dr. Jagann: Will the Minister give the undertaking that he will approach the Institute for copies of this Report to be tabled in this House?

Mr. B : The Reports are available for purchase and if the hon. Member so desires, he can purchase one for himself.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS -

The following Bills were introduced and read the First time:

Guyana Coat of Arms (Regulation) Bill, 1966.

National Security (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, 1966. [The Minister of Home Affairs.]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTIONS

**TRIBUTE TO THE LATE
MR. JAMES ISAAC RAMPHAL**

"Be it resolved that this Assembly record its deep regret at the recent death of Mr. James Isaac Ramphal, O.B.E., and pay tribute to the service which he rendered to Guyana and to Parliament and direct that an expression of its sympathy be conveyed to his widow and children." [The Minister of Housing and Reconstruction.]

Mr. Bissenber: Sir, with your permission, I move the suspension of Standing Order No. 23 in order to move the Motion standing in my name on the Supplementary Order Paper.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order suspended.

Mr. Bissenber: Most of us in this Chamber knew, at some time or other, the late Mr. James Isaac Ramphal who was once a Member of the Legislative Council. He has served this country for many years, dating back to the year 1929 and onwards. Most Members, particularly those who came from the County of Berbice, would agree with me that the late Mr. Ramphal contributed quite a lot towards the educational advancement of the people of this country. I, personally, first came in contact with him at Auchlyne

on the Corentyne, and thereafter, I had the privilege of being taught Latin by him when I was taking the London Matriculation examination in New Amsterdam. At that time he was Inspector of Labour, having left the teaching profession.

Mr. Ramphal had a very wide field of activities. In 1926 he was Headteacher of a Government School. In 1928 he was Principal of the Modern High School. In 1937 he was Assistant Master of the Berbice High School. I think in those days you knew him, sir, or maybe you knew him earlier - in his childhood days. In 1938 he was Principal of the Modern Educational Institute. In 1943 he was appointed Inspector of Labour, and served this country for many years in the Department of Labour until 1952 when he was appointed Deputy Commissioner of Labour. In 1954 he was appointed Commissioner of Labour and held that post until he retired.

I am also informed that he was Chairman of the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee; he was Chairman of the Board of Industrial Training; he was Chairman of the Standing Committee of the Employment Exchange, and he was Chairman of the Juvenile Employment Committee. I have also been told that in 1958 he received the O.B.E. award for services rendered to this country.

Mr. Ramphal has been a man who has been the very epitome of a human being. He knew no other race except the human race. When

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he qualified as a Barrister and appeared in the Magistrates' Court and the Supreme Court, I remember that he was quite willing at all times to give fatherly and friendly advice to many of the young practitioners with whom he came in contact.

We regret his death, sir. He has served this country faithfully as a true Guyanese, and we have today his son who is our Attorney-General and Minister of State. We have to offer some consolation to the relatives of the late Mr. Ramphal that his name will ever remain a permanent memorial to all of us in this country because of the good service he rendered to the Guyanese people on the whole. I suggest that most of us in this House should emulate some of the shining examples of his life, some of us should try to copy some of the things which he believed in and which he preached all around this country.

I ask that we express our sentiments by way of conveying to his widow and immediate relatives our deep and sincere condolences, and wish that they might not take it so seriously but find some consolation in the fact that he once lived in Guyana and his name will be here for all Guyanese to remember, and that they will find some solace in the fact that Guyana on the whole pays tribute to a great man, the late **James Isaac Ramphal**.

The Minister of Local Government (Mr. Cheeks): William Shakespeare put in the mouth of Mark Antony the immortal words, "The evil that men do lives after them. The good is often interred with their bones." Guyana should not let this happen to James Isaac Ramphal. When I first became associated with him, I realized that I had met a man who was different from the ordinary selfish, grasping human being whom I had got accustomed to encounter in my passage through life.

I was carrying on a Correspondence School for teachers along with some other colleagues and we needed quite a large quantity of stationery and a printing machine, that is a Roneo duplicating machine. To my surprise, as soon as Jimmy Ramphal heard of our difficulty, he offered us not only the use of his machine and of his building, but he also allowed us to use whatever we wanted in stationery that he had in his office. The result was that, throughout the time that the course lasted, and it was about two or three years, we never had to buy ink for that machine nor paper for printing.

At that time I found it difficult to think that Mr. Ramphal could be acting from purely unselfish motives. I thought that there must be some gainful interest behind his apparent generosity. But as time passed, I discovered that Jimmy Ramphal wanted to do good for the sake of doing good. He wanted to help

others for the sake of helping others, and I learned to respect him for this quality of his character

I did not have much to do with his activities when he left teaching, but I know that he must have regretted it because he liked teaching. However, he was called to another aspect of service and I am certain that he also did well in that field although I was not closely associated with him in it. So, sir, I offer to this House and to Mr. Ramphal's family my sincere condolences on his passing, and I regard it as a privilege to second this Motion which was tabled by my colleague.

3.10 p.m.

Dr. Jagan: Death is a moment of grief, loss and regret, particularly to one's family and to one's friends. On occasions such as this, especially when a person has been in public life, the nation through its Legislature attempts to make an assessment of the contribution that the person has made to society and to his country. Generally, one tends to be laudatory and, perhaps, that is in keeping with the spirit of the occasion. But the keeper says to the person who enters the gates of Heaven: "Let me see the good and the bad." I should like, therefore, to point out what I regard as good and bad about Mr. Ramphal. There are two phases of Mr. Ramphal's life on which I should like to comment. The first is his role as a good Samaritan

in the field of education, and the other one is not so good.

There is no doubt that in the field of education Mr. Ramphal has probably made a contribution second to none in this country, particularly in the earlier period of this country's history when education was something to which many could not hope to aspire. Therefore, schools and institutions such as those founded by Mr. Ramphal certainly played a very great role in moulding the lives of many Guyanese who, today, play an important role in Guyanese society and Guyanese life.

Having said that, one must now look at the negative aspects of Mr. Ramphal's life. The second phase began some time in 1952, and culminated in the granting to him in 1956 of the title of O.B.E. In the early period of his life he served as a Labour Commissioner. It is known that in those days Guyanese and colonials in other territories like this had to go through difficult times. At that time the Public Service was dominated by Englishmen and pseudo-Englishmen with a colonial mentality. It is my view that Mr. Ramphal, a great fighter in his early years, decided to conform to rather than oppose the dictates of the Colonial Office. When he was the Deputy Commissioner and the Commissioner of Labour of this country he carried out dutifully the orders and instructions from the Colonial Office.

[DR. JAGAN]

Like his predecessor, Mr. Bissell, Mr. Ramphal carried on a policy which is having repercussions even today - a policy which did not allow the issue, for instance, of union recognition to be decided democratically. Today we are hearing a lot of talk about democracy and freedom.

On the suspension of the Constitution in 1953, Mr. Ramphal became a Nominated Member of the Legislative Council at a time when the Prime Minister was calling those who participated in the Government loyal Kikuyus. I would say that, on balance, Mr. Ramphal has made a great contribution as a teacher and as an educator, but I regret to say that in his later years he virtually succumbed to the whims of the Colonial Office. He served the Colonial Office well, but against the national interests of this country. Therefore I, on behalf of my colleagues, cannot find reason to join with the members of the Government in showering praise on such an individual. However, we recognize the deep loss which Mr. Ramphal's death must have been to his family and close friends. We join in expressing our sympathies, and we would like our expressions of sorrow to be conveyed to his widow and children.

The Prime Minister: In view of the fact that this Motion was moved by a Government Minister and seconded by another Minister, I would not have spoken on it. I

have known Mr. Ramphal intimately and closely, and, in view of some of the improprieties which have been indulged in in paying tribute to a Guyanese who was undoubtedly great, I have decided to speak. I have disagreed with Mr. Ramphal on many an occasion, but I have always found him a man of charm with a complete control of his temper; a man who did what he did out of conviction, and who served according to his belief. We cannot in life expect the boring monotony of having everyone agree with us, but, at least, we can sometimes go below the surface and recognize the moral virtues and motivations of individuals with whom we are connected.

I have differed with the late Mr. Ramphal as a trade union leader, and very frequently I have disagreed with the attitude which he took on certain matters. There have been other occasions on which he has agreed with my point of view. That made him no better a man because he agreed with my point of view. What I think distinguished Mr. Ramphal was his complete self-control, his selflessness and his love of humanity.

I have known Mr. Ramphal personally, and I am convinced that not only in the field of education has he made a sterling contribution, not only as Commissioner of Labour and Deputy Commissioner of Labour has he made a sterling contribution, but he has also made a sterling contribution by his very attitude.

These are things which can be easily recognized. In the circumstances, as head of the Government, I desire to pay tribute to a great Guyanese.

3.20 p.m.

Those of us who like to find some solace in philosophy may speak of death as "the groom that carries a taper to the outer room", but these philosophical mouthings are of little assistance in circumstances and on occasions like these, for in the context of the twentieth century Mr. Ramphal died at a comparatively young age. He had not reached 70 and, therefore, his death must have been a blow to his immediate relatives.

I should like, as head of Government and a not unrepresentative citizen of Guyana, to take comfort in the fact that he has left behind him a son of distinction who has, so far, rendered great service to this country and who, because of his youth and ability, will, I am sure, render still greater service than that rendered by those mealy-mouthed people who find it so easy to criticize. [Applause.]

Dr. Ramsaboye: I would not wish this opportunity to pass without reminding Members of the House that the late Mr. J.I. Ramphal was a member of the Bar and that to those of us who are lawyers he was a good friend and colleague.

I came to know him very late in his life. I remember him as a kind and generous man, a man of culture and refinement. I remember that his son, who is now the Attorney General, was the earliest scholar in this country to pursue post-graduate legal education and he must have been encouraged and assisted by him. His example many of us have followed and some of us have even gone further along the way.

As a member of the legal profession - and I am speaking for lawyers in the Chamber and out of it - I would wish this opportunity to be taken for us to join in expressing our feelings of sympathy to his son, the Attorney-General, and to the other members of his family on this very sad occasion. [Applause.]

Mr. Wilson: I think of all the Members of this House I stand in a very unique position because, although I am so old, I have been taught both by the father and the son. I was taught parliamentary procedure by the late Mr. J.I. Ramphal at extramural classes of the University of the West Indies and under the same auspices I sat at the feet of his son during a course of lectures entitled "Law for the Layman".

I would like, on that account, to place on record my tribute in that I found the late Mr. J.I. Ramphal a great teacher and so, also, I found his son. As a matter of fact, having been

for declaring vacant the seats of Members of this Assembly who cease to support the party on whose list they were elected to this Assembly." [Dr. Ramsaboye.]

Dr. Ramsaboye: In moving this Motion standing in my name I wish to advert very briefly to certain events which took place in 1962 and in 1963 when it was decided by the imperial power that the Constitution of this country was to be subject to important and fundamental changes in the interest of what the imperial power, at the time, called stable and strong Government.

On that occasion, and indeed it was in the Music Room at Lancaster House on the 23rd October, 1962, that the hon. Prime Minister, then the Leader of the Opposition, made certain observations including these: He said that the Constitution must be a book of rules, must be a document which reflects the political realities in which we would have to operate. We must have a Constitution which would assure all the Guyanese that their rights would not be trampled upon, even by majorities. A Constitution was not a document from which we could hope to gain some cheap political victory; it must be something that must be cognizant of the present and anticipatory of the future developments of the country.

Today we live in an era of cheap political victory and it is because of the most recent cheap

political victory which this Constitution has allowed, that is the defection of the hon. Member Mr. Bowman from the P.P.P. to his appointment as junior Minister, that I decided to introduce this Motion in this House. The Constitution must be a book of rules, yes! The Constitution must reflect the political realities of our position, yes! The Constitution should never be permitted to allow frauds upon the public which this present Constitution seeks to do.

It was strenuously argued by the People's National Congress and the United Force, at the Conferences in 1962 and 1963, that a system of proportional representation was necessary to produce stable Government. But a decision to change to proportional representation had already been made and determined by the imperial power. They were merely seeking machinery to carry it out. They decided in the end that the new nation should have proportional representation on a system using the whole country as one single constituency.

The argument of the hon. Prime Minister, who was then in the Opposition, was that the seats which were awarded on the basis of first-past-the-post did not truly reflect the number of votes raised by the various parties. He was insisting upon a system whereby the number of seats which a party held in the House would reflect the number of votes held. He justified the probable need for coalition with

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all the parties in the formation of Government by saying that people in the country will be forced to work together. Whether people in this country will be forced to work together under this system, whether they will work together, is not relevant for the purpose of this discussion.

What is relevant is this: political representation remains on a party basis. The hon. Prime Minister, then in the Opposition, had, through his party, expressed this in a memorandum which was tabled at the Conference on the 24th October, 1962 - that is the day after the observations which I referred to previously were made. The hon. Prime Minister said then that it may be argued that the limitation of choice, which is the concomitant of the party list, was undesirable, but anyone who has lived through the last two General Elections in Guyana would know that the overwhelming majority of the workers exercised franchise in favour of a party and not a candidate. That observation is, of course, true.

The problem before us then, in framing the constitutional proposals, was to ensure, as the Opposition then said, that political parties should have representation in accordance with the votes they received. But elections were held. They were held in December 1964 and the awards are published on page 57 of the Report on the House of

Assembly General Election 1964, a Paper which was laid in this House. The P.N.C., having been awarded 96,657 votes, received an allocation of 22 seats. The P.P.P., having obtained 109,332 votes, received an allocation of 24 seats. The U.F., having obtained 29,612 votes, received an allocation of 7 seats.

Today, the People's Progressive Party has only 21 Members in this House; three have defected. The P.P.P., by the workings of this constitutional document, is now in a position in which its membership in the House no longer reflects the number of votes the party held. [An hon. Member (Government): "Whose fault is it?"] It is the fault of the system because the system is fraudulent. The system allows fraud to be committed behind the backs of the people. A whole party can be alienated behind the backs of the people who voted for it if, by bribery, corruption, or other methods, its members are persuaded to cross the Floor and break their ties of allegiance which they exhibited to the electorate.

No mention about party is made in the constitutional provisions. This probably was because, for some reason which is inexplicable, the draftsmen did not wish to refer to political parties as such. They felt that reference to lists would be equally effective in providing the system of elections and voting. But it is clear that the realities of the situation

are that a list in this country is produced by a party; a party decides the number of people who are going to be on the list; a party decides the order in which those persons will be shown on the list. A party cannot change this list afterwards, and the elections proceed on the basis that should a Member resign or die, someone else will take his position on the list.

3.40 p.m.

Now, by making no provision for defection from the parties, by making no provision for conditions under which a person once elected on a party list ceases to come under the control of that party, a hole has been left through which political pundits are now able to draw coaches and horses. It may be that we have become so corrupt that we can no longer detect frauds of this nature because they have become part of our system. But let all those who are generals over the perpetration of this fraud remember that the people of this country have had nothing to say; they have had no opportunity to express any opinion on this question of crossing the Floor. It may be that there are three members of the People's Progressive Party who have crossed the Floor.

A fraud has been committed because it is clear that members of one party at least have defected, and they have swollen the ranks of the People's National Congress. This shows that people who can accept positions

of this nature behind the backs of the electorate while they have no right to say anything about it must stand before the electorate condemned. It may be thought by some that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander.

Is it right for political deals to take place behind the backs of the people? [*Interruption.*] Is it right that Members who are on the lists of the parties in the Government should be bypassed so that strangers could cross the Floor and be given higher positions as a national? [*Interruption.*] Is it right to the people? Is it fair to them? It is in my opinion a tragic case. Of the 24 members of the P.P.P., 3 have defected. [*Interruption.*] One-eighth of the number has been withdrawn from the list upon which the Members were elected. The consciences of certain Members of this House have been eaten away.

It is clear that a man would only cross the Floor if he decides to sacrifice his integrity and honour, and if he forgets that his position in the House is not a personal position. A man must not forget to distinguish between his representative capacity and his personal capacity. All of us here are trustees, we are representatives of the people. These positions are not our personal positions. They are positions which we derived from the people who voted for us. We

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have a right to express agreement or disagreement as we see it. [Laughter.]

Why talk about discipline? We have far to go to find men who will disagree with frauds. We need a certain number of men who can withstand bribery. We have very far to go, and this encouragement of these frauds will cause us to have to travel two generations to find men who would disagree. Rewards are being offered. I understand that one man who wants to cross the Floor has asked to become a Minister of the Government before he will cross the Floor. There are people sitting on those Benches who have tolerated those discussions and have actually bargained with the man.

There was a Roman Emperor named Caracalla. He murdered his brother, Geta and he sent for the Roman Jurist Papinian, and requested him to write a paper eulogizing the fratricide. Papinian decided to sacrifice life to honour and his execution for refusing has added lustre to the pages of Roman jurisprudence for which he was responsible.

3.50 p.m.

Under the system of education in this country in our early days, we have been made to read these things and to understand them. Papinian was executed because he refused to write a

eulogy. It is so easy to brandish a Parliamentary Secretaryship, or to tell a Member that you will consider making him a Minister in order to get him to cross the Floor or to renounce his party allegiance.

The hon. Prime Minister has made some observations at Lancaster House which will go down in the history of this country as those of a political genius, especially when we consider them in the light of what is happening at the present moment. May I read what he said about the Leader of the Opposition. On the 23rd October, 1962, he said at the Second Plenary Session of the Conference:

"The People's National Congress . . . feels that the distribution of political power in the community should be expressed in terms of a definite status for the Leader of the Opposition who is not only consulted but who has certain powers with respect to questions like emergency, declaration of war and the recruitment of the Armed Forces . . .

The Leader of the Opposition for us will not be merely a member of the legislature who leads the largest opposition party, but one who speaks for a large section of the community - one who expresses the attitudes of a large section of the country who, to put it briefly, on certain important matters should have a veto."

As far as the Leader of the Opposition is concerned, you have taken three of his men from him. Where is his veto? We call upon you to amend the Constitution, and put a veto upon any further sittings of the members who have defected from his party. It is said that in an emergency he should have the power of veto. Where is his veto now? Does the hon. Prime Minister still believe in the speech which he made on the 23rd October, 1962? What has become of us? What has come over us?

Let us have this veto now. Let it be stated that a man who no longer supports the party through which he was elected should be thrown out. I could draft an Amendment to this Constitution. Law was made for man, and man was not made for law. You have drafted law to rule a whole country. You have just put forward a Preventive Detention Bill. The man who could draft that Bill could draft anything. If you agree that the men who defect can no longer support the party from which they were elected and should give up their seats, I could draft the necessary legislation. Lawyers have drafted more important legislation than that, so do not worry about imaginary difficulties in drafting a Bill to deal with this matter. The question is: Do you agree that a man who defects from his party should not be allowed to sit in this House? If you agree that he should not sit in this House, then the necessary legislation will be drafted.

It will be noted that the Governor-General is supposed to act on the advice of the person whose name is first on the list. It shows that you have been thinking about it. In the same way when you get advice that a man's seat should be given up you should act on it. There are many ways in which you can draft legislation to deal with this matter, and the drafting of a Bill is really no problem. Do not tell me that it cannot be done. If you do not agree with it, then say so. If you think that it will be a fraud for a man to come here on a party ticket, cross the Floor and join the other side, sit and vote against his party, you must say so. Let us do something about this matter. A man who leaves his party should resign and give up his seat. He should certainly be disciplined.

Hardly anyone on the Government's back bench is allowed to speak here because of discipline. Do not worry to tell us that some of those who have defected have voted with us on one or two occasions. They cannot defect and then vote with us; they are voting for themselves. You cannot blow hot and cold. If he has resigned from his party, or has been expelled from his party, then his seat should be declared vacant.

Today it is conceivable in this House that five hon. Members of the United Force can cross the Floor and establish a new arrangement behind the backs of the people who sent them here, but we

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do not believe in that sort of thing. Surely, the day will come when this sort of thing will operate against you. The principle is wrong. It is like saying that we have a Preventive Detention Law; we will not use it now, but when you get in you may make use of it. This thing is iniquitous; it is a matter of far-reaching consequences, and in theory it is wrong.

Mr. Speaker: This sitting is suspended until 4.30 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.36 p.m.

On resumption.

Dr. Ramsahoye: This system whereby a man can cease to support a party presenting a list and yet remain in the House has two types of political implications. The first covers the case where he crosses the Floor and actively takes part in the work of the other side. The second case is where he remains in the House and represents no one but himself.

In the first case, when he crosses the Floor, internal problems, internal stresses and strains must necessarily arise. He might have crossed into ministerial position, causing somebody considered incompetent, or someone who did not have the necessary political patronage, to be displaced. He may cross and take a position above the heads

of men who had been in the firing-line and who deserved to be elevated before he crossed the Floor.

As I look around the House, I can, for example, ask: Why is the hon. Member, Mr. Wharton, not a Parliamentary Secretary? *[Interruptions.]* Is it that he must wait for ever? There may be machinations whereby other people become appointed. Hon. Members will remember that the hon. Member, Mr. Field-Ridley, was displaced. *[Interruptions.]* These stresses must in turn produce disgruntlements which cause prejudice to the public interest. The public welfare cannot be effectively looked after if within the Government parties there are stresses and strains and so much tussling for position.

Let us take the case of the other man who defects but does not cross the Floor. He stands there and he speaks. Whom does he represent? Nobody but himself. He occupies a position which the constitutional provisions never contemplated. He stands there and he speaks his own personal views and opinions from a position which he ought not in fairness to the electorate hold. The electors are represented through their parties. They are not represented by a man whom they do not know as an individual, a man whose beliefs and principles they probably were never interested in because, as the hon. Prime Minister said at Lancaster House, people vote for parties. Yet a man is permitted

to sit here and air and ventilate his private opinions and even to vote against the list upon which he was elected.

On the 24th September, 1966, organ of the United Force, expressed its opinion on this subject. This is what was stated then:

"In a 3-point release leaving United House Thursday the Executive Committee of the U.F. commented on:

MP'S WHO DEFECT OR ARE
EXPELLED

It is the view of the United Force that it is an essential feature of our PR system that parties, not individuals, are represented in the National Assembly, and that in the Assembly each party will retain its proportionate strength between elections. It therefore follows that should a legislator be expelled or defect from his party he should then lose his seat."

Correct! [Mr. Bissember: "Do you agree with that?"] What is its position now? What has happened since 24th September, 1966? What sort of political rascality are we seeing in this country? What is its position now? Has its views changed? If so, has iniquity turned to goodness? Has principle ceased to be principle? Has good sense ceased to be good sense? No! But it shows

the decay, it shows the decadence, it shows the inherent weaknesses of a manipulated electoral system cutting across the wishes and aspirations of a people.

We see now where this new system has been introduced and men set back to exploit it for their own selfish interest in disregard of the interest of the people. We cannot sit in silence while these inroads are made upon the rights of the electorate. It was intended all along that parties should retain their strength between elections. This is the whole basis of the system for, if that is not to be the basis of the system, nobody on the Government Benches could ever raise the argument that, under the first past-the-post system, persons got more seats in proportion to their votes. Nobody could raise that argument because, in this way, we see at once where, even under the P.R. system, by allowing men who defect to remain, the same position can obtain. A Government can be constituted having supplements for Members elected on the list by persons who defect from other lists. If we are honest, if we feel that a party's strength in the House should reflect its votes, then we must provide forms, legal and constitutional forms, whereby it will not happen that a person ceasing to support a party or the list upon which he is elected remains in the House.

There is a vital difficulty in permitting men to cross the Floor in order to make up Government. We must remember that the Prime Minister is elected having regard to the support which he

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commands in the House. He has tremendous powers; he appoints all the Ministers, in fact, the executive power is, in substantial measure, vested in him because he can make sure that he appoints to the Cabinet men who will carry the weight, so when it happens that a Government is to be made up of defectors, that is to say, when it happens that a Government could not be constituted without defectors, it means, in fact, minority rule. It is a patent flop. It means that a man, by being able to touch a few men personally, could alter the form, the character of a whole system of Government. That is what we are facing now.

Do not tell us that it is hard to make provision for that sort of rascality because it is not hard. Let us look at it this way. What is the substance of the thing? Is the man now representing himself alone? If the answer to that is yes, legal provisions should be made to prevent that self-representation. If a man has crossed the Floor, the position is doubly worse because he has taken what belongs to a party for his own personal gain. This is the position. If we reject this principle whereby a man can remain in the House after defecting we would have no problems because, in fact, once we know this is going to be the position, a man would not wait for a certificate to be issued by the person first named on the list. He will know. This may help our community because then he may leave in good faith.

We must, at all times, endeavour to uphold the right of

men to fundamental liberties. This is essential to our society. We must struggle hard to maintain this. We must struggle hard to maintain freedom of speech, freedom of expression, freedom of association. We must endeavour generally to uphold fundamental rights and freedom. We must not feel that if corruption is allowed it will do good to the society. This will do no good to the society. We must not feel that bribery will do good to the society. These things are like cancer, once they gain existence they have no restriction and no limited growth rate. They develop octopus-like and spread through the entire body politic.

We are going backwards. In the struggle for fundamental rights and freedom in this country, the people are on the retreat. But throughout history men have made a last ditch stand and have won. We cannot avoid them winning but we need not go to the position in which we have to go through struggle when doors are open and we can freely pass without trial, tribulation or suffering. Why make it difficult for us? Why should we sit here and make life difficult for ourselves and the future by pursuing policies and allowing corruption to continue, when we can immediately put our feet upon it?

I urge Members of this House to sit and reassess our position. It is true that at the Constitutional Conferences in 1962 and 1963 many things which were not meant were said by the then Opposition. The Opposition members' only interest then was to ensure that an electoral system would be

devised to give them a chance of winning electoral power which they did not have before. That is finished. They have achieved their objective; they have got a change in the electoral system. Now having got that, they have decided to sit idly by while stark corruption takes place.

4.50 p.m.

If the Coalition Government is in disarray, if it is breaking up because of disagreement, well, let us go to the polls again. But do not stoop to establishing a P.N.C. Government by defectors! Perhaps we are blinded by the simple truth, but I feel assured that with some contemplation, hon. Members will realize right is right and wrong is wrong. If we are elected on a certain basis, if the parties have certain allocations, then it is within their power to see that the rights of these people are guaranteed. In the case of the P.P.P. three men are a lot. Three men could deal with three different fields of public life. Three men could make significant contributions in the circle of Government on behalf of the 200,000 persons who elected them. Why deprive 200,000 persons of that? Why permit the depletion of this side of the House to 21 Members?

Similarly, if the U.F. has seven Members and five Members have defected, all that is left of the party is a shell. What will it do then? How will its interests be represented? If we cannot at this stage see the iniquities of this system, then we would not see them at all. I do not for one moment wish to embark upon the technicalities of legal

drafting because that is a cloak behind which some people will wish to shelter. Whatever we decide here we can draft. What I wish to know is whether, like Members on this side, Members on the other side agree to what was written in the organ of the U.F.

It is not for me to stand here and shed any tear. No mournful songs can be sung for those who amidst clamorous adulation cling to a political past-time whereby men cease to vote with their parties and become mere articles of political merchandise.

The Attorney-General and Minister of State (Mr. Ramphal): In bringing the Motion standing in his name on the Order Paper, my learned and hon. Friend has permitted himself to wander at large over a fairly wide and unchartered field of party politics, and of electoral procedures. In my remarks, I hope to pursue the more modest aim of dealing with this question --

Mr. Wilson: To a point of order. I have not heard the Motion seconded. Is this Mot on before the House?

Mr. Speaker: The objection is well taken.

Mr. Khan: I beg to second the Motion and reserve the right to speak at a later stage.

The Attorney-General: I was saying that I hope to pursue the more modest aim of confining my remarks within the narrow limits of the Motion and I trust that if I do so, hon. Members will acknow-

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ledge that this is in deference to my regard for the rules of debate and not that I concede the validity of any of the extraneous questions that have been raised.

This is the first occasion since Guyana became independent on which a proposal has been put forward in this House, or indeed, in this country, for an amendment of the national Constitution. I say a proposal because we are not embarking on an examination of a constitutional amendment itself, and I emphasize this because I think it is important that it should be appreciated both in this House and outside of it, and we should keep in the forefront of our consideration the fact that this Motion is not a vehicle of constitutional amendment. It is a Motion which seeks the support of this House for a declaration that this House recognizes that steps be taken to pursue a constitutional amendment. In his opening remarks, my learned and hon. Friend, quite fairly I think, stated that this was the limited purpose of the Motion. All the same, the Motion advances a deliberate proposal for constitutional amendment, and despite the difficulties - and they are formidable difficulties - created by its formulation for a really thoroughgoing analysis of the proposal, it is, I think, inevitable and palpably right that the proposal should be examined with care and with an appreciation of all its manifold implications.

Before I say anything about the proposal for amendment set out in the Motion it may perhaps be useful if I were to attempt to restate very shortly the position that now prevails under the Constitution with regard to these matters. Members of Parliament are elected to this National Assembly by virtue of their occupying a place on the list of candidates sponsored by a group of individuals. That sponsorship often, but by no means necessarily, takes the form of an organized political party.

5 p.m.

It is on the basis of the list so constructed and the votes of the electorate cast in support of the list that Members ultimately take their seats in this honourable House. Once so elected, they remain Members of this House for the life of the Parliament, unless in certain well-defined circumstances stipulated by the Constitution itself, they cease to be Members and vacancies occur. These circumstances are stipulated with precision and are, in fact, limited to four clearly defined situations - situations that are well known to hon. Members: cases of resignations; cases of loss of a member's seat through violation of the Rules embodied in the Standing Orders regarding absence from sittings of the House; the loss of Commonwealth citizenship and the acquisition of certain disqualifications which would be a bar to membership in the first instance.

Subject to these precisely defined situations established by

the Constitution itself the Constitution is a warrant that guarantees the tenure of the seats of hon. members duly elected in the course of a General Election. That guarantee is an absolute guarantee, and in fulfilment of it the Constitution confers and, in some cases authorizes the conferment of rights and privileges on hon. Members the better to enable them to discharge their responsibilities both to the House and to the country as a whole.

It is a particular feature of these highly-prized rights and privileges that Members of this House enjoy a special freedom of expression, an immunity from restraint on that freedom of expression, to the extent that subject only to the rules of debate - rules laid down and established by the House itself - nothing said in the House can be the cause of civil or criminal proceedings against any Member. This immunity and this privilege are provided for in the Constitution itself. Whatever a Member says in this House or in a Committee of this House is absolutely privileged. This essentially fundamental right which gives to an hon. Member of this Parliament the right to state, without restraint, his opinions on matters of public concern that come within the purview of the House is an ancient and much cherished right of Parliaments and of all parliamentarians throughout the democratic world. It is a right that has been hard fought for, and lives have been given in other places from which we have inherited the parliamentary tradition.

From the 17th century in Britain there are several cases that have marked the development of parliamentary government, and the victory they represent has been the very foundation of the success of parliamentary institutions. It is a right that has existed in this country throughout our many and varied parliamentary institutions from time immemorial. It is a right that has been stoutly defended and asserted by those early parliamentarians of this land whose militancy we sometimes forget, people like Webber, daSilva and Woolford whose battles in the legislative institutions of this land remain recorded for all who care to read. For this is not a new fight which has somehow devolved on our own institution with Independence; it is a right that we have enjoyed in this country from the days of our Dutch parliamentary institutions, a right enjoyed in the Court of Policy and in the Combined Court as well as in the more recent parliamentary institutions that were established in Guyana.

Nor, Mr. Speaker, is it surprising that this right should have been so cherished and asserted throughout the democratic world, more particularly by those liberal-minded men involved in public affairs who refuse to be constrained within the narrow limits of dogma and ideology. For this right of expression is basic to the very concept of the function of a Member of the Parliament and in its wider sense essential to the discharge of the duties and responsibilities of a Member of Parliament,

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not to any group, or interest, or section of the community, but to the country as a whole in whose Parliament he sits and whose destiny it is his responsibility to help and guide. All of this is well known to those who pursue the history of parliamentary institutions and the development of democratic Government.

Nowhere, I think, has the concept been better expressed or more forcibly set out than in a document with which you, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure most hon. Members of this House, are familiar. I refer to an address by Edmund Burke to the electorate of Bristol a very long time ago. His expression has since become a classic statement on the rights and responsibilities of a Member of Parliament in relation to his constituents. My hon. and learned Friend made great play in his introduction of this Motion about the responsibilities of Members of Parliament to the party and the people who have elected them. I can do little better than to remind hon. Members of what Mr. Burke said. Speaking to the electors of Bristol who had just elected him to serve them in Parliament, he said:

"Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness of a representative to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him; their

opinion, high respect; their business, unremitting attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions, to theirs; and above all, over, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiased opinion, his mature judgment, his conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living . . .

To deliver an opinion, is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear; and which he ought always seriously to consider. But authoritative instructions; mandates issued, which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgement and conscience, these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenor of our constitution.

Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local

prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not member for Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament."

5.10 p.m.

[Interruptions.]

Mr. Speaker: Let us keep a level today. If anyone interrupts I am going to rule him out of order.

The Attorney-General: May I, in the language of Burke, repeat those words and send them forth to the community as a whole in relation to our own Parliament and our own electors. You choose a member, indeed, but when you have chosen him he is not a member of the People's Progressive Party, or a member for the Corentyne; he is not a member of the People's National Congress or a member for Georgetown; he is not a member of the United Force or a member for the Rupununi. He is a Member of Parliament for Guyana. [Hon. Members (Government): "Hear, hear!"]

It is said that the system of proportional representation, under which hon. Members have come to this House through being on a party list for which electors have voted and not through direct election in constituencies, somehow, in some way, obliterates these fundamental concepts and makes it permissible indeed, I think my learned and

hon. Friend would say "essential" - that Members of Parliament should lose their seats in the House "if they cease to support the party on whose list they were elected" - to quote the strange and uncertain language in which the Motion "is cast."

Underlying this proposition must be an asseveration that under the old and, to many, discredited, system of first-past-the-post elections, Members of Parliament who were elected in their own right through constituencies -

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members are passing between the Chair and the speaker.

The Attorney-General: were elected as individuals, were elected in their right and capacity as individuals and not as members of the party which sponsored them. It must be implicit in the proposition that this was so and that, because it was so, they were entitled to express a point of view or to adopt a stand inconsistent with that of the party itself. I wonder if such an asseveration can be advanced with seriousness against the established realities of political life and experience in this country. Even under the first-past-the-post system Guyana is not the only country in which a political party could boast that were a broomstick put up as a candidate in a constituency it would find itself elected to Parliament.

Writing in their now definitive work on electoral systems, Lakeman and Lambert, whose work

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would be familiar to all those who from 1962 to 1964 followed the arguments on proportional representation, were able to conclude after an examination of a wide range of cases not only in the United Kingdom elections, but also in elections in the Commonwealth that —

“in a modern British election, the selection of the men and women who are to serve as representatives is made, not by the electors whom nominally they represent, but by party organizations (local or national).”

They drew attention to the fact that this was not a new phenomenon, but it was the logical development of a tendency that had become evident as long ago as 1861 in the period in which John Stuart Mill was writing his celebrated work on Representative Government.

It is not, therefore, surprising that when comparing first-past-the-post with the list system Mackewan and Lambert concluded that —

“In actual practice, the (list) system differs very little ... from the existing British method ... though it appears to do so.”

No observer of the political scene in Guyana over the last 10 years needs the authority of political scientists to tell him this. The evidence of elections in this country under the first-past-the-post system from 1953 onwards bears lasting testimony

to the fact that under this system rather than the system of proportional representation the average elector voted primarily for the party of his choice, taking into account in so doing his views of the leadership of the party and of the state of candidates put up in constituencies throughout the country, candidates who would ultimately become Members of Parliament and who would form the Government if the party was successful.

It is, I suggest, in this latter regard that the individuals whom the party was offering as its membership in the new Parliament, or as Ministers in a new Government, played an important part in the preference of the elector. Is this not essentially the same position as that which now exists under proportional representation, although under the list system the presentation is more forthright and more dramatic? It is not, I suggest, in the slightest degree accurate to say that the considerations that have so far been favoured in the vast majority of democratic societies in upholding the rights of the individual Member of Parliament in asserting his responsibilities not to

, not even to constituency, but to conscience and to the country as a whole, no longer apply and no longer have a validity to a Member of this honourable House who was elected on the basis of his name being on the list of candidates for which electors have voted.

5.20 p.m.

These are considerations of general application but they are, I think, important to a consideration of the proposal embodied in

the Motion and we make no progress with the development of our fundamental institutions if we ignore them and fasten only upon the immediate needs and problems of a particular political situation.

It is necessary for me to look a little more closely at the terms in which this proposal is being advanced. The Motion as it is formulated asks this House to

“recommend that steps be taken to amend the Constitution of Guyana to provide for declaring vacant”

and these are important words

“the seats of Members of this Assembly who cease to support the Party on whose list they were elected to this Assembly.”

I draw attention to the fact that this is advanced as a proposal for constitutional amendment, and this House is being invited to recommend that a law be drafted to give effect to this proposal and to secure the necessary constitutional change.

This is not - certainly not in its formulation in the Motion - a proposal of a broad political idea and we must, therefore, consider with especial care the implications of each of the significant features of the proposal. It just will not do to advance a formal proposal for constitutional amendment in carefully drafted language in the form of a Motion and to say that all the House is concerned with is the principle of change and that a method will be found to give effect to it.

What then are the particular features of the proposal? Note that, in the first instance, the proposal recommends that the seat is to be declared vacant. We must assume, therefore, that it is not the intention of those who propose the constitutional amendment that the vacancy should take effect by virtue of operation of law. It takes effect by virtue of an act of declaration. Who makes this declaration? Is it made by this Honourable House itself on a Motion, in effect, expelling the Member. Or is it, perhaps, made by the courts exercising a novel and, one must surely assume, unwelcome jurisdiction in an area essentially political. Or is it made by the party on whose list the name of the Member appears?

If it is to be made by the party, by what arm of the party? By its national executive, or by its parliamentary executive? Or is it, perhaps, made by the chairman of the party? Or by the leader of the party in the House? If it is possible to discover by whom the declaration is to be made, and to be sure that there will always be someone to make it, is it mandatory that the declaration shall be made when the act of defiance is committed, or will it merely be permissive, that is, can the declaring authority waive the offence and demonstrate an act of clemency to the recalcitrant Member? Must the declaration and the decision be made forthwith, or may it be postponed? If postponed, for what period?

We must assume that my hon. and learned Friend who introduced this Motion has considered with

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care all these various possibilities and is aware of the precise interpretation that he attaches to the proposal. Assuming, for the purpose of the consideration of the proposal, that we can get past this confused question of the declaration of the vacancy, and that we can, perhaps in some way, reach the stage where the declaration is made, that we know by whom it is made, can we glean the circumstances in which the declaration may be made?

We are, after all, being asked to endorse a proposal under which a man who has been duly elected a Member of the National Parliament is to lose his seat. It is trite to observe that it is essential, in this situation, that all concerned - the man himself, the party on whose list he was elected, the community at large - should know with certainty the circumstances in which the vacancy will arise. The Motion provides for the seat to be declared vacant if the Member ceases to support the party on whose list he was elected.

Let us take each of these concepts in turn. A declaration can only be made if the Member ceases to support the party. When, and by virtue of what act, does the cessation take place? Does a single act of self-expression involve a cessation of support for the party? Must a Member lose his seat in Parliament if he votes on an issue in a manner different from that in which the majority of his colleagues in the party on whose list he was elected happen to

have voted? Or does he lose his seat if he merely abstains from voting when they vote?

5.30 p.m.

Does it matter if he acts inconsistently in a proceeding of the House or in a Committee of the House? Or is it enough if he fails to attend a meeting of the House in response to the party Whips? Can cessation of support take place in a manner and in circumstances quite extraneous to the proceedings and deliberations of the House? Does a Member who resigns from a party but consistently votes with the party in the House cease to support the party in terms of the amendment? If any of these possibilities constitutes cessation of support - and I by no means pretend that I have exhausted all possible deviations - is it established by a single occurrence or by several occurrences of a related nature? Must it be a pattern of behaviour, and if it is a pattern of behaviour, is this to be established on the basis of a specified number of instances? I am sure that my learned and hon. Friend who moved this Motion knows precisely what he means by the concept of cessation. But here again it would have been helpful to the House had this information been vouchsafed to us.

Then there is the concept of support. Whatever the circumstances in which support ceases to exist, we must at least know, before the House is asked to adopt this Motion and to endorse this proposal for constitutional amendment, what is the nature of the support of the party that the proposal envisages. Wide areas

and vistas of uncertainty are here opened up. Are we talking of support through voting in the House, which is, I suppose, the most obvious type of support that would spring to mind - voting in response to the party Whip? Are we talking of attendance to the affairs of the party outside of the House which has nothing to do with the proceedings of the House? Here, quite obviously, are important areas of support for the party.

Does a Member cease to support a party, for example, if he fails to fulfil a speaking engagement directed by his party executive as a week-end assignment, even though he consistently supports the party in this House? Or are we in the area of financial support? Does a Member cease to support a party if he is in arrears with party subscription, even though he faithfully discharges his duties in the House? Or does he withdraw his support if, while being up to date with his financial contributions, he fails to give militant support outside of the House to the causes which are dear to the hearts of the party executives, or perhaps to that section of the party which fortuitously happens to be in the ascendancy of that executive? Does this constitute a withdrawal of support? Does this act of defiance call for the loss of his seat in Parliament?

Here, again, I am sure that the learned and hon. Mover of the Motion has a clear conception of what is involved in terms of his amendment. But here, too, it would have been helpful had this been revealed to hon. Members.

There are still further difficulties. It would be helpful if we could, perchance, know what "support" implies and if we could determine with some measure of precision when it ceases. Who makes the determination, as distinct from the declaration, that it has ceased? Is it made by the party executive or is it made by some other authority? And again, must it be made immediately or must it merely be a sword of Damocles, a threat of the declaration hanging over the head of the intransigent?

But this is by no means the end of this tangled path. There are still further and more vexing problems in the way we are being asked to consider this Motion. We must assume that the purpose of this debate is - as we are seriously talking about a proposal for a constitutional amendment - to consider the circumstances for the loss of a Member's seat if he were elected on a party ticket. Now, whatever the political realities - and I recognize that the realities in this regard do not necessarily accord with the theoretical possibilities - we must check again all these possibilities if we are suggesting a tampering with our basic institution. Neither the Constitution itself nor the electoral laws by which hon. Members are elected to this Parliament relate the list system as it was not a prerequisite of the operation of first-past-the-post. Once the list is endorsed by 200 electors, it is a properly endorsed list. It follows therefore, that there need not necessarily be a con-

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tinuity of party organization after the General Elections on which this disqualification for membership - the circumstances for the loss of a seat - can operate.

5.40 p.m.

It is no use saying that in the vast majority of cases there will be a party. If we are serious about the business of Constitution making, it will not do to be so imprecise. Let us take the political realities into consideration. It is common knowledge that in the majority of cases a Member would have been elected on a list sponsored by a political party, and he is to lose his seat in the House if he ceases to support that party. What is the party to which this concept of genuine support must be attached if, subsequent to a General Election, the party on the basis of whose list he was elected goes into fragmentation and emerges, perhaps, as no party at all?

We need not go too far back in our own history to find examples where a party emerges, perhaps, as two separate parties sitting in the House. Is it surely not a case that all of the Members of the House elected on that particular list will lose their seats, for where now is the party to which their continuing support attaches, being the party on whose list they were originally elected? Of course, this is carried to its logical conclusion. The inevitable allegiance

of the Members will go to one party or the other, because they have emerged off-shoots of the party. We can go on *ad infinitum* on this matter. There is literally - and I say this with all seriousness - no end to the uncertainties and parliamentary chaos that are implicit in a constitutional amendment based on the proposal embodied in this Motion. I think it is not unfair to say that it is a discourtesy to hon. Members of this House and to their intelligence that we should be asked to debate and to vote upon a proposal as ill-conceived and ill-prepared as this one is.

This brings me to the only other comment that I wish to make on the Motion which the House is considering. It is a comment that is, perhaps, of more fundamental importance than any of the other points with which I have attempted to deal. We are now an independent country. We have fashioned a Constitution which is now the supreme law of this land and which provides the very foundation for all our legal and political institutions. It is indeed the very heart of our legal and political systems. We are no longer working under a Constitution from the Colonial Office amendable by Order in Council as occasions demand. What is more, the processes for a constitutional amendment have been very carefully delineated. These processes are to be found within the community itself. The possibility for a constitutional change is entirely within the hands of Guyanese. It is a right that carries important and far-reach-

ing responsibilities. It is not good enough for us to use a constitutional amendment in order to settle an essentially political problem, as we might, perhaps, have been tempted to do in the past before this country gained its independence.

In the circumstances, I venture to suggest that it behoves us - the Members of this House and the community at large - to promote a due regard for our basic national institutions and in particular for the Constitution of our country, and not lightly or in a facile manner to advance proposals for constitutional amendment merely by way of a protest in a political context.

Few Members in this House are in any doubt of the real problems involved in the constitutional change to which my hon. and learned Friend referred. They are problems of party organization, party control, and party discipline. The problems of a political party do not justify ill-advised tampering with our permanent constitutional arrangements. Let us not in this House or outside expect to solve all our problems by way of constitutional amendment. Whenever we feel constrained to advance proposals for a constitutional amendment, let us do so only after the most searching examination of the matter. Let us be satisfied that the change we propose to make in the permanent fabric of our law and our political institutions achieves the good we wish to establish and causes no injury to basic

arrangements which will outweigh the benefits which we seek to achieve.

This Motion, conceived as it was in pique and nurtured on misunderstanding, stands revealed for what it is - a political absurdity, masquerading as constitutional dogma. It does not deserve the support of hon. Members of this House and will not, I hope, command it. [Applause.]

Mr. Luck: I rise to support the Motion of the hon. Dr. Ramsahoye. After listening to the arguments of the "hon. Minister of the United Kingdom" - I am sorry - the hon. Minister of State, one must conceive that his arguments sound attractive, but, as far as I am concerned, they are as unsound as they are attractive. It is the height of irony, indeed, that this "hon. Minister for the United Kingdom" should be quoting Burke and Mill on *Representative Government*. He has the effrontery to quote Mill on *Representative Government*, when everything that Mill has written supports the contention that what is taking place here is invidious and obnoxious.

Why did the hon. Minister of State quote certain sections on Parliamentary Democracy and conveniently forget other sections? Mill in his great work on *Representative Government*, pointed out that if people were to be denied the right of electing their representatives, such people would be denied inevitably their every right. Mill had no use for nominated elements in his concept of a Parliament and nothing

[MR. LUCK]

he has ever written could support this system of having a nominated Member.

5.50 p.m.

When future historians come to examine the history of our time this debate will stand out as the low-water mark in Guyanese public life. That we should be debating a matter that is the accepted norm of conduct in all civilized circles is conclusive proof of the low standard of public morality in this country. That we should be debating whether a representative of the people, elected by the people and having sold them out for filthy lucre, should remain in the National Assembly or should be compelled to resign shows the very low standard of public life. By all that is right and just, by all that is decent and holy, such a man should resign and try his luck when the next election comes around.

My learned and hon. Friend uses his learning to advance very ingenious arguments, but in what capacity are we here? My learned and hon. Friend, Dr. Ramsahoye, struck the crux of the matter. We are not here to speak of our own beliefs; we are here to represent those who put us here, and if it so happens that we cease, either for private gain or for personal profit, to represent the people who sent us to this Assembly, then honesty, integrity and decency impel us to resign.

I am a rebellious sort of fellow myself and I see that the Motion is not without its difficulties, but the truth is that our Constitution has been devised to give dictatorial powers to that hon. Member opposite. In consequence, as we read through the Constitution we see that the person first named on a list has rights over those on the list. I see nothing wrong in empowering the person whose name first appears on the list to have such power. Since he put a man in - and some of us came very early - then he can decide to put him out. I adopt the argument of the hon. Attorney-General, but I arrive at a different conclusion.

The Attorney-General said that the history of recent elections in this country, even under first-past-the-post system, shows that candidates are really elected by the party hierarchy. Indeed, in the case of the People's National Congress it is Mr. Burnham himself who selects the men. If this is the process of selection, why should there be unhappiness that this should also be the process for rejection? I adopt the argument of the Attorney-General. I agree with him that this is a solemn debate and we must approach it seriously even though the majority of votes are on one side or the other. It is not a matter for hilarity.

I will relate this story to the House and I will relate it on a public platform. It is an amazing story of corruption and dishonesty. Men in this Chamber

should stand by their convictions; they should not be bought and sold as articles of commerce. Long before the event, I was able to predict to the leadership of the People's Progressive Party the impending defection of one of our legislative members.

Let us consider the matter from the other way round. Let us allow the parties to remain as they are: let us say that all the parties will keep their following; then, as the Prime Minister argued when he proposed the system of proportional representation, some meaningful accord would have to be arrived at. This was the argument of the Prime Minister: rather than allow rascality and a chance 42 or 40 per cent to have overwhelming power, let us have a balance and then, in a multiracial society with racial voting, statesmanship must emerge to save us from disaster.

6 p.m.

Those on the opposite side who dream of completely dominating this side of the House must know that some of us may run - [The Prime Minister: "Which of us?"] - others may take the dishonourable course, but some must remain. Not everyone is ashamed, not everyone can be ashamed of and apologize for belonging to a future if the country is divided. The country has a sharp division and when a Member takes the step of leaving this side of the House for the other, or *vice versa*, it is an act of treachery. That is how it is regarded, and rightly regarded, by those who sent us

here. To allow this sort of thing to continue, far from elevating the tone of national life, would make it a hot-bed of corruption.

I had returned from the great Republic of China and it was commonly felt that I had come with communist money. Unfortunately, and unhappily for me, that belief was contrary to the truth. I was asked to extend some of this money to a comrade. I saw at once that there were difficulties, so I gave him something to hold on to. I said, "Comrade, I really do not have it, but I shall get it for you if it is necessary." I had no intention of getting money for anybody, for I do not believe in that. I asked those, who may have had, to do something in this matter, and every time I saw the gentleman I would tell him, "I have just sent off the cable, comrade." I gave him the address in Peking, but I sent no cable.

Surely, for such a person to remain in this House and to cross the Floor is an act of public immorality and indecency. No laughter, no humour, can erase the awful truth in such a situation. In this Chamber we are the representatives of the people who put us here. We are not here in our own right; we are not here to enrich ourselves. We are here, I hope, to give honest representation to those who put us here. An examination of the recent past of this country must show, even if the hon. Attorney-General blinds himself to the fact, that

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there are rigid lines between the party on this side of the House and those on the other side. For my part, I have done my best to blur these lines in the interest of the country, for I can see no particular race. That is the awful situation in this country today.

I tell the hon. Prime Minister openly, as I have told him in private, that devious forces are at work in this country. Money is being thrown around like confetti. Money is all around and the source of that money has just left. I urge the hon. Prime Minister to abandon the hope of buying a few venal and corrupt instruments and allowing Ministers to steal so that they may join his party. These tactics would give a temporary majority but no lasting progress to this country.

Instead of that, let us allow the parties - he proposed this as the *raison d'être* of his P.R. system - to remain as they are and then let statesmen emerge who will make some meaningful accommodation. Quite clearly, the hon. Prime Minister is determined to take the opposite course - bribery, corruption, and coercion. I am not unaware that, in history, given certain circumstances and certain skills in those who wield this unholy trinity of power, this thing could lead to success but, in this country, from my experience in this matter, the prime levers

of power are not in Georgetown, they are in Washington or at points east and west.

I should now like to advert to the technical difficulties which the hon. Attorney-General raised in his very lucid and attractive address. First of all he says - and possibly with some measure of fairness - that the Motion itself is imprecise. No one on this side of the House claims that the Motion is precise. What we are asking is that this House approve that those who leave the party, those who cease supporting the persons who put them here, those who cease supporting the party, should be asked to vacate their seats in Parliament. This is the normal parliamentary behaviour in all civilized countries. It may well happen that I may differ with my party colleagues. I would resign if that happened. I have absolutely no doubt in my mind about this and the proof of it may be shortly.

I was speaking about the technical difficulties of the P.R. system. I have said that the person to indicate that the chap - [The Prime Minister: "The hon. Member."] - has stopped supporting the party should be the person who heads the list on which the hon. Member belongs. There is nothing difficult in this if the leader on that list signifies to the Speaker that this chap - [The Prime Minister: "Hon. Member."] - hon. Member has defected. What we are deciding tonight, in spite of the

beautiful speech of the hon. Attorney-General, is whether or not a person who turns around and joins the P.N.C., after having got his seat in this House by virtue of being elected a member of the P.P.P., should be allowed to remain in this Chamber. This is what we are debating. It is as simple as that.

I see some significance in the fact that this Motion is being debated at this particular time, before certain taxation proposals are decided upon in the Cabinet. Give and get! That is the whole nature of this Government, a most sordid marriage of convenience which one day will lead to an equally messy divorce which will not be heard at eight o'clock in the morning. [The Prime Minister: "It was 8.30 in the morning."] Why has this Motion come now? It is well known that the hon. Member Dr. Richmond has publicly and properly - and in very effective and felicitous language - castigated the appointment of the hon. Member Mr. Bowman as junior Minister. Why has this Motion come now? It has come now because the taxes will be relieved depending on the abandonment of criticism of the hon. Member Mr. Bowman. He gives here and they take there. This is not the way a country can be successfully run.

The hon. Attorney-General spoke of Burke and on the role of a Parliament. It would not have escaped his attention or the attention of this honourable House that when Burke wrote there were very few Parliaments indeed and,

in those days, the Parliament of England was a gentleman's club wherein the differences were not really many nor grave.

6.10 p.m.

Today a vast gulf divides this House on all issues and anybody who is so dishonest as to defect from this side to the other side is a public Judas. I do not wish my good and hon. Friend, George, to believe that I restrict my remarks to him. There was a catechist's son, a renegade from the church. Should such people be allowed to remain in this House? I do not care what manner of sophistry or what vast erudition the hon. Attorney-General or anyone else brings into this House. The matter before this House is a matter of public corruption.

The hon. Attorney-General did not mention this but the successful working of a Parliament, as stated by Burke and Mill and those who have written about it, demands that, far from rascals being elevated, men of calibre, men of integrity either on the front Benches or the back Benches must be elevated. Surely this is elementary.

I have watched the leader of the United Force and I wonder what his reflections will be when I tell him formally that he has no more than three Members in this House today. That is my certain knowledge. I give him three only out of respect. There are two over there - I do not

[MR. LUCK]

want to say one is a "rat" so I say two - but percentage-wise, it is much greater than ours. In a modest way this House can contribute much to the welfare of this nation, and I would hope that the Members opposite would see the wisdom of accepting this Motion.

I once raised with one of the promising gentlemen opposite the possibility of his elevation to higher office, and, pulling his leg I predicted that George would get the job. I was told that that was absurd; that that was impossible and that the party could not stand for it. What have we seen, Mr. Speaker? Surely, on those Benches opposite there are better men than the defector, putting aside the defection. Are we living in wonderland where a man's merit lies in his rascality? This is Alice in Wonderland: "Topsy-Turvy!"

In all seriousness, I see good men opposite. Let them reflect on this. The hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye made an interesting disclosure. These disclosures are shocking and in any developed society where people hope to retain their freedom, such disclosures must shock the public conscience and cause the people to rise up in some opposition. As my good friend had said, "The party would not stand for it", but the party did stand for it.

In this country we must be very careful lest we establish a

system based on bribery, corruption and deals. The hon. Prime Minister defined political science as the "science of deals." What a cynical definition! We see the Prime Minister's plans unfolding in front of our eyes one by one. The hon. Prime Minister knows that what I want is not his to give. He might obstruct it; but it is never his to give.

In concluding, let us now be serious in this matter. We are voting here tonight either for honesty and integrity in public life or for corruption and dishonesty and foreign manipulation. We defend our national integrity by empowering the leaders of those lists in such cases to take definitive and necessary action. I would not want to believe that there are more than three agents of foreign powers in this Parliament.

6.20 p.m.

Mr. Sancho: The hon. Attorney-General has already referred to the vague, strange and uncertain language in this Motion by the hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye. He also said quite rightly that what the Motion seeks to achieve is not a proposal of a broad political idea. Indeed, when the hon. Mover of the Motion was speaking he referred to the fact that at one of the Constitutional Conferences the hon. Prime Minister remarked that a Constitution is not an instrument of "cheap political victory". Similarly, it should not be an instrument to be manipulated in the House when

a party is having trouble in its ranks and is facing political defeat.

Like the hon. Attorney-General, I have noted the words "amend the Constitution" appearing in the Motion. It is my view that five months after the Constitution has been in force is far too early for us to amend a document which was arrived at after so much thought, after so much discussion. It will be recalled that the members of the party opposite refused to attend the Constitutional Conference. Had they done so they might have been able to have certain things included in the Constitution.

In the Motion I notice the words "that steps be taken to amend the Constitution". This is going to raise a very dangerous precedent. Why should we make this bitter, indiscriminate change in our Constitution in order to rectify what is basically a political problem? Even if by some miracle the position changes when voting time comes and this Motion should secure a majority of votes, in a matter like this it can and should only be carried on a two-thirds majority of the votes. That is stated in the Constitution. As the hon. Attorney-General so lucidly said, to include matters of this type at this time in our Constitution is to raise a dangerous precedent. I do not think we should tamper with our Constitution after a period of five months.

It is stated quite clearly in the Constitution at Article

61(3), on page 55, the ways in which a Member of this National Assembly may cease to hold his seat. I quote in parts:

He loses his seat if -

"...adjudged to be of unsound mind, sentenced to death or imprisonment, or convicted or reported guilty of an offence ..."

These things are clearly set out, because it must be realized that when a man becomes a Member of this Parliament he holds a national position, and it is no longer a matter for the party alone to throw him out.

The arguments put forward by the members of the Opposition can be very much likened to the name which the Trinidadians gave a certain bird--*[Interruption.]* I want it to be clearly noted that the Independence Conference was called; that all parties were invited to attend - as is the case at all Independence Conferences - to put forward their views on the Constitution. The P.P.P. should have gone to London and taken up the very point which has now arisen and from which they happen to be the sufferers at the moment

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until Wednesday, 16th November, 1966, at 2.00 p.m." *[Mr. Bissember.]*

Adjourned accordingly at 6.30 p.m.

APPENDIX I

LIST OF ENTERPRISES AWARDED CONCESSIONS BY GOVERNMENT
FROM JANUARY 1st 1965 TO 30th APRIL 1966

Company Name and Plant Location	Status: Planned/Under Construction/In Production	Product
Guyana Knitting Factory Ltd., 34, Fort Street, Kingston, Mr. Festus Charles	In Formation	Knitting of Garments
Guyana Timbers Ltd., Houston, East Bank, Demerara	In Formation	Secondary woods' pro- cessing
Starter Battery, Manufacturers Guyana Ltd.	In Operation	Making of Batteries
Swan Manufacturing Company Ltd., Evans Street, Charlestown	In Operation	Detergents
Sterling Products Ltd., Providence, East Bank Demerara	In Construction	Detergents
Rupununi Enterprises Ltd., Rupununi.	In Operation	Bone Meal
Yasin/Lysons Textile Ltd., Ruimveldt Industrial Site	In Construction	Dye fabrics, knitting
Continental Agencies Ruimveldt Industrial Site	In Operation	Curry Powder
Guyana Merchants Ltd., Ruimveldt, East Bank Demerara.	In Operation	Retreading of Tyres
Demerara Building Industries, Friendship, East Bank Demerara	In Operation	Clay Products

Company Name and Plant Location	Status: Planned/Under Construction/ In Production	Product
Modern Signs Ltd., Robb Street, Georgetown	In Operation	Neon Signs
Atlantic Travel Goods Manufacturing Company, c/o Mrs. Rickford, Christiana Rickford & Company, Vryman's Erven, New Amsterdam, Berbice	In Operation	Travel Goods
Vacu-lug (Guyana) Ltd.	In Operation	Repairing and remoulding Tyres
Briana Manufacturing Company Ltd., Lombard Street, Georgetown	In Formation	Paper Envelopes
Briana Manufacturing Company Ltd., Lombard Street, Georgetown	In Formation	Coir Pads
Da Silva Confectionery Ltd., Curtis Street, Albouystown	Under Construction	Confectionery
Demerara Shirt Factory, Plaisance, East Coast, Demerara	In Operation	Ladies' Garments
Asco Enterprises Ltd., Ruimveldt Industrial Site	In Formation	Footwear Manufacture
National Utility Products	In Formation	Waxes, Cleaners, Insecticides
Bata (Guyana) Ltd.	In Formation	Footwear Manufacture

Company Name and Plant Location	Status: Planned/Under Construction/ In Production	Product
Sand & Glass Manufacturing Company Ltd., Germany	In Formation	Glass
Toucan Headwear Ltd., Cove & John, East Coast, Demerara	In Production	Manufacture of Hand Bags
Guyana Fibre Products Ltd.	Under Con- struction	Fibre Products
Roma Manufacturing Company Ltd.	In Production	Mosquito Repellent
Canada Bed Company	In Formation	Beds
T. Stiemann & Company Germany	In Formation	Cutting & Polishing of Diamonds
Guyana Paper Products Ltd.	Under Con- struction	Napkins & Toilet Paper
Johnson & Johnson Ltd., Trinidad	In Formation	Sanitary Napkins
Guyana Records Ltd.	In Formation	Phono- graphic Records
Sannap Manufacturing Company Ltd., 148 Regent Street, Georgetown	In Formation	Sanitary Napkins
Guyana Plastic Works Ltd.	In Formation	Plastics
Guyana Times Publishing Company	In Operation	Cardboard Container
Guyana Electronic Industries Ltd.	Under Construction	Radio Assembly
Hobart Manufacturing Company	Under Con- struction	Sanitary Products

Company Name and Plant Location	Status: Planned/Under Construction/ In Production	Product
Guyana Corrugating Works	In Formation	Corrugated Sheets
Nicholas Daher Ltd.	In Operation	Cigarettes
Guyana Milling Company Ltd.	In Formation	Livestock Feed
Sue Young Polythene Enterprises Ltd.	In Formation	Polythene Products
Guyana Plastic Processing Company	In Formation	Plastics
Allied General Corporation	In Operation	Cutting and polishing of diamonds
Tower Hotel Limited	Under Construction	Rebuilding and construction of additional 30 rooms
Woodbine Hotel Limited	Under Construction	Construction of additional 15 rooms
Continental Oil Company Ltd., (Guyana)	In Operation	Exploration for oil
Shell (Guyana) Ltd.	In Operation	Exploration for oil
Toolsie Persaud Limited	Under Construction	Expansion of quarrying
Baracara Quarries Ltd.	Under Construction	Expansion of quarrying

Company Name and Plant Location	Status: Planned/Under Construction/In Production	Product
Sherrit Gordon Mines Ltd.	In Operation	Exploration for Miner- als
American Metal Climax Ltd.	Under Organi- sation	Exploration for Miner- als
Tobrit Mining Company	In Operation	Exploration for Miner- als
Various individuals	In Operation	Exploration for Miner- als.

APPENDIX II

RESTRICTIONS ON PERSONS RELEASED FROM DETENTION

QUESTION No. 35

QUESTION by Mr. Bhagwan and REPLY by the Minister of Home Affairs:

Question: (a) What restrictions have been placed on the liberty of those persons who have recently been released from detention?

(b) What are the reasons for these restrictions?

Answer: (a) Varying restrictions have been placed on persons recently released from detention and include in some cases curfew during the hours of darkness, reporting to the Police weekly or fortnightly. Individuals have, however, been given special permission to move out of their areas of restriction in order to attend to their private business, to see their Legal Advisers, receive medical and dental attention; attend weddings, cinemas and even a boxing match.

(b) **The persons are considered a security threat.**

Government is committed to maintain the security of Guyanese and persons who become a threat to this security must be dealt with in a manner to ensure the security of Guyanese people.