

# SECOND LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

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

Monday, 18th January, 1960

The Council met at 2 p.m.

## PRESENT:

**Speaker**, His Honour Sir Donald Jackson

**Chief Secretary**, Hon. D. M. Hedges

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

**Financial Secretary**, Hon. F. W. Essex, C.M.G.

*ex officio*

The Honourable **B. H. Benn**

—Member for *Essequibo River*  
(Minister of Natural Resources)

„ **Janet Jagan**

—Member for *Western Essequibo*  
(Minister of Labour, Health and Housing)

„ **Ram Karran**

—Member for *Demerara-Essequibo*  
(Minister of Communications and Works)

„ **B. S. Rai**

—Member for *Central Demerara*  
(Minister of Community Development and Education).

**Mr. W. O. R. Kendall**

—Member for *New Amsterdam*

„ **R. C. Tello**

—Nominated Member

**F. Bowman**

—Member for *Demerara River*

**L. F. S. Burnham**

—Member for *Georgetown Central*

„ **S. Campbell**

—Member for *North Western District*

„ **A. L. Jackson**

—Member for *Georgetown North*

„ **E. B. Beharry**

—Member for *Eastern Demerara*

„ **Ajodha Singh**

—Member for *Berbice River*

„ **Jai Narine Singh**

—Member for *Georgetown South*

**R. E. Davis**

—Nominated Member

„ **H. J. M. Hubbard**

—Nominated Member

„ **A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.**

—Nominated Member.

**Mr. I. Crum Ewing** — Clerk of the Legislature

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

## ABSENT:

The Hon. Dr. C. B. Jagan — Minister of Trade and Industry — on leave.

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

**Mr. R. B. Gajraj** — Nominated Member.

**Mr. A. M. Fredericks** — Nominated Member — excused.

The Clerk read prayers.

## MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on the 7th of January, 1960, as printed and circulated, were taken as read and confirmed.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## LEAVE TO DR. JAGAN

**Mr. Speaker:** I have to announce that the Minister of Trade and Industry (Dr. Jagan) is out of the Colony on official duty and will be away until the 20th of January.

## PAPERS LAID

**The Financial Secretary** (Mr. Essex): I beg to lay on the Table the

Report of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on the 4th December, 1959.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question is, that the Report of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on the 4th December, 1959, be adopted.

Agreed to.

Report adopted.

**The Financial Secretary:** I beg to lay on the Table the

Report of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on 29th December, 1959.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question is, that the Report of the meeting of the Finance Committee held on the 29th December, 1959, be adopted.

Agreed to.

Report adopted.

**The Financial Secretary:** I beg to lay on the Table the

Report of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council on its consideration of the 1960 Draft Recurrent and Development Estimates (laid in the Legislative Council on 7th January,

1960), together with the Minutes of the Meetings of the Finance Committee thereon.

## GOVERNMENT NOTICES

## DEVELOPMENT ESTIMATES

**The Financial Secretary:** I beg to give notice of the following Motion:—

“Be it resolved: That this Council approves of the Estimates of Development Expenditure for the year 1960 which have been laid on the table, with the amendment recommended in the Report of Finance Committee of the Legislative Council dated 15th January, 1960, totalling Twenty-four million, six hundred and seventy-nine thousand, seven hundred and eighteen dollars, as detailed by Heads in the undermentioned schedule, and of the projects therein being financed from the Development Fund Ordinance, 1954.

## SCHEDULE

Head No.	Head of Estimate	Estimate in 1960
I.	Agriculture .. ..	\$1,426,120
II.	Civil Aviation .. ..	540,000
III.	Drainage and Irrigation .. ..	7,842,600
IV.	Education .. ..	1,086,000
V.	Finance (Industry and Credits) .. ..	1,500,000
VI.	Geological Surveys .. ..	503,019
VII.	Health .. ..	306,300
VIII.	Housing .. ..	1,239,711
IX.	Lands and Mines .. ..	160,000
X.	Land Development .. ..	1,661,693
XI.	Post Office .. ..	650,000
XII.	Public Works .. ..	4,930,000
XIII.	Transport and Harbours .. ..	2,019,688
XIV.	Miscellaneous .. ..	120,787
XV.	Rural Self-Help .. ..	150,000
XVI.	Social Welfare .. ..	170,000
XVII.	Local Government .. ..	120,000
XVIII.	Amerindian Development .. ..	208,800
XIX.	Tourism .. ..	45,000

\$24,679,718”

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**The Financial Secretary:** I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of the

Gowrie Sankar (Widow's and Orphans' Pension) Bill, 1960.

**ORDER OF THE DAY****GOWRIE SANKAR (WIDOW'S AND ORPHANS' PENSION) BILL**

The following Bill was read the First time:

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to provide for the payment of a pension in respect of Gowrie Sankar under the Widows and Orphans Pension Ordinance."

**APPROPRIATION BILL****BUDGET DEBATE**

**Mr. Speaker:** Council will now resume the debate on the Motion for the Second Reading of the Bill intituled:

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

The Motion for the Second Reading was moved at the last sitting and the hon. the Financial Secretary had concluded his speech on the Motion.

**Mr. Jackson:** The public of this Colony of ours may, in some respects, feel somewhat happy over the fact that there has not been proposed for this year any increase in taxation, but any happiness felt over that fact must spring from a superficial attitude of mind. After an examination is made of the present position it ought to be clear that the Government has demonstrated a lack of imagination in dealing with the Colony's problems. Because of this lack of imagination it is perhaps safe to conclude that the Government has failed to demonstrate its ability to govern this country in the interests of all its people.

Not so long ago we had an outburst of dissatisfaction over the state of the country's employment situation — unemployment and under-employment — and it was revealed not very many years ago that the seriousness of the situation relates more to people of very tender age, perhaps between the ages of 16 and 21 years, who were without any employ-

ment; and when one approximates the number of young people leaving school every year from 1957 to the end of 1959, it may be safe to conclude that approximately 20,000 more people have been added to the list of unemployed and under-employed, and that since the report which was presented to this Council in 1957 or 1958 was released, the situation has become far more serious than would appear on the surface. It is all the more serious because this state of unemployment and under-employment is affecting the young minds of our population, minds which are capable of turning to one path or the other which could either make for very good citizenship or influence them to lead a life of crime. Such young people become frustrated as they find themselves without any employment, and without any prospect of finding employment either now or in the immediate future.

If we are at all interested in the welfare of our country we must at all times examine Government's policy with respect to recurrent expenditure to see how far its programme indicates an endeavour to bring about some relief of the present situation. As far as one can see from an examination of the programme of expenditure for this year there has not been any serious attempt made to grapple with this problem. It is true that in the Development Estimates we will find here and there an increase in some directions, but when the overall picture is taken into consideration the broad unemployment situation has not been touched at all.

In fact the situation seems to be graver still when we consider that the Financial Secretary in his Budget Speech indicated that economies would be applied in order to offset the small increase in expenditure in the payment of Government employees as from December last. Since he did not say in what ways the economies would be effected, it is open to me to conclude that it would be by way of retrenchment.

[Mr. Jackson]

It would be an accurate conclusion, when one takes into account the policy of the Government over the past three years. There has been retrenchment in almost every branch of the Public Service, and no attempt has been made to balance this retrenchment by the creation of new employment. It is for the Financial Secretary to tell me whether my conclusion is right or not.

The Financial Secretary mentioned as one of the reasons for the delay in the presentation of this Budget the strike of Government employees last month. That is unfortunate, but Government has only itself to blame. As compared with industry and commerce, Government is the only employer which has had so many strikes over the past three years. In the major industries one will find that strikes are almost things of the past. The reason? The employer has become responsible towards his employee and the employee has recognized that the atmosphere in which he does his work should be one of harmony instead of disharmony and conflict. Government, however, in taking an attitude that is about 20 years out-dated is not following good examples in labour relations.

I go further and accuse Government of attempting to bring about further confusion and greater conflict. One of the things agreed upon by the Government and the Federation of Unions of Government Employees was that the provisional figure of \$2.75 per day should be accepted as the minimum wage—and among the signatories to that were the Chief Secretary, the Minister of Trade and Industry, and Union officials. Disagreement over the word “provisional” was one of the reasons which prolonged the strike to the 16th of December; it could have ended on 13th December, but Government remained foolhardy in its attitude and this brought about the prolongation of the strike.

We find the Financial Secretary making no mention of the fact that the

figure of \$2.75 was provisional. Anyone reading the Budget Speech would conclude that in spite of the agreement to which I referred, Government seems to have changed its attitude. It is clear that Government either intends to force members of the Organizations concerned into another conflict very shortly, or to maintain the attitude of the Minister of Trade and Industry who was reported to have said, even before Government met the Organizations concerned, “Not a penny more will be added to the wages and salaries of Government employees”.

**The Financial Secretary:** May I interrupt, Sir, to ask the hon. Member to state the particular part of the Budget Speech he is dealing with?

**Mr. Jackson:** Paragraph 23. I quote:

“As Members know the Government has already agreed to pay a minimum wage of \$2.75 a day as against the former \$2.52 and to make adjustments in related daily and weekly wage rates and related ‘B’ and ‘C’ scales.”

I gather from that that Government does not account for the sum of \$2.75 as a provisional figure. Also, I would say this, that any Government which fails to take into account its promise to review wages and salaries on a broad basis is a Government which lacks imagination and one which is not grappling with day-to-day problems.

This is not the first occasion on which Government has so behaved. In 1958 the Government appointed a one-man Commission to review wages and salaries of Government employees—the Gorsuch Commission—and yet Government did not take into account the possibility that it would need more money to pay its workers. No statement has been made in this Council as to how Government is treating the Gorsuch Report, and this is a fact which has given rise to alarm among many people and which contributed to the difficulties experienced last December.

Government was of the view that the strikers could not remain out for more than three days and that they were on strike for Christmas money. In fact the workers were on strike for 15 days, and their representatives were at pains to point out that they did not strike for money to spend at Christmas. I want to warn that if the interpretation I put on the Budget Speech is correct, then the workers will be on strike again, and this time for more than 15 days. If the Financial Secretary had a headache last year, the chances are that he will have more this year. I hope I am wrong in my interpretation. I hope I am wrong.

**Mr. Speaker:** Wait and see.

**Mr. Jackson:** Thank you, Sir. Whitley Council will meet in February and Government's policy will come up for consideration. I feel it my duty to draw to the attention of Government what is happening, and I hope Government officials and Members of the Government who are here will not take this as a lightly made point. It is true that the civil servants did not go on strike with the other workers—

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not wish to interrupt you, but if you are moving a Motion on the strike situation, your remarks would be all right; but this is the Appropriation Bill before us. Have you not said enough about this matter of the strike? Why go on now to expatiate on it still? Is it within the ambit of the Motion? I do not think so.

**Mr. Jackson:** What I am saying, Sir, is this, if you will permit me a couple of seconds: I am trying to point out that in every field of the Government service there is great dissatisfaction, and because of this dissatisfaction the conflict which arose at one point in a certain section might spread to another section. That is why I am making the point that Government should examine its attitude.

**Mr. Speaker:** Would it not be better to leave it at that—a warning?

**Mr. Jackson:** I shall leave it there. But I was saying that Government's policy is one which lacks imagination. I have said that no attempt had been made to grapple with the situation, and that Government, as an employer, is behaving unlike other employers as a responsible body in a country. While they have refused to act in accordance with modern practice on the one hand, on the other hand they have acted in a way which can be said to amount to blackmail of the people of this country.

In the Estimates for the year, there is provision for the payment of fees to doctors and to specialists in our institutions. There is provision to pay them overtime, and from the conditions which one can examine, or from the results of the conditions which one has examined, one has been forced to conclude that the Government has agreed with those concerned to put this country to blackmail.

During the debate on the Development Estimates as presented here some weeks ago, the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry referred to the fact that in Finance Committee I had asked for a memorandum on those conditions. He sought to imply that I was wasting time when I asked for that memorandum, and I can remember saying to him that when the time came I would deal with the matter. The time has now come; for even though I have not the memorandum which was promised on the 9th October, 1959, I am still in possession of facts to demonstrate and to prove that the country, as far as its health is concerned, is held up to blackmail.

Doctors and specialists have been offered a change in their allowances, and when they work at night they would receive \$20 a night. Memorandum No. 23/1959 asked Finance Committee to agree to an increase in the consultation fees of specialists, and if one remembers what transpired in Finance Committee it is clear that there was an alternative to Government's proposal. Government proposed to pay

[Mr. JACKSON]

\$1,800 a year to these specialists as consultation fees or to leave it open for them to choose their own course of action. They have, in the majority, not accepted Government's proposal. If I am correct, there was only one of them who agreed to Government's proposal. I propose, here, to refer to the names of the doctors.

**Mr. Speaker:** Must you?

**Mr. Jackson:** Yes, Sir, unless you rule to the contrary, because I intend to show how much was taken from the public in this blackmail.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think you should refer to the names of individuals who are not here, without any notice being given.

**Mr. Jackson:** The figures I am going to quote are records of the Government and they cannot be disputed successfully.

**Mr. Speaker:** You are quoting from the Estimates?

**Mr. Jackson:** I am quoting from figures which I know are correct even though Government has not placed them at my disposal.

**Mr. Speaker:** I do not think you should refer to the names of doctors.

**Mr. Jackson:** If you rule, I shall not; but the point is, there are too many unethical things happening in that Department of which the public should know, so that an end may be put to them.

**Mr. Speaker:** That should be a debate on a substantive Motion, but if you, in your address now, refer to certain officers by names, who are not in a position to defend themselves, I do not think it would be right. If you want to make reference you may, perhaps, say that in a certain Department 'so-

and-so' is happening, but I do not think you should refer to names of individuals without any notice. You can speak generally.

**Mr. Jackson:** I assume that the people responsible for this have the records. I am not accusing the individuals. I am pointing out what has actually happened — what was drawn by these men from October to December.

**Mr. Speaker:** For you to attempt such a thing you might first adopt the course of informing the Government what you are going to do so that Government might be prepared; but I do not think I can give permission to mention the names of doctors off-hand when you are dealing with the Budget. You may refer to the Department, but I do not think that without any awareness by the other side or the persons concerned you should bring in names.

**Mr. Jackson:** I accept your Ruling and shall find another way to bring the figures out.

I said that Government agreed to the introduction of certain conditions in the Medical Department in respect of specialists and doctors. On the one hand they agreed that the doctors should have private practice — and I am not aware as to what time these doctors are going to have private practice, whether it is during the normal working hours or outside of those hours.

I do know there is a case in point as late as last year where a postal apprentice was sent by his postmaster to the doctor. The Post Office Department gives a printed form to attend a G.M.O. or any medical institution in the Colony. The lad left the West Bank of Demerara and came to Georgetown to find, on his arrival, that the doctor was not present in the Casualty Department. He told me as he was feeling ill he came to me for advice. I advised him to go to a private practi-

tioner and return a certificate to his postmaster.

The lad went to a doctor and found that that doctor worked at the Public Hospital. That was between 11.30 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. The doctor examined him, gave him a form which is intended for use at the Georgetown Hospital and charged him a fee. That form did not indicate any prescription, so that it is clear that the fee charged by the doctor was for the examination; and as far as my information goes, \$14 was paid by the lad for the service rendered.

The point I wish to make is whether Government has laid down any conditions as to what time private practice is to be conducted; if so, whether Government has not realized, as yet, that it has opened the door between doctors and other employees who are professionals. If I were a midwife, having seen Government yield to the doctors, I would ask for the same privilege.

**Mr. Speaker:** Fortunately, you are not.

**Mr. Jackson:** That is right, Sir. But if I were a land surveyor working with the Government I would say the time is ripe for me to practise privately in addition to the work given to Government. I warn Government that in making this agreement with these doctors it has opened itself to serious conflicts and trouble. I would have thought that we have people in the Government who are wiser than to permit such a thing.

The other point is: Has Government made it clear to the doctors that private practice should not be done in the institutions in which they work? Have they made it clear that the instruments of the Government should not be used while performing their private practice? I am aware, and in a position to know, that this is not the case,

for in almost every case where specialists do private practice it is done in the institution, and at times when they ought to be attending to persons who cannot pay the sums which the specialists receive as consultation fees and remuneration for private practice.

In the month of September one specialist whom I will call "Mr. A", received as consultation fees the sum of \$881, and \$22.90 as operation fees. In the month of October he received \$806 as consultation fees and \$46.95 as operation fees. Half of the operation fees goes to the specialist and the other half to the Government, but the whole of the consultation fees goes to the specialist. In the month of November "Mr. A" received \$1,004 in consultation fees and \$30.05 as operation fees, while in December he drew \$312 as consultation fees. In September "Mr. B" drew \$286 in consultation fees and \$45 in operation fees. In October he received \$491 in consultation fees and \$100 in operation fees. In November he drew \$692 in consultation fees and \$91 in operation fees, while in December he received \$540 in consultation fees and \$122.50 in operation fees. "Mr. C" received \$526 in consultation fees in September but no operation fee. In October he drew \$569 in consultation fees and \$30 in operation fees, while in December he received \$423 in consultation fees and \$12 in operation fees. In September another specialist, "Mr. D", received \$184 in consultation fees, \$386 in October, \$264 in November and \$430 in December.

"Mr. E" drew \$352 in consultation fees in September and \$13 in operation fees. In October he received \$254 in consultation fees and \$52 in operation fees. For November he received \$220 in consultation fees and \$14 in operation fees, and for December he got \$227 in consultation fees and \$5 in operation fees. In September "Mr. F" drew \$138 in consultation fees but no operation fees. In October he received \$174, in November \$106

[MR. JACKSON]

and in December \$52 in consultation fees. In October another specialist received \$20 in consultation fees and \$541.34 in operation fees; in November \$10 in consultation fees and \$591 in operation fees, and for December \$54 in consultation fees and \$708.54 in operation fees.

I said before that in addition to these fees specialists receive overtime allowances. They are also allowed private practice. It is reported that when persons consult a specialist there is an opportunity to receive money which is not recorded, and it is also reported that specialists receive more money than is recorded. I mention this because I think our Public Service should be free from such a condition of things. I think some definite ruling should be made in the matter, and that our Medical Service needs a thorough examination and some overhauling. It is also said that in prescribing for some out-patients some of the specialists direct them to take their prescriptions to certain drug stores, and the rumour is current that as a result of this behaviour money goes back to the doctors and specialists.

**Mr. Speaker:** Do you think it is right for you to mention such rumours without making any attempt at verification? There are so many things that are said which on examination may prove to be incorrect, so that I think one should be wary in repeating rumours which may or may not be substantiated. It is easy for people to say that someone is doing something, and very often when someone is called upon to justify the statement it cannot be done. I take it that you will not mention such rumours without attempting to have them verified, because they may have a damaging effect upon the persons concerned.

**Mr. Jackson:** There is a saying in this country that in every rumour there is a modicum of truth.

**Mr. Speaker:** Do you say that is true?

**Mr. Jackson:** I have made the statements not by way of deliberately trying to offend anyone, but to try to get the Government to examine the situation which can tend to destroy public confidence in the Medical Service. Since I have made the point I wish to say to the Government that if it felt that doctors and specialists were entitled to receive more money its attitude ought to have been to increase their salaries so as to prevent any addition to the burdens of the public, as is the case at the moment.

Consultation fees range from \$6 to \$10, we are told, so that it will be seen very clearly how difficult it is for poor persons to have the services of a specialist. It has been said that no specialist can charge a fee for consultation unless a patient has been referred to him by a medical practitioner. I say that that is not the practice, but if it is the practice then it is clear that there ought to be a change in the system, because the people who may suffer most are those who may not be able to find the money to pay for the consultation. Added to all this, my information is that during the morning hours you cannot see a specialist unless you can pay a consultation fee. In such a case you have to return in the afternoon and join a long line, because of the fact that more people have to wait for free service, and you may have to attend several days before you see a specialist if you have no money to pay.

The public is entitled to protection against such a policy, and I mention the matter here because it is the place where the public rights can be respected and made known to one and all. Perhaps in the Committee stage I may move, not a reduction of an item but the complete removal of the items from the Estimates, for it would appear that the conditions under which the specialists work now make it possible for them

to earn far more money than many private practitioners. I cannot say that they are earning too much, because I do not know what doctors in private practice earn, but it seems to me that with consultation fees and other allowances added to their salaries they should be allowed to have private practice without being a charge upon the country's finances, because the people who contribute to their salaries are members of the public who go to them for consultation and for operations.

I understand that in the case of surgical operations the specialists make the charges. There is no schedule of fees, so that a specialist can charge a patient \$100 if he so desires. This is a very unsatisfactory arrangement.

**Mr. Speaker:** You say you are going to move an Amendment in Committee?

**Mr. Jackson:** I hope to, Sir.

**Mr. Speaker:** Then you should not exhaust yourself now.

**Mr. Jackson:** Government itself ought to take steps to remove the conditions to which I have referred.

I gather from the Budget Speech that we are not stagnating, but marking time. In any case we are not going forward — unless “marking-time” has a new concept in the minds of Government. I have found it difficult to see the progress referred to, and to believe that the economy of this country is not going to be made worse every day by the actions of an unimaginative Government. The entire policy of the Government is having the effect of worsening the conditions which put them into office in 1957.

I have found it difficult to reconcile the socialist tendencies of the Majority Party with its acceptance of *bourgeois* economic conditions. Perhaps the Majority Party's acceptance

of hook, line and sinker of what it used to condemn has made possible the marriage of socialist and *bourgeois* concepts.

**Mr. Speaker:** I should like to remind hon. Members that this is the Appropriation Bill before us, and as the Budget is under debate I thought I should allow Members a half an hour more than they are permitted to speak under the Standing Orders. If further time is necessary, it will have to be secured by way of a substantive Motion. I am just telling the hon. Member for Georgetown North that his extra half-hour is fast running out and there is still the Committee stage left.

**Mr. Jackson:** I was anticipating your comments in this respect, Sir, and I was hoping that I had not gone beyond my time.

**Mr. Speaker:** If you had gone beyond the time I would have stopped you already.

**Mr. Jackson:** It seems that they have joined the band of classical economists and the *bourgeoisie*, whom they had so often condemned.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any other speaker?

**Mr. Tello:** Once more it is a pleasure for me to congratulate the hon. the Financial Secretary on the way he has prepared and presented the Budget. I join with the thousands who are happy to welcome this year a tax-free Budget. At one stage I had felt that the Government's policy on education was not in the best interests of the public. Since then I have noted that the Government has placed the emphasis somewhat on the preparation and training of teachers to run parallel with the Development Programme; and the Development Programme itself provides for the building of more primary schools, post-primary schools and domestic science centres and additional furniture and equipment. Undoubtedly,

[MR. TELLO]

education must play an important part in the economy of the country, and I am going to tax my patience and see how much will accrue from the present emphasis and the policy in general.

I am also very much in sympathy with what the hon. Member for North Western District said as regards the allocation in the Development Estimates for Amerindian Development.

While all this is so, I have a slightly different view and approach to another matter that the hon. Member touched on. I doubt very much that I erred in misunderstanding what the hon. the Financial Secretary said in paragraph 23 of his Budget speech:

"The figures which are put before Members are based for the most part on the rates of salaries and wages which were current when the 1959 estimates were prepared."

As a trade unionist I am worried about that statement and I interpret it as revealing an attitude of wage-freeze. Anyone accustomed to preparing annual budgets will say that increments have to be allowed for and the increased cost of living must be somewhere taken into account. How anybody can sit down and prepare a Budget on just current figures I do not know. It is not to be imagined, much more to be understood. I am hoping it is an oversight. If it is not, then we must interpret it to mean that Government is giving serious consideration to that most despicable measure, the freezing of wages. Never in the history of any Administration has wage-freezing been successful. As my Friend, the hon. Member for Georgetown North, pointed out, it is fortunate that private enterprise is not taking up the same attitude. Only recently the Demerara Bauxite Company and its employees through their union reached in an amicable manner an Agreement which will make for better working conditions.

I hope that what I read in paragraph 23 of the Budget Speech and

what I interpret as a hint of policy of wage-freeze was inserted because of pressure of work and because there was insufficient time to prepare accurate figures based on anticipated wage increases. I would refer, with Your Honour's permission, to the words of Mr. George Meany, President of the AFL-CIO, in the Winter 1958 Edition of "IUD Digest":

"It is important to remember that no advantage for workers has been gained by a wage freeze by unions in peacetime anywhere in the world. The wage freeze in the German trade union movement after World War II has now been replaced by an active programme for wage increases. The same can be said about the wage moratorium in England, where trade unions are now pursuing a very active wage increase programme in spite of continued talk of inflationary pressures.

From the things that I see in the economy at this time, there is no reason to conclude that a wage freeze would be advantageous to anyone but the employers."

In our case the employers happen to be Government. Such a policy would have the effect of trifling with the economy of the country, because the progress of commerce lies in the buying strength of the working-people.

It has been established the world over that until a country can offer current rates of wages that permit the expansion of the spending power of the working man, there is no true development and no true economic stability.

That has been the opinion shared by the Majority Party in this Council—they had expressed the view time and time again—that until the working man can live, rather than exist, this Colony or any other country cannot make true progress; and I join with the last speaker, the hon. Member for Georgetown North, in hoping that we are all wrong in our comparison of the attitude of private enterprise as an employer as against the attitude of Government as an employer.

In that same page mention has been made of 'economies'. I hope 'economies' is not another word for retrenchment and reduction of staff. I hope so, because I recall some two years ago when the recession was at its height and all progressive Governments the world over moved into the situation and recognized their responsibility and started new works, this Government participated in a retrenchment programme, making the unemployment situation which was very bad, even worse. I hope with his sagacity and ability, the hon. the Financial Secretary would find a means of effecting these economies without thinking of retrenchment and reduction of staff; because already, with the very high percentage of unemployment and under-employment, I think the economy of this country cannot afford it.

I do not see full employment around the corner. I do not see, also, that any progressive Government would do anything to make this already bad situation worse. We have not stated the figures, but they are public. The original figures were given by a great authority. They indicate that some years ago there was 21% of the people unemployed and under-employed. At that time they did not take into consideration the school leaving population or the necessity of Government and private employers to pursue a policy of employment; so that that 21% would be more correctly stated as 26%. However, I feel I should leave that matter for the time and hope for the best that inasmuch as Government had given serious consideration and certainly decided in the interest of the masses by not increasing taxes, they would also give consideration to avoiding further unemployment or under-employment.

I noticed in the Budget Speech, at Paragraph 17, the Financial Secretary states that:

"The actual receipts from beer duty in the current year will be \$454,000 as against the estimate of \$750,000. As duty is not paid till the second month after the beer is brewed..."

If my arithmetic is correct, he has collected more than \$290,000 less than he had anticipated. At the time when I opposed this tax, I said that we were over-estimating the revenue collectable from this beer tax. The tax has been with us for over a year. We are not quarrelling about it. But many people believe that we, the workers, are not entitled to a bottle of beer; that our wives are not entitled to cosmetics and the nice things of the world. It is very regrettable that we have not collected this revenue after we have caused the working man to pay more for his beer.

I have read in the Press, and I have no reason to doubt it because I do not know that anyone denied it, that a new small industry which may have assisted in solving, in some measure, the unemployment problem, has been driven away by this tax on beer. I said last year we must beware of taxing new industries and, at the same time, taxing an old industry that has kept 30,000 people employed. People in and out of the country would lose faith in a Government with a policy or anxiety to tax. I said that I hope that we would, at least, collect this revenue because we have already done severe damage to the country. Regardless of what information this Council has, because of the tax on Banks beer, it has driven away to Barbados another foreign firm which had every intention—

**The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing (Mrs. Jagan):** Which firm? Name it!

**Mr. Tello:** The firm which was to start a furniture factory here.

[Cries of 'That is not so'.]

**Mr. Tello:** And as long as we have to carry that sort of reputation, whether it is true or not, it will be damaging in the case of bringing new capital to the country.

I also read with some satisfaction that Government is encouraging new

[MR. TELLO]

enterprise in the country, and I ask myself the question: How are you encouraging new enterprise and new industries? At this stage I will quote from the lower part of Paragraph 12 of the Budget Speech:

"During the year the Government has given tax concessions to a number of new secondary industries. Some of these will be quite substantial when established . . ."

That is a step in the right direction. Why not keep going in the right direction all along? Why, at one moment, you would pursue a policy that would encourage new industries that are so necessary, then in another case you hastily turn around and do things that would frighten capital away?

In Paragraph 5 I read:

"Our other main agricultural export, rice, shows however an encouraging increase in 1959. The value of exports of rice for the first nine months was nearly \$9 million, or over three times what it was in the same period of 1958. This is of course the result of the good rice harvest in late 1958 which followed the bad harvests of 1956 and 1957. Rice farmers have also had a well deserved success with the autumn crop, and this has greatly helped the economy."

I would also like to quote a portion of paragraph 13:

"For rice there will be an increased acreage as large areas of additional land come into production from the efforts of individual farmers in extending their cultivation, and from the drainage and irrigation programme."

I refer to the second largest agricultural industry in the Colony and I am very pleased to read what an important part it is playing in the economy of our country, and how much we now look forward to it as revenue bearing. So much faith has been placed in agriculture that we are now spending most of our Development Fund on drainage and irrigation — \$7.84 million, out of which \$5.60 million comes from revenue. On land development we propose to spend \$1.66 million, most

of which comes from C.D. & W. funds, and \$.57 million from local sources.

It is heartening to think that Government sincerely believes that a diversity of crops, without relaxing the emphasis on rice, can solve the economic problems of British Guiana and ensure a more confident future for the rising generation. Speaking on the Development Programme a few weeks ago I think I said that I sincerely believe that the emphasis on production is correct. I know that many of us would much prefer to see some more money allocated to welfare, but we also feel that it is better that the country itself produce the money than that we should go around borrowing money and increasing our public debt.

I observe that the Financial Secretary has placed great faith in our peasants producing other agricultural crops while continuing their rice production. This brings me to the very important point of what programme would the peasant embark upon to make his livelihood from agriculture; how much faith would he attach to pursuing it as a life business; how much of his energy would he whole-heartedly put into this agricultural project when the security of his tenure is still in doubt? This is not the first time—I shall never cease doing it—that I appeal to this Government to clearly indicate to this Council its policy with respect to land ownership. Not only are we entitled to this information; not only have we the right to ask and even to demand it, but I feel that it is only fair to the general public and to the land users of British Guiana that they should know what is their true position on the land. How long will they be permitted to own it? Will they be able to bequeath their holding to their children, so that they can invest their last penny in it, knowing that the policy of Government is that, provided they keep it free from liability, they can possess it.

I feel that it is not fair to ask this Legislature to support Government by voting these substantial sums of money

to be spent on land development, on drainage and irrigation and agricultural projects, when Members of this Council are not in a position to tell people who ask us to tell them the true position with regard to Government's policy in relation to land ownership. It is almost unjust to invite people into a partnership for the development of the economy of this country and not share fully with them information as to the conditions under which they are asked to contribute their share. Again I would like to quote from the "I.U.D. Digest" where on page 4 Senator William Proxmire says:

"One of the basic tenets of the progressive faith is that political leaders have a primary obligation to inform their constituents. This springs from the progressive doctrine that the people have the truth and freedom to discuss it, and all will go well."

I emphasize that the people are sovereign. Let the people know and all will go well. I appeal to the Government, especially the elected Members of the Government, to make known their policy either in a White Paper or in a statement by a Member of the Executive Council, but by some means let it be publicly recorded in this Council so that all the people may know and all will go well. I am asking these champions of the people not to leave the public way longer in doubt on such an important matter. Whatever is Government's land policy—whether it is freehold or leasehold — I think Government should have the courage to tell the world about it.

Having pleaded so often with Government, I now challenge it to produce an official statement on the matter, and I wish to say that in doing so Government will only be fulfilling an obligation it has to the people of British Guiana. If the people have faith in Government's land policy I think we could rely on better co-operation, and we can all jointly move together confident that there are no secrets between Government and the people.

Some people are saying that the fact that Government has not declared its land policy, and the haste with which it passed the Land Bonds Bill indicate some evil intention. I think that if the idea is to create new avenues of employment in this country Government must be very careful about its approach for public response, because inasmuch as it is found wanting in respect of a particular policy the people will become suspicious of Government in other matters.

It is no use telling the people that the solution is to diversify their crops, because you are not telling them to what extent you propose to go into partnership with them. As I have pointed out already, some West Indian Governments in encouraging people to diversify crops enable people to buy land at prices which they are able to repay easily and, of course, the primary purpose is to let them own the land. On such an important thing as land policy it is important that Government should make up its mind, because it will have a bearing on industrialization. If an investor with capital finds that Government is undecided about this question of the ownership of immovable property, he is going to be sceptical about investing here. If the Government is not clear about its land policy, then it is safe to assume that it is uncertain about its industrial policy.

Now that thousands of dollars are being spent to encourage people to produce more food it is time that some statement should be made on the policy of marketing. What does Government propose to do about finding new markets or extending present markets? I have said it before, and I say it again that this question of an available market is important to the farmer who has devoted his time and energy to growing crops, because the lack of a market can deter him and dampen his ambitions and his desire to work. It is enough for the farmer and the peasant to put up with the adversities of floods and droughts to find that there is not enough

[MR. TELLO]

buying locally or no markets outside of the Colony.

Government's policy at the moment seems to be that wages should be frozen. Must they now endanger the confidence of the farmer and peasant? I again claim it is the right of this Council to know what the policy is in regard to marketing of agricultural produce and this is a forum where such information should be given so that it can accurately be recorded in *Hansard* and there would be no confusion. I say confusion because we often hear Members on the other side saying "You misunderstood me", or "I did not mean that."

I have always heard in this Council remarks that the people are sovereign and that on important issues like Federation they must be consulted, but it appears that the people are not sovereign enough where other matters are concerned. I am pleading with our Elected Ministers to come forward and let the people know where they stand. It is known that the people who are unemployed today hold a substantial part of the general purchasing power. The tax policy last year reduced the probability of any new capital investment here and it also minimized to a great extent anxiety and desire of the local man to invest in his own country. Our last resort therefore lies with the peasants and the agriculturists who have so far not yet given up. Those are our rear-guard action and I am appealing in this Council that Government should seek to give them all co-operation.

Finally, I want to say that I do not subscribe to the view that the duty of the trade unionist is to oppose the employer at every angle and at every time but instead to preserve employment. Therefore I have no hesitation in criticizing any unfair treatment of any industry which deals reasonably fair with workers. One such industry is that of sugar which employs 30,000 workers, and I believe that this industry should not have

been given greater weight to carry, especially when the price of sugar was declining. I feel that it does not add to the credit of this Colony or of this Government that a decision should be taken to reimpose a tax, however small it may be, on the sugar industry. Apart from the decline in price, there is increased competition for markets. In spite of the difficulties I have mentioned employees in the sugar industry have obtained through the M.P.C.A., and very fortunately, one of the most up-to-date labour agreements for the last decade.

I am happy that we are not further taxed. I also feel that with a little more thought we might not have been taxed on so many items last year, in which case relations between Government and public would have been improved where they were embittered and strained. The Financial Secretary and all his associates who had a part in the presentation of this Budget ought to be congratulated. There have been criticisms of the Budget, but it is better for us to express our opinions rather than to nurse grievances.

**Mrs. Jagan :** I have listened to the last speaker devote most of his attention not to the 1960 Budget, but, like Rip Van Rinkle waking up from his slumber, he took us back to the 1959 Budget and went into a long dissertation on belly-aches like the "Opposition" to the Banks beer tax and the sugar production tax.

What the hon. Member failed to appreciate was that despite all the threats of doom and the predictions that the world would end with these taxes, these have not materialized. Our dear friend, Banks Breweries Ltd. did not collapse. The horrible idea of raising Banks beer from 24 cents to 25 cents a bottle was not in force for one week before we saw in the streets that some retailers were selling beer at 24 cents a bottle. More beer is being bought and people are drinking more beer. The industry has not suffered, and only a few disgruntled Members of the Legislature are un-

happy, and that is because their prophecies have not been fulfilled.

Why must we sit here and listen to another set of complaints? It is a waste of time, and I do not think they have any place in the discussion on the Recurrent Estimates for 1960.

The hon. Member has also brought up the matter of our Land Bonds Ordinance which he fears is going to upset the balance in British Guiana. Somehow similar legislation has not upset the balance in Jamaica, and I might say that our Land Bonds Ordinance was not original; the law, in fact is in some respects identical with the Jamaican law.

I do not see that it has destroyed the goodwill or the integrity of the Jamaican Government. I do not see that those who had been paid in bonds have howled and wept in order to discredit their Government. There had been insinuations that when the Government give such bonds they would not even think of redeeming them. All this type of slander by Members can do nothing but harm this country. Can we say who will be the Government in 20 years' time? It is a sad sign—a desire to discredit the country that prompts some people to keep hammering away at these things.

I heard the same hon. Member referring to a little item he saw in the newspapers. He was all smiling. He was happy to tell us that he read in the newspapers that we have chased away a furniture factory. What type of patriotism is that? I have had a conversation with the gentlemen concerned with this furniture factory and they never mentioned that it was because of the 'Banks tax' that they were going to Barbados. They had never considered the prospect of opening an industry here. It was for other reasons that they have started their industry in Barbados. We have a furniture industry in British Guiana. I had a long discussion with them and they never once mentioned that the 'Banks tax' chased them away. In fact, they were so ignorant of British Guiana's

situation that not only did they not investigate the possibility, but they were unaware of the terms we offer to new industries. We explained to them the various incentives offered by British Guiana.

There are many things that bring industries to a country. The possibility of making profits is one of them, and although it is not a pleasant thing to say, I must confess that one of the points they did raise when they mentioned going to Barbados was that the labour was cheaper in Barbados. That is not a pleasant fact for us to harp upon. The furniture factory may be going to Barbados for many other reasons, but some person, whether deliberately or not, has chosen to blame the 'Banks tax' for the factory not coming here. It is malicious and untrue and I wish hon. Members would stop attempting to destroy the good name of British Guiana and not to do it so happily and gayly as if the future of this country is not the concern of everyone here—the "Opposition" and the Majority Party. I think patriotism must go far enough to protect a country.

No one says that the "Opposition" must not oppose, criticize and try to remedy errors, but not to destroy the good name of the country and make it more difficult to push our country forward and see that the good work goes on. One would imagine, by listening to these hon. Gentlemen, that no one is coming into British Guiana. That is not true.

The Minister of Trade and Industry had spoken the other day giving the facts and figures that foreign investments had gone up by leaps and bounds. Other foreign industrialists are knocking at our door from day to day. When one misguided individual gets up and makes a statement that the 'Banks Beer tax' is chasing people away we must not take him seriously.

The hon. Member brought up the question of land. I wonder whether the

[MRS. JAGAN]

hon. Member is aware that the Majority Party, at no time, ever expressed its opposition to the system of freehold which exists at the moment. Arising out of comments made in this Legislative Council and deliberate attempts to misconstrue the Majority Party's views on the subject, it has been almost generally accepted that the Majority Party does not agree with the rights of private property and intends to take away private lands from persons who have titles to such lands. Such statements and ideas are the result of impressions created in this Council so much so that we find newspapers to this day making remarks that the Majority Party intends to take away people's lands.

I would remind Members that the decision of leasehold lands was in relation to one very small group of tenants in British Guiana—those living on the Government Land Settlement Schemes. That does not involve very many people. It does not involve a great deal of land and, certainly, it does not concern hundreds of thousands of acres of land which are held by freehold title.

I say that now because so frequently Members seem to have the wrong idea and, perhaps, it is deliberately done. In fact, this Government has gone out of its way to bring into effect the Land Registration Ordinance which actually assists persons, who have been unable to establish title, to establish title to lands. Do you want any better proof than that? We have considered this one of the most important bits of legislation brought to this Council during our term of office. This is not to take away land from people; this is not to convert freehold into leasehold, but to assist in establishing titles to persons who, because a great deal of time has been passed from one generation to the next by various marriages, etc., it has been difficult to establish title without going to Court.

I would remind hon. Members that the Caribbean Land Tenure Symposium,

which is not a political body but one associated with the examination of land tenure by the Caribbean Commission, has recommended that leasehold tenure is more advisable than freehold tenure. I will leave that there for the moment.

We were treated, by the hon. Member for Georgetown North, to a long dissertation about the Government employees strike in December, 1959. The Member took the hon. the Financial Secretary to task for putting into his Speech the words: "As Members know the Government has already agreed to pay a minimum wage of \$2.75 a day". He then referred to the Agreement which the Financial Secretary and the hon. Minister of Trade and Industry signed, which stated that the Government and the Federation agreed to the payment of a minimum basic rate of pay of \$2.75 per day with effect from the 1st April, 1959, together with adjustments to the daily wage rates and related salary scales, etc. I cannot agree that the hon. the Financial Secretary is incorrect in putting in this statement, because it is correct.

The hon. Member did tell us a very interesting thing. He said that the strike should have ended on 13th December, but it ended on the 16th December. He said if Government had only agreed the strike would have been settled earlier. I had an entirely different understanding of why this took place. Certainly it would have ended on the 13th if a certain politician did not deliberately urge the Trade Union Council to continue the strike when negotiations were to end on that day. The very Member who urged the T.U.C. to continue the strike is sitting here today. Those are the facts.

**Mr. Burnham:** This is 1960.

**Mrs. Jagan:** Those are the facts. The truth always hurts.

The hon. Members also discussed at length the question of specialists' fees

and allowances. Perhaps it is not fair to say it, but it is a fact that the hon. Member did not fully understand what he was talking about. Some of his criticisms are no doubt justifiable, but let us start from the beginning. The hon. Member is under the impression that specialists receive overtime pay. That is not correct. Specialists do not receive pay for overtime work at night. The hon. Member has confused them with hospital doctors who have had an extra burden placed upon their shoulders due to the shortage of staff and having to work an excessive number of nights per month. The allowance of \$20 per night, to which the hon. Member referred, has nothing whatsoever to do with the specialists, but is paid to the institutional doctors.

I must say that the hon. Member is better informed than I am; he has information which I have not yet received, but that is how things go in British Guiana. He was able to inform this Council—and I would not doubt that his figures are correct—extensively of the amount of fees the specialists are receiving. Unfortunately, that information has not yet reached me. I daresay the hon. Member has better access to Government files than I have, which reminds us of the debate we had last year concerning the Education Department. But that is one of the things we accept as they come.

The question of specialists being allowed consultation practice has been bothering Government for a very long time. Specialists have been requesting the right to consultation practice, and have based their claim on the fact that specialists in other territories are allowed consultation practice. It is a fact that Trinidad and other territories in The West Indies do allow specialists consultation practice or an allowance in lieu of such practice. In other words, a specialist may choose to have his consultation practice, and if he does he is not allowed the non-pensionable allowance which he received formerly in lieu of such practice. The majority

of specialists have chosen consultation practice.

As I told Members in Finance Committee, we are watching the specialists' private practice very carefully. In fact, arrangement for the introduction of such practice was made for a limited period—for a probationary period. We are now observing how it is working. If it is abused I can see no other answer than to discontinue such practice. If it works out satisfactorily and it turns out that many of the specialists are satisfied and will not threaten to leave the Service, we think that the people of British Guiana will have benefited.

I take the strongest objection to any specialist charging a fee to any person in British Guiana who cannot afford to pay such a fee. I have had a talk with the specialists as recently as Saturday last, and they feel just as strongly about this point, and they are fully in agreement to do everything possible to prevent any abuse of the system. There is no doubt that from time to time there have been reports of such abuses. I have investigated them thoroughly, and where such reports have been true strong action has been taken. I would appreciate — and I have said this more than a dozen times since I have been Minister of Health — that if Members would only let us know of these complaints they would be investigated. But it seems as though Members prefer to come here and tell us that someone was charged \$14, while it would only take a few minutes to send me a note and I would have the complaint investigated, because I am more keen than many of the Members here about stamping out any abuses.

It is not true to say that specialists do not give service to those who cannot pay. That is a slander against many of the country's best doctors. I wonder what Members think the doctors do all day? They go through the Wards and take care of pauper and poverty patients who are bed patients. Look at the thous-

[MRS. JAGAN]

ands of patients who are taken care of in the Wards. It is not fair to slander all the doctors if one or two of them make a mistake. I have seen some of the most delicate surgical operations performed on people who have never paid one cent. Only the other day I saw a boy who, before he went to hospital, was walking on the toes of one foot, and when he had received what he told me was excellent care he came out walking like a normal human being.

We cannot only point out one or two cases which are wrong; we have to remember that the same doctors also take care of thousands of patients who do not pay a cent for treatment, and I want to remind Members of the point I made in Finance Committee, that a pauper or poverty patient, one who cannot afford the specialist's fee, would normally go to the Out-patients' Department at the Hospital, there to be seen by the out-patient doctor. If on examination the out-patient doctor feels that that person should see a specialist, arrangements are made for the patient to go to the specialist. Such a person is not required to pay a fee. If the hon. Member has information to the contrary, I ask him please to give me the cases and I will go into them. I cannot prove anything by groans; I must have facts. Give me the facts and I will work on them. I have had some cases brought to my attention and I have gone into them.

Those who know me know that I am not particularly kind to people who I find have victimized or have oppressed others. ["Hear, hear"]. As far as I am concerned, those who injure others or exploit others have no sympathy from me. I am glad hon. Members agree and I hope they will not be the first to start protecting those guilty persons. I would ask hon. Members again to try to co-operate. From year to year I ask this, but not one legislator has ever had the energy or the interest to carry his complaint beyond the Legislative Council. That is not the answer.

Such cases cannot be tackled properly unless all the points are brought to our attention.

The whole question of specialist practice is under examination because the arrangement is temporary. If the experiment does not prove successful it will have to be terminated. From my discussion with the specialists I feel that they sincerely wish the experiment to be a success, and that they sincerely intend to take a serious view of any of their colleagues who abuse the rules. I know as a fact that the majority of our specialists are good decent men who want to help their fellow men. I think the majority of them are inspired by the traditions of their profession and abide by its rules. Let us give them a chance. Let us also at the same time be vigilant to see that people who are not in a position to pay such fees are not obliged to do so.

I know that hon. Members are critical, but I wonder how critical they would have been if an entirely different situation had arisen—if in this world where there is a shortage of specialists, some of those we have had left the Service. Members would have been extremely critical of Government's inability to hold such men. It is a fact, and we have to look at the world picture to realize that in certain professions there is a shortage, and once a shortage exists, whether we want to or not, special efforts have to be made from time to time to hold on to what we have.

Hon. Members are as concerned as I am about our difficulty in obtaining a mental specialist, a psychiatrist, for our Mental Hospital. They readily agreed last year to the provision of a very handsome salary for a psychiatrist, but in spite of the very handsome salary offered we have so far been unable to obtain one, because of the general world shortage of such specialists. In the circumstances I feel that Members should appreciate that every effort ought to be made to hold in the Government Service those specialists who have been giving service to this country. The hon.

Member for Georgetown North rattled off a list of specialists' fees which those gentlemen receive monthly. I am sure that Members appreciate that the Income Tax Department also would have a detailed record, so that the Government does not lose as much as one would imagine.

Once indigent people are not subject to abuse, I think we can let the system work as it has been working in other territories of the West Indies. While I say that, I am not suggesting that because a thing exists in the Islands it is *ipso facto* good for British Guiana.

Why is it, anyway, that most of the smaller Islands allow their specialists to do consultative practice? The reason lies in the same problem which we have here. These medical men can command salaries running into thousands of dollars in other parts of the world. Small areas cannot afford to pay such salaries without upsetting the salary scales, and in their wisdom they have allowed this concession and retained the services of these men whose salaries in the world market are high above what the small Governments can pay. I hope that I have to some extent explained the position as far as this question of specialists and their practice is concerned.

**Mr. Bowman:** The emptiness of the public gallery is no doubt an expression of the disgust and contempt which the people have for this Government, and their lack of confidence in it. The presentation of a Budget with no new taxation is a clever and subtle attempt by the Government, which realizes that it has committed political sins and broken many promises. They hope to fool the public and so mitigate the charges that are brought against the Government from time to time. I have been with these people for a long time, from the inception of the People's Progressive Party, and I know them. With the forthcoming General Elections in view they have devised a Budget which they feel

will not further arouse the anger of the people. They are attempting to appease the population and avoid the rising unpopularity of the Government.

As far as the Development Budget is concerned, I do not think that enough is being done through it to improve the position of the working-class. I am particularly concerned, about this, because for the past 10 years, during which time I have been active in politics, my interest has always been with the working-class—the class to which I belong.

I saw in the Budget speech that the Public Debt at the end of 1959 was \$89.9 million. That is a lot of money, and the borrowing programme of the Government for the next few years would bring it to \$161.7 million at the end of 1964. I am not opposed to the idea of borrowing money, but I am not convinced that it is going to be spent sensibly and in the best interests of the Colony. What is being done with the money? Most of it is to be spent on land reclamation and drainage and irrigation, and so on. I am not opposed to that either, but it is only the farmer that will benefit. Where does the man who sells his labour to live come into the picture? What about the unemployed?

Even if the whole Development Programme is carried out, as I see it, unemployment will still stalk this country. Mr. McGale in his Report stated that there were 30,000 people unemployed and 20,000 under-employed. I would like the Government to tell me what steps it is taking to alleviate that situation.

What we need to do is to make other areas available to people by providing more road communications. The Evans Commission in 1948 recommended that a road should be built joining the coastlands with the interior, that is, with the Rupununi. The Mission of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development supported the idea of interior roads, and it

[Mr. Bowman]

was accepted by the previous Government in 1956 that \$15 million should be put aside for the development and completion of a road to the Rupununi. If Government turns its attention fully to this project more people would get employment, and the unemployment situation would be eased.

I want to warn the Government that while they are seeking independence they should remember that in 1926 this country ran into debt and a certain Commission—

**Mr. Benn:** The Wilson-Snell Commission.

**Mr. Bowman:** The Wilson-Snell Commission recommended that the country's Constitution should be disrated. I am afraid that if all this money that is being borrowed is not spent sensibly, this country will go bankrupt and a similar situation will occur.

If the interior road is built farming communities will spring up along the road. This is exactly what I had in mind when I moved a Motion last year asking that a Mission be sent to Brazil. An amendment was made to the Motion including Venezuela. A Mission was sent to Venezuela and up to now no Mission has gone to Brazil. I want to ask these people: why are you not paying attention to the development of the Interior? I know how the United States as a country was built. Whenever roads and railways are built, population follows. Such things will have the same results here.

I see, here, \$4,270,000 earmarked for the maintenance of part of a road which has already been built, but what I have in mind is the extension of the road from Madhia to the Rupununi. What are they doing about that? It was only last week that I asked the Director of Agriculture whether he was aware of the fact that cocoa is being produced in the Potaro area and he said "yes". I

also asked him if he did not think it would be good to set up a nursery in that area so as to develop real cocoa farming in that area. He said that he had a nursery at Bartica which was taking care of the development in that area. The Interior has good farm lands and whilst it is Government's intention to concentrate more on the production of rice, I feel if they would encourage people to go into the interior and develop land settlements there it would ease the unemployment in Georgetown and this upward trend of crime would stop.

I do not know what my friends are thinking about but, as I said, they have their eyes on the forthcoming General Elections. I can, however, give them the assurance that, contrary to their expectation, they are not going to have an easy run-over as at the last Elections. It is not going to be as you think. The tables are going to be turned.

**Mr. Speaker:** Address the Chair, please!

**Mr. Bowman:** I am sorry, Sir. Turning back to the question of taxes, I noticed from the Financial Secretary's statement that the consumption of rum was dropped from about 490,000 proof gallons in 1958 to 470,000 proof gallons in 1959, a difference of 20,000 proof gallons. He has been trying to give the impression that this resulted from the recession. I do not believe so. That is his opinion but that is not mine. I believe this drop is the result of the increase in the excise tax which was passed on to the consumer. The same goes for Banks beer. They estimated they were going to collect \$750,000 as a result of the increased taxation; instead, they got \$454,000, and they want us to believe that this is a result of the recession. That is not so. It resulted from the increase which they put on; and these people are not going to understand. They lack the necessary ability to reason. They are like mules. They are stubborn.

**Mr. Tello:** Be careful, comrade!

**Mr. Bowman:** They are, indeed, seeing the repercussion. Where are the new industries? The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing said that new industries are coming in and she referred to the fish industry which is already established. I had given notice of a Motion about tax concessions to new industries five months ago and it has been shelved. What are the incentives given to new industries? Is Government trying to bring the concessions in line with the West Indies? Can they not ask themselves why new industries are not coming to British Guiana? I had really believed in them, but Marx said: "All things in this world are subject to changes."

**Mrs. Jagan:** Why have you changed?

**Mr. Bowman:** I changed because —. I had given notice of a Motion and it has been shelved, but as soon as this debate is finished I will call for it to be debated. I want the people to see clearly who are their champions. Those who had been claiming all the years to be the champions of the people are proving today that they are not the champions of the people but the champions of themselves. If you think you are going to run away with this Constitutional delegation you are also making a mistake. If I have to pay my own passage I am going to England. [Laughter].

Let them laugh. They are laughing at their own downfall. I think I have said what I wanted to say, but let me warn them again before I take my seat: In 1926 we lost our Constitution because this country ran into debt, and if the money that is being borrowed is not spent properly, we are going to find ourselves in difficulty.

I read a spiritual psychological book sometime ago, when I was a young man, entitled "Zoism", the object of which is to free the soul from its bond-

age. It has rules and one of the rules says that one should not receive gifts because the receiving of gifts places the recipient in moral bondage; and since we are seeking independence we should not seek gifts because we will be morally obligated.

British Guiana is to be given \$22 million free and loans totalling \$38.4 million from the British Exchequer for the Development Programme between now and 1964. We will be obligated; and obligation is not something that makes for independence. Once we are begging we will be obligated.

The same author of the book said that if you have a good friend from whom you received gifts from time to time, there will come a day when that friend will ask you for something which you need badly for yourself and you will find it difficult not to give it to him. You are not going to deny yourself of a thing you need to give to your friend. I only quote this to show the senselessness of these people. Try to be reasonable! You should not ask for gifts now. If you want independence, I think it would be more along the lines of independence if you ask for a loan. But if you are going to ask for independence and, at the same time, ask for gifts, we will be morally obligated and I think that will put us back about 30 years.

**Mr. Tasker:** I would first comment, Sir, as has the hon. Member for Demerara River, on the sparcity of attendance in the Public Gallery, which I read differently from him. I read it as an illustration of the general lack of public interest in a Budget which the hon. the Financial Secretary referred to as non-controversial — by which, of course, he meant that it provides no new taxation. This seems to me to be a particularly sad state of affairs in our present stage of development, and to imply, I think, a lack of responsibility in some of our organs of public information. The Financial Secretary's speech was widely published and yet, to my

[MR. TASKER]

knowledge, only one of our newspapers has taken the trouble to attempt a serious analysis and criticism of the Budget Speech. I do not agree with all the points made by the editorial writer in "The Daily Chronicle", but I warmly congratulate that newspaper on the effort it has made to bring the Colony's economic well-being into the arena of public discussion and to comment on it.

The Financial Secretary in his Budget Speech said he hoped the facts and figures which he was bringing forward would demonstrate once and for all that it was ridiculous to talk about British Guiana as stagnating. I agree with him. The facts and figures he produced show that, like most economies, ours is developing, though slowly and somewhat unevenly. He drew attention, as he has on previous occasions, to our continuing dependence, which many speakers have commented on in this Chamber, on the two main industries for export, namely, sugar and bauxite. But he also gave us some encouraging signs of a contribution, now increasingly important, by other products, and I was extremely glad to hear what he had to say on the improvement in the fortunes of the rice industry; on our exports of forest products; on the contribution being made by balata, coffee and diamonds; and, of course, on the hopes which we all have for the new manganese mining industry.

I think it is reasonable, however, to dwell for a moment on the Financial Secretary's comments on sugar. He pointed out that 1959 had not been as good a year as 1958, and that the negotiated price for sugar sold under the Commonwealth Sugar Agreement in 1960 would be reduced—and this is of course the first reduction since the Agreement came into being. He also pointed out, if not explicitly, certainly by implication, that both sugar and bauxite are in the unfortunate position, so far as British Guiana's economy is concerned, of being largely dependent on world conditions and world marketing arrange-

ments over which this country and its industries have no control. I hope that what the Financial Secretary has said will bring home what I can only call the stupidity of the export tax that was imposed on the sugar industry last year.

I spoke on the subject in this Council a year ago when I argued that it was a discriminatory tax — not a land tax, nor an agricultural tax, but a purely discriminatory tax on the productive efficiency of one industry. The point, I think, has been brought home this year when the Financial Secretary says on behalf of the Government, that with the falling world price he hopes that the sugar industry will rise to the challenge. So do I, for one very good reason—that if sugar does not rise to the challenge, and in spite of those very promising signs of other industries, there is nothing right now to take its place. I am very glad that point has now been accepted by the Government.

The Financial Secretary also dealt with development. I do not propose to deal with the detailed proposals for development expenditure, but since he referred to the finance for development I think it is relevant at his point. I am anxious about the apparent *volte face* between 1959 and 1960 in terms of the amount that we are to provide from our recurrent budget for development. The Financial Secretary said a year ago that he felt that \$3 million per annum was the minimum we should aim at as a contribution from our own resources towards development, and I do not think any Member would disagree with him, because it is surely axiomatic that if you are looking for help from other people, whether in terms of grants-in-aid or loans, short or long-term, the first prerequisite is that you should demonstrate that you are prepared to help yourself, otherwise it seems unreasonable to ask others for help. It may be that there is a perfectly sound reason behind the approach which the Government is taking this year. We did not get even \$2 million last year, and now we

are estimating for just over \$1 million this year. It is true that the Financial Secretary has made it clear that that figure might well be an underestimate. But what worries me is that if it might well be more, should we not be estimating more closely right now? And if in fact it is going to be \$1.1 million only, is that really enough? I shall be glad to have Government's assurance on this point.

I raise this question because in the Development Estimates substantial sums of expenditure have been reserved. Now, for somebody not in the councils of Government, the question is raised: are these sums being reserved because we are doubtful of our ability to spend the full amount intelligently and well; or, as another Member has already suggested, is it because the Government is not prepared at this stage to raise the full funds needed for development, because of the implications of added taxation? If it is the latter, then I am numbered among those who would rather be taxed. The question is: are we being strictly honest with ourselves in terms of the Development Programme and the importance which we all attach to it? Either it is our first priority, and therefore funds must be found for it; or it is not our first priority and may be subordinated to other considerations.

**Mr. Speaker:** Do you think you are likely to conclude your remarks this afternoon?

**Mr. Tasker:** I am not aware of what time Your Honour will adjourn.

**Mr. Speaker:** I was thinking of the extra half-hour.

**Mr. Tasker:** I should be finished by half-past five, but if Your Honour prefers to adjourn now—

**Mr. Speaker:** No, I do not wish to restrict you in any way. If you think you may take much longer we can take the adjournment now.

**Mr. Tasker:** I am always anxious to speak as briefly as possible, but there

are other aspects of the Financial Secretary's speech with which I would like to deal. I am concerned about his comments on Education. In paragraph 23 of his Budget Speech, if I may quote briefly, the Financial Secretary says, in dealing with the estimates for Education:

"It is most difficult to sustain the ever increasing cost of primary education much less the growing needs of secondary education. However, the Government sees no alternative to providing more money for primary education as the population continues to grow. It does make it difficult, however, to find additional money for increases in public expenditure for education at university level."

I do not think anybody can question the honesty or the sincerity of those sentiments. What I do question, however, is the long-term wisdom of saying that we are prepared to accept an escalator clause in terms of primary education which may go on and on and up and up but warning at the same time that secondary education and post-secondary education may have to suffer as a result. That seems to me highly questionable as a policy in our present stage of development.

I was not here when Professor W. Arthur Lewis, the new Principal of the University College of the West Indies, visited British Guiana last year, but I am well aware of what he said on that occasion about the value of a University College to a developing area; and I would like to record the view that any attempt to cut down on the agreed level of expenditure for the University College, or on our use of the University College—in terms of training our own people for the jobs for which we so desperately need them—would be very misguided.

I feel strongly, too, and for the same reason, about technical education. It would be a sad day if, by paying lip service to primary education only, we should get to a stage where we failed to provide the necessary finance for the training of men and women who, in our developing community and society are so desperately needed.

[MR. TASKER]

My second point is in regard to the Financial Secretary's comments on the Public Service and on the serious frauds perpetrated in some Departments, and also on waste. The Financial Secretary referred to the continuing process of stabilization; in other words the recognition that no employer can pay more in employment costs than he can afford, and that Government is, of course, no exception. I must say I am encouraged in another sense, because I assume that the Government is at last recognizing that in these matters it can no longer distinguish between itself as an employer and private enterprise.

Members opposite are well aware that on this subject the sugar industry has been their target from time to time. The industry's policy of labour stabilization is a policy being brought about in order to provide more work and increased wages for the number of people that can really be employed. I am glad to see that Government has recognized the same thing, that an employer cannot employ more people than he can afford to pay. I hope that what is now claimed as a virtue in Government will no longer be seen as a vice in private enterprise.

Also, in terms of the Public Service, I do feel there is one very important issue arising out of the Financial Secretary's remarks on its administration, and on the deterioration of standards that has taken place. I speak with some feeling on this subject as a Member of the Public Accounts Committee, which for some time now has been recommending urgent action by Government in terms of improved training of and under the Public Service. The Financial Secretary in his speech explained some of the difficulties and he referred to the complex Financial Regulations and to the fact that an immense amount of detailed accounting of public funds had to be done.

Mr. Speaker : Paragraph please.

Mr. Tasker : Page 16, Sir.

Mr. Speaker : Thank you.

Mr. Tasker : Two points came out of this. Firstly, the Financial Regulations of the Government are clearly laid down and should be clearly understood by all officers required to administer them. If these Regulations are outdated, then, for Heaven's sake, let us bring them up to date; if these Regulations are not being applied, then let us take steps to train the responsible officers in what should be done.

Secondly, the Financial Secretary suggested that many of these difficulties might be solved more easily in private business than in Government. He may be right, but there is a vital point of principle in this, namely, that it is the responsibility of the Head of a Department to ensure that his Department is administered properly. And as Members of the Public Accounts Committee are well aware, and as the Reports of the Director of Audit have also made clear, too often these problems arise either because proper arrangements for the implementation of Financial Regulations have not been made, or because a public servant somewhere was required to take responsibility without being properly trained for it.

I would add that this raises a third point, which is that too often, in the experience of the Public Accounts Committee, the buck is passed from the top of a Department as far down as possible, before somebody picks it up.

All of this adds up to the fact that the administration of each Department is a job for people who have been trained in administration. I know that Government, like private enterprise has been sending senior officers abroad for training in Public Administration, and I only hope that will continue as a policy. But I do not think Government should stop there; just as administration is the responsibility of the departmental head and cannot be passed down the line, so training of people who are required to

carry out administrative duties is also the responsibility of the Head of a Department and cannot be delegated. This seems to me to be a call for a concerted effort at all levels of responsibility in the Public Service; and in view of the extremely bad effect on the public relations brought about on the Civil Service caused by recent thefts and frauds. I do not believe that any senior Public Servant today would not give up his time in order to equip himself better in this vital area. But if the lead in this direction should come from Government, each Department should be making an effort to improve its own administrative procedures and to improve training at all levels for those required to carry out responsibilities.

#### SESSIONAL COMMITTEES

**Mr. Speaker:** Before I ask the Chief Secretary to move the adjournment, I take this opportunity to announce the appointment of the following Sessional Committees:

**Public Accounts Committee —**  
Mr. W. O. R. Kendall, Mr. F. Bowman, Mr. A. L. Jackson, Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard, Mr. A. G. Tasker, O.B.E.

**Public Petitions Committee —**  
The hon. B. S. Rai (Minister of Community Development and Education), Mr. L. F. S. Burnham, Mr. R. C. Tello, Mr. Ajodha Singh, Mr. Jai Narine Singh.

**House Committee—**The hon. Ram Karran (Minister of Communications and Works), the hon. B. S. Rai (Minister of

Community Development and Education), Mr. R. E. Davis.

#### ADJOURNMENT AND TIMES OF FURTHER SITTINGS

**The Chief Secretary (Mr. Hedges):** Sir, before I move the adjournment I would like to say that I have consulted members of the Government and the "Opposition" in private, on the timetable for the Budget debate sessions. I think we have now agreed that today we will adjourn at 5.30 and that tomorrow, the 19th, and the 20th we shall debate the Motion for the Second Reading from 2.00 to 5.00 with night sessions from 8.00 to 10.00.

On the 21st we intend going into Committee stage; and we have reserved 21st and 22nd from 2.00 to 5.00 and from 8.00 to 10.00. On the 25th, which is a Monday, we hope to sit from 2.00 to 5.00 or, perhaps, 5.30; and on the 26th from 2.00 to 5.00 and from 8.00 to 10.00. Afterwards, if it is necessary for the Committee stage to continue, we wish to sit from the 1st to the 5th of February from 2.00 to 5.00 and in the evening from 8.00 to 10.00.

I move that Council do now adjourn.

**Mr. Speaker:** We shall now adjourn until tomorrow afternoon at two o'clock.

*Council adjourned accordingly.*