

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 2]

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

17th Sitting

Thursday, 5th October, 1967

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

The Assembly met at 2.00 p.m.

Prayers

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

Present

His Honour the Deputy Speaker, Mr. R. C. Tello.

Members of the Government

Ministers

Dr. the Honourable P. A. Reid,

Minister of Finance.

The Honourable N. J. Bissember,

Minister for Parliamentary Affairs (Leader of the House).

The Honourable R. E. Cheeks,

Minister of Local Government.

The Honourable E. F. Correia,

Minister of Communications.

The Honourable C. M. L. John,

Minister of Home Affairs.

The Honourable R. J. Jordan,

Minister of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

The Honourable C. A. Merriman, J.P.,

Minister of Labour and Social Security.

The Honourable M. F. Singh,

Minister of Works and Hydraulics.

The Honourable H. C. Spence,

Minister of Trade.

Parliamentary Secretaries:

Mr. D. B. DeGroot,

Parliamentary Secretary, Prime Minister's Office.

Mr. G. Bowman,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture and Natural Resources.

Mr. O. E. Clarke,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education.

Mr. P. Duncan,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Local Government.

Mr. J. G. Joaquin, O.B.E., J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Hydraulics.

Mr. C. V. Too-Chung,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance.

Other Members:

Mr. W. A. Blair

Mr. J. Budhoo

Mr. M. Kasim

Mr. W. G. Carrington

Mr. R. G. B. Field-Ridley

Mr. D. Mahraj

Mr. H. Prashad

Mr. T. A. Sancho

Mr. J. H. Thomas

Rev. A. B. Trotman

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

Members of the Opposition

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

Mr. A. Chase

Mr. Ram Karran

Mr. C. V. Nunes

Mr. M. Hamid, J.P.

Mr. J. R. S. Luck

Mr. H. Lall

Mr. Mooneer Khan, J.P.

Mr. Y. Ally

Mr. L. Linde

Mr. R. D. Persaud, J.P.

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F. A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M. B. Henry.

Absent

The Honourable L. F. S. Burnham, Q.C.,
Prime Minister.

The Honourable Mrs. W. Gaskin,
Minister of Education.

The Honourable W. O. R. Kendall, C.B.E., J.P.,
Minister of Health and Housing.

on leave

The Honourable M. W. Carter,
Minister of Information.

on leave

The Honourable S. S. Ramphal, C.M.G., Q.C.,
Attorney-General and Minister of State.

Mr. P. S. d'Aguiar
Mr. B. H. Benn
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard
Dr. Charles Jacob, Jr.
Dr. F. H. W. Ramsahoye
Mr. E. M. G. Wilson
Mr. D. Jagan
Mr. M. Poonai
Dr. S. A. Ramjohn
Mr. E. M. Stoby
Mr. S. M. Saffee
Mr. M. Bhagwan

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY
THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I have to announce that leave has been granted to the hon. Mr. Prashad for five weeks from the 6th October, 1967 and to the hon. Mr. Chase for two months from the next sitting of the Assembly.

PUBLIC BUSINESS
MOTIONRECRUITMENT TO THE
POLICE FORCE

"Be it resolved that this National Assembly condemn the Government for its failure to implement the recommendations contained in the Report of the International Commission of Jurists with respect to recruitment to the Police Force in 1966." [Mr. Chase.]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: We resume the debate on Motion No. 1 on the Order Paper. Mr. Jagan: The Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. John) in his speech yesterday queried the decision of the People's Progressive Party to boycott the sittings of the International Commission of Jurists. One would have thought that with developments since the time of the sittings of this Commission, that the Government would have hung its head in shame rather than rebuke the P.P.P. for boycotting the sittings of this Commission. The Minister seems oblivious of the fact that the I.C.J. is an instrument of the C.I.A. even though this was publicised both here and abroad. [Interruption.]

For his and for the benefit of those who like to cover their deeds with a lot of noise, I would like to put the record straight. Mr. Benenson, the Secretary General of Amnesty International, early this year charged that the I.C.J. was in receipt of C.I.A. funds; and he should know, because the Chairman of Amnesty International is the Secretary

General of the I.C.J. He made it very clear that because of this connection between the C.I.A. and the I.C.J., he was asking Mr. McBride, the Secretary General of the I.C.J. to resign as Chairman of Amnesty International. This information, though in public print has not been denied by Mr. McBride, yet these gentlemen continue to exist as if nothing had happened and they had the gall to question us for not appearing before this bogus organisation.

2.20 p.m.

Listen to the logic of the Leader of the House. No wonder he was demoted to his present position!

In the hon. Minister's reply, the point was made that the I.C.J. was not a technical body and, therefore, what was said need not be implemented. But the Government made it appear to the whole world that it was going to implement the recommendations of the I.C.J. That was the general impression given to the world. In order to excuse itself for not implementing the recommendations, we are now told that the I.C.J. was not a technical body. That was the second reason.

Why did we refuse to appear before the Commission? At the time, we said that we were dissatisfied with the terms of reference of the Commission because the Commission was coming to Guyana to ascertain whether it was necessary for the police and security forces to represent a broad cross-section of the Guyanese population. We made it clear that that was not the question which was in doubt. As long ago as the 1960's it was taken for granted by the British Government authorities - I believe a police adviser came here in 1960 - that wherever there are multiracial societies, the police and security forces should reflect a broad cross-section of the particular country's population. The concept was accepted by the P.P.P. Government, it was accepted by the British Government, and it was accepted as a matter of principle in most countries, except by the Minister of "terror" Mr. Jordan - [Mr. Jordan: "Except Castro's stooge. Have you

Mr. Jordan
[MR. DEPUTY-SPEAKER]

paid back Castro his money yet? You cannot go back to Cuba now.”]

We heard the Minister saying that the British Government cannot dictate to this Government. We are not saying that the British Government should dictate to this Government. What we are saying is that before this Government assumed office, it was agreed between the P.P.P. Government and the British Government that steps would be taken to see that the police and security forces reflected a broad cross-section of the Guyanese population. When I saw Mr. Greenwood in London soon after he assumed office, I gave him all the facts leading to this decision, plus the Report which was issued by the Security Branch of the Police Department, and which was called the Research Paper on the P.N.C. Terrorist Organisation. Those documents were put in Mr. Greenwood's hands in order to convince him of the necessity of taking steps to implement, as quickly as possible, the decision that the security and police forces should reflect a broad cross-section of the country's population. [Mr. Jordan: “What were you going to do? Knock off all the boys?”] The Minister asked if we were going to knock off all the boys. Let me say here and now that that was never the intention.

Some time ago the then Commissioner of Police had written a Report in which he stated that it was necessary to strengthen the Police Force by an additional 500 men. There was also the question of the Guyana Volunteer Force, the recruits, of which, as you know, were mainly from Georgetown, New Amsterdam, Wismar and Mackenzie. It was felt at that time that, since we were thinking of having one army, the Volunteer Force should be expanded from 500 men to 600 men, and then to 1200 men, to act as a supplementary Force to the security forces, and, thus, what was desirable could have been achieved.

The Minister asked how was that to be done and where was the money to come from.

2.30 p.m.

I put it to the British Government that, because there was a necessity to have this done, because it was agreed to in principle by the British police adviser who came here, they should try to find the money to help Guyana to carry out the change. The money did come, but these people having run the country bankrupt, as they did this year — [Dr. Reid: “Tell us why you were going to recruit them. You had that in your papers.”]

This year we have seen where grants and loans, given by the British Government to this Government for Independence, have been used not for development purposes but to balance the budget. They have squandered the money which should have been used for purposes such as that, and they now come and say, “Where are we going to get the money?” [Mr. John: “Do you want us to dismiss these people?”] Listen to the ignorance of this Minister! I repeat the question: “Will you dismiss the fellows from the Force?” I have said, “No”.

You people can try to fool the masses, but they always come out right in time, noise does not fool anybody. Beating empty drums makes a lot of noise but they are empty nevertheless. The Minister says now that the Guyana Government agreed to implement the I.C.J. recommendation with a little proviso — “subject to funds being available”. The first point to be noted is that the Government has taken the funds which should have been used for this purpose to balance the budget. We will see what funds you are going to divert to balance the budget this year.

Secondly, they asked what recommendations we had put up. We didn't say, like the I.C.J., that there should be a 75 per cent intake of Indians and others 25 per cent. We didn't say anything like that. The Governor produced a report, which the

Commissioner of Police has, in which it was shown how gradually the imbalances could have been corrected over a period of time. The Governor in his report pointed out that — [Mr. Jordan: "Which Governor? Your friend Luyt?"] I will come to that in a moment. The Governor in his report pointed out that in five years, by the method he was suggesting, the number of Indo-Guyanese in the Police Force would increase from about 30 per cent, if I remember the figures correctly.

I expressed the view that I didn't think that was fast enough and what I was requesting the British Government to do was to provide a technical man, or technical men, who would come here prior to Independence to work out a formula which the British Government would be committed to carry out. That was agreed to by Greenwood.

It was agreed that the British Government would appoint technical men who would come and examine the problem in all its ramifications in order to achieve the objectives which had been stated, but when these people assumed office they did not want to carry out this intention, and consequently, they brought the I.C.J. The American Ambassador must have been consulted; the American Ambassador must have got in touch with the C.I.A. and the I.C.J., the International Commission of Jurists, a great body of international repute, with wonderful *bona fides*, a body which has entree to the United Nations, was hand-picked, as they themselves pointed out. This, it was said, would be the body which would give the stamp of approval.

Now, sir, these were the reasons why we boycotted the Commission: First, because the job which was supposed to be done was a technical job, namely, to examine how the police and security forces could reflect a cross-section of the community. If the Government had any honourable intentions of carrying out this proposal then it would have agreed to the pledges which had been given by the British Government that a

technical body would be set up, but the hon. Members were the Government and they didn't want to carry it out. The principle was there, whichever Government was in office, but this Government didn't want to implement the principle. The Government told Greenwood, "We are not prepared to honour the pledge given to the previous Government".

2.40 p.m.

As a result of it, the I.C.J. came into the picture. No doubt the C.I.A. which helped to put this Government in office also helped to bring the I.C.J.

The I.C.J. made its Report. We did not plead. We did not go to the members of the I.C.J. and say: "Do so and so." But this was where the whole fraud of the operation came in. The members of the I.C.J., knowing that the Government will never implement their recommendations, put out what appeared to be good recommendations. It was publicised all over the world that the Guyana Government has honourable intentions to carry out these wonderful recommendations. It was publicised in the *New York Times*; and other reporters wrote that the Government was doing everything to solve the racial problems, and so on and so forth. The I.C.J. mission was mainly a propaganda device to give the Government an opportunity to parade before the world knowing that the Government need not carry out the decisions afterwards.

Our intention had been that a technical body would have come and examined the problem, would have made its recommendations, and the British Government and the Guyana Government would have committed themselves to a set of procedures which they would have begun implementing. But it is clear that the Government had no intention of doing anything except to use the I.C.J. Report as a propaganda weapon.

Ministers ask, sitting in their chairs: "Why didn't you do these things when you were in the Government? Perhaps I can ask them if

Mr. Jordan
[MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER]

they read the article in the *Sunday Times* of April 27 which stated that Duncan Sandys, Harold Macmillan, two top security men in Britain, a number of British officials in British Guiana, which no doubt included the Governor and the commissioner of Police -- [Mr. Merriman: "Why didn't you get rid of him?"] Listen to the Minister! If the Governor, the Commissioner of Police, Duncan Sandys and Macmillan were taking orders from America, could I fire the Commissioner of Police? These ignoramuses say I could.

The position is clear. When we were in the Government those who were in charge of the police and security forces did not co-operate with the Government of the day because it was necessary to give some excuse for not allowing British Guiana to proceed to Independence under the P.P.P. Government. Obviously, the excuse was to have disturbances, racial riots and so on. Not only did we have the co-operation of the security forces but those who were in charge of them never intended to see that the Police and security forces should not be a political arm of any political party or any Government.

When we talk of the police and security forces representing a broad cross-section of the country, we are not here talking about race. What we are talking about is the political neutrality of the service - the police and the armed forces - and in a country like Guyana, where we have seen how politics have turned, it was definitely necessary to see that this principle was implemented. But what do we find? We find that not only is lip-service paid to the recommendations of the I.C.J. Commission but we see in actual practice what is happening today.

The Minister told us of intake in 1966. What the Minister did not tell us is what is usually hidden behind the statistics. It is like the big propaganda campaign that the

Government is carrying out on the 8% increase in the Gross Domestic Product which, when you analyse it, boils down to nothing. You can give figures, but what is happening behind the figures? Discrimination comes in at the first stage. At the second stage pressure is put on people to leave. [Mr. Jordan: "And go where?"] There is a saying that there are many ways to skin a cat and the Government practises many ways to skin a cat.

This Government takes people it does not like and pushes them out in the Interior or somewhere else. If the members of the Government were so honourable in their intentions, how is it that Mr. Felix Austin's head was rolled? If they were not interfering with the Police Force to make it a political arm of the P.N.C., how is it that Mr. Austin's head was rolled?

You can tell people that intake was so and so but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. What is of importance is to see the reality outside.

2.50 p.m.

The reality certainly is that the Government is doing everything to create a police and security force which will be the political arm, not only of the Government, but of one section of the Government. This, no doubt, is another reason why the coalition seems to be growing over-stretched. We are not stupid. It is very clear to everyone that this Government sits on a very slender support, 40 per cent of the electorate for this side of the House and 12 per cent for the other - 52 per cent. They do not go into the country anymore; they are afraid because they know that the extra 2 per cent over the 50 per cent has gone long ago. So we see attempts to rig Elections, attempts to bypass not only the Elections Commission but even such bodies as the Public Service Commission and the Police Service Commission.

Subverting the Constitution - this is what the Government is doing at the moment because basically, it knows that it will not be

able to win a majority. It is a matter laid down in the Constitution. It is like the Americans holding elections in Vietnam according to the Geneva Agreement. Mr. D'Aguiar, the Leader of the United Force, according to a report in the newspapers, said: "We do not want any voting machines." He said so; so, what happens? The Ministers come and make all kinds of declarations but the proof is seen in these little things and big things, heads rolling because the Commissioner refuses to carry out orders to promote "X", "Y" and "Z".

At one time it was necessary to keep the United Force within the Government, but now its supporters are feeling, perhaps, "We have been left out." But when the reading of the voters' lists takes place and when the voting machines begin adding, dividing, multiplying and subtracting, then they will be sure. No wonder the United Force sees the handwriting on the wall. Clearly, this Government, like Marshal Ky in Vietnam, is planning to stay in power with minority support and to do this, it is working up support whereby the police and security forces will be not only pro P.N.C. but 100 per cent - not a cipher of dissent.

We were talking about Felix Austin who, the P.N.C. thought, was good enough to be promoted to the post of Commissioner of Police after bypassing two senior persons. But because he refused to carry out orders from Congress Place, the Prime Minister's Office and the office of the Minister of Home Affairs, his head was rolled. We would like to advise the Government that this is no way to achieve progress, prosperity and peace in Guyana.

What is the point in talking about efficiency when the Government is putting square pegs into round holes? How is the Government going to get efficiency. Forty-four per cent of the Budget is being concentrated on maintaining the bureaucracy. In most countries it is only 33 per cent. This will continue to rise if the Government does not change its ways. I do not know if the Government has noted figures, but I believe that is why Mr. d'Aguiar

has bailed out of the sinking ship. Whatever may be his shortcomings, Mr. D'Aguiar knows figures more than some of the persons who are in association with him. The Government has allocated 44 per cent for personal emoluments, 16 per cent for debt charges making a total of 60 per cent - two heads, first priorities. Forty per cent is allocated for all the things which are necessary - health, education, pensions, subsidies, guaranteed minimum prices.

3 p.m.

Everywhere in the country we are hearing the cry: "We have nothing." The Government says it has no money. If the 40 per cent is not enough today, you should ask Mr. D'Aguiar what the position will be in a few years' time. Assuming that you maintain the bureaucracy at 44 per cent, your debt charges are mounting like a kite. Soon they will reach 30 per cent. Where will you be then? If you add 44 per cent to 30 per cent you will get 74 per cent, leaving 26 per cent. If 40 per cent is not enough today, how will 26 per cent be enough in a little while.

Production is not increasing in the country; agriculture is going down; industry is stagnant. You may depend on bauxite now, but how is bauxite going to continue at the rate of expansion that has been going on over the past few years? Mr. D'Aguiar has seen the handwriting on the wall. He bailed out.

But you do not want to run the Government honourably, you are only concerned with one thing and that is to stay in office and draw fat salaries. You do not care. The position cannot be improved by pious appeals for efficiency. There will be no peace and there will be no progress. [Mr. Merriman: "Let me hear your trend now."] As Minister of Labour and Social Security, you know that there have been 146 strikes in 1965, 162 strikes last year and 57 strikes at the end of April this year. Threatening to ban strikes and calling for voluntary arbitration will not solve anything. There

Mr. Jagan
[MR. BISSEMBER]

will be no peace and progress in this country with that kind of instability.

I conclude by saying that this Government brought the International Commission of Jurists here and if it wants peace and progress in this country, it must honour its commitments, not only to the Guyanese people, but to the whole world.

The Minister for Parliamentary Affairs (Leader of the House) (Mr. Bissember): In my opinion, it would have been more appropriate for the Leader of the Opposition to have tabled this Motion since the history of the Police Force began some years ago when he sent a petition to the United Nations complaining on several matters including the racial make-up of the Force. I am sure many hon. Members in the Opposition will agree with me when I say that they were most ashamed to see their leader present such an iniquitous document, which was rejected out of court by those people in that honourable, august Assembly. That petition was sent about four years after the supreme Court actions of the Enmore shooting trials.

Dr. Jagan, the Leader of the Opposition, claims to be deeply concerned about the Indian population in this country, but the members of the other side of the house should be told a few facts. In 1948 some people were killed. Those people were killed by guns fired, not only by policemen of African descent but by policemen of Indian descent. But the Leader of the Opposition did not mention that Indian policemen were involved. After the actions came up and were about to be tried, the Leader of the Opposition was present at a certain meeting in Church Street, which was called by the Indian Association. Myself and Mr. D. P. Debidin - at that time I think he was a legislator - attended that meeting. The question came up for the provision of funds to subpoena witnesses to assist the relatives of those persons who were killed and those who were injured, to bring the actions before the Supreme Court. This gentleman

and good friend of mine, Dr. Jagan, who calls himself the leader of the Indian masses, said there and then that he had no money to contribute to subpoena witnesses and Bissember and Debidin must find the money to fight the case. [Interruption.]

Dr. Jagan submitted a certificate of honour, which was signed by him, for chauffeur allowance when his wife had already claimed chauffeur allowance for the same car. If, that is not dishonesty, then what is dishonesty?

Dr. Jagan: To a point of order. The Minister is lying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Two of you cannot have the Floor.

Mr. Bissember: I will not misuse this hon. Assembly to be personal and abusive. But if the Leader of the Opposition wants to bring in personal matters, I am prepared, at all times, to accept the challenge, and I am prepared to defend myself anywhere in this country.

As I was saying, Dr. Jagan sent that petition to the United Nations. The Leader of the opposition made statements throughout the length and breadth of this country, telling the people - particularly at Enmore - that the war in the 1961 Elections was Indians versus Africans; that if they did not vote for the Indians the Africans would take over.

3.10 p.m.

This gentleman said that, and there are many persons who can bear witness to it. That is the kind of person we have as Leader of the Opposition.

But let us come to a few of the things which were mentioned by some hon. Members on that side of the House. The hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition yesterday had the temerity and audacity to say - and I quote his words - "There is major concern in the Opposition, in that the Government intends to use the Police Force to its political advantage, and to prevent fair and free elections." I was surprised when I heard that Deputy Leader of the Opposition, my hon. and learned Friend, Mr. Ashton Chase,

say that, I would have been happy to hear the hon. Leader of the Opposition, and not his Deputy, use those words because when we examine the situation with regard to fair and free elections from 1961 onwards we see that in 1961, in the month of November, a petition was filed with respect to the Houston constituency. That petition was heard in November 1961 and the trial judge agreed with the prayer of that petition and found that the election was null and void.

That was in November, 1961. I am surprised that the hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition made the remark I quoted, because he figured very prominently in that case. After the petition was heard in November 1961 — [Mr. Luck: “The man’s name was cleared.”] I am not imputing anything to Mr. Chase. Some weeks after that petition was heard, I sat over there in the third chair and we in the Opposition asked the Government when it would have the bye-election since the election in that constituency was declared null and void. We were told to submit a Motion calling for a writ to be issued.

That was early in 1962. We were told then that because my good friend, the hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, was involved in a certain way, they were awaiting the results of that trial. That trial came to an end on 8th March 1962 when Mr. Chase was duly acquitted. [Interruptions.] I don’t want to go into the question of being cleared, because when you stand in a witness box and are cross-examined it is a different position from that where you are frightened to go into the witness box, but that is not relevant at the moment.

Four months after the Supreme Court had given its ruling, this Government failed to hold the bye-election. The whole of 1962 passed. They told us to wait. On the 7th January, 1963, the then Leader of the Opposition tabled a Motion to this effect:

“Be it resolved that the Writ for holding the bye-election for the Houston Constituency No. 23 be issued forthwith.”

That was tabled in this National Assembly, the Legislative Assembly at that time, on 7th January, 1963. They refused to put the Motion on the Order Paper.

The Legislative Assembly was prorogued in June 1963 and we retabled it on 1st August, 1963. Not a word was heard of it. In other words, during 1961, 1962, 1963 and 1964, these people who talk of fair and free elections refused to have the bye-election for Houston constituency. [Mr. Wharton: “Shame!”] They ought to be ashamed to talk about elections. They ought to be ashamed to speak of fair and free elections when they failed to issue the writ for the Houston bye-election.

The man Sookhoo was imprisoned. I was with his wife in the corridor of the Supreme Court and it was pathetic to see that woman shed tears because her husband was imprisoned. Some of us ought not to misuse this very important body to go into personalities and to go into irrelevancies in this situation. [Interruption]

I would say that we do not worry with the threats which have been issued by the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Opposition. We accept challenges. As for the hon. Member Mr. Luck, nature’s scavengers would find his challenges unpalatable. The hon. Leader of the Opposition made some threats during his speech, but let me say this: whenever the People’s Progressive Party wishes to intimidate, whenever, the People’s Progressive Party wishes to threaten, this Government will use all the force at its disposal to bring quiet and peace to this country. We will never shed our responsibility to maintain tranquillity and peace in Guyana. We shall do so at all costs. Those who have ambitions to disturb the peace of this country, let them beware!

This afternoon, Dr. Jagan went on to say that the Commissioner of Police submitted a report saying that there must be recruited 500 additional men. Now, one would have

MR. BISSEMBERJ

imagined that the hon. Leader of the Opposition would have gone further and told us how this was to be implemented. How was this report, to which he referred, to be executed in fairness to all concerned? He has left us in the dark.

Was it the intention of the Leader of the Opposition to bring Indians from Mauritius? I don't know. I want to hear. Was it the intention of the Leader of the Opposition to divide this country further with his own racial tendencies? I cannot understand how any Government could have carried out this recommendation for recruiting 500 persons. Were we to dismiss some people who were then in the Force?

Let me say this here and now; The Indians in the Guyana Police Force are doing a wonderful job. [Mr. Persaud: "Why don't you promote them?"] Let those who try to interfere with them be warned that if they interfere with the police they are liable to be prosecuted if they are caught.

The entire Guyana Police Force earned the commendation not only of the Government but also of all loyal, peace-loving Guyanese people. I say "the entire Guyana Police Force," not Afro-Guyanese or Indo-Guyanese. I am speaking of the entire Guyana Police Force. Those who wish to inject into the minds of certain sections of our community feelings of racialism, those who wish to sow the seeds of racialism, will understand this: Whether it is the P.P.P. or the P.N.C. in office the two major sections of the population will have to continue to live together for a long time.

3.20 p.m.

In other words I submit that, whether you have the P.N.C. in office or the P.P.P. in office, leaders will come and leaders will go, but the major sections of our Guyanese community will continue to live in peace or they will die together in strife. All those who

are ambitious to create any trouble must know what the consequences will be.

The hon. Minister of Home Affairs (Mr. John) gave figures showing that out of 177 recruits for 1966, 117 were from the Indian section of the community and 60 were of other races, not just Africans. How can one say that this Government is not attempting to carry out the recommendations of the I.C.J.?

The hon. Minister explained the other question which arose from these recommendations. We have provided the dietary conditions. In some cases, members of the Force get "Halaal" meat. We have made sure that all the facilities becoming their religious persuasions are provided them so that they will remain in the Police Force.

We hear a lot of talk from the members of the Opposition. We are told of imbalance. They do not want imbalance, they feel that this imbalance situation must come to an end. Let us hear about the imbalance at GIMPEX. They call themselves national leaders. The hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran spoke of Indians being dismissed and not being recruited. He has less than 5% of non-Indians working at GIMPEX. Out of 56 persons working at GIMPEX, 46 are Indians and the rest are non-Indians. [Mr. Luck: "You do not know about percentages."]

At the New Guyana Co. Ltd. a similar situation arises. Eugene Hall who was trained in Cuba and who swore on a Bible in the Supreme Court and committed perjury in favour of Dr. Jagan when his car was involved in an accident, was dismissed from the payroll of the P.P.P. Why was she dismissed? Was it because she is an Indian? What about Rose Amsterdam? These are the people who talk about settling imbalances.

The hon. Leader of the Opposition (Dr. Jagan) also said that we have taken the money we received as Independence gifts to balance the Budget, and that we should have used that money to carry out this plan of

recruiting Indians in the Guyana Police Force. We never asked the British Chancellor of Exchequer for \$¼million. The P.P.P. did that. We never asked any foreign Government to give us money to balance our Budget. As a matter of fact, the P.P.P. went cap in hand and begged the same Mr. Sandys whom it is criticising here today. Dr. Jagan went on television and made a famous speech: "I believe in the British sense of justice and fairplay." He made that statement to the world at large. Dr. Jagan was praising the British Government for its sense of justice and fair-play.

All that time, when the Houston by-election was not held, Dr. Ramsahoye, Ph.D., former Attorney-General, was the legal adviser to the Government then and Mr. Chase was President of the Senate and a member of the Bar. These are two eminent lawyers and I want Mr. Chase, in his reply — [Mr. Chase: "I am not replying."]- to tell us what advice he gave his colleagues when we asked them to have the writ issued for the Houston by-election. My friend said he will not answer but he just said we intend to use the Police Force so that there will be free and fair elections.

Did you, in 1961, run asking the British Government to validate, by Order in Council, Henry's election after the Supreme Court's decision? You were asked, by two Motions tabled by the then Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Burnham), to issue that writ. Let us hear from the two legal advisers. Of course at that time Mr. Griffith did not appear in the picture, so Mr. Chase was then advising the P.P.P.

We hear many allegations being made about this Government not trying to carry out the recommendations of the I.C.J. Report, and we hear ad nauseam about the C.I.A. I remember very well when the leader of the U.F. (Mr. d'Aguiar) used to sit in the Opposition the front bench Members on this side used to say: "d'Aguiar, you are sleeping

with communism; you are going to bed with communism; communism is under your bed." They are now not only sleeping with C.I.A., walking with C.I.A., but C.I.A. is in their pockets, in their cars, in their mattresses, in their bedrooms.

It should not be in the mouths of the Opposition to criticise this Government for doing nothing whatsoever. Members of the Opposition said that the Government is making the Police Force an arm of the P.N.C. [Mr. Persaud: "That is so."] How can the Government make the Police Force an arm of the P.N.C.? [Mr. Persaud: "When it is already an arm."] How can the Government make the security forces an arm of the P.N.C.?

The opposition is permanently geographically located in that section of the House and, knowing it is permanently geographically located in that section of the House, it is now trying to find excuses as to what will be the results of the next elections. The ballot boxes will be used at the next elections and I know that many who sit over there will not continue to sit there. They will not be mentioned at all on the P.P.P. list. Janet has already begun to take away some names, but be that as it may, this Government as was made pellucidly clear by the Minister responsible, shall continue to examine the situation and, when funds are available, will implement some of the recommendations which are practicable and which can be implemented.

Why should the members of the Opposition allege that this Government is discriminatory when the hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran reads the Official Gazette every Saturday? Open the Official Gazette every Saturday and you will see people of Indian descent being appointed in the Public Service. Every Saturday you open the Official Gazette you see people of Indian descent being appointed to Boards. [Mr. Luck: "Aren't you ashamed?"]

3.30 p.m.

If you offered something to the hon. Maccie Hamid, he would accept it and his

[MR. BÏSSEMBER]

name would be in the *Official Gazette*. Everything the Government does, the Opposition attacks. If we were to have an Indian and African Opposition, I do not know on which side the hon. Mr. Ram Karran would be and I do not know on which side other hon. Members would be.

We have put this Motion on the Order Paper and this is the third Wednesday on which we have had Private Members' Day. We have given them opportunity to speak and we shall continue to give them opportunity to speak despite the irrelevancies and vituperation. I should say this. Can the hon. Mr. Chase tell us how many people of African descent his party found jobs for at the Rice Marketing Board during the period 1961 to 1964? I shall tell him this, that this Government has found more jobs for Indo-Guyanese in the last three years than they had found during their seven years in office.

I have already mentioned something of the historical background. It is known by all the people that when the Indians leave school, they go straight into rice planting or farming because they make more money. If you told them about joining the Police Force they would think you were insulting them. We cannot use the propaganda machines. The hon. Mr. Chase must do that and get the Indians to apply and when they have applied and they are rejected because of partiality or racial discrimination, then he can come to this House and challenge us. We have invited applications to the Police Force and out of 177 recruits, 117 were Indians. If that is not a reasonable effort to carry out the recommendations in that particular part of the I.C.J. Report, I do not know what is.

I am sure that Mr. Chase was not aware of those figures yesterday when he got up to move this Motion. Having heard the facts and figures, it must be clear to his mind that this Government is doing everything it can, and reasonably can do, to carry out the

recommendations of the I.C.J. I remember well that when the I.C.J. came here, I spoke with two hon. Members who are members of the legal profession, and because I spoke privately with them I shall not call their names, and they said that their party would not agree to sending any memorandum but, the hon. Dr. Fenton Ramsahoye, in his own clandestine way, prepared his own memo to the I.C.J. I do not know if that is the reason why they rolled his head, I do not know if that is the reason why the P.P.P. is against him. The sooner people like the hon. Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, the hon. Mr. Ally and the hon. Dr. Ramsahoye — and I think they have some influence — realise that the P.P.P. has no use for them, and will sooner or later roll their heads, — the sooner they come out and serve their country, — the better it will be for all.

If the hon. Mr. Nunes had moved this Motion, we would not have heard the nonsense we have heard from hon. Members because the hon. Mr. Nunes knows the true position. He would have appreciated that the total of 117 which we accepted in the Police Force is more than reasonable for the first year, 1966. I think this Motion should be rejected out of court.

I think that, having heard the hon. Minister of Home Affairs, having heard the views of the Government side, having got the facts, and having heard the various assurances which have been given, it would be wise for the hon. Mr. Chase to withdraw this Motion. Let it not be said that on a Motion of this nature, the Government spokesman, who is the Minister responsible, did not give the necessary assurances and the necessary undertaking that we shall improve on the situation.

Finally, I should like to say that any Government in Guyana that attempts to discriminate against any one of the two major ethnic groups is looking for real trouble. This Government is not stupid like the last Government represented by the P.P.P. [*Applause.*]

Mr. Chase (replying): The more I listened yesterday to the Minister of Home Affairs

(Mr. John) the more I believed that the Government has no intention of carrying out all the recommendations contained in the Report of the International Commission of Jurists. Indeed, if this Motion serves any purpose, it has certainly served the purpose of exposing the fact that the Government does not intend to honour the pledge which it gave that it would carry out the recommendations of the I.C.J., particularly with regard to the Police Force.

This speech of the hon. Minister of Home Affairs was a dissertation on the theme on why the Government cannot accept in full the recommendations of the I.C.J. Never before was the nation informed that the members of the I.C.J. were not technical men and were incapable of going into the full pros and cons of police administration and recruitment, but yesterday we were treated to detailed criticisms of the recommendations which the Commission made. Indeed, the Minister seemed to have missed the point of a number of arguments I put forward [*Interruption.*] when in truth and in fact all that I was seeking to do was to put before the House some of the very arguments which had been put forward by the I.C.J. themselves. I was using the reasons and conclusions of the I.C.J. but the Minister seemed to believe they were my own rather than the Commission's.

3.40 p.m.

When the Government agreed to an inquiry by the International Commission of Jurists, it was not sincere in its intention to remove the difficulties which existed in the Services. The Minister said that their intention really was to give an opportunity to the Opposition to express its views so that they could be debated. He said that the Government was making an attempt to investigate the complaints of the P.P.P. and certain sections of the community, even though it felt that those complaints were unjustified. In other words, the Government intended to give a facade of a serious investigation when, in fact, it had made up

its mind that it was not going to carry out any substantial reform such as the recommendations of the International Commission of Jurists, having listened to the evidence put forward, came to the conclusion that something was seriously wrong with the composition of the security forces of the country, and recommended that steps should be taken to correct what was described as the imbalances in the police and security forces.

It has been said by the Minister that we missed the opportunity of going to the Commission to express our views. That is not the point of this debate. That is completely irrelevant to the Motion which is before the House. Whether we went or not, the point is that the Commission sat and made certain findings and recommendations. The Government, having read those recommendations, made a statement to the nation and to the world at large that it accepted the recommendations of the International Commission of Jurists and would carry them out within the context of its financial resources.

Yesterday, a new qualification was added by the Minister of Home Affairs. The question of practicability was brought into the picture. In any case, it seems to me that if the Government had gone into this matter, and if it had found that some of the recommendations were impracticable and could not be carried out, it was its duty to make a public statement on the recommendations that were impracticable so that the nation could know that it was diverting from its original pledge.

It seems to me that, in his address, the Minister of Home Affairs was impugning the work of the Commission and derogating from the recommendations which had been made. This is a serious matter because the Government, having originally stated that it accepted the recommendations, is back pedalling on that undertaking. This is really one of the things that has given rise to this Motion being tabled.

The Minister said that there were difficulties which were not facilitating

[MR. CHASE] ✓

admission to the Police Force in accordance with the ration set out by the International Commission of Jurists. The Minister must state what those difficulties are. We have not heard what the difficulties are. We have not yet heard what has prevented the Government from faithfully carrying out the recommendations with regard to the percentage intake into the Police and Security Forces, even though I specifically invited the Minister to state what difficulties, if any, existed.

The Minister said that the Government had made an announcement that it was accepting the recommendations, and in his view that announcement was sufficient for people in all sections of the country to know the position and apply for admission to the Police and Security Forces. I would suggest that the Government has media at its disposal to inform the public, particularly the sections of the community which are directly concerned, and it should use those media to let people know that they are wanted in large numbers in the Police Force. It is not good enough for the Government to suggest that we, the members of the People's Progressive Party, should go around seeking to recruit people to the Police Force. That is not the function of the Opposition. Having accepted the recommendations, the onus falls on the Government to take steps to inform those whom it intends to recruit to the Police Force that the opportunities exist for them to be admitted.

The Minister of Home Affairs sought to create the impression that we said that the pay for policemen should be increased so that Indo-Guyanese would be encouraged to apply to the Police Force. I do not think he has read the Commission's Report properly. The International Commission of Jurists made the recommendation that the pay for policemen should be increased. Even before the Commission had made that recommendation, the Wynn-Parry Commission in 1962 reported that salaries in the Police Force were inadequate and they

were a cause for complaint. The logic is that if the people who are already in the Force are complaining against the rates of pay, how many more will be discouraged from applying if the rates are not rectified. If, indeed, persons in the Force are complaining about the lack of proper accommodation for married persons, and other fringe benefits and facilities, surely those things must be put right not only for those persons who are in the Force but also to make the Force more attractive so that persons will be encouraged to apply. The Government must recognise that the Police Force is a very special case.

A lot of red herrings were drawn into this debate about the racial composition of certain auxiliary bodies - non - governmental bodies. The point is that the International Commission of Jurists came and made an examination of a specific problem. Police relations with the public were treated as a case in point, and the Commission made certain recommendations as a result of its investigations. The I.C.J. was convinced - even though the Government appears not to be convinced up to now - that the Police Force as it was comprised, was not in the best interest of good human relations in this country. Until the Government can accept the basis of the commission's recommendations, we are not going to get anywhere. I cannot see why the Government should be objecting to this Motion because, as far as I can see, it has no intention whatsoever of even following the recommendations.

3.50 p.m.

What they should do is to be honest enough with the country and make a declaration that they will not follow all these recommendations so that we can get the I.C.J. out of the way and face up to what are the realities of the situation.

The Minister referred to the recommendation made by the I.C.J., namely, that the level of qualified persons permitted to enter should be 75 per cent to

25 per cent intake. This is a logical point and the Commission had to recognise that it was necessary and therefore it is put in the recommendations. But the Minister has stated that there has been an insufficient number of persons of East Indian origin who have applied with the all-round suitability that is required. What is this all-round suitability that is required? The Minister has not stated what criteria are taken into consideration under the head of "all-round suitability". This is a term which I think is used to hide a multitude of sins, a term behind which the Government hides in order to weed out persons and to discriminate against them.

The fact that the Government has not been able to put into effect the recommendations regarding the promotions board and the selection board is a matter which goes to the whole root of this problem. I see no difficulty. There are Indo-Guyanese persons who are in the officer rank. There should be no difficulty whatever to have a selection board composed in the way in which the Commission recommended, but it is clear that the Government has no intention of following that recommendation. The personnel are available, yet the Government will not set up the boards in accordance with the recommendations of the I.C.J.

Figures have been brought with respect to the years 1966 and 1967. The number of Indo-Guyanese admitted works out at something like 66 per cent of the amount. This falls short of what the I.C.J. recommended. This has to be admitted. Hon. Members must admit that this has fallen short of the recommendation of the International Commission of Jurists.

My point is that the longer the Government takes to meet up the rate of intake, not only with regard to percentages but with regard to the overall number of persons taken into the Force, the longer this

problem will remain, and the longer we shall have to wait.

The Minister of Home Affairs said that the points made by reference to estimates ought to be left until we are discussing matters relating to Estimates. The point was made that so long as there is a lack of provision for the necessary funds to carry out certain important things inherent in the I.C.J. Report, so long does it become clear that the Government has no intention of honouring the recommendations, because, if the recommendations are to be honoured, then steps must be taken to have them fulfilled. So long as steps are not being taken to make provision for carrying out the recommendations, it means that Government will be falling down on the recommendations.

On the question of the deployment of the Police Force and the question of maintenance of good relations, the Minister dealt with this as if we were making the point. This is a point which the I.C.J. itself made. If hon. Members look at the tables which are set out in the I.C.J. Report they will see them sticking out like fish-bones from someone's throat. This is a matter which the Minister was arguing against, but to argue against this is to argue against the very propositions on which the whole of the I.C.J. recommendations flow. When the Minister took this line on this particular point as well as on others, clearly he was arguing against the recommendations of the International Commission of Jurists and that is why we are saying that members of the Government must be honest to the nation and say whether they accept the recommendations. If they don't accept them they must say so and people will know and will not expect them to carry them out. It is pointless making fancy statements saying that they accept the recommendations and at the same time not carrying them out.

I would like to say that I should hope that the time will come when once a person wears a badge of the Guyana Police Force he will be accepted and respected by all regardless of what his racial origin may be.

[MR. CHASE]

This will happen only after the present imbalances have been corrected and after the recommendations of the I.C.J. are fully put into effect.

There are some who feel that these matters ought not to be debated in this House. I repeat that we must face up to the realities of the situation in this country. To turn your back on the problem does not mean that the problem does not exist. We in this House must be great enough to face problems however thorny, however difficult they are, and try to find solutions.

They talked about things, even about recruitment of apprentices in Berbice. The Minister of Labour and Social Security wrote a letter to the Board of Industrial Training in Berbice saying that there was no proper balance. The Government is concerned with imbalance with regard to the Police Force, where there was a special investigation and special recommendations, it remains absolutely silent.

After the Minister had concluded his speech we were treated to some vituperations and recriminations by the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs (Mr. Bissember) who seems to have generated a lot of heat. I think he needed to have some exercise before he left the country and that is why he took the Floor. His speech was so irrelevant, so much off the point, and he strayed into so many byways that I do not propose to follow him. I propose merely to treat his remarks with the contempt that they deserve without even replying to him on his irrelevancies. They were so ridiculous that I was shocked that a Minister of the Government could get up and make such an irrelevant and boisterous speech as the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs did on a matter of this kind. It is true, sir, that in many Parliaments there is a clown. For a moment I thought this House had moved to the Theatre Guild and was being presented with a performance when the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs was on the Floor. I completely disregard his drivel for the entire

House appeared in a state of shock that such remarks could be made by the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, who ought to have sound knowledge of the Standing Orders. I do not hope to see that kind of performance repeated here.

I now ask hon. Members to accept the Motion which I have moved.

Question put, and negatived.

Motion lost.

GOOD WISHES TO COMMONWEALTH PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION DELEGATION

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. members, as this is likely to be the last sitting of this Assembly before the departure of the Guyana Delegation to the Thirteenth Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Kampala, Uganda, I wish, on behalf of hon. Members of the Assembly and myself, to extend our very best wishes to the Leader of the Delegation, the two Members and the Secretary. The necessary leave of absence from the sittings of the Assembly has been granted. I am sure that hon. members will associate themselves with me in this.

Mr. Bissember: I wish to thank you. I am sure we will have a very pleasant stay and amicable relationship among ourselves. We will undertake to do our best to project the proper image of Guyana and of Parliament.

Mr. Chase: I wish to thank you for the kind sentiments you have expressed. We are sure that we will do what we can to represent this Parliament to the best of our ability. Thank you very much for your kind wishes.

ADJOURNMENT

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

Adjourned accordingly at 4 p.m.