

**LINDEN FORBES SAMPSON
BURNHAM, O.E., S.C.**

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEECHES

VOLUME 4

January 1964 - December 1965

Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, O.E., S.C.
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Biographical Summary

Scholar :

Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham was born to a Headmaster father and a devout Christian mother on February 20, 1923. His scholastic career is one of the outstanding features of his life. He went from Kitty Methodist School to Central High School and then to Queen's College in 1935 and one year later gained the Centenary Exhibition as well as a Government Junior Scholarship. In 1937, he won the Percival Exhibition Award and in 1942 he won the coveted Guyana scholarship. The war prevented him from proceeding to University overseas and he therefore read externally for a degree from London University. After the war, he proceeded to read Law at Gray's Inn, winning the best speaker's cup in the process. But the Law could not hold him. Politics was in his blood. Several Caribbean Leaders, especially Errol Barrow of Barbados have testified how Burnham and others "*tired the sun with talking*" on all subjects political. The destiny of Guyana and the Caribbean region claimed his attention. Left wing politics attracted him and soon Burnham was involved with the youth arm of the Communist party of Britain and the politics of the Caribbean students.

Brilliant Lawyer:

In 1944, he was awarded the Bachelor of Arts Degree at the External Examination of the University of London. In 1947 he gained with honours, the Bachelor of Laws Degree from the same University. In 1948, at the age of 25, he was admitted to the Bar of the Honourable Society of Gray's Inn, London. In 1949 he returned home and was admitted to the local Bar. By 1959 he had so established himself as a brilliant lawyer, that he was elected President of the Guyana Bar Association.

Politics:

While a student in London, his keen interest in politics earned him the presidency of the West Indian Students' Union in 1947 and participation as a delegate to the Students' Congresses in Prague in 1947 and Paris in 1948. Upon his return to Guyana he became a co-founder and Chairman of the People's Progressive Party. In 1952, he was elected to the Georgetown City Council where he served as Mayor on two occasions, in 1959 and 1964.

First Executive President:

In 1957, he founded the People's National Congress and served as Leader of the Opposition within the Legislature until 1964 when he became Premier at the head of the People's National Congress / United Force Coalition Government. When Guyana became independent in 1966, he became Prime Minister and with the advent of a new Constitution, he was

elected the First Executive President on December 15, 1980 , remaining in that position until his death on August 6, 1985.

International Respect:

He earned for his country international recognition and the respect of friends and foes alike for his articulation of commitment to the practice of Non-Alignment. He made it clear that he was not prepared to sacrifice Guyana's right to determine its own path of political, economic and social and cultural development. He was also an indefatigable foe of apartheid and was repeatedly praised for the strong support to the liberation struggles in Southern Africa.

Carifta/Caricom/Carifesta:

Within the Region, he was a Founding Father of both Carifta and Caricom and was regarded as *"a regional Leader of utmost importance and highest esteem."* His was the vision of an integrated Caribbean Community of independent people and he worked hard towards making that vision a reality. In the quest for cultural independence, under his leadership, Guyana hosted the first Caribbean Festival of Creative Arts (Carifesta).

Women's Rights:

He ensured the passing of legislation which gave children born out of wedlock equal rights with those born of wedlock. A State Paper on Women in 1976 gave birth to three laws - The Equal Rights Act; The Family and Dependants Provision Act and the Married Persons (Property) Amendment Act. These Acts ensured for women equal rights in all spheres of political, economic and social life.

Concern for Youth:

His concern for youth was manifested in the establishment of the Guyana National Service which was meant to give early school-leavers additional opportunities and to build in young people a spirit of nationalism and engender a zeal for service to the nation.

Awards:

He received Guyana's highest award, the Order of Excellence (O.E.) in 1973. His work as an internationalist earned him the grand Cordan Dh'orde du Mil award from the Government of Egypt, the Jose Marti award from the Government of Cuba in 1975 and an honorary Doctorate of Law from Dalhousie University of Canada. Three countries awarded him their highest awards - in October 1983, Brazil honoured him with the Cruzeiro DoSol, in 1984, Bulgaria with the Star of Planinay and in 1985, Yugoslavia with the 'Order of the Red Star'.

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Appropriation Bill 1964 (Budget Debate): 16th January, 1964

Mr. Burnham: In view of the fact that one political party wanted proportional representation and another wanted first-past-the-post, we suggested that the two Houses should be constituted based on different electoral systems. We said let the Lower House be constituted on First-Past-the-Post and the Upper House be constituted based on the percentage of votes from the Lower House or some such thing like that. That was a compromise. There may be other compromises but no one should think that he can very much impose something on our country. No one can impose a solution upon British Guiana if the People's Progressive Party refuses to accept it. I am sure it cannot work in British Guiana.

It is recognized that the two main Political Parties also have a great deal of strength and force, and power, and courage in this country and that is why we talk about a coalition, a compromise. But it should not be believed that because the Opposition can burn, and loot, and rape, the British Government will get away with the three-card trick – to use the words of the Hon. Member in this House.

The Government proposals are clear. We have pointed out that the problems in Guiana are not the problems of the PPP or the problems of one section of the community, but the problems of the Guianese people. And if we understand that, and face this problem in this spirit, I am sure that a more realistic attitude would be brought to the problems of this country. And that instead of sniping and swearing at those who fight to improve the economic and social position of British Guiana, we should devote our effort to abolishing the reason for our poverty, backwardness, and degradation.

Mr. Speaker, it was my misfortune not to have been present on Tuesday, 31 December, when the Hon. the Minister of Finance moved the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill. I am, however, happy to have had the opportunity studying the statement – or rather his statements – carefully and with the greatest respect, I do not think I have lost much by being absent.

He conceded very early in his remarks that an unusual amount of time was going to be spent, and has been spent, on matters other than those financial and economic. I am not one of those who feel that a Budget must consist of a bald statement, with respect to the revenue and expenditure problems and patterns. I concede that the Budget speech by the Minister of Finance should be much wider and broader than that, must contain some forecast of Government's intentions and must attempt the setting out of the programme of the Government.

I do not quarrel with the Hon. Minister of Finance in the sections of his Speech devoted to matters other than financial and economic. What I do

join issue with him about is his inability to see any fault on his side and the ease with which he accuses everyone else – except the Party to which he happens to have the honour to belong – of being wicked, malicious, responsible for all the ills of the country. He has the temerity, without the sophistry of the Hon. the Premier, to speak about the imposition at the London Conference.

Now, this matter is topical. I have had reason to allude to some of the incontrovertible facts before but, apparently, the Government Party would like to be the magicians of this century and to change the facts. Let us concede from the very beginning that it is regrettable that the decision with respect to our Constitutional future had to be made by one other than a Guianese.

A short resume of the relevant statements, acts and actions of certain Members of the Government will indicate the true position. It is to be recalled that in November, 1962, when there was an impasse between the Opposition and the People's Progressive Party on the question of the electoral system, the People's National Congress offered an eminently democratic solution. The PNC did not ask the British Government to impose anything; it merely asked for a referendum to be held. That was rejected. The Hon. Leader of this House on his last appearance before the United Nations said that the PPP in 1962 never asked the British Government to impose its (the PPP's) point of view. That is on the record and it was admitted by the Hon. Premier, though he, with less sophistry than his deputy, attempted to explain that statement before the Good Offices Committee when we both appeared at the United Nations. That was rejected. This is just to show you how people can become dishonest and corrupt intellectually by the taste of power.

To come here and say that they represent the wishes of the majority of the people in this country is nonsense. We offered them an opportunity to consult the wishes of the majority of the people in this country, but they rejected it. We had the autocratic and patronising excuse from the Hon. Premier that one does not give razors and sweets to children merely because they want them. Then came the period between November, 1962, and the 21st October, 1963. On Tuesday, 15th October, 1963, sitting in the Committee Room, the three political Parties represented in this House met on the initiative of the PNC. The PNC sought to get some agreement between the three parties; it sought to impress upon the PPP the necessity for some electoral reform. There were persons who, by then, had come out against Proportional Representation in the past and who had conceded the necessity for some electoral reform. The Hon. Leader of the House led the PPP delegation. The Hon. Attorney-General was one of those present when the Hon. Leader of the House, Mr. Benn, said that, so far as the PPP was concerned, there was no need for any reform; all that was necessary was that dissident politicians should understand that they had to accept the proposals of the Government. Was that the attitude of one who wanted

to arrive at a compromise? I asked him what he expected to get out of the Conference. Later I read in the usually unreliable press that, on his departure from this country, he promised to bring back the bacon. It looks as though he has brought back the sow, and that is why his colleagues are not around the collar.

On my arrival in London from New York on Monday, 21st October, at 8:30 a.m., if not earlier, I telephoned from my hotel in order to speak to the Hon. Premier. I spoke to him on the telephone and suggested that we should meet on the Tuesday afternoon and intimate to Mr. Sandys at the formal session on Tuesday morning that we would not attend further sessions until we had arrived at some solution or compromise. The Hon. Premier said that he preferred to go ahead under the Chairmanship of Mr. Sandys. I took the precaution, as this was said over the telephone, to have another member of the delegation on the extension to my phone, so that he could be a witness.

On Tuesday, 22nd October, 1963 the conference opened at 9:30 a.m. and by 10:30 a.m. the Hon. Premier said to Mr. Sandys that if the proposed Commonwealth delegation failed to conciliate between the two points of view he, Mr. Sandys, as the representative of the British Government, would have to make a decision.

[Mr. Ram Karran: What did you say?]

Mr. Burnham: This is a serious matter; this is not an occasion for the exercise of the dull wits of the Hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics; this matter deals with the destiny of this country. Let us not get away from this central fact. The Hon. Premier, and experts on the gyrations and rascalities of the imperialists, who knows what the imperialists did in Latin America, Africa, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, Indonesia and elsewhere...

[Mr. Ram Karran: What about you?]

Mr. Burnham: They have not yet caponised me as they have caponised my opposite Member.

This gentleman, who knows what the imperialists can do, went to the BBC sound and TV and said two things that gave me goose flesh: (1) the people in British Guiana love the British Troops and (2) he had great faith in the sense of justice and fair play of the British.

I asked myself, and I think we should ask ourselves this: If the Hon. Premier is this expert on the wicked machinations of the imperialists, why did he suddenly commit this *volte-face*? Why did he put himself in the position where, on October 31, he told Mr. Sandys that he gave him less than Mr. Burnham was giving him? Was he gambling? If he was gambling it would mean that we have a gambler at the head of our Government, and if so, we have a dishonest gambler. Why did he show all of this naïveté by

committing into the gentle hands of Mr. Duncan Sandys the destinies of the country and of his Party?

We hear now that there has been this wicked imposition. Let me concede and repeat that the PNC accepted that the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the ex-Godfather of the Hon. Premier, was dishonest in not fixing a date for independence, at least in relation to the Election

We said that before, and we are not a pack of infants. We are capable of standing in our own places and saying what we have to say.

We hear today that this imposition by the British Government is against the interests of the people; that it is a dishonest system that has been imposed. Now let us divide the question. On the question of not fixing a date for independence in relation to a timetable, the PNC says that was wrong, and inferentially there is some common ground with the PPP on the point.

Let us observe the electoral system, the electoral system which was open, and which was left to Mr. Sandys for decision, was a bone of contention between the two sides. We sought proportional representation, and in that we were supported by the United Force. The Premier's friend, Sir Jock Campbell, has had the temerity and rudeness to say that he does not agree with P.R., as though he had a vote here. But, as I was saying, the electoral system was the bone of contention between the two sides. When the Premier signed that document with such alarming alacrity and speed, asking Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Commonwealth and Colonial Affairs to decide the outstanding issue, what on earth did he think the issues were? Did he think the issues were whether or not he could borrow money? Did he think the issues were whether or not GIMPEX should be allowed to import oil? Did not the simpleton know that since October, 1962 the electoral system was the basic issue? Did he not get his Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Benn, to urge the most unconvincing point about reducing the voting age to 18 years? Did he not concede to me on Thursday, 1st November, 1962, at Lancaster House, that the main thing that was bothering him was the electoral system? When the Party Leaders met each other one by one, did he not concede that? Did he not, therefore, anticipate that Mr. Sandys was being asked to make a decision on the electoral system?

I am ashamed that an Englishman had to make the decision, but the difference between the Premier and me is that I admit my human failings. I admit that it is a source of embarrassment that an Englishman should have had to make the decision, but certainly Dr. Jagan knew that he was taking a chance that Mr. Sandys would either say first-past-the-post or proportional representation. I knew I was taking a chance, but if he was advised by some of his friends whom he spent the time lobbying, instead of coming back from the United Nations in September – if he was advised by Professor Griffith, who I understand lectured to my learned friend, the Attorney-General, or by Sir Hilton Poynton, or Mr. Nigel Fisher; if he was

fooled by Mr. Duncan Sandys, it is a matter for him. That was the decision he knew Mr. Sandys was going to make. If Mr. Sandys had decided on first-past-the-post the People's National Congress proposed to make it an issue to be decided at the general elections.

Great play has been made about the alleged interference by the United States Government in the settlement of Guiana's constitutional problem. Let me, as lawyers say, confess and avoid. Let me concede that that proposition is correct, that the US Government was particularly interested in the outcome of the Conference and preferred a particular outcome so far as the electoral system was concerned. Now, is it not naïve and ignorant on the part of the same Dr. Jagan who says that the United States would be interested in a particular outcome to entrust his political future and the destiny of his country to the greatest ally of the same United States? There is a saying that "*white dog don't eat white dog.*" Is he such a fool as not to understand that if Mr. Sandys had to decide between Kennedy and Jagan he would say "*Kennedy*"? I am taking Dr. Jagan's argument as repeated here on page 3, paragraph 2 of the Budget Speech of the Minister of Finance. One has to come to the conclusion that either the PPP was endowed with an elephantine amount of ignorance, or deliberately wanted this to happen. Perhaps this is a convenient point at which the sitting of the House may be suspended.

Mr. Burnham: When the suspension was taken, I had remarked that the People's Progressive Party leadership must either have been endowed with an elephantine amount of ignorance or had really wanted to find itself in a position where it could complain about an imposition which it could then use as a *cheval de bataille* in a campaign, but it has struck me that perhaps there might have been another element present, an Olympian conceit that in the context of the recent history of Guiana the People's Progressive Party could have persuaded anyone that there was no need for electoral reform.

It is to be noted that the People's National Congress has been the first political Party to advocate what is called the Israeli-type of proportional representation.

It is to be further noted that in exchanges of letters between the People's National Congress and the People's Progressive Party, and at subsequent political meetings, the People's National Congress has specifically spoken about electoral reform, because, not suffering from the conceit that it was omniscient, it was prepared to discuss seriously any possibility of electoral reform. I have already recounted how those efforts at discussing electoral reform fell on deaf ears and consequently, there was eventually the decision by Mr. Duncan Sandys. I would like to repeat that there had been an earlier effort at sending this question to the electorate who, after all, are the final arbiters and sovereign on matters of this sort.

Now, I note with interest the observation by the Hon. Minister of Finance made by him on page 3, paragraph one, to the effect that honest

Guianese, who value and yearn for freedom, have not lost their sense of justice and fairplay. I agree with him that the majority of Guianese value and yearn for freedom. I think somewhere in 'Macbeth', there is a passage to describe an utterance like this: "*Damnably equivocation!*" The devil quoting scripture to suit himself. Is it not true that the majority of Guianese yearn for freedom from the British Government? And at the same time yearn to have established a nation, the citizens of which are free in the fullest sense and not merely citizens free from a foreign power as distinct from a country whose citizens themselves enjoy freedom? They have not lost their sense of justice and fairplay, I agree. I merely remark *en passant* that the phrase "*justice and fairplay*" seems to be always in the armoury of the People's Progressive Party leadership, even when referring to the imperialists. And it is the yearning of Guianese for justice and fairplay that makes me bold to say that the majority of Guianese favour the electoral system of proportional representation. It has been suggested that it is a crude system. The difficulty about language and expression is that one can use any expletive to suit one's belief, without worrying whether or not the expletive is descriptive of the situation in the circumstances one sets out to describe.

Now what is crude about proportional representation? Proportional representation, perhaps for the educational edification of my good friends on the Government benches, is an electoral system under which each Political Party gets a number of seats in direct proportion to the number of votes it gets from the electorate. Now I am wont sometimes to wonder at what process of reasoning must be that of the PPP leaders when they say it is crude. If it had been like certain systems as one finds, say in the Southern Rhodesia Constitution, and as was contemplated by the British in the 1950's in Kenya, one could have understood the description 'crude'. One has to ask: what is the PPP's fear of proportional representation?

[An Hon. Member (Government): Not fear.]

Mr. Burnham: They will get the number of seats to which the number of votes entitles – no more, no less.

We hear a great deal of agitation. We hear their erstwhile friends being described as "*white bastards*". We hear slogans like: "*death rather than P.R.*" And we were entertained by the usually silent Minister of Labour, Health and Housing, declaring in New Amsterdam on Sunday night that P.R. or no P.R., the PPP will win. I am not interested in their false prophecy or inaccurate propaganda, but what I would say, in the circumstances, is this: In spite of the sophistry of the Hon. Mr. Benn, you agreed that the outstanding questions should be settled. The outstanding questions of the electoral system having been settled, you might as well face the fact and contest the elections on the basis of that system.

Now, let me assure them that the PNC having got proportional representation, has no intention of signing any letter to Arthur Bottomley – or any other person – regardless of who wins the next elections. We have got proportional representation and it will stay. In spite of the remarks of my good friend who has adorned and enriched our language, I repeat that the PNC has got elections under P.R. in spite of the vulgarities which have been perpetrated by some of my colleagues on the other side in the lobby of this House and it is competent to see that P.R. remains. It seems to me that if we face this fact, we can get down very quickly to achieving independence in the present context of Guyana.

Does the PPP appreciate – it has got to appreciate – that the longer it pussyfoots and plays the fool, on this question, the longer there will be uncertainty in the country and the longer it will be before our country's economy adjusts or re-adjusts itself or is adjusted or re-adjusted?

Now, on the question of independence this is what I would say. There have been some attempts at misrepresentations. The stand of the People's National Congress at this conference is this: we did not agree with this sort of childish desire to copy from the Trinidad Constitution. We wanted a Constitution which was drafted by Guianese for Guianese. We wanted Guianese to draft a Constitution which they thought would suit the needs of Guianese. We also thought that it was unrealistic to fix a date for independence before we had decided either on the solution to the outstanding problems, or the machinery for ensuring the solution to the outstanding problems. The contention of the People's National Congress was that either the problems be settled, or the machinery agreed on for settling them, then we could fix the date at the same time as we had decided on the machinery for settling the problem.

It does seem to me that in that context Mr. Duncan Sandys was certainly not being fair and honest when, having decided on the electoral system as a result of a request by the three political leaders, he did not at the same time, fix a date for independence in relation to a timetable.

The record having been set straight, there being no doubt as to the request, therefore, no doubt as to the desire on the part of the PPP leadership to have the British Government settle the outstanding problems, there being no doubt as to the Premier's professed faith in the sense of fairplay and justice of the British Government. I want to observe that it is bootless for us to argue, or to fight against what has been done. Now that the Hon. Premier has admitted in an informal discussion that he took a gamble, let us get on and forget these events of the very recent past.

I have heard that there is need for responsible leadership. Responsible leadership must come from both sides of the political fence, so to speak. There must be responsibility on the part of the leader of the Government and the leaders of the Opposition Parties. This tendency to abuse must stop. There was a strike last year, and I have seen in this Budget Speech, which is intended for the record, things like:

“Some will remember 1963 as the year in which politically-inspired strikes, lockouts and disorders failed in their objective of either overthrowing the constitutional Government or running the country insolvent,”

To put it mildly, this is childish.

Let me remind the Government that – there is no doubt about this – the Hon. Premier at one time was contemplating running to the USA, but he could not get there.

[Hon. Members (Government): Shame!]

Mr. Burnham: He had hoped to be able to tour the American Universities lecturing on the situation in British Guiana. The Hon. Minister denied that he borrowed money from the British Treasury when he had done so. When I told this House that the Government was bringing three expatriates to work here, the Hon. Minister said No; yet they came. The Hon. Premier received a cable from Mr. Joshua of St. Vincent indicating that all he could send him were some coconuts and goats, but the Hon. Minister says that it was not so. Mr. Joshua told this Government that he had no oil, but could send them some coconuts and goats.

It is my original contention that what took place in 1963 was a strike. At least the Hon. Minister of Finance, who was my senior at school, calls it a strike, but he purports to term it *“a politically-inspired strike”*. Let us assume that the strike was politically inspired, it seems to me that they are all either politically or industrially inspired. But whatever was the source of the inspiration of what took place on the 7th July, 1963, the Hon. Premier had to sign an agreement in which he granted more than the Trade Union leaders had been asking for in April, 1963.

Whatever was the source of the inspiration, the fact remains that the Government had to come to terms and concede what it had refused to concede in April. If that is so, then the Government must be blamed for whatever might have been the consequences or efforts upon the society and the economy of this country, which flowed from the strike or disturbances between April to July, 1963. If in July the Government had signed an agreement which gave the trade union organisation less than it had asked for in April, then we could have said that the trade union organisation was to be blamed. This is a question of morality.

Now comes the question of expediency and reality. It was said that a child shall lead them, but it was not said that a child shall lead Burnham. Now that you have had to concede certain things, let us get on with the job. We find that we are regaled with long dissertations as to the responsibility of those on either side of the House. It seems to me that what the PPP is attempting to do is to use words as a substitute for sense. The Members of the PPP Government have been beaten, and having been beaten let them be gentlemen, let them admit that they were beaten and get on with the job.

We are told a bit of ignorance like this on page 4:

“Such has been the experience of the present Government of British Guiana, merely because it wishes to carry out its election pledge of creating the conditions for a society of greater freedom, economic security and social justice for all Guianese people.”

They say that the imperialists operated against them because of that intention. You will find that this is, or must be, a reference to the effect of the strike – the effect of the PPP defeat of 1963. Can this Government kindly enlighten me and point out in what way the Labour Relations Bill which was carried through a divided Cabinet – a Bill which was not accepted *in toto* by the trade union movement it was intended to help – was going to contribute to greater freedom, economic security and social justice for all Guianese people? Certainly the PPP Government must not insult the intelligence of the people of British Guiana. Do not insult the intelligence of the people of Guiana by trying to urge the proposition that first-past-the-post is the fairest electoral system.

Has the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Lands forgotten what has happened in Zanzibar? Zanzibar has proved that if the majority of the people do not want first-past-the-post they are not going to have it. The Hon. Premier got what he asked Mr. Duncan Sandys for. Does he want to enjoy the fate of the Sultan? Does the Hon. Minister of Finance want to enjoy the fate of the Minister of Finance in Zanzibar? Does he want to enjoy the fate of the Minister who was ordered to kill his sons, daughters, and then himself?

I would like to assure the People’s Progressive Party that we will not be as harsh as the Afro-Shirazi Party. It is only today – and I want to say how much I welcome it – that we have heard from the acting Premier, Mr. Benn, that the People’s Progressive Party is prepared to consider a compromise on the electoral system. I want to congratulate him for speaking from a position of weakness and appearing to be generous, but so far as the People’s National Congress is concerned, the fact that it has spoken always, is now, and will always be speaking from a position of strength, will not prevent it from being willing to listen to what the PPP may have to say on this matter, without committing ourselves to accept what they say.

We find that there is a great hue and cry about the allegation of insolvency, and I would like to deal with that briefly for a moment. First of all the Minister alleges that there is a false allegation of insolvency, but that on the other hand the country is solvent. I am not a financial wizard. I did a little more mathematics than some of my friends over there: I have the simplicity and humility to admit that I am not very good at juggling with figures. But I would like to ask a few questions on the point of solvency and insolvency. The first question: Is it not a fact that on Saturday, July 13, 1963, in my presence the Premier asked Mr. Sandys

what he proposed to do about the request of the B.G. Government for financial assistance for the Recurrent Budget? (2) Is it not a fact that at Government House Annexe the Premier, in my presence, asked Mr. Sandys whether he was prepared to put up the money for the provision of an army, for which this Government had voted \$400,000? (3) Is it not a fact that prior to the opening of the London Conference the Premier was asking Mr. Nigel Fisher and Mr. Sandys for assistance to balance the Budget on the recurrent side? This is what I say: that if those requests, two of which were made in my presence, had not been made, then there would have been room for some people to come back and say that the country was solvent, so far as the Recurrent Budget was concerned. The Government wanted assistance for the Development, Budget and the Recurrent Budget.

Is this Government solvent or insolvent? Is it very easy to be solvent? This is the way to solvency: do not honour all your debts; do not meet your obligations.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Like you.]

Mr. Burnham: Therefore I am in a position to advise, but if you say that outside you know that Judges are awarding \$5,000 plus costs. As I was saying, this Government says it is not insolvent, but why did it use \$700,000 from the Sugar Welfare Fund? Why did it in September use \$809,000 from the Widows and Orphans' Fund which, under the law, it should not touch? What about the Exchequer loan of a quarter million dollars which was not applied to the Development Fund? What about the \$1.7 million loan from GIMPEX which Government has made a lot of flurry about having repaid, but the cheque in repayment of which was not cashed up to the 31st December by arrangement between Kassim and Jagan?

The Government has an obligation to its people. There is a Government Housing Scheme. I am not going to go over the question of the conditions of the Scheme which were referred to by the Hon. Member for La Penitence Lodge, Mr. Merriman. I merely ask the Government whether it is not true that it has an obligation to provide proper sanitary conveniences, literally and metaphorically, for the people in that Scheme who are paying their rents and in addition maintenance costs? If this is a solvent Government, why is it that hundreds of children at a school at Yakusari in the Black Bush Polder have to sit on the floor? There are no benches, no desks, no blackboards. But this is a solvent Government. If I dishonour my obligation to maintain and feed my wife and children and keep my money in my pocket I can boast that I am solvent. It seems to me that that is the context in which this Government claims to be solvent. Is it not a fact that in the 1963 Budget the Minister of Finance said that the surplus was going to be used for the liquidation of the overdraft on the Development Fund for 1963? On page 29 of the 1964 Budget Speech we find it disclosed that the Government did not liquidate the overdraft of \$3.8 million on

the Development Programme with the surplus it alleged it had. But in the 1963 Budget it is specifically stated by the Minister of Finance that the surplus of \$8.2 million was going to be used for various things. On page 9 of that Budget Speech the Minister of Finance said:

“There will therefore be a deficit of some \$4.8 million on the Recurrent Budget. However, this deficit has been exaggerated in size by the payment in 1962 of the 1961 arrears of revised salaries (\$2.2 mn.) and by the failure to collect some of the income tax (\$0.5 mn.), and the entire amount of the net property tax (\$1.0 mn.) The deficit that is therefore properly attributable to this year is only \$1.1 mn.”

Then he went on to show how the general revenue balance of \$8.2 million which was there from December, 1961, was going to be reduced to \$3.4 million at 31st December, 1962 – *“too low a level to accommodate the regular advances of the Government for the working capital requirements of the public services and public enterprise.”* He went on to say:

“Moreover, this deficit together with the debit balance (\$3.1 mn.) on the Development Fund at the end of the year will result in an unliquidated bank overdraft at 31st December, 1962, of some \$2.0 mn.”

It is not the Opposition that is imagining this bankruptcy. This bankruptcy is something that has been admitted in words and figures by the Government. What the Government has done in the meantime is to fail, as we see it on page 29 of this year's Budget Speech, to honour that overdraft in the Development Programme and do curtail services to a level which Mr. Jacobs, for whom it seems, has said is risky and then, having done that, and having dishonoured this obligation to the people of this country, to come here like lily-white lambs to say that people have been alleging falsely that the Government is insolvent.

Perhaps a little later I shall deal in greater detail with the relevant question when we consider that matter of solvency, or insolvency, but, for a change, I would like to agree with the Government in some of its academic protestations on the nature of imperialism. I agree; there is no doubt about that. The one major point of difference between myself and the People's Progressive Party leadership on this question of imperialism is that it is so naïve as to believe that imperialism is to be found only in one part of the world. It cannot explain what happens, or has happened in East Germany; it cannot explain what happens or has happened in Hungary; it cannot explain what happens or has happened in Poland. Having read Arvelho's *The Shark and the Sardines*, it can only explain what is happening in Latin America and even when it comes to Latin America it cannot explain the attitude of the Communists during the last few months in Venezuela when they wanted to substitute the bullet for the ballot. It cannot explain these things. This is the only cause of complaint so far as the academic analysis of imperialism is concerned.

I note with disgust the statement which one finds on page 17 of the Budget Speech and also in a little missive here which the People's Progressive Party is sending out from the Premier's Office on Her Majesty's Service. Incidentally, we have to have an investigation because the Premier is sending out "*On Her Majesty's Service*" PPP propaganda from the G.I.S. I want to see who is going to pay this G.I.S. officer after today. I am not calling names. On page 17 of the Budget Speech, at paragraph 3 we read:

"The Soviets were prepared to sell tractors, bulldozers and draglines at lower prices"

than those which can be had here –

"with five years to pay, and at 2.5 percent interest."

I would like to pause for a moment. The People's Progressive Party Government knows that the People's National Congress has always said if you can get economic assistance which can be really advantageous to this country, it does not matter where you get it from, you will have our support. Now, since the 1957 Budget Speech we have been hearing from the People's Progressive Party about the wonderful terms on which credit and/or assistance can be had from the Soviet bloc. It seems to me that either this is merely a piece of propaganda to delude the unwary or the Government Members have not been able to persuade the Russians that they are a good bet.

Don't let them fool the public. Take East Germany, for instance. Moneer Khan sold rice to East Germany and the price was miscalculated, but when he went back and said, "*Look we made a mistake in the price*", East Germany said "*A bargain is a bargain*". The sum of fifty thousand dollars was lost on that. The Government Members cannot doubt it. Therefore it is one of two things, either this is a piece of propaganda to delude the public or they have not been able to persuade the Soviet bloc that they are a good business venture, because, if they can get these tractors at this price why haven't they? Perhaps they have not heard the story of the Ghanaian Minister who called in the Comrade Ambassador from Russia and said "*Comrade Ambassador, take back your planes.*" You know who are my associates in Ghana. I don't have to call names; they come to me even though you invite them.

So what are we to make of this constant reference to better terms of credit and assistance from the Soviet bloc? I do not see that if these pieces of machinery could have been bought from the Soviet bloc that the People's Progressive Party Government would have failed to get them. But typical of the hypocrisy of the Government Members, they inveigh against the high interest rates up to 12 percent per annum charged by Finance Houses on hire purchase acquisition of property. May I remind them that on the

24th July, 1958, I tabled a Motion asking that legislation be passed to fix statutorily the terms of hire purchase, which would include rates of interest and rights to repossess and seize. On the 29th October, 1958, that Motion was passed by this Government's predecessor, which was itself, and here today we are in the year 1963, not with Mr. Austin but with Dr. Ramsahoye as Attorney-General, and that legislation has not been introduced yet, though I must concede that three days ago I received the courtesy of a draft. In 1964 I receive the courtesy of a draft of a Bill on Hire Purchase when the Motion was passed on the 29th October, 1958. This is the sort of hypocrisy and incompetence that I do not understand and cannot appreciate. Now, for goodness' sake, if you are at a public meeting, if you are talking to your supporters, and they are fanatical supporters at that, tell them something like this about what this Government has done, don't come with that nonsense to this House which is aware of the fact that for four years you have done nothing about a Motion which would prevent financial houses like Olds Discount from milking the people. Olds Discount is virtually a racketeer company. They charge too high rates of interest and their seizures are barely on this side of the law. I have experienced that in my profession. I am not entering into another man's profession. If a man is a lawyer he is entitled to take any case. Ask the Attorney-General about the cases he has taken.

This vein of hypocrisy, this attempt to denigrate the Opposition and to write what the Government continues to do on many pages in painful though at times humorous. Let us take, for instance, this every charming and, may I say, accurate analysis of the industries which contribute to the Gross Domestic Product in this country. We are told that sugar employs only a few thousand people. Now sugar is responsible for 17 percent of the Gross Domestic Product as against 6 percent in the case of rice. Sugar employs a few thousand people, rice employs 50,000 people and that is why they shy away from rice.

In 1962, at long last, this Government recognised the importance of having peasant cane farming; it made a lot of noise about it. In 1964 it is still bemoaning the fact that the rice planters, the sugar producers, do not enter into rice but keep the sugar plantations for themselves. This is the sort of backward game that the People's Progressive Party plays. Now Jock Campbell, to make them feel sweet says: "*I am against P.R.*" The PPP, to keep sweet with Sir Jock Campbell, will not make an honest effort to increase the participation of peasants in cane farming. You sit there as a Government. You decide that cane farming should be undertaken by the peasants, by the ordinary people over whom you shed crocodile tears, but what steps have you taken?

When the PPP leader was outside Government he was one to say how many thousand acres of government land, rented by the sugar companies, were not used by the sugar companies. Has that situation changed? Is Government incapable of assuming possession of Government lands which

are not being productively used, and which can be given to peasants? But, no, in the little diatribe which was sent in "*On Her Majesty's Service*" envelopes – PPP propaganda – they say that they cannot get the lands, and if they get the lands, the charges by the manufacturers would be heavy as was the case in West Demerara. They are the Government. Jock Campbell has said in B.G. and out of B.G. that he will live with any Government that is in office. But the PPP is not prepared to tackle sugar; they are only prepared to have Governor Harry Lall tackle Ishmael. They are not prepared to tackle sugar seriously.

You find that about 50 percent of the sugar in Jamaica is grown by peasant cane farmers and approximately the same percentage in Trinidad, but these idiots sit and cry and moan. They have the power to tackle sugar, apart from the constitutional and legal power. The head of sugar, the prince of sugar, the monarch of sugar, says that he is prepared to live with any Government. You are not taking away factories, you are just taking away lands that are not productively occupied. They have leases, you can terminate their leases. This is the height of hypocrisy. For instance, we are regaled by the fact that though the bauxite industry contributes 9 percent of the gross domestic product, it employs only 2 percent of the labour force, and, like Columbus, they discover that that, therefore, means a high rate of profit for the bauxite industry.

The PNC agrees with the conclusion which you draw there. But you must go further than drawing a conclusion. What more do we get apart from lengthy quotations about what some Arthur Vining Davis did, what Philip Reno, an American, said about Arthur Vining's venture, about ALCOA, ALCAN, ALTED? You are the Government of this county.

Jamaica, for instance, in 1955, the Jamaican Government was able to review the rates of taxation and the incidence of taxation on the bauxite industry and, as a result, was in receipt of about £12 million more per annum. Now what is wrong with this Government that it cannot get a similar adviser to go into this question of taxation?

We hear that these big business companies hide their profits. Excellent! Which big business concern, you don't expect to attempt to hide its profits? Ministers of the PPP have been known to hide their earnings when outside the House. But you have been in the House for seven years and if you say that these companies hide their profits, you must have the intelligence directly or through your expert advisers to discover in what way they are hiding. Certainly, the only sensible way of taxing an industry like the bauxite industry, is to tax it per quantity extracted and not on the value declared by a daughter company when selling to a mother company. "*Elementary, my dear Watson*" – if they ever read these detective stories.

We heard further in this long dissertation on the anatomy of poverty, that the majority of the import/export trade items are handled by foreigners. Now what would you expect to be the conclusion drawn? Not a long thunder of abuse in which it is alleged that the Opposition says that

Government must restrict itself, its economic ventures, to the field of infrastructure development. We would expect them to say: *"Well, look a great deal of money is being pocketed on simple import/export transactions, not on major development. Therefore some means must be found to get those profits, or a great share of those profits into the country's offers."* No, they don't do that, Sir. They set up their own little trading company – GIMPEX – and they run rackets. GIMPEX has 10,000 bags of cement being stored at the taxpayers' expense and 100 yards of Government tarpaulin being used to cover its cement, consigned to Mr. Ramlakhan – a member of the R.P.A. That is what they do.

They complain about Bookers. They complain about Sandbach Parker. They don't complain about the particular retailer who supplies them with small cars: and the line that particular retailer brings in cars, I see very much present in Government departments. The Police now use Volkswagons. The Post Office uses Volkswagons. The Premier uses Volkswagons. The Premier's brother uses Volkswagen. But you don't hear about that. Instead, Sir, of the Government making an honest attempt to set up an import/export agency on behalf of the Government of Guiana, it sets up GIMPEX with which it runs rackets on behalf of the PPP. That is what is being done.

The trouble about the members of the PPP is this: They want to be a new class of racketeers; they are not content with being socialists and so on; they must be the bosses and they want to be like Bookers. Stalin was as ruthless as any Czar. Jagan is as ruthless as any Seaford, or any of the previous heads of Bookers in this country. They will not tackle the problems which they claim to recognize.

A great deal of fuss was made over what the Hon. Member for Campbellville, Mr. Bissember, said about imperialism and neo-colonialism, but the point was lost. We are not interested in the follies of your excursions into the academic field. We are interested in what you are doing in this country to tackle these ills. We hear about high interest rates. We agree that high interest rates are a burden, and I cannot join hands with the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central, Mr. d'Aguiar, in trying to explain this away. If you are going to borrow millions of dollars for your Development Programme and you have to pay 6, 7 or 8 percent per annum on the amount, in the light of the economy of a country like this, it is bound to have the effects that the Members of the PPP recognise. Having recognised them, we have this sort of apology offered by the Hon. Minister of Agriculture when he says that it is difficult to get farmers to change over, and that if you went to Canada and asked a farmer to stop planting wheat it would be difficult to get him to do so. It is true that people's habits may take some time to change. The easiest way to be able to persuade people in this country to change their habits so as to be able to make the fullest use of what we have at our disposal is to obtain a national consensus. But the PPP has shown itself incapable of creating or obtaining such consensus.

The Members of the PPP cannot, in the manner in which they are behaving, excite support; they cannot excite the willingness of a substantial section of this community to make sacrifices on their behalf. They have, therefore, to indulge in political compromises so as to maintain their political power, and that is one of the chief reasons why the PPP is finding difficulty in getting things done.

We hear further that one of the reasons for our inability to get outside assistance is the fact that we have been maligned and labelled in the press. But there is always this inconsistency in the moanings or rantings of the members of the PPP. They say they cannot get money because they are maligned wrongfully. They say: "*Look, at Dr. Eric Williams, he cannot get money either!*" Is it that you are a part of a group that cannot get money, or are you singular in that you get less money than the rest? Let us assume that the latter is their thesis. What is the reason? The PPP states that it wants to pursue a neutralist policy. It must think those circumstances, pursue what is in fact a neutralist policy, and it must not assume ignorance on our part, or on the part of the people.

Look at this Budget; read it and you will find all the ills of only one side. Whereas the members of the PPP tell us of the 2½ percent credit they can get from the other side, they tell you all sorts of things about the West. Is this neutrality? This is due to the foreign ideologies of the PPP. If you are going to be fair to one side you must also be fair to the other side, because each side has its skeleton in the cupboard. Having regaled the people with your Communist analysis of the American imperialism and what Mr. Sandys has done, you failed to tell them of Khrushchev and the others. Having pointed out their sins, you have no criticism to make of the Eastern bloc. What conclusion just people arrive at? Having made your bed in that manner, you still run to the West cap-in-hand!

Jesus said: "*If your enemy strikes you on the left cheek, turn your right cheek,*" but Jesus is not here. The PPP may consist of atheists and agnostics, but the West does not consist of Jesuses. Russia is just the same. Stop regaling the people with the wonderful things you can get from Russia. You know what happened to the tractors that Russian was to send to British Guiana. Play your game straight and tell us what Nehru said. You did not tell us what Nehru said about Mao Tse-tung. Why is Ghana able to get assistance from both East and West? Because she plays a neutralist game. She abuses right and left, and she points to the failings of both sides. Nehru also eschews joining either the Communist bloc or the Western bloc.

The Members of the PPP come here and try to delude the public and their followers. When they reach a stage where they cannot move forward they blame everyone but themselves. But, perhaps, I should attempt to deal with the figures and not the dialectics of the Budget. Let us start reviewing from page 20.

The first thing that strikes me in the absence of final figures: The Estimates show the revenue and expenditure for 1962, but each side has

an asterisk and each asterisk has a legend. At the bottom you will find the word 'Provisional'. They do not have the Accountant-General's report up to now on the 1962 accounts; they do not know what the expenditure for 1962 has been, and they do not know what has been collected in 1962.

On the 31st December, 1962, the Hon. Minister of Finance said that there was going to be a deficit of \$4.8 million. You will recall what Dr. Jagan said when he went to London in 1958. Going back to the Budget, it is not our fault that there was a deficit of \$4.8 million; it is not Mr. Jacob's fault; it is not Mr. Sandys' fault, but the fault of the Government. A Government Minister came here a year ago and said that there was a deficit of \$4.8 million, but a surplus balance from 1961 was to be used to cover that deficit and the Development Programme overdraft. You said there was to be a further deficit of \$.2 million in 1963, and that you had no liquid assets or reserves capable of carrying an overdraft.

There can be little doubt that this Government has found itself in certain financial difficulties. There can be little doubt that the events of 1963, between April and July, did make a contribution to the lowering of the income possibilities of the Government, and did make a contribution to the reduction of the gross domestic product. But let us face this. Even if the Members of the Government were to come here and attempt to argue that they in no way contributed to the difficulties in 1963, it is little short of dishonest for them to come here and boast about balancing the Budget at the cost of hardship and suffering.

And it is a little unrealistic for them to state that they hope that 1964 will be a year of high production. What incentives have they offered to the Community? What attitudes have they struck which would lead the community to want to produce more and to yield more? What is the point, therefore, of telling us that in the Latin American countries the greater part of their revenue comes from indirect taxation. They have been in the Government since 1957 and have not attempted any basic change in the structure of taxation. We will hear that when they introduced the three property taxes there was a hue and cry, but they know that the PNC agreed with their property taxes. That was the only serious attempt to change the structure of taxation in this country, and the only other political force in this country that could by itself have effectively opposed and beaten the PPP to a standstill did not disagree with them on that. As the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central, Mr. d'Aguiar, has pointed out, if the indirect taxes had not been opposed they would have accounted for 50 percent of the revenue! Their anticipation of income from their property taxes has turned out to be ambitious. Why has there been a shortfall here? We have no explanation, but yet it is expected, according to the Minister, that next year, income tax revenue will be much higher than it was in 1962 and 1963, and above what it was in 1961. They are going to balance their 1964 Budget by anticipating increased revenue which their previous anticipations have shown to be unrealistic. The Minister of Finance has

even gone so far as to state on page 24 of his Budget Speech that there is the possibility of a surplus of \$2 million on the 1963 results!

What sort of Government is this which is hoping to squeeze a surplus of \$2 million when it has, on its own admission, neglected certain Departments like the Public Works; when it has at the beginning of 1963 asked Heads of Departments to reserve 10 percent of what was budgeted; when it has left posts vacant, and has deliberately had certain specialist posts at the Georgetown Hospital vacant for years; when it refused to increase its subvention which was \$110,000; in 1964 it is \$110,000. For seven years the subvention remains the same. Government will not even pay proper rates on its properties outside the city's limits which are serviced by the Town Council. I am not speaking here as a representative of the Town Council, but merely illustrating the way in which this Government hopes to get a surplus of \$2 million by cutting down on expenditure on salaries, cutting down on works, and refusing to meet its proper obligations. It seems to me that this Government is more interested in being able to tell the world that it has balanced its Budget than in improving the economic situation and lot of the people in this country.

We have a perennial argument about the disturbances, but why not come to the House and say that *"as the result of the disturbances, for which we angels, complete with halos, are not responsible, we cannot balance our budget."* Don't be dishonest. Do not abuse the Opposition for the disturbances and still try to prove that you can balance the budget by curtailing expenditure. The Minister of Communications has a deathtrap at Atkinson Field for the Air Traffic Control Officers. We find that so far as the figures are concerned the Government has been hiding from us, and I am glad the Minister of Finance has returned to the Chamber. I want him to explain to this House where the repayment of the £¼ million borrowed in 1962 from the British Treasury is shown in the Estimates, and what has happened to the \$700,000 from the Sugar Welfare Fund which the Government used?

Don't tell me you did not use it! When I told the Premier he did not doubt it. Where has the sum of \$800,000 from the Widows and Orphans fund gone? You do not have an answer. In the same way the Hon. Minister said in April, 1962, that he did not borrow a quarter of a million pounds and afterwards admitted it.

[**Dr. Jacob:** You are a liar.]

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has called me a liar and I am prepared to wear that appellation proudly if he can prove when he rises to speak that he did not borrow the quarter million pounds in April, 1962. Let him prove it! He has accused me of seeing the files. Have you paid it back? *"When you borrow you must pay back"*, said the ant, your predecessor. Where has the exchequer loan of \$2.4 million gone? We wish to find out all

those things. What about the payment of insurance premiums for public officers which you still have at the Treasury and have not yet paid? The Government said it had met all its obligations, but what about the public officers' insurance money, which has been deducted from their salaries and has not been paid to the respective insurance companies?

[**Dr. Jacob:** You have undermined their loyalty. They are not working, that is why.]

Mr. Burnham: As I was saying, is it not true that the insurance companies have offered to pay the necessary overtime so that the accounts can be straightened out but Government has refused? Why has the Government refused? Because it has not got the money. Is it not true that in my professional capacity I have been writing Government about back-pay and pension for people in the United Kingdom from British Guiana involving thousands of dollars, which liability has been accepted by the Accountant-General's Department, but which liability has not been honoured.

[**Dr. Jacob:** You must get the officers to work.]

Mr. Burnham: Many years ago, when the mother of James and John went to Jesus and said, "*would you put James on your right hand and John on the left?*" Jesus replied, "*Woman, you know not what you ask*". The Minister of Finance did not know what he was asking when he asked to become a Minister. Now he wants me, the Opposition, to be a Jesus and to run his Department for him. How do you expect the civil servants to have a sense of loyalty when you have the Hon. Member for Berbice East, Mr. Downer, abusing the public servants and openly attacking their loyalty and when the Premier goes to the United States and openly accuses Mr. Clifton Low-A-Chee of disloyalty? I call names because the Hon. the Premier said so in public to the delegates of Mali and Sierra Leone and to myself with a translator present.

[**Dr. Jacob:** Get back to the point!]

Mr. Burnham: I accuse this Government of attempting to delude the public when it says it has paid all its debts on the due dates, because (1) the Widows and Orphans Fund ought never to have been used; (2) the Sugar Welfare Fund ought never to have been used; (3) the due dates for pensions and gratuities are passed and they have not been paid. I know that for a fact, because in my other capacity I am appearing for the persons to whom these payments are due; and (4) the due dates for payment of public officers' insurance premiums have passed. So stop telling us that you have honoured your obligations and balanced your Budget.

But, we hear that the Government is going to have contractor-finance. Shades of Consorcio Empresas Grupo Del Conte! Why has the Government not told the public here what happened to the Del Conte money, the \$3 million which it paid and received value to the extent of only \$¾ million?

And now the Government complains about Jacobs, for whom it asked. Jacobs was kind to the Government Members. He said they were "*unfortunate in their choice of contractor*". Is it not a fact that this Government has been robbed by Del Conte, in spite of the protestations of the Opposition – and, let me be fair, the most vocal opponent of Del Conte was the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central, Mr. d'Aguiar? Give the devil his due. Mr. d'Aguiar was the man who told you that Del Conte was not worth a tinker's cuss. Instead of listening to him, you abused him. I don't love d'Aguiar but d'Aguiar spoke the truth once. Yes, we were hugging up. I suppose that is why the People's Progressive Party appointed activist Mars as the recruiting agent for labour to Del Conte. Don't you know Mars from Campbellville. He used to be my client. I ought to know. You had the PPP activist as recruiting agent for Del Conte. "*Hand wash hand mek hand come clean*"; "*You scratch me back, I scratch you back*". That is what the Government did with Del Conte. Del Conte paid for the contract; the PPP benefited and the nation suffered. Why do we not have any details about this money which was thrown down the drain? This money was not thrown down the drain as a result of imperialism; it was thrown down the drain as a result of rascality.

I think the Government owns this House a duty to report on the Del Conte matter. I think that it owes us the duty of saying more than that it hopes to have a new source "*in the form of contractor-finance from tried firms of good standing and experience*". I would like to advise the Government to try to be a little more fortunate – to use the words of the man Jacobs, whom they now abuse – when it chooses its contractor. This is what the Minister of Finance said:

"The Parika-Bartica Road will also bring further contractor-finance, but not until 1965, since the previous payments on bonds and in cash to the contractors are some \$2.7 million in advance of work done."

The Hon. Attorney-General stood up there and told me that he would see that a proper contract was executed. Now he is seeing whether an injunction can be granted. The Hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics stood up there and thought that I was wrong to suggest caution in this matter. The number of scandals that this Government has been party to is legion.

I think enough has been said in the field of contractor-finance. Enough has been said about the cost at which this Budget has been balanced. Enough has been said about the insolvency of this Government. I think the Hon. Minister of Finance would be well advised to cease his vituperations, to cease trying to deny that the Government is short.

The Hon. Minister of Finance is still my friend; he agrees with me in his personal capacity, when he comes here he has to make a noise to the contrary.

We note with more than a passing interest, that this year's Budget is going to be a tax-free Budget. It seems to me that this is part of a political gimmick. You are broke to the world, you have had to neglect services. You cannot raise money, you say that there is a great potential in taxation. The PNC says: *"If you introduce taxation based on changing the incidence and emphasis, it will support you."* When you want to go to Tanganyika and say you want independence you say 42 plus 41 make 83.

Well 42 plus 41 make 83. If you introduce new taxation that is reasonable, we will support it. The People's Progressive Party, in spite of what the Hon. Member Mr. Benn said about refusing to fight the P.R. elections, is planning to fight the P.R. elections. So, as part of its plan, it will put forward a Budget which is tax-free in the context of poverty.

I recall that on Wednesday, 31st October, 1962, at Lancaster House, the Hon. the Premier said that if he had known that he had to face an election, he would not have put forward the 1962 Budget. Since then, he has been living in fear of an election and so the 1963 Budget is tax-free and the 1964 budget is not only tax-free, but the 2 percent turnover tax is being withdrawn. So here is this gift from the Greeks offered to the people of Guiana in the hope that they will support the PPP at the forthcoming elections.

Now, it seems to me that the PPP is a hydra-headed monster. At one time it talks of cooperation, at another time it pursues partisan politics and abuses its opponents. In the latter role, it is going further, hoping to win elections in the former role, it is hoping to get assistance from the PNC.

There is a great deal of talk about coalition. There is a great deal of talk about coming together. Now the People's National Congress wants to ask all those who are talking about coalition and coming together: why don't you go to Nigeria and ask the Northern People's Party to come together with the N.C.N.C. Why don't you go to England and ask Harold Wilson and Alec Douglas Home to come together? Why don't you go to America and ask Lyndon Johnson and whoever is going to be the republican presidential candidate to come together? The PPP misconceives and misunderstands the situation. What is necessary in British Guiana is not a coming together of the PPP and the PNC. What is necessary in British Guiana is for there to be an accepted code. What is necessary is an accepted set of rules. What is necessary is an appreciation by all the Political Parties in this country, of the fact that no Political Party speaks for the overwhelming majority of the population. What is necessary is to understand that in Ghana there is one Osageyfo. In British Guiana you have at least two and no amount of abuse is going to change that. *"You left out Peter."* I said at least two.

In your document which you have circulated to the public at Government's expense in "On Her Majesty Service" envelopes, you called the People's National Congress a pawn and a willing tool of the United States of America. When you do that privately, you come here and like a number of hypocrites talk about the division of the working-class. Don't you see the inconsistencies? How can the People's National Congress be a pawn of the United States and still represent the most important sector of the working-class movement? And weren't it for your gyrations you would accept that the most important section of the working-class is the urban and industrial proletariat. You cannot get it here without destroying the PNC. So you speak with two mouths. It is wrong that there should be a division in the working-class movement, and on the other hand, we are the pawns of American imperialism.

I ask them seriously: what do you hope to achieve by distributing these documents calling the PNC tools of the American imperialism? The Hon. Minister of Finance does not know: I will send him a copy. "*Please forward your comments*", the Premier says. You will certainly not persuade the PNC leadership as to your *bona fides*. You will certainly not persuade the PNC's rank and file as to your *bona fides*. What is necessary is some sincerity, we are not asking for favours nor to be taken into Government. We represent the cry of the people of this country for fair play and justice. P.R. is a fact now. You must learn, like Paul, not to kick against pricks. You must learn this too, that you cannot have a one-party state in Guiana.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am trying to point out to the PPP that if it really wants cooperation, it has to exercise tolerance. They make a great fuss about what the Hon. Member for Werk-en-Rust, Mr. Carter, said about the need for cooperation, but cooperation is not one-sided. To take an example, they pack the University of Guyana with cronies as Members of the Board and then they come saying: "*Please let us have your cooperation.*" They appoint an electricity Board; they pack it with their cronies: and appoint one PNC member without consulting the PNC; then: "*Please let us have your cooperation.*" They pack the Rice Marketing Board with their cronies and then they moan: "*Please let us have your cooperation.*" In the case of the Rice Marketing Board, they make a Party membership card, the *carte blanche* to employment, then plead: "*Please let us have your cooperation.*"

[Government Members: Shame! Shame!]

Mr. Burnham: The PNC is sick and tired of the uncertainty in this country and bemoans the divisions in this country. The PNC bemoans race in this country but it cannot forget that when the Hon. Member Mr. Saffee of Saffee's fame, goes to his public meetings, he uses his racism on the question of we are friends though on opposite sides. The Members of the PPP must understand that they are responsible for what happened in 1963.

No matter on whose shoulders the PPP may attempt to place the blame or responsibility, it is known that the trouble which prevailed in this country

in 1963 was due to the PPP's obstinacy. The Members of the PPP abuse us here right and left. They have a right to their opinion, and we in the PNC will insist on our rights in this country. The PPP must understand that the repetition of Communist jargon is not going to get this country anywhere. The people are entitled to their points of view. If a man disagrees with the PPP, he is promptly called an imperialist stooge; if a Party disagrees with you, it is getting money from CIA. They talk about foreign intervention. Let them tell us about foreign intervention in the form of arms from Cuba; let them tell us how Seepersaud killed himself in attempting to destroy property; let them tell us about the free press from Castro.

One thing I cannot understand about the PPP is that it tries to persuade every section of the community of its honesty and *bona fides*, then it abuses the other side and asks for cooperation. Where did the \$1.7 million come from? How long can Cuba afford to send jeeps, presses and arms for the PPP? We in the PNC agree that there should be no foreign intervention. We say that there must be no foreign intervention whether from the United States, or from the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics through its agent Fidel Castro of Cuba. If the PPP understands that, everything will remain peaceful. The PNC has no fear of the results of the next Elections. The PNC promises to teach the PPP what it is to be tolerant of the Opposition from the position of Governmental power.

Estimates of Expenditure - In Committee of Supply: 21st January, 1964

Mr. Burnham: May I ask the Hon. Minister what work this organisation does?

I would like to inquire from the Government why it was thought necessary to reduce the vote for ammunition, arms and equipment for the Volunteer Force?

Am I to understand that by some elasticity of the English Language, "*ammunition*" can be described as "*uniform*"? My understanding may be wrong.

I see. Does the Hon. Minister still persists in that answer when it is to be noted that the Volunteer Force Personnel will cost \$20,000 more in 1964 than was budgeted for in 1963? And it would seem to me that more personnel would mean more arms, ammunition and equipment.

May I inquire whether any of these Assistant Secretaries are stationed in London?

May I inquire under which one of these Heads the Trust Officer, a member of the Civil Service, to be precise a Trust Officer, comes? Is he being paid for his service in London?

Was he not on leave and in London during his leave period, and now that his leave is finished nothing is done? Has the officer not sold out all his furniture in British Guiana and shipped his family to London?

The point is this. Is it not true that the officer who is in London was originally on leave and was seconded during his leave period and now his leave is over?

That is a very good answer.

He is a senior officer and a sort of Trade Attaché at the Embassy. Under what Head is he being paid? I am referring to Mr. Thakoor who is attached to the High Commissioner's Office in London.

How long has he been seconded?

I would like to find out whether that is really true. On the 7th November, 1963, I went to New York to attend a Conference of the United Nations at the invitation and expense of this Government. The Hon. Premier undertook to see that I was met and facilitated, but no representative from the British Guiana Office in New York turned up. I know that a cable was sent by the Hon. Premier in this connection.

He was on leave last year when he embarrassed the Hon. Premier!

How can the Hon. Minister purchase a property, pay insurance and still talk about rent? The Government has only one office in London.

I do not own a property in London.

The Hon. Premier gets the same allowance as any of us. Why does he get free quarters in London at the taxpayers expense? He gets a rent-free allowance in British Guiana.

All right; I am going there soon.

May I inquire from the Hon. Acting Premier the reason for having no estimate whatsoever for our army for 1964?

May I inquire from the Hon. the Attorney-General how many vacancies there are in the Establishment under Head 6 which are to be filled?

May I make a general inquiry? Why these vacancies among the Registry Officers? And even if the additional establishment of 8 is referable to the Registry Officers it would appear to be still short. There are eight too many Class II clerks, and there are 14 Officers who are not yet appointed. Therefore the Department is still short-staffed by six in terms of bodies.

I am grateful for the last reply, but I wish to inquire why this Government has permitted that sardine-like structure to continue as a Deeds Registry. It is common knowledge that the members of the staff practically sit on each other, and it is common knowledge that important documents cannot be found. It is also common knowledge that Judges have sometimes had sent up to them for hearing, cases which had been disposed of – not so much because of incompetence of the staff but because of the building accommodation being inadequate.

Can Government do nothing about increasing the accommodation in the Registry as distinct from the Judiciary?

May I inquire when this decision was made and what are the difficulties in the way of implementing it?

Now that I have dealt with the question of accommodation at the Registry, I would like to find out what provision is being made for more suitable accommodation for the Judiciary? For instance, when the Appeal Court is sitting there are not enough Chambers for the establishment of Judges, and furthermore we still have a toilet Court. A part of the High Court of Justice of the nation of Guiana is housing a toilet. While cases are going on there are noises that do not come from witnesses.

The tape recorder starts. If there are no disturbances, if things go right – and we expect them to go right – we might be in a position to start on the Court buildings in addition to the Bank of Guyana.

There are two observations to be made. The first one is that this shortage of proper and decent accommodation existed in 1960. If the records of *Hansard* are perused one will see that we have been raising this question since 1960. We had no disturbances in 1957, 1958, 1959, 1961. For once the junior Minister of Education has found his voice but not his feet. The Hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics must be serious with this House. This problem existed in 1960 and it was brought to the attention of the Government. Government undertook to look into the matter. This question of a toilet Court has been raised every year since 1957. There were no disturbances during that period. Secondly, I would like to make this observation, that the dignity of a Court of Law is most important and it is not good enough to keep on postponing this thing. It seems to me that we should get an undertaking from Government that this matter will be looked after in a matter of months.

I notice there is going to be a change in **Subhead 1, item 24**, which seems to make provision for a Supernumerary Marshal. Do I understand that the only amendment being offered here is a sum in the column "*Estimate 1964*"? May I just finish all my questions on this point? Is this one extra post intended to assist the Town Council in collecting arrears and is it the Government's view that one assistant Marshall can carry out the task?

I am not being critical at this stage. Am I to understand, therefore, that these two additional Supernumerary Marshals or what have you, will not be employed for the whole year, but will be employed for a period to get rid of certain arrears?

I would like to say something on **Subhead 4**. I notice that there is a sum of \$50,000 as provision for expenses of Jurors and I would like to inquire from the Hon. Attorney-General whether he and/or his Government ever thought of a possible reduction of this expenditure by arranging for smaller panels than 12 as is done in other parts of the world?

I am grateful to the Hon. and learned Member but there are two other matters I would like to raise here and ask the Hon. Attorney-General and his Government to consider with a view to reducing the strain on Judges and leaving them more time to hear cases. Will the Government consider the appointment of Masters in Chambers here? Because a lot of the backlog in the Registry in the hearing of cases, in my opinion, is due to the fact that very frequently, Judges have to spend very long periods hearing applications in the Chambers which can be disposed of otherwise, leaving them free to sit on the Bench, It is important, I think, that matters be expeditiously disposed of. As I am on my legs, there is one other query I would like to make, that is: what has happened to the District Courts which were created under the District courts Bill?

About what?

Is Mr. Kelshall sick?

In the case of housing, the investigations are carried out by skilled members of the Public Service. Am I to understand that skilled members of the Public Service cannot carry out these investigations with respect to lands such as those which were not given to Bacchus at Mahaica?

Even conceding but not accepting the Minister's opinion about the skill of the housing investigators, there is a point to which he has refused to address his mind. In the Housing Department investigations are carried out by members of the Public Service, and we would like to see the same thing in so far as land investigations are concerned.

I note that the sum of \$375,000 is going to be expended on this institution. There is no principal of that institution; is this not a waste of money? Having stated that there is no principal, can we find out from the Minister what happened to Dr. McConnell whose return to this country he vouched for?

No, I did not.

Certainly, the Hon. Minister must know about Dr. McConnell.

May I inquire from the Hon. Minister, through you, Sir, how many vacancies there are amongst the staff of engineers, executives and others?

May I inquire what savings were made under this Head during last year apart from the general curtailment of expenditure?

Does the Hon. Minister say that there are no vacancies under this Head, yes or no?

According to the revised estimates for 1963 expenditure will be \$2,086,548 as compared with the approved estimates for 1963 of \$2,674,490. How did that difference arrive?

Do I understand that the difference of approximately \$600,000 estimated by the Hon. the Minister of Finance between the approved and revised estimates for 1963 is accounted for accordingly?

What are the particular items on which there was this curtailment of expenditure? The Minister is coming here to discuss his Ministry? The Minister has been in charge of this particular Department since 1957 and he must know that this is the type of question that we would be interested in. He must have been at the Council of Ministers' meeting? It is unfair – if not discourteous – to this House to be travelling around the edges of the question instead of getting to the meat.

I want to congratulate the Minister upon the bold façade with which he covers his incompetence. Seven years a Minister in charge of this Department. He is entitled to gratuity. If he were an open voted employee, he would be entitled to gratuity under the regulations. And yet he cannot tell us what are the specific, significant and important items on which savings were made, on which there was curtailment. We want to know so as to understand what policy was pursued. It is not for us to go combing here, there and somewhere. He should have – and he has – competent advisers and I hope that they have transferred some scintilla of their competence to him.

I wonder whether the Hon. Minister can tell us how the curtailment of \$80,000 on **Subhead 2** was executed?

The strike was 80 days. That is less than one-third of the year, but yet the saving is more than one-third of the Estimate. Is that a sufficiently good explanation? The next thing is that if you ask the Ministers why they are going bald, they are going to say: "*The disturbances,*" whereas some of them were bald before.

Can the Hon. Minister now tell us why he thinks that this Head can be executed satisfactorily to the citizens of this country on a vote of \$604,565 less than what was estimated in 1963?

You understand why I say this Minister is incompetent? If he had only an iota of intelligence, he would have seen that \$440,000 has been transferred from this Head to Head 16. And he says he is running a Ministry.

I would like to inquire from the Hon. Minister why he wishes to light the Sea Wall, which few people want it lit, instead of putting lights in the Ruimveldt Housing Scheme which all the residents want lit?

Is it not a fact that the Ministry responsible for lighting is the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics?

The houses in the Ruimveldt Housing Scheme are Government properties, and the people are tenants of this rapacious Government.

I would like to refer to **Subhead 36** on page 29 which shows that Government pays the paltry sum of \$1,500 for sewerage service on Government properties outside the northern boundary of Georgetown. The Georgetown Town Council has raised this question on several occasions but has not got anywhere. Unless the Government is prepared to pay more this service is going to be cut off. I speak here now as Mayor of Georgetown and Chairman of the Sewerage Commissioners. If one looks at the number of buildings outside the northern boundary of the city one will see the rates that ought to be paid by a section of the community for the service provided, and here is Government paying the paltry sum of \$1,500 which does not cover the cost of the materials used from time to time for the servicing of its buildings.

I am asking the Minister to think seriously about this matter and persuade his Government to increase this amount immediately. If the Minister desires to have a discussion with representatives of the Town Council we shall be only too willing to have it, but it is time that Government shoulders its responsibility. It is payment for a service; it is not a subsidy.

What are we getting? Is this Minister really qualified for the title conferred on him by me as the "*Minister of Humour*"? We of the Town Council pay for the Fire Brigade, and here is the Minister saying that Government pays the Town Council. I merely want an undertaking from the Minister that he is willing to pursue this matter. He talks about subvention. This is no subvention or grant but a payment of \$1,500 by the Government for sewerage services rendered in respect to its buildings, for which other owners of buildings would pay several thousands of dollars.

How was it that in 1963 this Government was supposed to have expended \$5,941 on drought relief measures in 1959?

It reads 'Drought Relief Measures 1959'? How was this money spent in 1963?

A period of four years had elapsed. To whom was this payment made?

Certainly the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary must read his own estimates. The Hon. Member was referring to **Subhead 5 – Expenses, General Elections**, which is an item for \$6,000. There can be no question of Local Government Elections. You must know what was meant.

If that is so, why do you put down 'General Elections'? Does the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary not know the English Language? It is still the official language of this House.

Under **Subhead 6**, can the Hon. the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs be good enough to tell us what general emergency is anticipated for the year 1964?

I don't understand this Government. It wants to revise the register regardless of the fact that a new registration will take place in accordance with the decision made by him whom they asked to make a decision. Now they come back here and they say they do not want the British troops. They say: "*Limey go home.*" And yet they budget \$70,000. You see the hypocrisy of these people! The Premier and his satellites are only fooling their poor supporters. They want the British troops to go and they come here and vote \$70,000! We have internal self-Government. If you refuse to vote the \$70,000, you refuse. You do not have to billet them. This is nothing else but hypocrisy and dishonesty in the nicer sense, the purer sense, and I move accordingly the deletion of **Subhead 6, Head 18**.

It has been suggested in other quarters that if this sum of money was not paid, the troops would still remain here. That would be the responsibility of the people who are keeping the troops here. But you are going to pay rent for a man and say he must go away? If you want him to go away don't pay the rent. I still would like to get an intelligent answer from these colonial hypocrites.

I know that the Government proposes to make a contribution of \$110,000 towards the upkeep of roads. In Georgetown one thing is sure: every vehicle imported into this country has to be unloaded in Georgetown, and the predominant number of vehicles in this country operate in and/or into Georgetown. This contribution towards the maintenance of roads was made when Government's revenue from motor vehicle licences was about \$250,000 in 1957. By 1963 the Government's revenue from the licensing of motor vehicles was over $\frac{1}{2}$ million. On that basis it is obvious that since the contribution to the maintenance of roads is based upon the use of the roads by vehicles from which Government gets its revenue, when the revenue goes up that much it means that the number of vehicles has increased, that the revenue charges have increased per unit and that the contribution should also be increased.

[**Mr. Mann:** That is not necessarily so.]

Mr. Burnham: I would prefer the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education to answer on his feet.

In 1957, when this sum was agreed to, the Georgetown Town council was expending something in the vicinity of \$200,000 on roads. In 1963 the Georgetown Town Council has expended over \$300,000 because the cost of maintaining the roads has gone up. It means that the source from which Government purported in 1957 to make a contribution has increased, and I am quite satisfied in my mind that the Government should increase its contribution. It is good for certain Hon. Members on that side of the Table to exhibit a certain sense of humour, but this is not a matter for humour.

While discussing an item a few moments ago, the Hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics tried to evade the question by saying that we would have to proceed by way of negotiations. We are not asking Government, at this stage in this House, to say that it will increase its contribution by \$2,000 or \$3,000. We want to hear from the Government if it accepts the fact that this contribution should be revised upwards. The exact amount and terms of agreement can always be settled between the Government and the Municipality at a later stage.

The same remark can be made with respect to **Subhead 13**. I know that he who was in the best position to make it is not in a position to make it and, therefore, I take the argument *mutatis mutandis* with respect to **Subheads 12 and 13**.

Georgetown is defined as excluding these roads, and for an increase in the subvention we must undertake more work! What idiocy is this? The Georgetown Town Council is not to be bullied by pettifogging people, but it will cut off your sewerage. I give you three months to revise the sewerage charge, or I will cut your sewerage off.

Estimates of Expenditure - In Committee of Supply: 29th January, 1964

Mr. Burnham: Those are not advertisements; they are notices.

May I ask what was the revenue from the *ad hoc* steamer service that was run by the Minister during the period May to July, 1963?

Is the Minister perfectly sure that there was not a disappearance of money about which he himself complained one evening at the Wharf?

I heard him, Sir. May I ask what payments have been made to the Department in respect of the 10,000 bags of cement stacked at the Vreed-en-Hoop Stelling for several weeks now?

When was that payment made?

I am not asking about charges. Imagine that this Minister used to teach children English. I asked about payment and he tells me about charges.

I am not asking about courtesies; I am asking what has been paid. I understand the answer to be nothing. We will deal with that later. How long are those sacks of cement going to be there that the Department can now anticipate the ultimate charge?

What is this reasonable time, and for what period is storage charged?

For what is this charge which the Minister mentioned? For what period? For what purpose?

Is this not a case of either ignorance or dishonesty? I asked what revenue has been received for the storing of 10,000 bags of cement on the Vreed-en-Hoop Stelling for several weeks. I am given a figure and now we understand that that figure which was given was for carriage and, therefore, the Minister was either ignorant or dishonest – and this is not a question of using parliamentary language, this is drawing a logical conclusion. I asked for storage charges, I am given carriage. How long have these 10,000 bags of cement been there, so that we can get an idea of what has been a reasonable period?

I do not run a sweet drinks business. I am asking about the cement, but certainly, this Minister ought to know; he is a Member of the Government.

As a matter of privilege; I asked a question. Am I to be treated to the discourtesy of a Minister answering another Minister? Ministers do not answer Ministers in this House. That is contrary to the tradition and they go and tell Sandys they are trying to follow the tradition.

I can advise the Minister that he is hopelessly misinformed, if he is told that the cement was there from the 6th January. Because I was at that stelling in December of last year and I saw the cement there and I am surprised that his advisers should make him look so stupid when I saw the cement. Secondly, 10,000 bags at the rate of 500 or 600 a day – that is how many days? The Hon. Minister was a teacher; he would know how long it would take to remove them. I am not interested in sweet drinks; that is a matter for the sweet drinks people and the Admiral. I am interested in cement.

May I inquire from the Minister what is the nature of this property stored?

The Minister would not understand that goods are property. When it comes to answering the question, he does not realize that it is synonymous. What is the nature of this property that was stored, that he said was Government's property?

The goods property: What is the nature of the goods?

I would like to assure the Minister that none of the PNC need the food which GIMPEX brought in, but I understood the Hon. Premier on another occasion in this House to say that these goods were not, at the time of storage, Government property. They were subsequently requisitioned, there was a period, therefore, when a private concern was storing goods with the Transport facilities and if the Hon. Minister will turn around and ask his advisers, and have them tell him the truth, he will have to get up and say yes, he agrees, but he would not turn to them.

On what date did they become Government property?

Development Estimates 1964: 29th January, 1964

Mr. Burnham: I am not really interested in the Government's hack doing its nasty job as usual, for in every organization scavengers are employed. What I am interested in are the permanent annuities paid to holders of railway stock – whether the Government is contemplating having those annuities commuted into lump sum payments, so that once and for all we can be rid of them, because it is a burden which we have been carrying for a long time, and has been criticised by the Premier when he was Hon. Member for Central Demerara in the Legislative Council. Does the Government contemplate doing anything about decapitalising those annuities?

As a Minister of the Government he should know that the qualification to be a Member of this House is a modicum of literacy. I ask whether Government contemplated doing anything about commuting these annuities. There is nothing Communist about that. The Minister would go to a public meeting and talk about what was inherited. There is no question of communism at all; just a question of intelligence. If the Minister does not know, let him say so.

Why did the Minister not say that before?

I would like to ask this very simple question. Why did the Minister purport to sign an Order for a year's appointment if he knew at that time, as he subsequently claimed Mr. Storey knew, that the appointment of Mr. Storey was not for one year?

Is it tidiness to mislead the public? After all, Judicial Notices, as the Hon. Attorney-General will tell the Minister, will be taken from the *Official Gazette*. If someone asks whether Mr. Storey ought to be there for a year, the Magistrate or the Judge only has to look at the *Official Gazette* and say 'Yes'. Either the notice is a lie or the subsequent explanation is a lie. The Minister must have his choice of lies.

And who, may I ask, is the official Member?

I do not agree with the proposition of the law by the Hon. Member for Georgetown North, Mr. Cheeks, but I think I am on perfectly safe ground when I say that Mr. Benjamin will not qualify as an official Member, and even the Hon. Attorney-General will not so advise the Minister. Furthermore, I say that the Board is not properly constituted. It may well be that there is a certain provision, but regardless of whether the vacancies are filled, it can still make valid decisions. I want to make this comment. When we are talking about ignorance in high places it is suggested that we do it out of envy or a desire to be nasty. The ignorance in this case consists of the inability to know that we know not because certainly, why do we have a political Attorney-General, one learned in the law, one of the leaders of my

profession, an able member of my profession who advises people like the Minister? But this Minister is Marshal, he is Air Vice-marshal; he is a Jack of all trades.

With respect, Sir, the Attorney-General has indicated that this gentleman's qualification to be an official Member is going to be re-considered, but the Ordinance does not provide an official Member should be the Chairman. The Ordinance provides that an official Member should be a Member, therefore, with respect, we are entitled to find out now the considerations of suitability that led the Hon. Minister to choose the headmaster of a school as Chairman of the Guyana Airways Corporation.

I have seen the Minister excluding himself as a candidate for chairmanship.

In what categories do these occur and what are the reasons for such a large number in such a comparatively small establishment?

Mr. Burnham: The Hon. Minister was about to give us an answer when the sitting was suspended. It was with respect to vacancies in the Department. I was about to ask him how long were these vacancies in existence, and why in the case of the Controller of Aerodrome Operations it is now proposed to send this post on for the consideration of the Public Service Commission?

My question was: How long have these vacancies been in existence? For instance, in the case of the Controller of Aerodrome Operations, only now a request is being made to have the post filled. The Hon. Minister, who has a penchant for the economy of speech when replying to awkward questions, has merely referred to the post of Controller of Aerodrome Operations. I await his answer while he gets the information. Having regard to the number of vacancies in the Department, does the Hon. Minister consider the efficiency of the Service impaired?

How long has there been a vacant post under Item (14) – Leading Firemen?

Of course the Hon. Minister has not answered the question as to whether he considers the efficiency of the Establishment impaired as a result of 15 vacancies. What is the difficulty in recruiting a Fireman? There is absolutely none. This merely shows the policy of this Government; it is indulging in savings in the wrong areas. Can you imagine a Government attempting to economise in the field of fire-prevention at an International Airport? Is it not true that there has been an unfavourable report recently by experts as to the suitability of Atkinson Field to qualify as an International Airport?

Why can't you get 4 Firemen, and why were certain qualified recruits not sent in May and June last year to be trained in Trinidad when 3 blue-eyed boys of the PPP were sent and all 3 were returned from Trinidad?

Tell me about the appointment of the 4 Firemen.

Does it take all that time to appoint 4 firemen to bring up your Establishment? You do not have to wait for the approval of this House, and I do not see who has to give approval for keeping the Establishment as provided for by this House. Approval from whom?

In 1962 and 1963 the Establishment was fixed at 27. Therefore how can you be awaiting approval to keep 27 Firemen on the Establishment?

May I repeat? In 1963 the Estimates provided for an establishment of 27. How is it that in 1964 you are still asking for approval to complete that establishment? That is the point I am making, Sir.

Listen further. The establishment in 1962 was 27; the establishment in 1963 was 27; in 1964 it was 27. I do not like to be raising my voice, but I do not like to be given evasive answers like this. How could the Minister be waiting for approval since 1962?

If you say the four vacancies occurred in 1963, I have to accept that in this House, but as President of the B.G. Labour Union you know that I know it is not since 1963. What approval do you have to obtain to fill vacancies arising in an establishment agreed to by law?

Development Estimates 1964: 30th January, 1964

Mr. Burnham: So actually maintenance work of \$273,000, if spent, is still less than income, which is \$460,000.

I cannot see that. When you take \$152,000, which is for personal emoluments, from \$600,000 you will only get about four hundred and something thousand dollars.

That is \$448,000, which is less than the income which you expect. That is the point I am making. The first error here, the first wrong thing in this Department is not to face the fact that you have to keep the Housing Department as a permanent institution and it must not be palmed off' on the Development Estimates. That is the first unsatisfactory aspect of the matter. You are either going to have a Housing Department or you are not going to have it. Just imagine, when there is so much poor housing in this country, the Housing Department comes under the Development Estimates.

The second unsatisfactory arrangement, even assuming it is properly there, is that when you deduct compulsory personal emoluments you are left to spend on the substantial operation less money than you anticipate in income. For instance, as I see it, there is only a sum of \$393,714 to spend on housing estates for maintenance which is clearly less than you are receiving. Clearly Government must understand its duty to subsidise working-class housing. If the Government is going to spend less than it is receiving, it is not subsidising. The Hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge, Mr. Merriman, will now speak extensively on the difficulties which prevail in these housing estates as a result of this juggling and unwillingness by Government to face its responsibilities with respect to housing.

If the Hon. Minister is going to say "*Well, we do not have the money*", I shall understand, but he cannot say that in the context of the boast of solvency. I have had reason to observe in this House on previous occasion that if one does not honour one's obligations and meet one's commitments, but keeps in one's pockets all that one receives anyone can be solvent; even Burnham can be solvent by that process.

May I inquire from the Hon. Minister under what provision of the law the Housing Department is responsible for these housing schemes? Secondly, he said that he was advised that only Laing Avenue and Wortmanville were subject to the Central Housing and Planning Authorities. I shall then proceed to ask, if that is the case, why is it that the Housing Department is also supervising and controlling Laing Avenue and Wortmanville if they fall under the aegis of the Central Housing and Planning authority?

The question was whether the *ad hoc* Committee was advisory or executive.

These housing estates are supposed to be run by the Central Housing and Planning Authority, but now the Minister says he has been advised that the Housing Department acts as the agent of the Central Housing and Planning Authority. A principal has to appoint an agent, and the Central Housing and Planning Authority which cannot be superseded by the Minister, never made the Housing Department its agent for the control of the housing estates. Even though the Planning Officer, who is normally the agent of the Central Housing and Planning Authority, wants certain changes, the law is that the Central Housing and Planning Authority is responsible, and there is no record in the minutes of the Central Housing and Planning Authority to the effect that the Housing Department has been appointed the former's agent. The law does not permit the Central Housing and Planning Authority to appoint another Government Department as its agent. So again we have a case of bogus legal advice.

In fact what has happened over the last year or two is that the Minister arrogated to himself, or to the Housing Department in some cases, powers which are essentially those of the Central Housing and Planning Authority. I asked the Minister to seek the advice of the Attorney-General. He promised me faithfully that he would, and I am sure that if he had consulted the Attorney-General he would have told him that what he did last year and the year before was absolutely illegal. I charge this Government with undermining the very law it is supposed to uphold. I charge the Government with finding ways and means of getting around the law in order to exercise patronage. My own view about the Central Housing and Planning Authority is that although there may be appointments from his Party by the Minister, there are certain other persons whose appointments are independent of Government patronage.

The Minister appears to have been advised by some lawyer under a spreading saman tree that the Central Housing and Planning Authority could appoint the Housing Department as its agent. I showed him Chapters 181 and 182 and suggested that he should get advice. The fact is that there has been a series of irregularities and the appointment of an advisory Committee. Advisory to whom? Advisory to the Minister. We know that an advisory Committee only advises, and that decisions are made by the Government. It is about time that the Government does something about this matter. If it does not we will have to seek the arbitrament of the Court. I give the Government one last opportunity to correct this matter.

What about the points I have made? The Minister cannot ignore me like that.

I must congratulate the Minister upon the calmness with which he speaks and yet the ability with which he avoids my question. I asked him under what provision, what law, does he say that the C.H & P.A. is not the body responsible for the Housing Department. Who appointed the Housing Department as agent? The Ministry is a separate corporation from the

Central Housing and Planning Authority. So tell me again, chapter and verse please, what Ordinance, what Section, and then tell me when this agency came into being and thirdly, answer my questions. Was advice sought from the Attorney-General as was undertaken over 12 months ago?

The Minister has the temerity to talk about whether there is irregularity of the law; there is irregularity in the Minister's action. The law is there.

I am not here to suggest who gives the Hon. Minister advice. I would desire to inform the Minister that under the Constitution there is a certain Minister, to wit, the Attorney-General, who is supposed to advise him on the law and whose advice he proposed to take over 12 months ago. But there are some laymen who think they can be lawyers. May I remind the Hon. Minister that he who is his own lawyer, has a fool for a client.

Departure of the Governor, Sir Ralph Francis Alnwick Grey: 26th February, 1964

Mr. Burnham: There are certain traditions of courtesy still extant in this country. In 1959 there came to this country Sir Ralph Francis Alnwick Grey as Governor, and I understand that he is about to leave the country some time next week. In spite of the hilarity and amusement which it seems to cause some Hon. Members on the other side of the House, I should like to move the Motion in all seriousness.

There is no doubt, it is a matter of history and of record that the People's National Congress, of which I have the honour to be the Leader, has had great difficulties with the Governor Sir Ralph Grey. Everyone recollects that at one time the PNC led the demand for the recall of Sir Ralph Grey, but he has been a visitor to our shores. I am sure that you will – whether you agree or disagree with me – concede that, like many of us involved in public life, he has had a difficult time. I think it is only fair, as he is about to leave our shores, that we should wish him good health and happier surroundings in the new job which he is about to take up in the Bahamas.

In the circumstances, whatever may be our difficulties – I repeat that these difficulties are grave and have not been removed – in the tradition of Guianese hospitality and courtesy, I, seriously, ask this House to pass a Motion wishing *bon voyage* to Sir Ralph Grey as well as to Lady Grey and the rest of the Governor's family, hoping that all of them will enjoy their stay in the other territory of the Bahamas.

Assistance to Farmers for Flood Losses: 26th February, 1964

“Be it resolved:

That this Legislative Assembly recommends that Government take immediate steps to render assistance to those farmers who had suffered loss in the floods early in the year.”

Mr. Burnham: I cannot, because of the circumstances, speak for any length of time on this Motion. This Motion was originally tabled on the 22nd March, 1963, and it had to be re-tabled subsequently, what with the famous or infamous prorogation which took place on the 18th June, 1963. Undoubtedly, it was brought before this House earlier this year, and the fact that it was not being debated early in 1964 is not due to the Government. It is either the fault of myself, or my inability to move it earlier this year. It cannot be denied that the fact that it did not come before this House until this year must be the fault of the Government who ought to explain themselves.

Late 1962 and early 1963 there were serious floods in certain of the rural areas. These floods affected those farmers interested in ground provisions as distinct from rice and sugar. The situation was so grave and it brought such great losses to those engaged in that type of farming that I thought it necessary to seek the Government's intervention for the purpose of having assistance given to these farmers. Nothing was done either about the Motion or about rendering the necessary assistance in proper cases. It seems to me that this amounts to a certain degree of callousness and/or neglect of duty.

Even if we forget that, I still feel that Government can still take steps not only with respect to those who suffered losses but also to prevent a repetition of such serious loss to people whose economy was already a marginal one. It seems to me that it would be proper for Government to consider things like crop insurance to cover these losses which arise with unflinching regularity. It seems to me also that Government should consider further assistance being given to villages whose backlands are the farms, assistance for them to look after their drainage and to put up the necessary works to keep out the flood waters more effectively than has happened in the past.

I would commend these more comprehensive ideas to the Government since it seems a little unrealistic to expect this Government at this stage to give any financial assistance to those who suffered losses because in spite of their asseverations of solvency we have noticed that they are very short of financial resources. I shall, therefore, not press them unduly but shall commend to them schemes to prevent the repetition of this type of flooding to which allusion is made in this Motion which was tabled nearly a year ago.

Mr. Burnham (Replying): I have been accustomed, during my years in this House, to the guile which is shown by this Government but I am really surprised and shocked at the show put on this afternoon, and there has been a veiled attempt to obscure this issue.

The first issue I realised when discussing this Motion was tabled in March of 1963 and it finds its way into this House for debate in January 1964. There is not one word of explanation about that, except the facetious remark by the Minister of Works and Hydraulics, to the effect that it is a blessing in disguise that the Motion took so long to come here as the delay avoided friction between the Members of the House. There are certain shafts of wit and certain humorous exercises which would make one a lion in the drawing-room, but would certainly disqualify one from holding ministerial office in a country like this.

This Government took nine months to bring up this Motion and the best they can do is to get the Minister of Works and Hydraulics who, it is established in this House, cannot add and subtract, to make a facile and facetious explanation. Why has the Motion been delayed?

Let us proceed. Said the Hon. Minister of Agriculture: "*We have done all the things that you suggested might have been done.*" Is that so? The fact is that this Motion was tabled in March of 1963. It was as a result of representations by farmers specifically on the East Coast who had made unsuccessful representations to the Agriculture Department and to the Ministry of Works and Hydraulics.

[**An Hon. Member (Government):** From where?]

Mr. Burnham: From Victoria, from Cove and John, and from Golden Grove. These three villages, particularly I recall.

That was in March 1963, and there had been no relief of any sort given to those persons up to that time. And then the Minister of Agriculture whose veracity it is improper for me to question in this House, says: "*We have done everything,*" the "*everything*" done is something done as a result of a telephone call from the Attorney-General – on his own testimony – with respect to the farmers in the Canals Polder. It seems to me that the question is not being fairly and squarely faced.

The Minister suggests that crops were not ruined. That is contrary to my personal knowledge because I have seen the ruin. It is contrary to what has been told to me by farmers to suggest, as the Hon. Minister has, that what was ruined was the crop replacement, and not the crop itself. People lost actual growing crops and as a result made representations and what one would expect to hear from the Hon. Minister, in the circumstances, if his claim should be justified, is that the Government in fact replaced crops that were lost or gave some form of loan or compensation to these farmers.

Ad nauseam in this House, Mr. Speaker, we hear from Members of the Government that it is impossible to prevent excessive floods in the rural

areas. I am one of those shoemakers who stick to their lasts, unlike some of my opposite numbers who have now taken up navigation by sea and air. This is what I should like have answered. Although, according to Standing Orders, it cannot be answered this afternoon, I should like to have it answered at some time by the Government: If every year when there is heavy rain there is flooding – there has been no flooding last year and up to this moment, because we have not had any rain – is it not some proof that there has been some miscalculation as to what is the average rainfall to be taken off? I am not a navigator or a hydraulics engineer, and I should like this matter explained.

If you take the rainfall for one year, divide it by 365 days, and then say that in 24 hours you will have to take off so much water you will never be accurate. The idiocy of that exercise is that the rain does not fall for 365 days in a year. There will be so much rainfall at a certain period and, therefore, the rate at which the water must be taken off cannot be calculated in terms of 365 days – that is where the exercise has gone wrong. If that is not the way in which it has been done, then the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Lands should explain it.

All of us know that we have had floods. Every year there is a drought, and crops die as a result. Never before has so much money been spent on drainage and irrigation for so few people with such poor results. I do not want to parody the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central, Mr. d'Aguiar, but I, perforce, agree with him. It is true that never before has so much money been spent on drainage and irrigation with so little effect.

We have heard the Hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics trying to defend his Government's policy on this question but, despite the use of a microscope, I am unable to find out exactly what was the defence he was advancing. We have heard a lot about solving the question of unemployment. I think I know more about solving labour problems than the Hon. Minister, Mr. Ram Karran. I would never start writing the socioeconomic history of British Guiana by referring to indentured labour. That happened in 1961, November, and certain Members of the Government know that I am speaking the truth.

We are not interested, today, in solving labour problems by the usual sophistication of the PPP. We are not interested in what Sir Henry Seaforth said about labour. We are not interested in what his *alter ego*, Sir Jock Campbell, said about the electoral system. The same sugar producers and a few others are looking to run Public Corporations here.

[Mr. Wilson: Communists?]

Mr. Burnham: This sort of Adam-like behaviour is for people like —. God rest the dead, and I hope He will soon rest the PPP.

Certain Hon. Members on the other side of the House have tried to make out that the losses to the farmers were due to the wicked machinations of

the Hon. Member for Ruimveldt who opposed the proposal to make petrol available to the poor, downtrodden farmers and, consequently, they lost the autumn crop and had to plant a spring crop. Consequently, the drought caught them with their pants off or down and, therefore, the calamity is traceable to the Hon. Member for Ruimveldt.

Let us examine that last assumption that I am responsible. What does the PPP want with me and the People's National Congress? How can these milk-white maidens of politicians associate with us sinful people? They are not priests, and they cannot hope to save our souls! I think that at this time that the PPP are merely causing confusion among their followers. At one time they say that the members of the PNC are such rascals, and at another time they loose two pigeons, call them doves, and say PNC and PPP must come together.

I repeat that the PPP must be consistent. It would appear to me that it does not lie in the mouth of the PPP Government, or its Ministers, to suggest that the trade union movement has caused difficulties amongst the rice farmers. Incidentally, we were not talking about rice farmers but of all farmers. Some people have certain obsessions, and they cannot speak without referring to rice farmers.

Let us go carefully into this matter. It seems to me that some people must be taught their lessons regularly, slowly, and carefully. On the 7th July the Hon. Premier, Dr. Cheddi B. Jagan, signed an agreement, and the other signatories were Richard A. Ishmael, J. H. Pollydore, and R. Willis. Indeed the Hon. Premier conceded to Richard A. Ishmael and J. H. Pollydore more than these two gentlemen had been asking for in April, 1963.

[**Mr. Wilson:** I cannot understand you.]

Mr. Burnham: 'Coco' says he cannot understand, and I do not know how he managed to pass his teacher's examination. If at the end of a war you are conceding more than your enemy wanted originally; if you are not the person responsible for what had taken place, why admit that you are wrong? Might is right.

Do not let us indulge in any philosophical sophistry. Might is right; if you lose you are wrong. Even if it is not a question of morality, you are wrong because you have lost. It is the Hon. Premier who sat down at that Table on Thursday, 18th July, 1963, and admitted to me that he was not releasing petrol supplies because he wanted to get rid of the petrol GIMPEX had brought in. 'Rascal' is a word banned in this place. I hope that 'dishonest' is not banned. These dishonest people who withhold petrol stocks in this country.

These people who in furtherance of the interests of a certain trading company of which the Premier was once a member and which is attached to his Party – he cannot say that is not so; I know it is true; I saw the Registry papers – these people who in the interest of GIMPEX withhold normal petrol supplies.

[**Mr. Wilson:** Who withholds petrol?]

Mr. Burnham: Some of us have been raised to the estate of Rear-Admiral and I would like to remind them what was the animal on which Jesus rode to Jerusalem.

I never advised the T.U.C. against issuing petrol to farmers and even if I did I do not care. I am not the person courting the People's Progressive Party. I am the person being sought after by these failures who have our country bankrupt and who cannot even build roads so that one of their members has to leave.

Situation in the Sugar Industry: 26th February, 1964

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Speaker, I submit that a certain amount of confusion has been deliberately dragged into this debate principally, if not entirely, by Members speaking from the Government Benches. As I understood it, the question originally posed by the Hon. Member for Upper Demerara River, Mr. Jordan, related to the violence, intimidation, burning and use of such explosive substances as dynamite. The Hon. Member for Corentyne – West, Mr. Lall, and his colleagues have dragged into this discussion the pros and cons with respect to the dispute between the M.P.C.A. and the G.A.W.U.

Now I myself am a trade unionist and I think that the union which I lead has shown itself quite effective in getting recognition and has shown itself quite effective in having removed from the trade union field persons who did not enjoy the confidence of the workers. The British Guiana Labour Union, of which it is my honour to be president, has never had to indulge in acts of violence but has been able to gain the wholesale support of the workers. I am not disposed to say who is right or who is wrong, whether the M.P.C.A is entitled to exclusive bargaining rights, or the G.A.W.U. That is an opinion which I prefer to express in another place and at another time.

It seems to me that those sitting on the Government Benches themselves are ambivalent in their attitude to the undoubted burning of canes, the violence and the intimidation. I recall it was during the month of April 1963 that a certain junior Minister of this Government told me that the People's Progressive Party was in a position to – if the occasion arose - to burn down every sugar estate. It may be completely fortuitous that an irresponsible remark like that should have been made less than a year ago by a junior Member of the Government in the Lobby of this House.

Now it is also not without significance that the burnings took place at far distant points and there seems to be some synchronising of burning. It is also not without significance that there has been the unusual exercise of using dynamite which we have never before experienced in strikes in the sugar estate or elsewhere in strikes as such. I am not interested in the ignorant bellowing of certain people.

I hold no brief for the sugar producers. I cannot hold any brief for the sugar producers because, so far as I understand, Sir Jock Campbell who is the chief producer, having taken onto himself the political wife of the People's Progressive Party, there is no hope for the PNC to vie for favours unless we are prepared to be the political prostitutes that some people want to make us when they have demonstrations at the rifle range. But the point that must be clearly noted here is that as a result of these burnings, these disturbances on the sugar estates, there must be some unfavourable effect on our economy.

I am not accusing any one of them. I am seeking to defend our honour and political chastity. I am saying that no doubt there will be an unfavourable effect on the economy of our country in the circumstances. It seems to me that even when we assume – and I am not attempting to give a value judgment here – that the G.A.W.U. is entitled to representation or to recognition, because it has a majority membership, as a trade unionist, I would say it is entitled to call a strike and not to indulge in violence. The G.A.W.U. further, is alleged to have responsible leadership; there is a close relationship between the G.A.W.U. and the PPP, the governing Party; it must be remembered – if I may digress for the moment – that at the last annual congress of the G.A.W.U., there were present the Premier and the Minister of Labour, the latter giving an undertaking as to a certain Bill.

Therefore in a small community, we cannot indulge in the sophistication of saying that the G.A.W.U. is separate and distinct from the PPP. If the G.A.W.U. is as responsible as it has claimed, then let it call a general strike. We realise that the ultimate sanction is a general strike. If it can call a general strike and close down all of the sugar estates, it will have informed the sugar producers that it is in charge of the workers. Sir Jock Campbell's solicitude for the PPP springs from the fact that he wants to live and if the G.A.W.U. were able to close down the estate it is likely to gain recognition. What the members of the PNC object to is the burning of canes, unnecessary violence, and intimidation.

The sugar producers have their property insured, and burning canes cannot affect them. The members of the PNC also object to the indiscriminate use of dynamite. This is a serious matter, and it cannot be suggested or alleged that one Seepersaud, who blew himself up with a hand grenade which he did not know how to use, is a member of the PNC. There is proof that Seepersaud was a PPP activist.

[Mr. Benn: What about Chippie Graham?]

Mr. Burnham: Of course Chippie Graham is a PNC member and, the courts have found him not guilty of the alleged offence. You had better not repeat that remark outside of this Chamber. There is no Credit Corporation money in this.

Is there some suggestion that the Credit Corporation has loaned money to burn the canes?

No, Sir. We are arguing that certain people are instigating the burning of canes, and that the question of intimidation tends to weaken the case of the union involved. The Hon. Member for Corentyne-West, Mr. Lall, who usually brings his troubles and difficulties to me and whom I advise free of charge without having a brief marked, came to me with this question. I told him: *"I agree with you. Do not submit your books to the employers."* The members of the British Guiana Labour Union know that we do not submit books to employers, but to the Labour Department.

Let us look at this matter dispassionately. The answer by the G.A.W.U. is to call a colony-wide strike, but not to encourage in any way or to white-wash violence. It is not without significance that the Hon. Member for Corentyne-West, who is the President of the G.A.W.U., made a public statement to explain the reason for the violence. He said that it was due to frustration and the fact that some people felt they were not represented. Herein lies a very interesting, attractive bit of information: he has accepted that the workers are responsible for their livings.

The Hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing has directed our attention to an interesting statement by workers whom he met at Enmore. They told him that they were wrongly blamed for what is taking place. It would seem to me that, in the circumstances, the story of the Hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing does not mesh with the analysis of the situation by the Hon. Member for Corentyne-West. Either of them may be right, but both cannot be right. It may be that the people who spoke to the Hon. Minister were not workers. Certainly the evidence is there to indicate that it was part of a country-wide scheme. Therefore it would appear to me that, instead of attempting any exculpation or analysis or explanation, there should be a clear attitude on the part of the G.A.W.U. and the Government to the effect that they deplore violence, intimidation and the use of dynamite. The G.A.W.U. can continue with its strike without intimidating people and using dynamite, if it wants to.

It is not good for the Hon. Minister to come here and say that there seems to be dual membership because people are afraid of victimisation. The workers at the Rice Marketing Board, who have been given licks, stood up like men. If you believe in a principle, do not worry about victimisation because the struggle is a matter of life and death. I have had the same experience in the British Guiana Labour Union where there has been victimisation on the part of a certain authority whose principal gave money to the PPP and to workers. We stood up and would not move, and they had to grant us recognition. If the workers are convinced that there is a scab-union and it is not representing them properly, then they must be prepared to stand up and say that they are leaving the M.P.C.A., victimisation or no victimisation. I hear the Hon. Minister speak about deductions without authority. There are in the PPP a few lawyers, and certainly these lawyers can advise the people concerned.

[**Mr. Benn:** They do not control the Judges like you do.]

Mr. Burnham: That remark should not go unchallenged in this House, Sir.

[**Mr. Speaker:** I have indicated in the course of this afternoon and before that it is very improper to sit and make remarks whilst another Hon. Member is on his feet. I want to give every Member who wishes to speak

a full and fair opportunity of expressing his views. I think myself that the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Lands should not impute motives of that kind to the judiciary. He knows that in the Standing Orders it is laid down very clearly that there are certain categories of persons who cannot and should not be mentioned in such terms in the House. Therefore I would take it that his having been in his seat when he said these things his words do not go on record. I ask that he does not take the opportunity of repeating them.]

Mr. Burnham: Thank you Mr. Speaker. A Daniel come to Judgment!

[Interruption]

[Mr. Speaker: I wonder if the Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Lands will allow us to continue. If you were on your feet and some other Member attempted the same I would castigate that Member on your behalf. Please let us be fair about it.]

Mr. Burnham: I was saying that so far as the allegation about deductions from wages without authority is concerned, I feel that that is not an objection or an allegation of substance, because it is a matter of simple law that if there are deductions without consent, the persons from whose wages the deductions are made can successfully sue the person or the body that deducts these wages.

Assistance to Farmers for Flood Losses: 28th February, 1964

“Be it resolved that this Legislative Assembly recommends that Government take immediate steps to render assistance to those farmers who had suffered loss in the floods early in the year.”

Mr. Burnham (Replying): I have but little to add to my observations on the transparent justification of itself in which this Government indulges during the debate on this Motion. Perhaps I can usefully say, however, that the fact that the Government has taken nearly a year to bring this Motion before the House, apart from the unsophisticated explanation by the Minister of Works and Hydraulics, Mr. Ram Karran, is really proof of the fact that Government had really done nothing or very little to alleviate the sufferings of and to give compensation to farmers who were affected. We should hope, however, now that in the course of another debate there was an admission on the part of the Government that these droughts are the worst for 100 years, that the Government will see to it that assistance and every possible help be given to the farmers.

I find it difficult to understand why, if the Government had done what it ought to have done and had left undone those things which it ought not to have done, and there is health in it, it should now refuse to accept this Motion. All the Government need say is that this Motion is otiose, but I cannot understand why it should oppose or be unable to accept the Motion. I am not a student of logic; I am not an expert in dialectics, and perhaps I can get some assistance from the Government if the rules of procedure permit, because under the Standing Orders a Government Minister can speak after the mover of a Motion has replied if the Motion is critical of the Government. Perhaps the Government can enlighten the House if it wishes to take advantage of that rule but I commend the Motion to my colleagues on this side of the House.

Unemployment in British Guiana: 28th February, 1964

"Be it resolved that the Government take immediate measures to remedy the unemployment situation."

Mr. Burnham: It seems as though the Hon. Member for Ruimveldt is the hardest worked Member of this House, but I suppose that penalty one must pay for putting on the Order Paper Motions of national interest and immediate importance. The Motion which I seek to commend deals with the question of unemployment. It may be recalled that in 1956 there was in this country an expert from the I.L.O., Mr. McGale, who after an investigation reported on the figures of unemployment and under-employment in this country and, if I remember correctly, when his report was submitted in 1957 the then Minister of Labour, Mrs. Jagan, expressed a great deal of solicitude for the unemployed and, indeed, in a radio broadcast undertook on behalf of her Government to see what could be done to remedy the situation. Unfortunately, instead of being remedied, the situation has grown worse.

The statistics of Mr. McGale were to the effect that there was approximately 17 percent unemployment in this country in 1956. There has been made a statement to the effect that unemployment has increased in terms of absolute numbers and also in terms of percentage of the labour force and there has been no attempt at rebuttal by the Government. There are many who, having studied the statistics and trends and having analysed the 1960 census, have come to the conclusion that unemployment at the moment should be approximately at a minimum of about 20 percent of the labour force. And what, in the circumstances, have we found Government doing about it? There has been a certain number of tears shed but tears have not yet been made by the scientists into a medium or currency of purchasing bread or providing shelter for the unemployed.

We find that a strange thing has happened since 1957, and before the perennial excuses are offered, let me say that this happened before 1962, that is that since 1959 and 1960 this Government has embarked upon a policy of retrenchment amongst Government employees. The situation has grown worse and we find that in 1962 and 1963 in the Public Works Department, where some of the unemployment used to be taken up, there has been a reduction of the number of workdays available per week. There has been the system of offering employment to normal permanent employees for only 4 out of 5½ working days and paying them for the 4 working days only. In addition, retrenchment has continued and has reached a higher level than that which it had reached in 1959 and 1960.

If I know this Government – and I believe I do – we will hear from them that unemployment in this country has increased as a result of what they would call – and I would put it in quotes – “*the disturbances of 1962 and 1963.*”

[**Mr. Wilson:** Full marks.]

Mr. Burnham: Apart from the fact that my examination papers have been marked by people of greater academic distinction than the Minister of Communications, I will not accept the intended compliment from the Minister, nor will I accept the tape-recorded answer which I anticipate will be given by the Government, because it is clear that prior to 1962, unemployment figures in absolute numbers and percentages had increased. Therefore even if unemployment increased during the years 1962 and 1963, that merely marked the further development of a trend which had become obvious in the years 1957 to 1961 when there were no disturbances and when there was relative peace and quiet in the country.

It seems to me that difficulties in which this Government has found itself in – let us face the fact and forget for a moment 1962 and 1963 – may be divided into two parts. The first difficulty which is the less offensive to offer in this House, was that it had not worked out a policy up to the year 1962, by means of which the unemployment situation would be improved. The second difficulty in which it found itself was that it so conducted its affairs and itself, that it had failed to be able to get the necessary investment – whether it be from private sources or public sources – which would have taken up some of the slack of unemployment.

It has been estimated by experts, whose advice this Government has had, that by 1970 to 1975, if there is a sufficient injection of investment of about \$500 million, there is likely to be full employment in this country. Therefore it seems to me that a Government's responsibility in this context is not merely to work out the theoretical policy for the relief of unemployment, but also to conduct itself and its affairs as to be able to get the necessary investment, local and foreign, private and public, to reduce unemployment and to give jobs to all those who leave schools from time to time. It therefore seems to me that the Government, instead of indulging in a number of excuses, instead of indulging in rabid criticism of the Opposition, ought to bring before this House a White Paper and initiate a debate on such White Paper on the question of unemployment and outline what the Government proposes to do and has done.

Unemployment is a national question. It is not, to my mind, a political or partisan question and I am sure this is one point on which the Government ought to have consulted the Opposition, cooperated with the Opposition, offered suggestions and accepted suggestions, so that together we can work as a team towards solving the grave problem of unemployment.

That can be done while each Political Party maintains and retains its individuality in the circumstances of this country. This is not calling for a national Government; this is not calling for a coalition; this is not calling for – what is popular to some of the Members on the other side – a one-Party state. This is a crisis in this country and this is a calamity which affects not one part of the country, but the entire country. It is true that though the population of Georgetown is not one-third of the country, Georgetown is responsible for 35 percent of the unemployed. It is true that the problem is more acute in Georgetown, but however acute it may be in Georgetown, it is still acute in other parts of the country even in the rural areas where the emphasis is on under-employment rather than on unemployment.

I am really surprised that the Government has taken no positive steps and has been content to make a number of academic analyses as to what is happening to colonial countries. I am rather surprised that the Government should be the modern Neroes of our time fiddling and indulging in irrelevancies and inconsistencies, while the country really burns, so to speak, with the fire of unemployment. I am hoping that the particular Minister, within whose portfolio falls the question of labour, will adumbrate for us this afternoon, what the Government has done, proposes to do and what the Government envisages as the net result of its actions within, say, a given period of three, four, five, or even ten years.

Reflecting upon this Motion, I cannot see how the Government can reject it because I am sure that any Government, conscious of the obligations it owes to the country that it governs, and to the people of the country who are its special wards, cannot reject the proposal that asks that immediate measures be taken to remedy the unemployment situation.

Let me give a bit of advice to the Hon. Minister before he rises to reply. We do not want to be regaled here as to the causes of unemployment. We do not want to be told whether the PNC or the UF has been responsible for unemployment. We do not want to be told whether the strikes of 1962 and 1963, rechristened disturbances by the Government, have increased unemployment. That is a matter of diagnosis. We all know what is the ailment and the disease; we all understand the nature of this cancerous growth. What we want is a prescription, and that is what I expect to hear from the Hon. Minister when he rises. I do not want a diagnostician; I want a prescription, and I want to hear what drugs have been proposed to cure this long-standing disease.

[An Hon. Member (Government): Independence.]

Mr. Burnham: In anticipation of the usual puerility that independence automatically remedies all ills, let me explain that independence offers an opportunity to remedy certain ills, but *per se* is no panacea. Those who, for

instance, believed Mr. Jacobs that we were bankrupt and begging for money, and subsequently found that we were not bankrupt, still have certain things to learn. If we were to get independence tomorrow, there would still be the question of implementing a policy on employment. One does plan the building of a house before one starts to build it. Now that we are on the threshold of independence, this is the time to demonstrate this policy under which we hope to decrease unemployment. With absolutely no acrimony or partisan criticism, I will commend this Motion to the Hon. Members of this House in the hope that their disposition will be to pass it unanimously.

Unemployment in British Guiana: 4th March, 1964

Mr. Burnham (Replying): There is one important point I wish to make very quickly, and I am sorry the Hon. Member for Essequibo Islands, Mr. Bhagwan, is leaving the Chamber, because he made a statement today which is typical of the PPP, and which arises either from ignorance or dishonesty. For instance, he said that this Government, as a result of its efforts, has been able to reduce unemployment from 18 to 11.3 percent. What effrontery! The 1957 Report by McGale defined an unemployed person as one who was without a job while capable and available for work but could not get work during the survey week. But the 1960 census defined an unemployed person as one who had not worked during the previous 12 months, so that if he worked one day he was not unemployed. Fancy a responsible legislator who is supposed to read these reports saying that this Government has reduced unemployment from 18 to 11.3 percent when the term unemployment has two different meanings according to the McGale Report and the 1960 census, and then he giggles! If his statement were true we would have seen it broadcast in the newspapers and the Government would have written letters to Fenner Brockway and Douglas Home. Is that responsibility in a Government?

Now that we have dealt with that bit of ignorance or dishonesty we can proceed to deal with some of the other points made in answer to the Motion. The Minister of Labour, Mr. Chandisingh, was less adventurous than the Hon. Member for the Essequibo Islands, and attempted to tell this House that as a result of the land development schemes furthered by this Government there has been a great deal of employment offered to the people in this country. But surely the Minister must be in possession of the Report published by Messrs. Dhar and Best. We will not worry with Gyanchand because he was not an economist but an amateur statistician. I am talking about two obviously qualified persons whose expert status was accepted by the United Nations. The Minister of Labour must have had at his disposal the Report of Dhar and Best because the Premier told me in September last that he had that Report at his disposal. I have not had an opportunity of seeing that Report because I am not a Member of the Government, but I certainly had an opportunity to discuss the question with both Dhar and Best who stated in their Report that the Land Development schemes did not keep pace with the number of persons seeking job opportunities annually, which is calculated at something like 34,000.

It does not seem realistic in the circumstances to boast about that. Maybe the Government should be congratulated upon placing people on land at a cost of over \$15,000 per person. Maybe it could be congratulated upon little things here and there, but certainly Members of the

Government must face the fact that since this Government has been in office it has reduced the normal working time of many of the unclassified persons in the Public Works Department from six to four days per week.

As I said when I was opening this debate, I am not interested in an academic dissertation as to the causes of the ills with respect to our economic structure. That was for those who sit on that side of the Table to do at home, and then their next duty was to come here and say that in that context: "*This is what we plan to do now, next year or the next year.*"

This Government seems to operate from two premises with respect to unemployment — in fact, with respect to most things. Now the first premise from which it operates is that you can do nothing until independence comes, though, of course, the Hon. Minister of Labour, a more sensitive — I would not say sensible — politician, attempts to say that something has been done. The other premise from which they start their argument is that whatever they do, or whatever they can do, would always be thwarted by the Opposition.

Let us accept both premises or theses. If it is true that nothing can be done until independence comes, then I would expect this Government, the intelligent group which it claims to be, to sit down and work out what they can do immediately on the advent of independence. Of course, I really do not accept their thesis because it has been shown in places like Trinidad and Jamaica, that Governments have been able to reduce unemployment before the accession of the respective territories to independence.

In the case of British Guiana, however, under the regime of the People's Progressive Party, unemployment has increased. It has not even remained static. It has increased in spite of the ignorance we heard here about a reduction from 18 percent to 11.3 percent. I could not imagine how the Hon. Member expected to get away with that in this House with the People's National Congress here. Those figures are there for those who are literate to read and I can sympathise with those who do not know the figures because I never criticise illiteracy, I always commiserate with the illiterate.

The second thesis with which I disagree is that whatever is done by the Government is thwarted by the Opposition. I have had reason to analyse this attitude before. I will be accused of being repetitious but apparently sometimes one has to deal with adults who are like the dunderheads you find in the elementary schools at the lowest stage.

If the Government comes here and says: "*We cannot do anything because the Opposition thwarts us,*" it is an admission of one of two things or both of two things. Either Government has a very poor system of public relations and is out of touch with the rest of the country and cannot persuade the country to support any point of view that is good, and/or the Opposition is stronger than the Government. On either proposition, the Government is not entitled to govern. It has disqualified itself either because of its inability to sell its point of view to the country, or because of its innate

weakness which makes it a weaker force, politically and administratively, than the Opposition.

But what are the things which Government claims it has been thwarted on? The 1962 Budget? The 1962 Budget, we are told, attempted to harness internal resources, and perhaps if they had read Professor Lewis a little before coming here, they would have said: "*to increase capital accumulation*" Now I give them that phrase. How far did they go? In the first place, they were attempting to harness internal resources by placing heavy import duties on commodities that were widely used. Therefore they were placing heavy duties on the working-class in spite of the fact that the People's National Congress had brought it to their attention over the years, that they should have changed the emphasis and incidence of taxation.

[**Mr. Bowman:** Peter force your hand; confess it.]

Mr. Burnham: Now there were a few property taxes which, when one looks at them, even on the Government's own calculation, could not yield any great capital accumulation and the Government knows that quite clearly. In any case, the only Party that could have balked them had no quarrel with the incidence of the property taxes provided they were utilised for the purpose for which they were levied not like the Development Budget money which was borrowed for Recurrent Expenditure and never paid back. The Government's attempt at accumulating capital by means of budgetary provisions was a weak one, and even if it had been successful, it would not have raised enough money to even keep pace with the amount of unemployment in this country.

We are entertained with long lectures about how the head of 'Bank' exports the profits, about what Bookers does, and about what DEMBA does. Excellent. I hold no brief for any of these. In fact, I have never been the recipient of hospitality from the head of Bookers which hospitality is the normal course of things for Member of the Government when in England. It makes no sense merely to come here and tell us what these firms have done. We would have liked to hear proposals by the Government and if their thesis that independence is necessary before these things can be done, let us then...

[**Mr. Benn:** We never said that.]

Mr. Burnham: ...hear from them: "*This is what we will do when independence comes.*" I am not a representative of Government, I am not a pedagogue to the uninformed and infants who now adorn governmental seats. When my Party and I sit in those seats we will do and tell you. Until then we shall play no pedagogue to these infants!

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, we have come through the whole of this debate with Government showing confusion. The Hon. Minister attempts

to say that they have done certain things. But he cannot deny that at the rate things are going, the unemployment figures in 1965 are expected on the McGale estimate to be – let me be very accurate, I am quoting from page 53 of the McGale Report:

“The unemployment figure at the rate at which the number of job facilities is receding, is expected to be something between 80,000 and 91,000 by 1966.”

According to the advice which this Government has, the unemployment figures for 1964 will be 42,400. That is from their own advisers that we taxpayers had to pay for and that is the situation in the midst of which we are going to be entertained by all sorts of pleasantries and excursions into fields academic.

Let us hear, for goodness sake, what is being done. I put forward the proposition that one of the things that would be necessary would be to increase investment in this country. Very well. They know that they have reports to the effect that to reduce employment by 1965 by half, an investment of \$418 million would be necessary. That was the rough calculation. Why have they not been able to tell us what they have done in that field or what they will do so far as that question is concerned? We hear vaguely that this Government has not prevented investment in this country.

You do not discourage investment by going and saying *“We do not want.”* My mother always told me when I sat upon her knee – God bless her soul - that there are many ways of killing a cat apart from drowning it. It is my contention and the majority of the people in this country will agree with me, whether the Government like it or not, that by the Government’s mismanagement, by its incompetence, and by its adventuresome attempt to make itself the advocate or the defence counsel of Moscow and her satellites, it has...

[**Mr. Benn:** made a *sotto voce* remark.]

Mr. Burnham: I should like to inform the Hon. Member that my re-employment potential is good. Mrs. Jagan never said that I would have to vote the way she wanted because I could not get another job. I do not owe the British Guiana Credit Corporation. It is for people like the Hon. Member, with no re-employment potential, to talk foolishness. Mr. Speaker, I apologise to you and to the House for sinking to the level where I had to reply to those who live in the gutter.

It is my contention, and the facts are irrefutable, that this Government has dissuaded investment in this country. It is interesting to note, and I think everybody knows, that persons who voted for the PPP have been the largest exporters of savings from this country. If the people who support the PPP have no confidence in the Government, what must one expect?

Even assuming that the Government has the best intentions, one must stop and ask why is this happening. Even if I give the Government full marks for its intention, I must criticise it for putting its supporters in a position where they are exporting their savings. Look and see who have been arrested for carrying money out of this country! Look and see whose bank accounts have suddenly been reduced and who are buying foreign currency! There is one member of the PPP who, I know personally, exports his capital. He is very close to the Party, and he does important work for it. Is it not time for this Government to stop and think? If the Government's own supporters do not want to support it, how then can it hope to encourage investment from abroad?

It is usual for the members of this PPP Government to tell us of the financial and other assistance they can get from Eastern Europe. I have given them my undertaking that, if they can bring to this country and to this House proposals which will benefit this country, they can have my absolute support. Unemployment in Georgetown is more than one-third of its population. In 1956, 37.5 percent of the people in Georgetown were unemployed. The most recent estimate of unemployed persons seems to indicate that the percentage has risen even higher. It is known that I will not object to any proposal put forward by the Government which would alleviate the unemployment position. I think it is agreed on both sides of the House that, if the Government is able to get certain capital assistance, it will be able to reduce unemployment in some measure.

What is surprising, however, in this debate from the Government side, is that we have not heard one proposal as to the rationalising of our agricultural resources! We have been told of the disadvantages of our economy being dependent upon export crops, and that sugar is given priority; but this Government has not been able, in this debate, to say how it proposes to use or diversify our agriculture so that we may be able to supply, or make an attempt to supply, the country with food and in that exercise cause more people to be employed. This can be an alternative to our dependence on rice and sugar.

The diversification of agriculture will not only provide more employment, but savings which can be utilised for setting up other industries.

I have given the Members of the Government one point, but I do not propose to educate them any further. I will educate them further after the October Elections. The most regrettable thing, in the context of this debate, is that we were entertained as to the weakness of the trade union that operates at the waterfront. An Hon. Member said that the waterfront workers are not properly represented. Let us assume that the majority of the waterfront workers do not think so, why did they not return Mr. Ashton Chase for a second term. Let us assume that the British Guiana Labour Union is not doing its duty on behalf of the waterfront workers, what has that got to do with the Government's plans for the relief of unemployment? I am reminded so much of the little boy in the class who

was telling the teacher which children were looking into the book without realising that he, too, was looking into the book.

Imagine these naïve mouthings coming from Members of the Government, who boast that they will never be pushed, who have a high regard for the British sense of justice and fairplay. These people who abuse the 'Limeys', and then vote \$70,000 for the upkeep of British troops! These Members are going to indulge in this sort of attitude when a serious question such as unemployment is raised, and they are talking about what unions are doing! Assuming that these unions are selling out the workers and are ineffective; even assuming dishonesty on the part of trade union leaders in this country, the Government cannot escape its duty by pointing to the weakness in other fields.

I am not prepared to enter into an argument as to whether what is said about the waterfront workers is true or not now. My contention is that the workers cannot be fooled. They would not have voted for L.F.S. Burnham and caused Ashton Chase to lose his deposit, if they thought that Aston Chase would have given them better representation, would they have voted for Burnham?

The trouble about democracy in the B.G. Labour Union, if I am to accept the remark of the Hon. Member for Essequibo Islands, is the same trouble in the country. If democracy causes ignorance to triumph in the B.G. Labour Union, it causes ignorance to triumph in the Government.

I know that I am causing them some discomfiture and I remember that Jesus said: "*Do good to them that hate you; pray for them that despise you*" and "*Love your enemies*". I shall not, therefore, cause any further discomfiture except to express my general disappointment in the Government and its inability to show what it has done actively and what it will do to reduce unemployment and to provide full employment within the foreseeable future.

I cannot support the Amendment moved by the Hon. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing, which is just an attempt by the Government to whitewash itself and to fool the public. His argument was based on an assumption, which I showed to be false, that unemployment was reduced from 18 percent to 11.3 percent. I would like to hear the Hon. Member for the Essequibo Islands asking your Honour to be allowed to explain that. I would be prepared, subject to your ruling, to yield the Floor to him, but he cannot explain that, Sir. "*Tom drunk, but Tom aint stupid*", therefore I insist that if the Government wishes to indulge in self-praise, if it wishes to indulge in whitewashing its incompetence, it may do so while yet it has the numbers, or where Mann went another may go.

Motion on the Revocation of Governor's (R.E. Luyt) Appointment: 4th March, 1964

Mr. Burnham: Politics permits a certain amount of gallery play. Politics sometimes premises a difference between what one does and what one says, and for the PPP, through one of its spokesmen, to propose a Motion like this is for the People's Progressive Party to play politics according to the definition I have just given. In 1961 when the General Elections were being contested the only Political Party which included in its manifesto and its campaign the proposition that the next Head of State should be a Guianese was the People's National Congress. There is no doubt about the fact that the People's National Congress feels that the Public Service of Guiana, in so far as there are competent and qualified Guianese to fill the respective posts, should be entirely Guianese.

But really it does not lie in the mouth of the People's Progressive Party to bring forward a Motion like this. It is not for me to mention Mr. Jack Kelshall, for this appointment has been dealt with by the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central, Mr. d'Aguiar. It is not for me to note that that importee was brought here and paid out of public funds more than the leader of the Bar, the Hon. the Attorney-General. It is not of any particular importance to deal with one who is preparing to meet his Maker. It is for me to remind this House of the fact that in March, 1962 this Government was guilty of a lapse of memory, a blank, a forgetfulness, when I pointed out that on Wednesday, the 14th of March, 1962, at a meeting of the Council of Ministers, at which the Attorney-General was present, it had been decided to bring in an expatriate Commissioner of Police and two Senior expatriate Police Officers. The Attorney-General, who must have been consulted when that decision was made in the Council of Ministers, rose on the floor of this House and said he knew nothing about it.

And why were those expatriate officers brought here? The reason for their appointment is not far to seek. This Government, though it would in other places mouth nationalist sentiments, basically is only prepared to support the appointment of any individual to high office if it is convinced that that individual is emotionally, psychologically and politically committed to its Party. Competence is no criterion, or Kelshall would never have been brought, nor McGill Smith. The Attorney-General, the leader of my profession, was consulted when his colleagues made the decision in the Council of Ministers to bring in three expatriate Police Officers, because the Guianese officers in line for those appointments were not known activists of the People's Progressive Party like a certain Assistant Superintendent of Police. Is this the Government to talk about Guianisation when unemployment has reached 20 percent, when day after day our young women walk from office to office asking for employment as steno-typists, with certificates in their hands and recommendations, and

one Miss Mulzac, because she is the daughter of a communist in New York, is given a job as steno-typist at the Rice Marketing Board by the person who is now Minister of Home Affairs?

Mr. Speaker, I was, when the suspension intervened, referring to a few incidents which are difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile with this talk about Guianisation on the part of the Party which the Hon. the mover of this Motion belongs, and I had shown that even in the context of unemployment at a lowly manipulative level, the principle of Guianisation had been honoured in the breach by this Party on the direct intervention of a person who, at that time, was not a Minister of the Government but is now a Minister of Government, in the appointment of a steno-typist, one Miss Mulzac of America, at the Rice Marketing Board. Can you imagine that a young woman should come here to get married - yes. That is one respect in which we have to dishonour the principle of Guianisation - from the United States of America with its flourishing economy, and he gives her a job at the Rice Marketing Board as a steno-typist when a Guianese wants a job.

We would like to know. This is not a question of poverty, because Miss Mulzac is not a poor woman.

[Mr. Bhagwn: made a *sotto voce* remark.]

Mr. Burnham: The Hon. Member will have an opportunity to reply, and he will be able to explain how such an appointment squares with his high-sounding protestations in this House.

Can we be told what is happening, say, at the Electricity Corporation? I remember that when the Hon. Premier returned to this country, after he had negotiated the consortium as a result of which the Electric Company was taken over by the Government, he told us that a part of the Agreement, although not embodied in legal terms, was, at least, understood between gentlemen; that the first Manager would be an expatriate, and he would train a local person for the assumption of the office of Manager. The Hon. Member, who is laughing, was not in this House at the time, and he would not know about this matter. Now that the Manager, a United Nations expert, is leaving, we hear an announcement that another expatriate is being appointed as the manager of the Electricity Corporation! I suppose there will be some explanation for this.

We would like to know certain things in this House. When Mr. McConnell, who disappeared like magic from the scene of Guiana, was appointed, was there no Guianese to fill the post? There was a Guianese on the staff with the necessary qualifications. I hear a giggle, but I have never robbed a bankroll. We want to ask further, what is this talk about Guianisation? I will not be questioned by the lesser breed. This PPP Government invited the British troops here. Furthermore, every year it has voted against the Motion by the PNC for the removal of the vote for the

British troops. Yet, the Members of this Government say that they favour Guianisation. When the Hon. Premier went to London and said over BBC TV: "*We love the British troops; let them remain.*", did he forget Guianisation? When he appointed Mr. Griffiths as the Constitutional Adviser to his delegation when he had with him the Hon. Attorney-General, Dr. Ramsahoye, PhD., did he forget Guianisation? The Hon. Attorney-General is the first Guianese to take a doctorate in law, and was described by his good friend, now absent, Laurence Mann, as the greatest constitutional expert in the Caribbean, with which opinion, with the greatest humility and respect, I concur. In these circumstances –

[**Mr. Speaker:** We have reached a consensus, at least, on one point.]

Mr. Burnham: Guianisation is not merely a question of passing a Motion and uttering high-sounding sentiments. It is a question of a frame of mind, or an attitude, or an approach. In October, 1962, when the leader of the People's National Congress – some people, apparently, went to school and they know that October comes after February – went to the Independence Conference, he said at the first Session: "*Let the three Guianese Delegations meet, and see whether they can work out an agreement on the question of the Public Service Commission.*" But the Hon. Premier said to Mr. Nigel Fisher, Her Majesty's Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies: "*No, sir, we prefer you to be the Chairman.*" It is all right to come and delude the people in British Guiana by telling them that you are freedom-fighters, losing pigeons and calling them doves. Let the people understand that the Hon. Premier told Her Majesty's Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies: "*No, sir, we prefer you to be the Chairman.*" Look at his mentality! He is the Hon. Premier of a country fighting for its independence, and he says: "*No, sir, we prefer you to be the Chairman.*"

When the PNC, throughout the years 1962 and 1963, sought to have an agreement reached between Guianese, the PPP was not interested in reaching an agreement. On Monday, 20th October, 1963, when the leader of the PNC telephoned the Hon. Premier and leader of the PPP to suggest to him that the afternoon Session of the Conference be postponed indefinitely, while the Guianese Delegations met to seek some *medio tutissimus*, what did the Hon. Premier say? He said: "*I prefer to sit along with Sandys; let Sandys carry on.*" That is the attitude of a colonial who calls himself a freedom-fighter. Freedom-fighter that he is, he shouts about his great belief in British justice and fairplay; he loves the British troops; he prefers expatriates; he prefers to sit under the Chairmanship of the under-Secretary of State rather than to sit with Guianese and endeavour to solve important problems. That attitude cannot mesh, or square with this motion under discussion.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** The Yankee dollar.]

Mr. Burnham: The Yankee dollar has greater currency than the Russian ruble.

We hear that British Guiana has been making plan after plan, but if anybody wishes to know something about this country – *“Jackass says blab, blab, but he don’t hear his own story.”*

The Government Members know that the British Government is making blunder after blunder but it is so purblind – I want to be nice so I shall not say ‘ignorant’ -

[**Mr. Speaker:** It is more euphemistic.]

Mr. Burnham: I prefer the euphemism. It is so purblind that it cannot see the blunders that they themselves have been making. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture, Forests and Lands, the representative of the People’s Progressive Party, appeared before the United Nations last year and admitted that the People’s Progressive Party was seeking to have the British impose something, though he tried to doctor it by saying they proposed a time-honoured system. That is all nonsense. New nations do not have time-honoured systems. You take the system that is suitable to your country, or that you think suitable. You do not seek refuge in the fact that something you propose is part of a time-honoured British tradition.

This same Party, whose representative now moves this Motion was wont to defend its stand on the electoral system by reference to what Mr. Iain Macleod, the former Secretary of State of the Colonies, said about proportional representation. It seems to me that there is little or no sincerity in this. This is mere window-dressing and gallery play. Further, I ask this: In the circumstances of Guiana today, how could the People’s Progressive Party arrogate to itself the right to speak on behalf of the Guianese people? It would be better to ask Dr. Makonen of the Ghana Mission to speak on behalf –

As I was saying, how can they arrogate to themselves the right, in the circumstances of this country, to speak for the Guianese people, and say that if the Government is not consulted the people will be disappointed and disillusioned?

If the People’s Progressive Party at last wants to change its habits, at last wants to get rid of the expatriates – I am reminded of a little incident which took place when the Hon. Minister of Home Affairs called in the expatriate commissioned officer, the head of the Security Branch, and told him, *“Mr. Martian, I call you because I can trust none of the local officers. There is a PNC man in Ruimveldt who has just buried ammunition in his yard.”* The expatriate, Mr. Martian, went looking for the buried ammunition and found a dead dog! When the People’s Progressive Party is prepared to remove these expatriates, whose posts can be filled by Guianese, when it ceases to bring expatriates for one of two reasons or sometimes for both reasons, the reasons being that it does not want those particular Guianese

who are fitted for the posts, because they are not activists, or because the expatriates who are brought in are politically sound and ideologically safe – witness the University of Guyana where some of the staff are now getting sick – when the PPP clears the Aegean stables, which they has erected and which they has besmirched, then it can talk about Guianisation.

As it stands at the moment, the only Political Party that can speak clearly and unequivocally about Guianisation is the People's National Congress. We are prepared to consider a Motion worded otherwise, but this, as it stands, stinks. It stinks with insincerity and it stinks with presumption and impudence in that the People's Progressive Party, which is falling to bits like a row of pins, talks about speaking for the country. At one time only Beharry had left, now Mann has left and another one is leaving. If the People's Progressive Party wants the voice of the people of Guiana to be expressed on this question, if consultation is to be not with a rump, but with the representatives of the people, it will gain audience.

Approval of Financial Paper No. 1 of 1964: 14th May, 1964

"Be it resolved that this House approves the proposals set out in Financial Paper No. 1/1964 – Schedule of Additional Provision on the Recurrent Estimates for January to April, 1964, totalling \$199,812.00"

Mr. Burnham: May I inquire from the Hon. Minister of Finance what relationship there is between the Home Office and the Department of External Affairs? I thought the Home Office was an internal Department. The legend says: *"To provide for the creation with effect from 1st January, 1964, of an additional pensionable post of Clerical Assistant on the salary scale A34: \$1,152 - \$1,872 per annum, for the Home Office."* What is the 'Home Office'?

You mean the office at home. I am very concerned about this External Affairs Ministry and its personnel in London. There is an officer in London who, the Hon. Minister of Finance knows, was Trust Officer here, who sold out all of his furniture and was merely seconded. His leave was finished since September last and there is still a vacancy for Trust Officer. Where are we going to get with this? His substantive post as Trust Officer is still vacant. He sold out everything he owned in B.G. and left for the United Kingdom on leave. His leave was completed since September 1963 and he is not back home. I ask the Hon. Minister of Finance not to be misadvised by his advisers. If they tell him anything to the contrary it is absolutely untrue.

But the officers there – Sit down, I am on my feet!

The officers there must know that this man sold out everything and this officer has no intention of returning. In law when you want to prove change of domicile, one only has to draw attention to the fact that a person has sold out all of his holdings.

May I ask the Hon. Minister how long will this secondment last?

May I, therefore, ask the Hon. Minister of Finance two questions: One, whether there is not available an officer to hold the substantive post and secondly, in the meantime, does he appreciate that an important office like the Crown Solicitor's office is suffering from the vacancy created by the long absence of a senior officer?

There is another question: Is there no officer available to hold the substantive post in London?

What arrangements is the Government making to have an officer fill this substantive post?

The Hon. Minister of Finance could have said so long ago. I know that Phillips ought to be recalled. I sympathise with the Minister and accept his last answer.

Is there in existence in British Guiana a Court of Appeal? If not, how soon is it proposed to institute such a Court?

I can quite understand the attitude of the Government as expressed by the Hon. Attorney-General. If, in his view as the leader of our bar, this Government is competent to pass the necessary legislation, no acerbities as to meagreness on the part of Her Majesty's Government, should preclude this Government from using such constitutional power as it is advised by the Attorney-General.

This is playing hide and seek. If the Hon. Attorney-General, whom I have to look to as the leader of my profession, feels that the Government is competent, then let us have the legislation – meagreness has never been a good excuse.

Since I know that my Hon. and learned friend will rise to his feet and answer, I should like to pose another question: Why is there provision only for the British Guiana Court of Appeal, so far as books are concerned, and no provision for the Supreme Court which, of course, is the Court of first instance? I have seen Judges, in spite of alleged requests by them, resorting to textbooks which were about two editions out. Certainly, I think, the Judges are entitled to more up-to-date textbooks. I have been told, publicly and officially, in the Courts by the Judges that there has been the plea of unavailability of funds. It seems to me that that is hardly good enough, and proper steps should be taken to supply textbooks to the Judges in the Courts of first instance as well.

Am I to assume that the Hon. Attorney-General agrees with my conclusions and strictures with respect to the competence of this Government to pass legislation for a Court of Appeal?

The Miscellaneous Enactment Bill was reserved because the Governor felt that it encroached on the domain of defence. I can find nothing in the Constitution which suggests that the establishment of this Court by legislation would, possibly, be an encroachment on the powers reserved by the Governor. Let him reserve it, if he wishes. That is the type of talk that we get from these so-called 'nationalists'. They will not make an issue with the Governor over something they feel they have the power to do. They let some little boy in the Colonial Office tell them that the legislation would be weak. We have an Hon. Attorney-General, who is a Doctor of Philosophy and an outstanding member of the legal profession, and he is going to worry about what some little boy in the musty rooms of the Colonial Office tells him about meagreness or weakness of legislation. This is something that will have the support of the PNC.

May I find out what is being done to compensate the residents and farmers of Buxton for the damage done to their crops and their losses as a result of the breach of the sea defences?

What steps is the Government taking for the relief or compensation of the residents and farmers of Buxton who have suffered loss and damage to their crops, as a result of the recent breach of the sea defences?

I am grateful to hear that the Hon. Minister has taken that interest to inquire as to the extent of damage. I do not want to break a lance with him

as to the terms of the English Language. I went to that area on Good Friday; the Hon. Minister was there, and certain sections of the sea defences were obviously broken. If there is some distinction between 'breakage' and 'breach', I am not going to quarrel about it.

May I inquire of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs as to what is the significance of this provision? Do I understand there is to be an additional Assistant Superintendent for the Mounted Branch of the Police Force? Already the Head of the Mounted Branch is an Assistant Superintendent and has been so prior to the 1st January, 1964.

May I inquire of the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs as to what was the rank of Messrs. Frisby and Billyeald when they were in charge, exclusively, of the Mounted Branch?

The Hon. the Parliamentary Secretary misses my point. I merely asked him what was the rank of these two expatriates who, as I know and as everybody knows, were on their appointment in charge of the troops and that exclusive of any other duty. What was their rank? That is all I am asking. I am not asking for a long diatribe on something with which the Parliamentary Secretary is not acquainted. What was the rank of Billyeald when his only duty was in respect of the troops? What was the rank of Frisby when his only duty was with respect to the troops?

If the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary does not know, let him say so. I am not asking what was Billyeald's rank when Billyeald was in the C.I.D. as a Senior Superintendent. I am asking what was Billyeald's rank when his only duty was in this Branch and *mutatis mutandis* I am asking the same question with respect to Frisby.

I should like to take this opportunity to inquire from the Hon. the Parliamentary Secretary when Government proposes to appoint the Commission which this House agreed to several months ago to investigate conditions at the prisons?

Three months ago I received the same reply. Will the Parliamentary Secretary give an undertaking in days or weeks? I will not say months because the Government will not be in a position to appoint a Commission some months from now.

The legend states that five pensionable posts are to be created from the 1st April, 1964. As I look at **Head 32 – Town and Country Planning** – I see that the sum of \$75,896 was voted for Personal Emoluments and when I look at that Head I see that every cent of it is taken up by the post provided for here. I see that the only allocation here is \$1, which is a token allocation. From what vote are these five persons going to be paid? Because \$75,896 is already fully taken up by the post that appears under Head 32.

The person on pre-retirement leave does not come under Head 32, he comes under Housing Development – Planning Officer, Principal Administrative Officer, Chief Planning Officer. Let us see how many bodies are away. I cannot see how there can be savings when a man is on pre-retirement leave because first, he has to be paid on his leave; secondly, there will be an appointment to the post.

Do I understand from the Minister that when an officer goes on a six-month training course you do not have to pay him? Where is the saving?

[**Mr. Kendall:** It would cost more.]

Mr. Burnham: I do not understand this Government. It knows when an officer is going on pre-retirement leave. He goes on six months' pre-retirement leave and no attempt is made or arrangements for the filling of the post until the officer's pre-retirement leave comes to an end. In other words, they are deliberately keeping a vacancy open to execute these savings, and then we are told by the Minister of Finance that we are solvent: In other words, we are solvent at the expense of failing to do our duty.

It is right to me, at least. I should like to find out from the Hon. Minister who undertook to answer here – I did not know that he was the spokesman for Trade and Industry – what was the revenue intake for this item, and how much revenue was paid into the Treasury?

This Hon. Minister also assured me that Groupo Del Conte would carry out the contract properly! I should like to see the figures. If the Hon. Minister wants time to get the figures this evening, then I would ask my Hon. Colleagues to permit him that indulgence.

Today we were given copies of the 1964 Estimates and they refer to 1962 and 1963. The figures can be found in the Estimates, and the Hon. Minister should know his work. He is now speaking for the Minister of Trade and Industry. Can he tell us on what page we can find the information sought?

I note there is a legend under this item to the effect that these proceedings were defended as proceedings against the Crown. I should like the Hon. the Attorney-General to explain what he meant when he caused, or permitted, this to be written. I should like him to remember that when I ask him that question I ask him as a lawyer.

I ask the Attorney-General as a lawyer if he can give me a precedent of Government paying costs and damages in a libel suit, a suit against a civil servant.

Two rich men are engaged in litigation, d'Aguiar and Jagan, and the poor taxpayers –

As I was saying, Sir, two rich men, Messrs. d'Aguiar and Jagan, are involved in litigation, and we poor taxpayers are being asked to satisfy the judgment given against the loser. The Hon. the Attorney-General does not speak here as a mere politician for, unlike Dr. the Hon. C.R. Jacob, he was made Attorney-General *qua* barrister. How can a barrister in this world or the next suggest that a man committing libel is acting in the execution of his duties as a servant of the Crown? If a servant of the Crown who is employed as a driver of a motor vehicle knocks somebody down it can be held to be in the execution of his duty. But Dr. Jagan was not employed to abuse people. He was employed to administer this country; not to say whether d'Aguiar stole money or not.

[Mr. Ram Karran: He stole secrets.]

Mr. Burnham: Some people use the immunity of this House to reveal secrets.

It seems to me that as a matter of law there is no justification for this at all, and a man of the Premier's known means and resources, a man who gets \$50 per day and spends \$10, should pay this judgment. I say that in law there is no justification for asking the taxpayers to pay this amount, because it was not in the course of the Premier's duty to lie or to broadcast people's private dealings. It would have been in the course of his duty if he had called upon the populace to continue with one type of action or to desist from taking certain action, but not to go into d'Aguiar's business. That sort of thing is for the gutter. Our Premier could not have been saying that in the course of his duty.

The Premier earns over \$1,200, per month and is always travelling. Is it suggested that he cannot pay \$4,200, and that we poor taxpayers in this pauperised country must be asked to pay for the Premier's libel? Where are we going? We, the working-class people must be pressed to pay for Dr. Jagan's big mouth? What is the counsel's fee? Who was the counsel for Dr. Jagan in this matter, and what was his brief fee? Who was the solicitor, and what was his retainer? What happened to the costs which it is claimed were awarded against D'Aguiar Bros? Who got those costs? The legend states that costs awarded against D'Aguiar Bros. amounted to \$2,705. Where are those costs?

I want to find this out. This is a matter of law. When counsel's brief fee is put on a bill to be taxed, there has to be counsel's initial. Did the Hon. Attorney-General initial his brief fee on the bill as between D'Aguiar Bros. Ltd. And Dr. Jagan? Did he initial it? He cannot get it unless he initialled it.

He has to initial! You will find that in *Butterworth's Costs*. In *Butterworth's Costs* my junior Ramsahoye would find what I have stated is the law. But what has happened to the brief fee that was marked on the Tax Bill? I know when you are taking money. I would not ask what happened to the fat brief fee in the Credit Corporation case.

That is why I would not ask him.

I want to know whether the Hon. Attorney-General accepts this proposition: that the Crown is supposed to defend and give indemnity for the acts of its servants in situations where a principal would be liable for the acts of his agents.

The first thing I learnt in law is that the Crown can do no wrong, whether the learned Attorney-General accepts the proposition that the Crown will indemnify and defend any cases where the doctrine of *respondent superior* applies. But in no case is a principal liable for libel of his buying agent. You never can be liable and this seems to be stretching the law. In the case of a private person the doctrine of *respondent superior* will apply but I cannot see how the agent Jagan – and even the Hon. Member for Suddie, Mr. Jagan,

would agree with me – could have been acting as agent for the Crown when he was delving into d’Aguiar’s private business to discover that his delving was unjustified and his premises were false. This Government ought to have the largeness and the dignity to say: “*Very well, we are not pursuing this, Dr. Jagan will pay the \$4,200.*”

The little *Mirror*, the New Guiana Company, a pauperized company, paid something like \$15,000 - \$4,000 plus \$5,000, plus \$6,000. Why cannot Jagan pay \$4,200? Why must we pay? It is true that the cheque for Jackson was issued by the PPP. Similarly, let the PPP pay for Jagan. If they can pay for New Guiana Company, let them pay for Jagan. Be dignified and say: “*After all this, we are not going to proceed.*” In the first place it is unlawful and illegal; there is no precedent for it at all.

I asked the Hon. Attorney-General if he can cite me a single precedent where the Crown paid libel damages for a servant of the Crown. He could not, and I am prepared to give him time off – in the same way that I gave the Hon. Minister of Works and Hydraulics time off to find out another question – to consult all the books to find a precedent. There is none. The PPP is making new law that you can abuse a man and turn to the taxpayers and say: “*You pay!*” It is absolutely disgraceful! Whatever is your standard of morals or your system of modes, there can be no justification.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** You’re talking about that?]

Mr. Burnham: Yes! Sir, I didn’t steal from Beharry.

Is it not the case that the Chief Clerk of the Cooperative Department is now the Chief Clerk at the Labour Department, and the Chief Clerk of the Labour Department is now in the Finance Department? What is the point in bringing this provision before the Legislature?

Then, so far as (b) is concerned, it will only be for 1963.

My information is that the Chief Clerk, Cooperative Department, can be appointed to fill the post in the Department to which he has been transferred because there is a vacancy there. The Chief Clerk from the Labour Department is going to the Finance Department where there is also a vacancy. Therefore the Chief Clerk from the Labour Department and the other officer can both be appointed and end matters.

We are paying \$4,200 for Dr. Jagan’s mouth, and \$100 to feed poor people!

With respect to (b) of **Item 29**, would this post of Lecturer for Civil Engineering not be properly an item for the University?

I am aware of that but will the Hon. Minister be kind enough to tell us what diplomas in Civil Engineering the Technical Institute trains people for or awards? Civil Engineering is in the technological field and is different from the technical field. I did not know that the Technical Institute was awarding any qualifications in Civil Engineering and that is

why I raised the question. I want to know what qualifications in Civil Engineering are given by the Technical Institute.

The point I am raising is: Why is there a lecturer in Civil Engineering? What my Hon. Friend referred to is not Civil Engineering. It is a technician's course which is not Civil Engineering.

I wonder whether the Hon. the Attorney-General would agree with the Hon. the ex-Acting Attorney-General. Since the Minister of Finance has acted as Attorney-General for a few days he is talking law. I wonder whether the substantive holder of the post would agree that at this moment the National Savings Levy is law in view of the fact that a competent Court has declared that it is now law.

When was this Pilot Scheme started and under what authority?

Do I understand that the Hon. Minister does not know when this Scheme was established and he does not know the authority under which it was established?

This is unsatisfactory. If the Hon. Minister wants time to give me an answer, we can give him time. They are seeking money to further this Scheme and to make arrangements for this Scheme. It is unsatisfactory not to be prepared – if not today, some time in the future – to tell us by whose authority was this started.

Identity Cards with Photographs for Voters: 14th May, 1964

“Be it resolved that this Assembly recommends that all voters be issued with identity cards which should include photographs to be provided at the expense of the Government.”

Mr. Burnham: I listened with care to the remarks of the Hon. the Attorney-General as he proposed the question. Were I unaware of the background to the whole matter, as I am, I would have been attracted by his reasoning and persuaded by his logic, but it seems to me, though the term hypocrisy is now banned in this House, that to put it in its mildest form, the Attorney-General, who was in London in October, 1962 and again in October, 1963, is unaware of the stand which he and his leader took on the question of photographs.

But let me not deal with the London Conferences first. Let me deal with a meeting held in July, 1962, at Government House Annexe, where there were present His Excellency Sir Ralph Grey, the Premier, Dr. Cheddi Bharrat Jagan, the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central, Mr. Peter Stanislaus d’Aguiar, and your humble servant, L.F.S. Burnham. The last named participant at that meeting proposed that there should be a system of identification for voters, and that the identification cards should carry photographs to identify the respective voters. Dr. Jagan said that such a process would be too expensive and would take too long a time to be worthy of consideration. It seems to me now that the arguments against which the Attorney-General cries out were the arguments advanced by his political leader.

Then, in October, 1962, against the proposal of the People’s National Congress and on the insistence of the People’s Progressive Party, the Conference which involved the constitutional destinies of this country was held in London. Let me pause to remark that the Premier, in reply to my request that we insist that the Conference be held here, said he was not prepared to depart from the tradition of travelling to London. There are Members of this House who were present when I raised the question of the use of photographs, and the Hon. the Premier seemed inclined to consider that was a possibility, his feet were kicked by the Attorney-General who said *sotto voce* “*That would be against us.*”

[**Dr. Ramsahoye:** That is a lie.]

Mr. Burnham: I say it without fear of contradiction. There are my colleagues here – the Hon. Member for La Penitence-Lodge, Mr. Merriman, and the Hon. Member for Campbellville, Mr. Bissember.

On the 22nd of March, 1963, I tabled a Motion to which the leader of my profession has been kind enough to refer. Three months passed and that Motion was not debated. When the House was prorogued after that famous incident took place on the 23rd of May, 1963, when certain Members of the Government were found guilty of contempt, my Motion, which had this same idea of photographs, was re-tabled on the 1st of August, 1963. What I had in mind, that is, the use of photographs, I discussed with the Government, including the Attorney-General. Let me be frank by saying that at that stage he offered no objection but listened in doleful silence. It is said that seven is a lucky number. Indeed, for the PPP it represents a period of months which brings enlightenment. At the end of seven months we now hear the Attorney-General advancing the argument which I had advanced and which had been rejected by the Premier and the other PPP representatives at the London Conference in connivance with the British Government with whom they were then in concubinage. Perhaps they spoke the same language and showed the same intolerance. My proposal was rejected by the Hon. the Premier, Dr. Jagan, and today we sit here and have to listen to the mouthings of the Hon. the Attorney-General telling us about the use of fingerprints for criminals. How long are the PPP averse to criminals? They appoint teachers who are criminals. If people do not want to have their thumbprints taken they do not have to be registered. When the draft Regulations with respect to the registration system were sent to the People's National Congress we again asked for photographs, but we were told that a system of identification by photographs would cost too much and take too long. The PNC, through me, replied that cost was not a relevant consideration to achieve a fool proof system, and in any case our advice from Trinidad was that photographs did not cost a million dollars which the British Government was alleging. We have since made further inquiries and discovered that the actual cost of photographs in Trinidad was even less than the young Attorney-General, now gathering up his facts in this matter, has said. The cost was only \$72,000.

But what was significant: the replies given by the British Government on the question of photographs were identical with the replies given by Dr. Jagan in July, 1962, in October, 1962, and in October, 1963. Can the PNC in these circumstances be expected to accept the *bona fides* of the Attorney-General? Are we that puerile? Are we that young? Are we that moronic? Is our intellectual development that stultified and arrested?

It is a piece of impudence on the part of the Attorney-General if he thinks that what he says today can create any impression on our minds. He was there when Dr. Jagan rejected the photograph suggestion. In 1962 and 1963 he was there, he sat on the right. I am surprised to find that the Attorney-General has repented to the stage where he can put forward the proposal which we had earlier put forward. Believe it not that there is any sincerity in this Motion. The only purpose of this Motion is to delay registration and elections, that is the only purpose.

I tabled my Motion in March 1963; there was time to consider it. I re-tabled my Motion on the 1st August, 1963; there was time to consider it. I renewed my proposal on the 23rd October, 1963; there was time to consider it. What is all this sudden solicitude for an easy mode of identification? If we were to believe in the sincerity of the Hon. Attorney-General – I said ‘if’, in Latin we would use the prefixed subjunctive because this is academic, it is not realistic to say believe – but if we were to believe in the sincerity of the Attorney-General on this point, the only thing we can tell him is what is written in ‘**King Lear**’:

“The gods are just, and of our pleasant vices make instruments to plague us;”

We have lived to see Dr. the Hon. Fenton Harcourt Willworth Ramsahoye repeating the arguments which he, along with his political creator, rejected for two successive years. The PNC will have none of this.

We concede photographs would be a readier form of identification. We concede all that but we must look beneath the surface. If we have an imperfect system of identification which, therefore, calls for greater vigilance on the part of the participants in the elections whoever they will be, it is the fault of the PPP. *“Too late, too late, shall be the cry, Jesus of Nazareth not passeth by but has passed by.”* The time for this was earlier. When I asked, practically with tears in my eyes, I said: *“Cheddi, let us try and settle our differences. Let us work out our means.”* That was rejected, they preferred the arbitrament of the imperialist. They said: *“Sir, we prefer to sit under you”*, referring to the Under-Secretary of State. Now, today, we hear the bleatings about the impositions of Sandys with respect to these. We hear the cries of these self-admitted infants who have so long accepted the unsatisfactory nature of the system of identification.

I can say that I hope to be in a position to agree with the Hon. Attorney-General that we should have a system of identification cards with photographs at the next election after the forthcoming one. I agree with his arguments that it would be a ready means of identification. I agree that there is great difficulty for the laymen to analyse fingerprints. I agree that many people may not want to give fingerprints. I agree with all those things but let them wait for a time hereafter. Let the Attorney-General deny that we have not had a system of photographs (a) Because Jagan opposed it with his (the Attorney-General’s) support; and (b) Because the Government refused to debate and accept my Motion which was tabled since March 1962.

If they had accepted it, what would have been the position now? We would have elections this month or next month, the whole country would have already been registered. We would have – may I remind the Hon. Doctor – registered these people and would have had their photographs taken. What is all this solicitude for the poor voter now? As I understand it, the People’s Progressive Party is not contesting; why worry? I wonder

whether the Hon. Attorney-General, in the reply to which he is entitled, will explain this *volte-face*, will he explain this sudden change of mind and attitude as between 1962, 1963 on the one hand, and now, on the other hand, this 14th day of May, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and sixty-four.

[**Mr. Bissember:** Devious ways.]

Mr. Burnham: I am reminded that it has been alleged by the Hon. Member for Demerara East, Mr. Rai, that he was told at one time by the Hon. Attorney-General that the People's Progressive Party moves in devious ways. I can do no more than to adopt and adapt that description of the ways of the People's Progressive Party. They move in devious ways their rascalities to perform, but in recent years we have matured, we have become more astute, more alive to the deviousness of their ways and the purpose of their ways and we are afraid we cannot support this Motion for the forthcoming elections. We, however, promise you that we will agree to the system of photographs for the next elections but one. We agree with that. May I observe they have the numbers, they can pass the Motion, but the French say "*Après ca quoi?*"

Motion on the Second Reading of the Statutory Publications Bill: 26th May, 1964

Mr. Burnham: I have absolutely no objection to the first object of the Bill, to wit, that these orders may be published in one newspaper, but I cannot really agree with the validation of those orders which are invalid by virtue of their not having been published according to the law which existed then. I do not like this retroactive type of legislation which encourages clumsiness and light-heartedness on the part of those responsible for drafting laws. We had an example of this some time ago with respect to the Greater Georgetown Plan under a different Government, and it is certainly not something that should be encouraged.

I agree that in future we need not publish these instruments in as many newspapers, but I certainly cannot agree with this validation which is being sought, because it makes the Legislature a mere convenience. You make the laws, setting out certain prerequisites, then you ignore them and use the Legislature to validate your omissions. I do not think that my learned friend really disagrees with me on this point, because I happen to know what is his school of thought in jurisprudence, and I am sure he does not disagree with me. Therefore I would propose that in so far as those instruments which are invalid on account of not being properly published, that they be re-promulgated and republished.

Motion on the Seconding Reading of the Public Corporations (Amendment) Bill: 26th May, 1964

Mr. Burnham: I have listened on this occasion to the Hon. Attorney-General introducing this Bill, and I must say that I am not really impressed by the reasons advanced by him. Certainly the recollection of this House is clear as to what brought this Amendment about. It was when appointments were made to the Board of the Guyana Airways Corporation when I, in this House, questioned whether a certain Mr. Benjamin, who was a teacher, could be described as an official member, for the Hon. Minister of Communications had stated that Mr. Benjamin was an official member on the Board. It seems to me, therefore, quite clearly that the real object is not to designate – that may be a subsidiary object – but to permit the designation of a person as an official member who would not normally come under the definition of Section 2 of Ordinance No. 23 of 1962, which states:

“ ‘Official member’ means a person who is the holder of an office of emolument in the service of the Crown in a civil capacity in respect of the Government of British Guiana... ”

I have no objection to a person who is paid out of public funds who is thought to be a suitable person being nominated to this Board, but I certainly am not in agreement with these statutory legal figments.

Now from the definition as set out it is clear that what was envisaged was the appointment of a member of the Civil Service. As the Hon. Attorney-General said a few minutes ago: *“Someone who could be a liaison between the Ministry whose responsibility covers the Board and the Board itself.”* Let us examine this matter. If you give the Minister this power to deem, you will have happening what happened in the Guyana Airways Corporation. The idea is to have an official member from the Ministry forming a liaison. In the case of the Guyana Airways Corporation there is no such person. The person who was the official member, as defined in Section 2 of Ordinance No. 23 of 1962, was unceremoniously booted, and the person who came in under the definition of Section 3 succeeded him.

I sometimes sit and allow these things to pass by. These things may be permitted, if done nicely. I hate a clumsy fool; I hate a clumsy dishonesty. If you are doing it smoothly, do it in a way that people can say: *“He has done it so beautifully that he merits our admiration and not our condemnation.”*

Do so, not like so! I was saying that I cannot accept the Hon. Attorney-General’s explanation that this amendment would give the Minister no potential advantage. The Minister, having appointed more than one member of the Public Service, can now deem one of them an official member. There is inherent in these provisions that ability, but we have not been given the real reasons for the Amendment.

When I compare this Amendment with the definition of 'official member' as set out in Section 2 of Ordinance No. 23 of 1962, it seems to me that this Government and the Ministry or Ministries concerned do not have faith or confidence in the Public Service, and they want a roundabout legal way of appointing persons who are not public servants and deeming them to be official members as defined in Section 2 of Ordinance No. 23 of 1962. This is highly unsatisfactory.

While speaking to a certain Member of the Government, a backbencher, he admitted that what I have been saying is absolutely the case. Of course, this domain is not as wide as a Minister of the Government, but backbenchers in this small House are certainly *au fait* with all of the machinations of their respective Parties. I feel that this Government should come out straight and say that it does not want to be bound to appoint members of the Public Service to these Boards or Public Corporations. Therefore let us delete subsection (2) of Section 3 of Ordinance No. 23 of 1962, and leave it to the discretion of the Minister whether he will appoint a public servant.

Let it be left to our discretion whether or not we will put a public servant there. Be honest, be straightforward! Says the Attorney-General, "*The official member is put there as a liaison officer.*" The official member is Mr. Benjamin, a teacher. In other words, he is going to be the liaison between the Minister, with whom he has no connection but political loyalties, and the Board.

Day by day my heart bleeds for the Hon. the Attorney-General. Last week it was the Motion, now this week this Bill. The Hon. the Attorney-General cannot gainsay my arguments. He knows that what I am saying is absolutely right, but, like the good lawyer he is when he rises to his feet to reply he will have to argue the case for his clients. Fortunately for this clients they are being tried in a Court of Appeal where they are the judges in a majority.

Georgetown Cultural Centre: 26th May, 1964

Mr. Burnham: I do think that this House is owed the courtesy of being told the purpose to which this section is going to be put and I do think also that the members of the body controlling the Cultural Centre should be paid the courtesy of being informed. There is no official intimation to that body of which I am a member. I say that, because it was originally envisaged that this should be used for one purpose, but we are being asked to change the use of certain part and we should be told the purpose. That is all that I ask.

I thought that the Hon. Minister might have told us. Perhaps in his reply he can tell us. It is not a matter of political controversy.

Motion on the Second Reading of the F.W.E. Case Pension Bill: 26th May, 1964

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Speaker, I have absolutely no objection to Mr. Case getting his pension but I have a penchant for correctness and accuracy. Now, if you read the legend contained in the 'Objects and Reasons', it must strike you that we do not need a Bill for Case. Case was a Senior Assistant Master, the time during which he is seconded – I was a public servant I know it – counts towards his pensionable service. The contribution towards his pension was covered by the contribution from the University College of the West Indies. Case was Senior Assistant Master and was seconded, but what happened, Sir, was that Rodway -

People call me Burnham.

My apologies. What happened was that Mr. Rodway was appointed Senior Assistant Master of the Government Training College when there was no vacancy. That is the whole thing! There was no vacancy of Senior Assistant Master when Mr. Rodway was appointed. I do not quarrel with Mr. Rodway's appointment. I would not have quarrelled if a Bill were brought here seeking to have Mr. Rodway's period of carrying on in a vacancy which did not exist. If they sought to get that period recognized for pension purposes, I would have supported it but this Bill is the wrong Bill because Mr. Case was at all times during this period, Senior Assistant Master and some contributions were made.

It seems to me that the Hon. Minister of Finance had better reconsider this Bill because it is the wrong one and introduce the proper Bill to validate the Government's paying to Mr. Rodway a pension for a period when he held a non-existent post. Not that I think the money should be taken back from Mr. Rodway but things should be done properly. As I said earlier I have a *penchant* for correctness.

[**Mr. Bhagwan:** Smoothness.]

Mr. Burnham: Smoothness? This is ignorance, not dishonesty!

I beg to move an Amendment that for the proper name 'Case' be substituted the proper name 'Rodway' in Clause 1.

I beg to move that for the proper names 'Frederick Walter Eleazar Case' be substituted the names 'James Alwyn Rodway' in the second line.

I am quite serious about this matter. This is not a political matter. This is a case where one who has been in the Public Service carrying out certain duties ought to have the period, during which he carried out those duties, registered for purposes of pension. If Mr. Case was seconded from the post of Senior Assistant Master, the post was not vacant and, therefore, when Mr. Rodway was appointed as a Senior Assistant Master in 1948, he was appointed to a post to which he should not be appointed because the

establishment did not provide for the additional post. The post for which the establishment provided was, at that time, held by Mr. Case who was on secondment.

Recently, we had the Government understanding this question with respect to the Trust Officer. The Trust Officer, Mr. Phillips, is on secondment to the London office and no one has been appointed Trust Officer. Someone has been appointed to act because the establishment provides for only one Trust Officer. Similarly, here the establishment in 1948 provided for one post of Senior Assistant Master which was not vacant because the holder of the post was on secondment and secondment from a post does not make the post vacant on the establishment. It makes it vacant in fact, not in law, and can be filled only by an acting appointment or as sometimes happens here – as in the case of directorship of Civil Aviation and Commissioner of Police – provision can be made on the establishment for a supernumerary. There are only two ways of doing it – either appointing a supernumerary to carry on the work, or appointing a person.

If Mr. Rodway was only acting, his pension rights would be affected and I would agree to this Bill being passed with Mr. Rodway's name being substituted so that whatever gratuity and pension that has been paid to Mr. Rodway would have been properly paid.

I am pleading with the Government to understand that I am not making political capital of this matter. I am only indulging my *penchant* for seeing things properly done; it is not a political issue. I am not supposing that Mr. Case will vote PPP; he is out of the country and would not be back in time to register. I introduced the Amendment to give them an opportunity to explain. If they agree, they can postpone this Bill and introduce the proper Bill. I am not opposing this on political grounds.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Liquor Licensing (Amendment) Bill 1964: 26th May, 1964

Mr. Burnham: May I crave your indulgence, Sir? May I inquire what is the *raison d'être* of the word 'alteration'? I can understand 'damage' or 'destruction', but suppose a person voluntarily alters his premises, why should he be entitled to any refund? The 'damage' or 'destruction' would not be voluntarily done. We would expect if it was otherwise he would be charged. 'Damage' or 'destruction' we would expect not to be the result of his positive action but 'alteration' would be and I should feel that the word 'alteration' should not appear at all. In other words, if a man is doing bad business he will alter his premises and come under section 19A and be entitled to a refund.

That certainly does not seem an effective explanation. We have never had a Bill like this before. It is clear that this is to cover certain incidents that have arisen, primarily damage to premises. If a man takes out a licence at the beginning of a year is he going to be allowed, just by altering it, to call back? Where are we going to get at this rate? He just alters the premises, takes them out of the Ordinance by alteration and says "*Give me back my money*". As children at school we used to play the game 'No take back'. Are we going to dishonour that and encourage these merchants to be calling back for their money?

I understand 'damage' I said. I agree entirely with the principle of a refund when there has been damage or destruction. That is perfectly reasonable but not a refund when a man just alters his premises. Those of us who have practised in the Liquor Licensing Courts know that a slight thing like cutting two pieces of wood from a partition alters premises. By putting a door, which did not exist before, in an existing partition the premises are altered to take them out of the Ordinance. It seems to me you would be encouraging persons to do a thing like that and since they would be running something like a restaurant or a cake-shop next door they can still carry on the liquor trade illicitly. I should like the Hon. Minister to consider the deletion of the word 'alteration'.

This is going further and faring worse. This is leaving discretion to an officer which you do not have to leave in him. Let us suppose that the officer exercises his discretion in respect of Mr. 'X' and after a few days Mr. 'X' comes and alleges that he exercised his discretion wrongly against him and there is a suggestion of bribery or party affiliation. If you make it straight that the Comptroller shall exercise discretion in cases of damage and destruction there is an end to the matter. We know that in law you do not normally leave a discretion in a statutory agency if you can cover the case. I see the Hon. the Attorney-General here; I see a member of his staff here, and both of them would agree with me that you do not leave a discretion with an officer or any agency or corporation if you can cover the case.

I agree that if there is damage or destruction you can give the persons back their money if they cannot really use the premises, but not in the case of alteration. When you give a discretion here do you know what is going to happen? Do you know the suggestions that are going to be made, the number of times the honesty and discretion of an officer are going to be impugned?

The Hon. the Minister of Finance is telling me nothing I did not know before. As he said, the Comptroller can compound felonies. Let us understand the *raison d'être*. That power and discretion given to the Comptroller there are for cases where felonies are committed against the Customs Ordinance by persons not spending a long time in the country. He does not wish to hold them up and have a long trial and if they agree to pay double or ten times the duty, as the case may be, the revenue benefits and they depart. But here the holder of a licence under the Liquor Licensing Ordinance is a static person so to speak. He is not a person whose movement you want to facilitate.

I do wish the Hon. Minister would not bring up these specious arguments. If he does not wish to accept my arguments let him be bold and say so. This is a case where discretionary powers are given because it is in the best interest of the administration of the law to allow the Comptroller to deal with the tourist who is passing through. The tourist comes in with something illegally. The Comptroller says "*Pay twice as much. We are not going to keep you and take you to Court.*"

Appeal for End to Racial Disturbance: 26th May, 1964

Mr. Burnham: So far as the people who have suffered are concerned, the Government is doing everything possible to see what can be done. The Ministry of Education and Social Development since about two weeks ago, has been taking steps to see what could be done to alleviate the suffering and the hardship of the people who have suffered, whose houses were burnt and so forth. I hope that Members of this House will give their full cooperation to the Government in whatever measures are necessary in relieving this very grave situation at the moment, and also to do whatever they can to bring about an end to the strike and the disturbances which are certainly destroying our country.

Mr. Speaker, no one who is interested basically in his country and attaches any significance to his being described as a Guianese, can look on with equanimity or unconcern at the events which are taking place in our country today. It was recognition on the part of my Party of the fact that action causes reaction and that what may start as an act of bravado may snowball into a holocaust that led us some time ago to make certain proposals to the Government.

I do not intend or propose to cast or apportion blame; I shall leave that to history. This is not a time either, Mr. Speaker, for easy words about finding a solution to the basic problems. A solution to the basic problems has to be found by Guianese themselves and not by friends across the seas, not by asking others to intervene and to conciliate. But I will say that it is impossible to discuss the basic problems and find the solutions in the atmosphere which exists in this country at the moment unless we analyse the root causes.

I will not be so harsh as to suggest that some are unhappy to see the poisoned chalice committed to their own lips now, but I would say this: This shows that you can never condone violence in circumstances such as we have seen. You can never attempt to explain violence in terms of frustration. You can never indulge in a lot of philosophising when a man kills another because he differs a little bit from him politically or supports a different trade union. That can never be condoned and I call upon the Government now to take positive steps, in the taking of which positive steps it will have the full support of the PNC. There has been too much violence and talk of being prepared to die in this country. If we are prepared to die, mourn not death.

Now there has been too much violence and I call upon the Government to take the following steps and which would have the full and absolute support of the PNC: That all arms in the country be handed in and that there be an amnesty for a stated period for persons in possession of illegal arms. At the end of that period, legal arms will be re-issued to their

respective possessors or owners but anyone found illegally in possession of arms should be condignly dealt with. The type of offence should carry peremptory imprisonment for a period of not less than twelve months. That the proper legislation be introduced now to facilitate thorough searches of persons and of premises throughout this country. So help me God, the PNC will give absolute support to that.

It is time that those who talk about friends who have rockets and guns tell their supporters that that was metaphorical speech. I do not blame those who spoke about the friends with rockets and guns, but their supporters and followers might have misunderstood them. The difficulty of language is one which has been very woeful and which has brought very woeful results to our country. Let us have all the arms in from top to bottom and I would suggest further that perhaps we could have this question further implemented and an informal meeting of the Legislature may be called so that the legislation which is produced subsequently will be legislation which has had the agreement of all and be the result of a unanimous consensus.

I put these forward as suggestions because at this time we do not want to hear about root causes and basic causes, and this and that. We want positive steps, which find the support of the Political Parties, to be taken. When they are taken, and the population understands, and the murderers and hoodlums understand that they have no defence counsel in this place and that we are all serious about wiping out violence, then we can sit down to discuss how we may resolve, in an atmosphere of peace, those outstanding political differences which may still continue to exist. As for me and my Party, we are not prepared to discuss anything until we discuss and find an answer to this violence, until we are able to formulate programmes for the ruthless suppression of this violence which now hunts and stalks our country.

Death of Mr. Nehru: 2nd June, 1964

Mr. Burnham: A little man like me grasps the honour and the opportunity of seconding a Motion such as the one moved by the Hon. Premier. A little man like me may never hope to plant my footsteps in those of this great man Mr. Nehru who has died. Indeed, so great was he that those who called him an imperialist stooge in 1953 and 1954 now recognise his outstanding merit and world stature. A man who is able to combine determination and the ruthlessness of a freedom fighter with good sense and capable administration after freedom is won is, undoubtedly, a great man.

We all recognise that his achievements were not only on the domestic front, but also on the international scene. But, perhaps, before I allude briefly if, perhaps, repetitiously to his achievements as an international statesman, I should like to observe what, to my mind, is one of the greatest lessons he has left behind for us in this country. He was not born here; we have never had the honour of having him in this country, but, citizen of the world as he was, he belonged to every place.

After the achievement of his ideal and goal in 1947, he set about welding together a nation of diverse people, diverse religions and diverse tongues. He was a man of great tolerance – tolerance which indicated outstanding ability. It is a pity we are intolerant. Those who are afraid that their country and party will not be recognised so quickly become dictators, but a great man displays great tolerance. A man who was able to bring together the peoples of India and work out a solution with respect to the criticisms, with respect to the untouchables, with respect to the various states and make a decision in a country with such a great, long, religious history of establishing secular states, is a man to whom we in British Guiana must pay honour.

Having achieved independence for India, he did not then turn upon his former opponents and seek to destroy them. He appreciated and understood that the burdens of Government were to be borne by people in the entire country, and that a successful government is a government which is able to introduce the maximum amount of harmony in the country over which it rules. I would to God that we in this country who claim to be political leaders could copy a few pages from the book of Mr. Nehru.

As an international statesman, as the Hon. Premier has remarked, Mr. Nehru introduced the concept of international politics and non-alignment. Some people were unable to appreciate what he was doing at the time, but it is now accepted and, so to speak, has become respectable. But so far as I recollect, non-alignment as far as the late Mr. Nehru was concerned was

a matter of conviction and sincerity; it was not the empty prattling of a slogan which so frequently we find in our own country – it was a serious conviction. It was a question of non-alignment with neither East nor West, recognising that committing oneself to one bloc or the other would, in fact, interfere with one's independence which had been won at so great a price.

Even though we had the incidents of four years ago when Communist China invaded India, when those who now praise Mr. Nehru did not lift a finger or a voice on behalf of this great man and the great country which he led; even though he had to deal with the Sino-Indian war, he still stuck to this policy of non-alignment. I believe that the world was richer in having such a son as the late Mr. Nehru. I believe that not India only but the world is poorer from this loss. But since we cannot bring him back alive, the only thing that we can do is to learn the lessons which this great man taught us during his lifetime.

One of the outstanding things about Mr. Nehru was his humility. It seems to me that these little men, who in their dreams would imagine themselves a reincarnation of the great Mr. Nehru, had better learn something of his humility and observe the success which he has made in welding together a diverse people and a diverse nation. A great man has passed away. It was not unexpected, but yet it was a shock. Tears cannot bring him back. History will immortalise him and all we can say at the moment is: *"There goes a great man; when comes such another?"*

An occasion like this is not an occasion for empty histrionics; it is not an occasion for the repetition of shibboleths; it is not an occasion for empty rhetoric. It is an occasion when we must in reverence pause and pay real tribute to a real man. The occasion of the death of a man like Nehru is not for partisan speeches. The occasion of the death of Mr. Nehru is one when we who are political leaders should take time off from the violence, the clashes, the divisions, which now haunt our country, to do a certain amount of introspection and to hope, at least those of us who believe that when a man dies he is not really dead, that his spirit will descend upon us and assist us in solving some of the insoluble problems which we have constructed for ourselves in this country.

It is my duty, it is my honour to second the Motion, confident that after this some of us will have the scales and the shades fall off our eyes and pay the greatest tribute that can be paid to a great man, that is, to emulate him.

Extension of Emergency Regulations: 3rd June, 1964

Mr. Burnham: When one looks at what is happening, one notes the massacres and lawlessness on the West Coast and Wismar, one wonders whether the men of Guiana have their reason "*and justice fled to brutish beast.*"

It has been observed during the course of this debate that recrimination serves no purpose. It has been said by some Guianese abroad – at the University of the West Indies in Jamaica, and in Trinidad – that this is not the time for apportioning blame. There may be a great deal to be said for such pieties, but it seems to me that this is a time for recapitulation and analysis, and if those two exercises lead reasonable people to blame certain persons, organisations, bodies or figures it may be unfortunate, but the exercises of recapitulation and analysis are absolutely necessary. It is only a quack doctor who attempts to treat a disease without getting the patient's case history, without probing, without diagnosing so as to discover not only what the ailment is but what might have been the constitutional responsibility for the particular ailment or illness.

Out of deference to the Hon. the Premier, and because, in any case, I think his propositions provide a fitting framework for this analysis and recapitulation, I shall accept his observation made in this House yesterday, to the effect that our troubles are constitutional, industrial and racial. I accept the three propositions not merely for debating purposes but because I think – not meaning any disrespect to the Premier – that for once his analysis was acute.

Shall we, therefore, consider the constitutional questions? Much of what I may say I have said before, but some of my statements, I will say with the utmost modesty, can bear repetition, for this is the first occasion there has been an opportunity to consider everything that has happened over the last three or four years together.

What was the constitutional difficulty? The constitutional differences between the governing Party and the Opposition Parties arose over the question of the electoral system for this country. The People's National Congress argued that the attitude of the Government was such that with an electoral minority it did not recognise that its duty was to govern in the interest of the majority and to create a national consensus, taking into account the views of those who may differ from it on political questions.

There is that sort of bigoted attitude that whoever disagrees with the governing Party is a stooge. But let me not recapitulate or repeat the empty mouthings – for they were no more than mouthings – of the Deputy Premier a week after his Party was successful.

In the final analysis, the proposition of the People's National Congress – which proposition was supported by the United Force – was that, to ensure proper democratic representation and the fact that any

Government of this country has the support of the majority, the system of Proportional Representation should be introduced. That, in the main, was the constitutional difference. We are too old now to be dragged into all these new Marxist analyses of the imperialists. The imperialists may really be interested in dominating our economy but certainly, as one eminent West Indian said: "*Britain will soon have to be asking the United Nations for Independence from British Guiana.*" We are too old for these Marxist analyses. The fact is that the People's Progressive Party wanted a retention of the present system; the People's National Congress wanted a change.

The Conference of October to November, 1962, was indecisive, it came to no conclusion. The People's National Congress proposed a referendum. That was rejected by the People's Progressive Party, the facile excuse being that one does not give a razor to a child because a child cannot use it. All thinking people who came to this country – and even some of them who were at first fanatically supporting the People's Progressive Party – came to the conclusion that there was necessity for electoral reform. Up to the day – Tuesday, 15th November, 1963, to be precise – that was rejected on behalf of the People's Progressive Party by a group led by the Deputy, then acting Premier.

The People's National Congress had originally suggested that the Conference should be held here, but the People's Progressive Party, preferring the rarified atmosphere of London, rejected that proposal. Maybe the unspoken major premise was that since the two major Political Parties in Britain are opposed to Proportional Representation, the pressures of Britain's political views and climate would have forced the People's National Congress to give up this stand. I personally discussed this matter with the Hon. Attorney-General and a compromised systems that could have been worked out. The PNC delegation discussed it with the PPP delegation. All failed.

From advocating the pure P.R. of the Israeli system, the People's National Congress leadership, to the displeasure of some of its members and supporters, offered a compromised system consisting of First-past-the-post and Proportional Representation. That was rejected. The People's National Congress proposed to the PPP delegation in London to enter into discussions and to inform the Secretary of States for the Colonies that we would resume the Conference proper when we had worked out some agreement. That was rejected on Monday, 21st October, and alas, on Friday, 25th October, the Head of the Government of my country, with the greatest alacrity, appended his signature to a letter asking the Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Duncan Sandys to make the decision. This may be considered humorous by those who are opposed to the PPP but I repeat it because of its significance.

In the Premier's broadcast to the British nation over BBC TV and BBC sound the same night, he said that he appended his signature because he

had great faith in the British sense of fairplay and justice. He had, before signing that letter, recognised that what he was asking the Rt. Hon. Gentleman, Mr. Duncan Sandys who was not a conciliator or a mediator, but an arbitrator, because the distinction between those terms was drawn to his attention by the said Mr. Duncan Sandys on the morning of Tuesday, 22nd October, 1963.

Whatever promise might have been held out, the fact of the matter is that he asked. He was the first person. I recall very vividly the Hon. Member for Georgetown-North, Mr. Cheeks, saying that for the first time he was in agreement with the Hon. Premier. Strange bedfellows politics sometimes makes for us! If that was signed, and the Premier – whose perspicacity I may sometimes question but never his intelligence – knowing the difference between an arbitrator and a mediator, signed that letter, he must have appreciated that whatever came out as a result, was his responsibility. Perhaps I can pause for a moment to ask those who cavalierly suggest that we had better come to an agreement with the People's Progressive Party how easy it is to come to an agreement with people who solemnly affix their signatures to documents and then seek to avoid the consequences of their signatures freely given without duress.

The Hon. Premier returned to this country by the same plane as I did in November. He got a welcome; his supporters went to the airport to meet him, and his first public appearance was at the PPP's Conference the same Saturday afternoon at which he spoke about the wickedness of the British. I am no defender of the British. I am not here to say whether Dr. Jagan was right or wrong when he said that "*the British were just.*" But what was most significant is that the Hon. Premier, playing his usual game, suddenly discovered that the solution which had been put forward by Mr. Duncan Sandys was an imposition. Men have lost their reason; words have lost their meaning. How can it be an imposition when the Hon. Premier asked Mr. Sandys to make a decision? The Hon. Attorney-General, in the capacity of the leader of my profession, would say that an arbitrator's decision is never an imposition as long as the parties concerned freely agreed to the appointment of the arbitrator.

Anyway, later in the year we heard of 'white bastards' – the same people with whom the Hon. Premier had been hobnobbing and who, apparently, had misled him. Then there was a campaign launched throughout the country by the members of the PPP seeking to tell their supporters what a terrible thing had been done to the Premier. Mr. Benn then made a most stupid statement that "*the Sandys decision was anti-Indian.*" Note well that Dr. Jagan did not say it. Mr. Benn said it. Feelings are worked up and excited, and then came the strike.

Let us shift somewhat to the industrial dispute or certain aspects of the problem. There was a claim that the G.A.W.U., a trade union arm of the PPP, was involved in an industrial dispute in the sugar industry. It was

an industrial matter, and it seemed to us in the PNC essentially a matter to be settled between the three parties concerned: the M.P.C.A., the G.A.W.U. and the S.P.A. They, among themselves, should have been able to find some means of settling the dispute. We were told that it was an industrial dispute, but violence erupted.

I am sick of the hypocrisy which one sees in a certain local newspaper called the *Mirror*. One of the first victims of this violence was a man named Gunraj who, together with his African brother, was made a flaming torch at Tain. But the *Mirror* said that Gunraj was killed by an African. Violence broke out, and there was sugar worker fighting against sugar worker. Indians were beaten and their homes were burnt either because they supported or were members of the M.P.C.A. Let us be realistic; let us not be polite only; let us face the naked facts. "*Come ye in war, or come ye in peace?*", said young Lochinvar. There was violence of Indians against Indians in the industrial dispute which was rationalised by the Hon. Member for Corentyne-West, and the *Mirror*. The *Mirror* is a company, and one of its original subscribers is the Hon. Premier who had to apologise for what his colleague had said.

It was said that this violence sprung from the frustration of the people at not being properly represented by the M.P.C.A. Let us assume that these politicians, who suddenly turned psychiatrists, were correct in their assessment of the cause of the violence. At that stage it was never denied that the violence came from the G.A.W.U., and it has never been denied that the G.A.W.U. is the PPP union. Who, therefore, started the violence?

I am not interested in pinpointing individuals. It was admitted by a PPP Member of this House that the violence took on a racial flavour on the West Coast of Demerara. Today we hear about what happened at Wismar but, in anticipation, let me say that the events at Wismar like the events on the West Coast and East Coast of Demerara are a shame and a disgrace to any country and, certainly, is something that the PNC firmly, unequivocally and unapologetically deprecates. On the West Coast 208 houses were destroyed, but a fuss is made when 172 houses are destroyed at Wismar. I shall deal with the political angle behind this.

Where human suffering is concerned he, indeed, must be a heartless heathen to be introducing politics. On the West Coast of Demerara 208 houses were destroyed, 167 persons were injured, and 15 persons were killed. Of those 15 persons killed on the West Coast of Demerara, two were shot dead by the police and seven are reported to have died while resisting arrest. Of the twelve other persons killed on the West Coast, six were Indians and six were Africans. Let me say this: I am not interested normally in whether an African or an Indian is killed. I am concerned and moved to sorrow when any human being has his life snuffed out.

We were able, on this side of the House, on two successive occasions to have the matter debated as a matter of urgent public importance, not only with the leave of the Speaker, but with the leave of the House. On both of

those occasions never a word was said from that side of the House condemning the West Coast violence. Entreaties were made that an Emergency should be declared to permit the forces of law and order to deal more firmly and effectively with the miscreants on the West Coast.

We were told by the Hon. the Minister of Communications, who lists among his occupations representation of the Boerasire Constituency on the West Coast, that the Government saw no point in declaring an Emergency because on two previous occasions the declaration of an Emergency did not achieve the desired objective. But yesterday we heard the Hon. the Attorney-General say that the Emergency could not be declared before the professional advice of the Commissioner of Police was received.

Those two answers do not square. Did the Government fail to declare an Emergency because it felt that an Emergency would achieve nothing in the light of the experience of 1962 and 1963, or did the Government fail to declare an Emergency because the Commissioner of Police had not given his professional advice to that effect?

[**Mr. Wilson:** Both.]

Mr. Burnham: We hear the ex-teacher saying “Both”. We may pay obeisance to his skill in the classroom but only in civil law can you confess and deny and give alternative contradictory defences. The Hon. Attorney-General is competent enough to educate him immediately on that question, but let us assume that the Hon. the Attorney-General, for whose integrity and honesty I have the highest regard, gave the correct answer yesterday. How does that mesh with a recognition on the part of the ex-Minister of Home Affairs that since June 1963 the Commissioner of Police was unreliable? You cannot have your cake and eat it!

If it is the reason advanced by the Minister of Communications – and I am sorry to hear that he was so short of words, when he entered into a portfolio not of his own to give an explanation here, that he did not give the second explanation.

[**Mr. Wilson:** It was not necessary at that time.]

Mr. Burnham: What is the reason for declaring it now? If it is the Attorney-General’s reason, why was the most brilliant and astute Minister of Home Affairs taking advice which she was not compelled to take from one Mr. Peter Owen, the darling of the People’s Progressive Party?

I remember that it was for the first time in my life I found the Hon. Attorney-General being untruthful when in 1962 I said here that at a meeting of the Council of Ministers in March you agreed to bring an expatriate Commissioner of Police and the Hon. the Attorney-General, who was present at that meeting said, “I do not know anything about it”. Perhaps it

was not an untruth because, after all, he was bound by the Official Secrets Act. I always try to be not too hard on persons for whose professional ability and moral integrity I have some respect.

Tell us not about Mr. Peter Owen! If Mr. Peter Owen has turned out to be anti-PPP, if he has turned out to be ineffective and incompetent, it is a question of your being bitten by the adder which you clasped to your breast. It is what we warned you about on the 6th March, 1962. We will not, on this side of the House, be impressed for one moment by the double explanation given by the Minister of Communications and the Hon. the Attorney-General. The Hon. Attorney-General was just being legally correct. It is obvious to the world, it is obvious even to many PPP supporters whom I have met – and the ex-Minister of Home Affairs knows that there were some PPP supporters from the West Coast who were asking for a declaration of Emergency, but the Government did not see fit to declare it. What would have happened to the West Coast man, Mr. Mandall? What would have happened to Mr. Dipchand, manufacturing his home-made guns? If the hand of the People's Progressive Party were not deep in this violence, it could have been crushed out. We had no more violence on the West Coast than there was at Notting Hill Gate and no more than what the Americans have to deal with every day in Chicago. But here was a case of schizophrenia. The People's Progressive Party is the Government. The People's Progressive Party is the party behind the violence on the West Coast. I say that unequivocally and unapologetically. The Emergency is declared after a reaction sets in.

I have publicly stated, and have always meant it, that mass retaliation does not commend itself to me. I have publicly stated that mass retaliation only breeds counter-retaliation. It further emits feelings and those who are the victims of retaliation are frequently the poor innocent ones. It is not those gun-totters who pull guns on a harmless old man named Wilson on the West Coast - I am not referring to the Minister as the object of the gun-pulling who suffered. It is the ordinary citizen who has lived in a community for a long time and got on peacefully with the rest of that community, who is recognised as being different from the community and is set upon by certain elements in the community.

The Commissioner of Police, after the murder of Mr. and Mrs. Sealey at Buxton, according to the Attorney-General, advised the Government to declare a State of Emergency. It is necessary for us to understand these things very clearly and to stop pulling punches. Let us assume that the Emergency was declared only on the advice of the Commissioner of Police. On the West Coast an Indian police officer, Jagdeo, was shot and injured when he was going to save an African's house. On the West Coast an African and an Indian policeman were shot and disarmed. On the West Coast an Assistant Commissioner of Police, Isaacs, had information which he got in my presence, and which he admitted he had had before, that Mr. Mandall had pulled a gun on defenceless people, but there is no

prosecution. Later we shall hear of anti-PPP discrimination, but nobody stopped the Police from prosecuting, except when the Commissioner of Police was doing his mistress's biddings.

The forces of law and order are brutally attacked on the West Coast. It was not merely a question of internecine warfare and civil strife and racial violence, but a question of actually attacking the Police. A curfew is imposed at Wismar but not on any part of the West Coast of Demerara. A curfew has to be imposed by the Governor under Section 22 of the Statutory Instruments on the advice of the Government. There is no curfew anywhere on the West Coast where 208 houses have been destroyed and 15 persons killed. A policeman's life left hanging by a thread; policemen shot at and disarmed, but no curfew on the West Coast. But there must be the vindictiveness of this Government to which we have been so long accustomed. It is not to defend or to condemn, but while some attempt to rationalise or explain the violence we had at Wismar we must note the objective fact that no curfew was declared before Wismar, and when the curfew was declared at Wismar the objects of the violence there had all been removed. Half of your Ministers are married to white women, but you are still abusing white people.

It is embarrassing to the Attorney-General, the Premier, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Finance. All this vulgarity about "*white bastards*" is very embarrassing to their own colleagues. But enough of that. Why impose a curfew at Wismar and not on any part of the West Coast? It seems to me that so deep in the mire of violence were the hands of the PPP that they preferred to ignore the sufferings of the Indians because they no doubt calculated that if some of the people whom they would want to protect for political reasons might suffer, the greater suffering would be on the other side. I have been *au fait* with the callousness for years inside and outside. Let this be said in fairness to the Indian population on the West Coast, that the purveyors of violence, the gun-totters, were primarily from outside the West Coast; they were not from the West Coast. The Cuban-trained hoodlums and the gun-totters were not from the West Coast; they went to the West Coast to start trouble. But little did the PPP know; perhaps they had never heard of a man called Claude McKay who wrote of delivering one death blow for every thousand blows. That is what happened at Wismar. For every dozen buildings destroyed on the West Coast the people at Wismar delivered one death blow. It was the direct result of the violence planned by the Government.

When the Premier and I were requested to go down to the West Coast to make a plea for peace I did so. So did the Premier. I make no comments on the contents of the Premier's speech, but I said then and subsequently in this House, that this type of violence which had been started on the West Coast would do no good because a group of people might take advantage of their superiority of numbers in one area to do what was done to people at Met-en-Meerzorg, Zeelugt and Tuschen. But a group that is in the majority

in one area can find that there are relatives, friends and blood brothers who are in the minority in another area. Once a pattern is set it is difficult to prevent retaliation, but the Government was not interested then. We saw the alacrity with which a building was requisitioned – a good thing. We saw the alacrity with which a certain organisation close to the PPP came to do social service – a good thing. We do not for one moment say that it was wrong. We say that wherever and whenever there is human suffering it is the duty of the Government, in the absence of other agencies or even in the presence of other agencies, to do its best to rehabilitate those who have suffered, to give them consolation and assistance. I merely ask, if Wismar why not West Coast?

The Hon. Premier spoke yesterday, and if a Martian was to have visited this Chamber the latter would have thought that the only place where there was violence for this year was a place called Wismar. We hear about people who have been rooted up from the places they have made their home, for generations. Nonsense! Wismar has not existed as it is for generations. But we hear nothing of the people who were rooted from the places where they have lived for generations from the West Coast of Demerara, Zeelugt, Uitvlugt, Met-en-Meerzorg – these are Dutch places – Tuschen, Vergenoegen. From all of these places people are rooted out though the communities have existed for generations. But let us not bother with that. What I want to comment on is the naivety or the heartlessness of the head of our Government to be emphasising the violence and the suffering from one point and ignoring the violence which precipitated the second set of violence, ignoring it completely.

Now we shall shed some tears. We hear that there is a necessity for peace. But how are we to have this? Very well, Sir. Africans beat Indians, Indians beat Africans, Africans kill Indians, Indians kill Africans, and Indians kill Indians. Today there lies fighting for his life at the New Amsterdam Public Hospital an Indian activist of the PNC who was set upon yesterday afternoon in the Port Mourant area. The *Mirror*, so as to contribute to a peaceful atmosphere, has a daredevil photographer – whom I would recommend to some of the international presses – who was able to be there when an African boy is stamping an Indian on his face. But you know funnily, Sir, the African boy has not got a face. He just has a foot, he has not got a face. He was so unfortunate that he catches this poor Indian on the ground with his back turned. Now we have lived through these moments and days and months of violence. Ask any photographer in this country if he can get this close to any scene of violence! (*Indicating a picture in a copy of the Mirror.*) Like this! Ask them! There is a friend of mine who was trying to get a picture, he got no picture and he was left without a camera.

When one looks at the front page of the *Mirror* of Sunday, 24th May, 1964, one can come to only one conclusion. I am not saying that Indians were not beaten. One can come to only one conclusion when one looks at the headlines: **'INDIANS BEATEN MERCILESSLY'**, "*Not satisfied with*

flooring this Indian, an African youth uses his feet to trample him", then "Writhing in pain this Indian was robbed, beaten and his clothes ripped off his body. . ." Number one: I question the accuracy of the picture with the African boy stamping the Indian man. Secondly: Is this agency of the People's Progressive Party hoping, by this type of publication, to spread racial harmony?

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Ask your brother-in-law. Ask Armstrong.]

Mr. Burnham: Let me pause to say this: the failure of this Government to act firmly and to visit condign justice upon those who are the purveyors of violence on the West Coast, exposed the same Indian community, for which they are pretending to show such solicitude on the West Coast, in areas all over the country. It is a little difficult in a community like ours to turn a Nelson eye to violence in one place because it seems to be operating to our advantage or the advantage of our Political Party, or the advantage of our ethnic group. That very ignoring of the problem puts at a disadvantage the same people we claim we would like to protect.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Yes, father.]

Mr. Burnham: The ex-Minister of Home Affairs adds her little bit. I have known the People's Progressive Party long enough to know that the Premier is embarrassed. I know the series of embarrassments that he has suffered in this respect with his spouse and political colleague. I know, and he knows that I know, and I know that he knows that I know. There is a statement issued by the ex-Minister of Home Affairs on Monday last. I do not know why when I pick up this statement to look at parts of it that I should think of Jezebel and I should think of Lady Macbeth; Jezebel who encouraged her husband to murder to get a kingdom and lady Macbeth who led her husband to climb to the throne over the dead bodies of the innocent Duncan and his children.

I really do not know why these biblical and Shakespearian pictures should be floating in my mind. I do not know why I remember that Jezebel was eaten by the dogs outside Jezreel. I do not know why I remember that Lady Macbeth said: "*Will these little hands never be clean?*" I do not know why Lady Macbeth's statement that none of the perfumes of Arabia could sweeten her bloodstained hands, should come to my mind as I look at this statement.

This statement, Sir, is one which sets out to denigrate the Police Force. There is no doubt at all about that. Now what are the proprieties of the situation? Even if a Minister of Government, who is in charge of the Police, finds that he or she has to resign because of certain things going on in the department with which he or she does not agree, this is not the way to do it - to denigrate and to attack the whole force, all of the forces of law and order in this country.

To denigrate the Police Force, a Commissioned Officer of which, so anxious for the safety of the Hon. Premier, shot into a defenceless crowd and injured an Indian woman last year in June; to denigrate the Force whose Commissioner gave instructions to his Officers to be careful because the Minister is complaining: "*Do not press too many PPP members or Indians on the West Coast*"; to denigrate a Force which showed self-control when it was attacked by PPP hoodlums; to denigrate a Force headed by a Commissioner of Police whom this Government wanted against the wishes of the Opposition; to denigrate a Force whose Commissioner always gave professional advice that suited the PPP Government, is very bad.

The Commissioner did not, according to the Hon. Attorney-General, recommend the introduction of troops and the declaration of an Emergency until retaliation set in, although his men had been shot at, beaten and spat upon! He was the epitome of sacrifice and self-control. The London Police Force will have to learn from this ex-Commissioner of Gibraltar and now Commissioner of the Police Force in British Guiana.

We have a number of 'facts' in this document by the ex-Minister of Home Affairs, Mrs. Jagan, but I do not propose to deal with them at any length. It would be doing a modern descendant of Saphira too much honour to deal with the entire contents of this document. But what is noteworthy is that where her facts can be checked she has proved, to put it mildly, a little off the truth.

I agree with you. States the ex-Minister of Home Affairs: "*On the 23rd June, 1963, there was an explosion at the Ministry of Home Affairs. Shortly after the explosion, the Police dog, Rio, was brought to the Ministry. When set loose, he immediately went to the Chambers of Mr. L.F.S. Burnham, Leader of the People's National Congress, nearby, and there held on to a man.*" Then the rhetorical question is asked: "*Did the Police then search Mr. Burnham . . . ?*" "No", she answers herself.

The records of the Police will show that the Chambers of Mr. Burnham and the yard in which this man was picked up by the dog were ransacked for two hours – one of the ransackers was well-known PPP Commissioned Officer. Nothing was found then, but later they sent back the same PPP Senior Commissioned Officer on Saturday, 29th June, to ransack the Chambers for another two hours.

I hear the Hon. Attorney-General talking about searches. I wonder whether he ever heard the little quip: "*What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander?*" Here is a Senior Counsel's Chambers being ransacked on the *ipsi dixi* of some little crony, or on the *ipsi dixi* of a dog that cannot talk! In 1962 the then Mayor and Hon. Member for La Penitence Lodge, Mr. Merriman, had his home ransacked on the *ipsi dixi* of the PPP crony. Leaders of the PNC have been subjected to all sorts of indignities, but, when the Police search Mr. Benn's house and find unlicensed ammunition, the PPP shouts 'discrimination'. They have found ammunition in a private home occupied by two people, and they cannot get a conviction in such circumstances. The ammunition did not fly there.

[**Mr. Hugh:** They might have bought the house with the ammunition inside]

Mr. Burnham: They might have done that.

Now the people in this country are going to have their intelligence insulted by the Hon. Premier acting on the instructions of the ex-Minister of Home Affairs when he issues a statement from his office that "*what the Minister meant was not Mr. Burnham's office but his home.*" Why place in juxtaposition the statement that Mr. Burnham was not searched with the statement that the dog found a man at Mr. Burnham's office, and then ask the question: "*Why was not his home, which is two or three miles away, searched?*" The temerity of these people has in the fact that they will go on to say that Mr. Burnham's house was not searched, but that the Minister's house was searched.

I ask the Hon. Attorney-General to assist us. He is the guardian of the code of justice. I ask him to advise his more ignorant colleagues whether a man's home should be searched without evidence. He once said that he felt that these search warrants should not be issued unless evidence was taken and a *prima facie* case made out. If the Hon. Attorney-General has so advised his colleagues, then why was Mr. Merriman's house searched? Why was Mr. Correia's house searched?

[**Interruption**]

Mr. Burnham: They are so full of ignorance in this House that they do not even know that Mr. Kendall's house was ransacked.

[**Mr. Kendall:** My house was searched in my absence.]

Mr. Burnham: Burnham's Chambers were ransacked twice; Correia's house was ransacked, but they do not know about it. However, they know when Mr. Benn's house is ransacked and illegal ammunition found there.

Indeed, asks the Hon. Premier in one of his *non sequiturs*: "*Can there be one law for Ministers and another law for members of the Opposition?*" I would ask them, therefore, to have evidence sworn to before an impartial Justice of the Peace before search warrants are given to search homes. For instance, the Hon. Minister of Communications went to the West Coast, brandishing a gun and playing detective, and told the Police to search the homes of X, Y and Z because they were members of the PNC. My God, where are we going? What have we come to?

It seems to me, however, that, in addition to the stupidities, they are attacking the doctors on the West Coast of Demerara for discriminating. It seems to me also that this document which was issued by the ex-Minister of Home Affairs on Monday last was intended not only to denigrate the police but also to exacerbate feelings in this country to give the impression

that this lady from Chicago is even more solicitous about the welfare of the Indians than her husband himself the native-born Guianese from Port Mourant. Let me just refresh the memory with the fate of Jezebel, the fate of Saphira and the fate of Lady Macbeth. This document was issued on the eve of what were to be peace talks. Is there any peace in this, Sir? The People's National Congress is not interested, and was not interested, in the disagreement which existed between the Minister and her professional Head. Those were matters within their particular knowledge. They are both expatriates. One was particularly wanted by the other and her Government. But when the People's National Congress is dragged into it for no good reason it is time that we begin to ask ourselves whether the People's Progressive Party's nominal Leader is serious when he talks about peace, when he talks about getting together and, if he were to answer that he was serious and on this occasion would accept the consequences of any signature which he may append to any document, we then must ask ourselves whether he is speaking for the People's Progressive Party as a whole. The document not calculated to produce an atmosphere in which peaceful negotiations can take place.

The situation in our country today is so serious that we are forced to be generous enough to pay little heed to this libel on the People's National Congress and on the Police Force. The author of that document, in the final analysis, has another place to which she can flee. The author of that document cannot feel for our people's sufferings as we who are born, were bred, and no doubt will die here, can and must feel. We must not permit these birds of passage to becloud our view.

In the circumstances, the People's National Congress is prepared to offer positive proposals and suggestions for bringing to an end the unrest and violence which we now find in our country. First, we repeat our proposal that all arms should be called in, home-made and imported; an amnesty to be offered for those who give up or hand in their illegal arms, provided the illegal arms are handed in within a particular period. Further, that the powers of search for arms and explosives be increased and the penalties to be inflicted on persons found in possession of illegal arms after the expiry date of the amnesty be substantially increased.

Secondly, that a joint Council of the three Political Parties represented in the Legislature be set up to supervise and administer this exercise. Third, since our country, is at this moment rent by feuding factions and divided loyalties, I submit that we should agree – and this is the proposal of the People's National Congress without consultation with anyone – that a National Government be set up immediately in which all the three Parties in the Legislature should be involved; and this Government should carry on until elections are held under the system of Proportional Representation later this year.

Further, we propose that immediate steps be taken, after the formation of this National Government, to bring unemployment relief both to the

people in the rural areas and the people in the urban areas, and there be a shift, if necessary, of funds from certain works which may not be considered as high priority.

We also propose that there should be an invitation issued to all the religious and social organisations in this country to cooperate in a programme of education of the people with a special reference to racial amity.

In addition, as I proposed some time ago, let us invite a team of sociologists from the University of the West Indies to do a certain amount of research work on our peculiar racial problem and to advise us. I am aware of the fact that the Premier has not been averse from this proposal which I made to him in September of last year.

This National Government, which I propose, apart from holding until elections and ensuring to the public by the example of cooperation between the various political leaders, apart from setting the example, apart from providing an atmosphere where people can start thinking, should also make provision for adequate compensation to those who have suffered as a result of the recent acts of violence and provide for their rehabilitation back into the areas whence they came.

If we persist in allowing or encouraging persons to migrate from a community in which they are a minority to another community in which their ethnic group is the majority, we are in fact carrying out in practice though we may deny it in theory – partition or zonism. Those Africans who have fled from Indian areas must be rehabilitated back. Those Indians who have fled or been driven from African areas must be rehabilitated back to the areas whence they came.

It is to be noted – and I say this quite clearly – that the formation of a National Government as proposed by the People's National Congress, must be of the three Parties. The details of the terms and conditions can be worked out, provided there is the spirit and the desire to bring to an end the present troubles. This is not the time for ideological quarrels and quirks. Those cranks who would repeat the out-worn shibboleths and words which they do not understand must be kept out because, as I see it, this is a national crisis. The National Government which we propose is to hold office until the elections. It will need a common acceptance by all three Parties represented here in the Legislature, and that would also mean automatically acceptance by the entire country.

We of the PNC have given further thought to the position of the sugar industry. Mr. Crocker, of the *Observer*, writing on the information which he has had at his disposal over a number of years, in an article in the *Trinidad Guardian*, observed that Booker Brothers have always been sympathetic to and in support of the People's Progressive Party. Without attempting to introduce any divisive concept I would say that this Government has not seriously tackled the decolonialising of the sugar industry. The sugar industry continues to be based on the plantation system though in other

parts of the world there has been greater emphasis on shifting it over to peasant cane-farming. Some of my less peaceful colleagues would say that no serious policy statement has been issued on this because of an attempt to play “*ducks and drakes*” or “*one for Parry and two for Knight*” between the governing Party and the sugar industry. I do not wish to be uncomplimentary; I merely say it has slipped them. The decolonialising of the sugar industry must be done with the Government participating, because it also introduces the question of Local Government organization of the greater part, or at least a large part of the rural areas.

One of the things that strikes one – and one does not have to come from abroad to recognise this – is the ghetto system which the sugar producers have set up in their extra-nuclear settlements. How can we hope in this way to make a success of racial integration if the sugar producers continue to set up these extra-nuclear ghettos in which we have people exclusively of one ethnic group gathered together? That is something which must be positively tackled by this National Government. I have mentioned sugar particularly (I do not take sugar nowadays because I am getting too fat) not because of wanting to embarrass the Government, but simply because the whole trouble started in the sugar industry, and the steady tune of the Government has always been about “*these sugar barons who are exploiting the population.*” I know that some of the more irresponsible elements of the PPP have actually suggested that the sugar barons were the persons who killed the Sealeys, and no doubt they will also say that they are responsible for the death of Munroe and Gunraj. If, as the Government contends, there is this exploitation by the sugar barons; if, as the Government contends, these sugar barons are a law unto themselves, then something must be done to reform and decolonialise the sugar industry which is the *fons* of all this trouble we have in this country, as the Premier would have us believe.

The People’s National Congress makes these proposals in open Chamber. We do not like the secrecy of closed meetings where feeble memories sometimes give differing reports of identical incidents or statements. We are prepared to enter into discussion at any time on these proposals. The first one, of course, must deal with arms because it is our contention that although a great deal of the violence which has been taking place over the past few months has not been due to actual shooting – I think the smaller part has been due to the use of firearms – the fact of the possession and/or accessibility of firearms is a source of great tension. If X who belongs to one group is here, and Y of the other group is next door, and X boasts that “*we have guns*”, Y’s immediate reaction is to destroy X before X gets out his *cache*. To put it the other way: if Y were known to have a gun and sworn to use it or to have access to arms, and X gets afraid, his human reaction would be to destroy Y before Y destroys him. One would be surprised to know the amount of tension which is engendered by the knowledge or the boasting of possession of arms in this country

I concede that when one calculates the number of killings, there is a greater number killed by ordinary violence, the use of sticks, cutlasses, etc.

rather than by guns. But the guns themselves are a source of tension and very frequently people attack with sticks those whom they suspect of having arms or who are known to have arms.

This is a serious time. I have been unapologetic and caustic in my criticism of the Government's handling of the situation. I think that they have not only mishandled the situation but they have refused to be intelligent and humble enough to listen to the points of view of other Guianese who love their country no less than they. They have preferred excursions to foreign climes like London where they threatened a Cyprus situation, or New York where, before the United Nations Committee of 24, they alleged that the majority of people are against this and against that. But all of that I am prepared to forget.

I am happy to learn that the Premier has agreed with me that there is no need for us to travel to Trinidad but that if the good Prime Minister of Trinidad would like to offer his services, to help us to discover areas of agreement which we had missed before, we would be his ready, most hospitable and most generous hosts. I am happy to hear in a statement made by the Hon. Premier yesterday that he agrees with me now that our problems must be settled here, not at the Annual Conference of the Labour Party doing the twist, not by having tea with Sir Hilton Poynton, Permanent Under-Secretary to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, not in the White Hall of Trinidad, nor, Sir, in Peking. Our problems have to be settled here.

I feel a certain amount of hope that when we are ready to write our final Constitution for Independence, my good ex-friend the Premier, will agree with me that we must sit down to write it here instead of in London, where, according to his false impression of 1962, there are better facilities available. There are no better facilities than those in this country and I am hoping – and this I say seriously – that if the proposals of the People's National Congress are accepted in principle, signatures will be honoured in future.

**First House of Assembly Constituted
under the British Guiana (Constitution)
Orders 1961 to 1964**

Congratulations to the Speaker: 31st December, 1964

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Speaker, I crave a certain indulgence before the House proceeds to formal business to offer on behalf of my Government our congratulations and felicitations to you upon being elected to the honourable and dignified office of Speaker of this House. You follow in the footsteps of illustrious Speakers, without attempting to be invidious, the last being Mr. Rahaman B. Gajraj, and all of them have imparted to the high office that dignity and impartiality which are in keeping with the highest traditions of the office. Mr. Gajraj, I have reason to believe, will be serving our Government and country in another capacity, and I feel that I can do very little better than to commend him and his example to you, Sir.

It has been my good fortune to know you for a number of years, so long that it would be embarrassing to mention, but I still remember the occasions when you had reason to chastise me. It seems a curious twist of fate, that having been in the position to chastise me as a boy, you should now, as Speaker, be in a position to chastise me again, but I know and expect that you will use your power with the same discretion, the same feeling and the same humanity with which you used it in another place.

I have no doubt that your task will be far from an easy one, but I am certain that your abilities, your capacities and your experience will help you to carry out that task with success, and with the approval of all of us in this House and outside of the House.

May I also take this opportunity to wish you, sir, and Mrs. Alleyne a very happy 1965, a useful 1965 and a 1965 which will see you and your family doing sterling service to our country and to our community.

As you have already granted me the indulgence, I pray a further indulgence to offer congratulations to the Deputy Speaker, Mr. Rupert Tello, who today was elected to that office. I have known Mr. Tello in various places in various capacities, and I have no doubt that the experience which he, too, brings to this high office will be of inestimable value in the execution of his duties. I desire also to extend the good wishes for 1965 to Mrs. Tello.

I also desire to extend to the Members of this House, on behalf of the Government of British Guiana headed by me, the very best wishes for 1965, and I undertake that my Government will serve faithfully, fairly and impartially, but fearlessly. Mr. Speaker, I thank you.

Emergency Regulations: 18th May, 1965

Mr. Burnham: I readily concede that the subject matter of this question is of the utmost importance. I also concede to my learned friend, the Hon. Dr. Ramsahoye, that it is most undesirable to have people detained without their being given an opportunity to appear before a properly constituted Court and an impartial tribunal. I am not in any way affected by some of the platitudes that have been uttered. I am not in any way influenced by those who would recognise one imperialist jackboot and then turn the Nelson eye towards the other imperialist jackboot. I must say this: that I have been considerably moved and affected by the observations made by the Hon. Mr. Benn, and I want to state that as Head of this Government I am concerned about the fact that there are Guianese who have lost their freedom of movement and at the moment are at Sibley Hall. But I want to say this: that it is conceded, and has been conceded by even the most ardent supporters of the request for the release of the detainees, that every Government has the intrinsic right to seek to preserve the peace of the country.

I seem to recall that in 1962 and 1963 there were emergencies, and I cannot help remembering that in this Chamber the then Premier, Dr. Jagan, told us that he was maintaining the state of emergency even though he thought that peace had been restored in 1963, to permit GIMPEX to get rid of certain goods which had come into the country.

[Member of the Opposition: Lie.]

Mr. Burnham: Let us forget that, however. I am not interested in trying to ascertain which side started what or which side did what. In this context let me be perfectly frank and fair. I am reminded of the anecdote in which Mr. Lyttleton said to Lady Mountbatten: "*Lady Mountbatten, have you heard of the atrocities in Kenya?*" Lady Mountbatten replied: "*Yes, Mr. Lyttleton, on both sides.*" I am not interested, therefore, in the context of what took place in 1964, in seeking to show who had the terrorists, who had the more terrorists, or who had the smaller band of terrorists. It is clear for the world to see that persons were killed on both sides, arson took place on both sides, and that the disturbances were certainly not one-sided. I am not even interested in ascertaining who began it, because it is only going to start a long academic argument which will achieve nothing.

First of all let me remind those who are pressing for the removal of the emergency, that it was on my initiative two days before Christmas, even though the formal power was not in the hands of the Government, that a number of persons who were detained were released. Let me remind my good friends that under the Emergency Order and Regulations as they

stand now there are no limitations of any consequence on personal freedom, except for the detention. I listened in vain to those who are members of my profession for them to specify the incursions which have been made, apart from the detention. Let me say this: that this Government is anxious to bring the State of Emergency to an end. This Government is anxious to see that there is a reversion to what we have been accustomed to years ago, of persons being incarcerated only for offences with which they have been charged, and after conviction if they are sentenced. But this is not a one-sided matter. Unless there is the suggestion that the spirits of Goering and Hitler are roaming amongst the supporters of the two Parties in the Government, one must ask oneself who is responsible for the recent bombing at Mon Repos, who is responsible for the bombing of aqueducts, who is responsible for the disappearance of explosives from certain quarries?

[**Mr. Hubbard:** Let the Minister of Home Affairs answer the question put to him.]

Mr. Burnham: Let us ask ourselves as big men, who are responsible for these things? Certainly not the supporters of the Government.

I am making two offers to the Opposition this evening. First, the Hon. Dr. Ramsahoye says that the tribunal as constituted with certain rules is an unsatisfactory body. I am prepared to discuss a change of those rules. Secondly, I am prepared to discuss with the Leader of the Opposition ways and means, including public appeals and energetic action, to bring to an end these disgusting acts of sabotage which are resulting in loss of public property. I throw this out seriously. We can come together if there is a desire on both sides to re-establish peace in this country and to bring to an end these acts of sabotage and utter destruction. I think we have reached the stage when we should suspend.

At the time the suspension was taken, I was putting forward certain proposals which I would seek your indulgence and that of the House to repeat. Perhaps before I put them forward I would like to emphasise a point or two. The main point is that this Government is not interested in keeping persons detained for the fun of keeping them detained. There is no advantage that accrues from that, in fact it is expensive to the Government because as will be conceded and admitted, since the time that the representations were made, the fare and other conveniences have been of a very much higher order than one finds in the prisons. I do not want to appear to be ungracious nor in any way rude, but it is the sort of fare which, in many cases, is better than that found in some homes, so it is a source of expense to us. Further, this Government is not happy at having to carry on an administration in the context of the Emergency Order being in force, but in the final analysis it is to be appreciated from our own experience and from that of our predecessors in office and from the

experience of Governments and persons outside of this country, that that type of legislation is sometimes necessary as an ultimate sanction.

The Hon. Minister of Home Affairs observed that the Power of Detention without Trial Order has been extant in India since 1950 without any interruption.

The Hon. Mr. Benn has just returned to Guiana after a visit to Africa. He will no doubt know that in Ghana there is a Preventive Detention Act. Therefore it does seem that all countries find the necessity for this type of legislation. This Government, at this moment feels that the maintaining of this legislation is necessary.

I should like to offer my sympathy and commiseration to the Hon. Mr. Wilson for the mishap. I should like to assure him that a bacchoo was not responsible. We have no vested interest in his disappearance from the scene for, under the Constitution and the rules of Election, he will be replaced by another member of his Party. We would be no better off.

In various parts of the world this type of legislation has been necessary in the context of the security situation. As we see it and understand it, it continues to be necessary. I was offering quite seriously and earnestly, two proposals to the Opposition. Firstly, let the Hon. Dr. Ramsahoye or someone speaking on behalf of his Party, with legal training preferably, because the question he has raised is primarily a legal question, come in and discuss with us in what way these rules under which the Tribunal operates can be amended to remove the disadvantages to which he alluded.

It has been stated that the rules are such as to give the detainee applying to have his case heard before the Tribunal, the onus or the difficulty of having to establish his innocence. I am prepared to accept the Hon. Member's word. I, myself, do not know these rules in any depth or with any thoroughness. I accept his word and this is a matter which we can discuss so that a greater opportunity may be given to the detainees who may agree to apply to the Tribunal to defend themselves against charges. I would further want to say that one of the things which has led this Government to feel that the time is not right, is the constant acts of violence which have been perpetrated not against human beings but against public property.

The latest incident we have had is the one at Mon Repos. Prior to that we have had incidents like the destruction of the office of the District Commissioner at Enmore.

We have had private property destroyed, such as aqueducts on sugar estates. There has been destruction of the railway station at Uitvlugt, and we have also had destruction of telephone poles. It seems to me that if we want to look at this matter seriously, and we do not intend to indulge in cheap politicking and fulminations of imaginative minds, it is clear that though I would not for one moment suggest that any of these Hon. Members sitting on the benches to the West are personally responsible or

involved in these things, the group or groups of persons responsible for these acts are not supporters of the Hon. Members sitting to the East, and are more likely – I want to be as conciliatory as possible – to be supporters of the Party to which Hon. Members sitting to the West belong. And I am to assume that if a serious attempt were made by the Party concerned to impress upon those over-zealous *soi-disant* revolutionaries the stupid waste of taxpayers' money which their acts result in, and to call them off, so to speak, then of course it would be possible for us to remove the Emergency and the necessity to detain persons. May I add one small point. It has been said that those 14 persons which are now detained would not be the persons responsible for the acts to which reference has been made. That may be so, but certainly none of us are so naïve as to believe that their continued detention may not save the country from more serious and more frequent acts of this type.

I merely mention that *en passant*, with no desire to threaten at all, no desire, as the Hon. Mr. Hubbard would think, to impress the fact that we have power. As long as you are not a set of idiots, you must have power. Therefore it is childish to repeat "*I have power*". But I would like to mention that in the present state of things this Government may find it necessary in other cases to have other persons detained. It is a most unpleasant duty, but it is a duty we owe to the community. And whether one likes it or not, this is the Government of British Guiana – let me say, for the time being, but so long as that time lasts we have a duty on which we shall never renege. We shall never declare our incompetence to deal with this situation. I would like the Opposition to understand that we are seeking their cooperation in getting over to those people who are continuing these acts of sabotage and violence that it is not in the best interest of the country, and that as soon as the security situation permits there will be an end to detention.

As far as my memory serves me that is the only major provision under the Emergency. There is, of course, one which carries an exceptionally heavy penalty for destruction. But that is something which could easily have been promulgated under the Summary Jurisdiction Ordinance, Chapter 14. It is true that Emergency Regulations were made to promulgate that legislation, and it is something we could have come into this House and used our majority to promulgate. Therefore it is not something which flows irresistibly from the Emergency. It is not possible in a debate of this kind in this forum; it is not possible in any other forum for us to publicly disclose what information we have at our disposal. As a matter of fact that information is locked in the breasts of only two of the Ministers according to traditional practice – the information we have on the persons who are detained.

It is strange that appeals have been made in some cases and not in others but, if the situation warrants, certainly they will all be released. It will be cheaper to the Government. We can better spend the money we are

spending on them giving them beer and cigarettes, and I understand that some of them have a taste for expensive imported cigarettes. We can well spend that money providing jobs for some of the unemployed.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Begin with your allowances.]

Mr. Burnham: I understand that we will discuss after 9 o'clock the question of allowances, and I would ask the Hon. Mr. Ram Karran not to be so 'previous', but to reserve his remarks for that time. I personally am always at the disposal of the leader of the Opposition, or of the Hon. Dr. Ramsahoye or anyone else who wants to discuss the two matters. I am very anxious that there should be an end to the present state of affairs, but let not reluctance to take salutary and ruthless action be mistaken for weakness.

Death Sentence for two Rhodesians: 25th May, 1965

Mr. Burnham: I do not propose to speak at any great length on this matter because it is a Motion which I think will be readily accepted, and furthermore, the Hon. Mr. Sancho has dealt with it quite thoroughly. What I really got up to do is to ask the Hon. Mover – I concede that I ought to have done it before – whether he would add to his Motion a clause to the effect that a copy of the Motion be forwarded to H.M. Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs, because by one of those strange quirks and, shall I say as an instance of discrimination in favour of the unrepresentative Rhodesian Government, the British Cabinet Minister responsible for Rhodesia, which is not independent, is the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Affairs. I would merely ask the Hon. Member whether he would be prepared to graft that Amendment, so to speak, onto the Motion.

Apart from that I think all I can and ought to say at this moment is that a Motion like this deserves the unanimous support of this House; deserves the support of all Guianese.

Motion on Proclamation No. 2 of 1965 State of Emergency: 13th July, 1965

Mr. Burnham: Mr. Speaker, on Friday of last week, the 9th July, I gave notice of a Motion which I now move. This Motion seeks to have the period of Emergency extended by three months from the date on which it would normally expire – to wit, fourteen days after 6th July – under paragraph 3 (b) of Article 14 of the British Guiana constitution.

It may be remembered that in May of last year, the previous Government saw fit to advise the Governor to declare a State of Emergency under Article 14, and to issue a Proclamation to that effect. That period, as a result of subsequent Orders-in-Council promulgated by Her Majesty in Council, eventually would have come to an end during the course of this month – to be precise, the 19th July. It is thought fit to prolong or extend that period, for which extension there is enabling power under Article 14, paragraph 3, of the Constitution.

In moving this Motion, I should like to state that this Government -

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Is a puppet Government.]

Mr. Burnham: - has thought it fit that there should be an extension. Everyone is aware that when the Regulations under the Emergency Orders are promulgated, a great deal of power is given to suspend certain ordinary rights of citizens, both with respect to their personal liberty and freedom, and with respect to property.

As at present advised, this Government does not propose to invoke the entire gamut of the Regulations. I would be forthright and plain and say that the Regulations under which this Government seeks to make Orders – and to continue making Orders – are those Regulations which give the Government the power to deal with certain factious elements in the community, persons who consider it a lark to belong to the exclusive society of revolutionaries, to commit acts of violence chiefly by the use of high explosives against Government buildings and structures, and also against semi-public property, the destruction of which can have an effect on the economy of the country.

It is my conviction, as a result of my personal observation, that the majority of people in British Guiana – and here I am in harmony with the Hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye – do not indulge in violence, do not find any source of pleasure in these acts of violence, and are sick of these acts of violence. There is not the widespread violence which was found in 1964, but, from the real evidence, it is obvious that there is still a group – the size of which is comparatively small when one considers the population of our country – that is bent on the perpetration of these acts of violence. Some of

the perpetrators appear to be paid, without having political conviction; others of rather weak intellect -

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Like Jordan.]

Mr. Burnham: - have been persuaded that this is a means of preventing the entry of this country into independence. There are still others who believe that they can maintain a certain moral leadership, within their particular political group, by counselling, procuring and encouraging violence.

The system seems to be a conspiratorial one. In such cases, it has been observed by a Committee of the Privy Council, which sat in 1955, that though one may obtain the necessary information, it is neither expedient nor safe for the source, to disclose the source. It is to be regretted that this Government, in exercise of the powers conferred upon it by the Constitution, has had need to detain certain key figures in this operation which I should like to describe as 'Operation Violence'.

I should like to take time off to express my regret that I found it necessary, by virtue of the powers vested in me by the Constitution, to submit advice to His Excellency the Governor that a Member of this House should be detained.

[**An Hon. Member (Opposition):** Crocodile tears.]

Mr. Burnham: It is interesting to know that the atheists are more facile in prayer and in calling the name of God. I am merely saying that it is a source of regret, but it is a matter of duty in all the circumstances.

I want to say further, that if one were to observe the operation of the Emergency, one would know that there has been no attempt to restrict the public's right of freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, or any of the normal freedoms which one associates with a democratic society.

There will be a hue and cry about this being undemocratic. There will be, even by those adulators of Chou-en-Lai who are going on private business to China, and attempt to suggest that this is undemocratic. But what is significant is that this is a power which is contained in Article 14 of the Constitution and it is for the Government of the day, provided it can command a majority, to decide in what circumstance there is the necessity to have the Emergency Order extant and in what circumstance which of the regulations ought to be used and/or applied.

I can assure the general public of Guyana that these powers will not be capriciously, exercised. I can assure them that what a man says and the criticisms which he makes of political opponents do not enter into the considerations which dictate the signing of Detention Orders. Detention Orders are signed after there is, in the usual way which we find in cases of

this type, enough material to show that the individuals have been actively engaged in the perpetration of certain acts of sabotage and violence. It is of course a source of fear to anyone who is involved. I had to assure my Hon. and learned Friend Dr. Ramsahoye that he need have no fear because from the information at our disposal his only familiarity with things explosive is limited to gasoline at election time.

I want to say that after the security situation improves this Government will be prepared to recommend the revocation of the Emergency Order but in the meantime, I should like to make it quite clear that we will pursue every method and every means to protect the rest of the community from persons who would like to disturb the peace by acts of violence with explosives.

The only words of sense which came from the western section of this House when the Motion of Privilege was being debated came from the Hon. Dr. Ramsahoye when he suggested that a Committee of Privileges ought to be set up. I want at this stage to give Members of this House the assurance that such a Committee will shortly be set up after there have been the necessary discussions between both sides of the House.

There has been some dispute here as to whether or not the Opposition Members were willing to sit on committees. We shall once more give an opportunity to the Members of the Opposition to avail themselves of the right to sit on various committees, more especially the Committee of Privileges.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Or at Sibley Hall.]

Mr. Burnham: There is enough room at that mansion for all who play with detonators and dynamite. I should like to assure those who would like to be involved in these things that in the exercise of our duty no man is too high to be the guest of the Government at Sibley Hall.

International Commission of Jurists: 29th July, 1965

Mr. Burnham: I beg to give notice of the introduction and First Reading of a Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to confer certain powers on the Commission of Inquiry constituted by the International Commission of Jurists for the purpose of carrying out certain investigations in relation to British Guiana.”

The Governor’s signification in terms of Standing Order 21 has been handed to the Clerk and laid over.

I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order 46 to permit this Bill, the First Reading of which we have just had, to be carried through all its stages at this sitting.

I beg to move the Second Reading of a Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to confer certain powers on the Commission of Inquiry constituted by the International Commission of Jurists for the purpose of carrying out certain investigations in relation to British Guiana.”

Mr. Speaker, the primary purpose of requesting you to summon the House today is to take this Bill, the International Commission of Jurists (Commission of Inquiry) Bill, 1965, through all its stages. It is, no doubt, notorious that some time earlier this year, as a result of certain representations and allegations, the Government of British Guiana requested the International Commission of Jurists to mount a mission to inquire into the question of the balance of the various ethnic groups in the security forces, the Public Service, and any other significant areas of Government responsibility.

That request was acceded to by the International Commission of Jurists and, subsequently, three gentlemen learned in the law were appointed. They are: Mr. Justice Seamus Henchy of Ireland to be Chairman, Professor Felix Ermacora of Austria, and Professor Peter A. Papadatos of Greece. They will constitute the actual Commission.

There is, in the laws of British Guiana, a Commission of Inquiry Ordinance, Chapter 59. A number of specific powers are given to any Commission of Inquiry appointed under that Ordinance, powers which are intended to facilitate the taking of evidence, the production of documents in the interest of ascertaining the facts which are being investigated or which are the subject matter of the Commission of Inquiry.

Under the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance, Chapter 59, however, the Governor makes the appointment of the Commission, which appointment, under Article 22 of the British Guiana Constitution, 1961, has to be on the advice of the Governor. The request to the International Commission of Jurists, to which I have made reference, was that the International Commission of Jurists appoint a Commission. Therefore the appointment of the Commission itself is one stage removed, so to speak, from the competence of the Government.

It might have been possible, perhaps, for this Government to advise His Excellency the Governor, under Chapter 59, to name these three jurists to whom I have made reference, as a Commission of Inquiry and therefore, to confer upon them, automatically, certain powers with respect to the reception of evidence and the examination of witnesses. But in theory, if not in practice, the impression that might have been conveyed was that this Commission which is to carry out the Inquiry, was, in fact, a Commission directly appointed by the Government. After having gone to the trouble of seeking the assistance of leave and leaving the discretion to the International Commission of Jurists, the Government has considered that it would be ill-advised, by any act, to give the impression that this Commission, even so far as the personnel is concerned, is appointed direct by the Government. The purpose of this Ordinance, therefore, is really to confer certain powers on the Commission of Inquiry constituted by the International Commission of Jurists.

There seems to have been some misapprehension abroad, which, I think, has been contributed to largely by certain irresponsible sections of the press. Perhaps, for the record, we may note that in 1962, when the previous Government in its typical colonial tradition, asked Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies to appoint a Commonwealth Commission to inquire into the disturbances which took place in February 1962, there was, on the 29th March, 1962, an Order in Council promulgated by Her Majesty in Council which gave the power to the British Government to do so.

The least said about some of its findings the better, because while one side speaks about the ambitions of the present Premier, another side speaks about the intellectual limitations of the then Premier. Therefore we had better not go on about the findings of that Commission which consisted of Sir Henry Wynn Parry, Sir Edward Asafu-Adjaye, and Justice G.D. Khosla. The warrant under which that Commission functioned give to the said Commission – and mind you this warrant was a warrant promulgated by the British Government – in sum, the powers enjoyed by a Commission of Inquiry under Chapter 59. Those powers are similar to, if not identical with the powers which we seek to confer upon the Commission of the International Commission of Jurists. There is nothing cynical about it. There are no ulterior motives.

If a Commission is to carry out an inquiry, there may be certain disputed facts and if facts are in dispute, one way so far invented is to let

the evidence be given on oath. I am not speaking of the unusual methods of brainwashing and things like that. But an oath cannot be administered by a group of persons or an individual unless there is statutory provision for the group, commission, or the individual to administer that oath.

I have already alluded to the Government's unwillingness to have the Commission appointed under Chapter 59. In the circumstances, therefore, if provision is to be made so that the members of this Commission may, from time to time if they deem it fit, receive evidence on oath, then an Ordinance is necessary. Of course it is also a fact that a person giving evidence on oath, for the falsity of which oath there can be punishment under the Summary Jurisdiction Offences Ordinance and the Criminal Offences Ordinance, is likely to be a little more careful and a little less reckless than if he were giving that evidence without oath. In sum that is the purpose of this Bill; to permit this commission to administer the oath; summon or have summoned witnesses to testify as in the case of the Commission, of inquiry Ordinance under Chapter 59. Those are the powers. No unusual power is being conferred upon this Commission.

Some persons more carping than intelligent in their criticisms may find something new about the proposed provision which seeks to give immunity to the members of this Commission in so far as any acts done by them in the execution of their duties in respect of the Commission are concerned. But that is nothing unusual either. Under the Commissions of Inquiry Ordinance, Chapter 59, the members of a Commission of Inquiry would automatically qualify to be described as Justices within the Justices Protection Ordinance. It is only fair to avoid all doubt and to make it pellucidly clear that the I.C.J. Commissioners will have the privileges and immunities provided under the Justices Protection Ordinance conferred upon them. That is the only provision which, at first blush, may appear to be unusual and out of the ordinary. In the circumstances I commend this Bill to the House and move that it be read a Second time.

Mr. Burnham (Replying): The Hon. Member Mr. Bhagwan has made what may be considered, from one point of view, some profound remarks, but they are not really germane to the question before the House. This is not a controversial Bill. This is a Bill to give a commission certain powers without which the Commission will not be able to carry out fully, in some instances, the purpose for has nothing to do with the question of racial balance or imbalance. That is a matter to be considered by the Commission on evidence written and oral. There is no desire to show undue haste, except such as the circumstances demand and compel. The Members of the Commission will be here next week and it is only proper, as in the case of all other commissions, that if they are to start work at the earliest possible point of time, they should have the necessary and proper powers.

I would hardly have found reason for discussing this Bill any further but for the remarks of my Hon. Friend Mr. Bhagwan. Perhaps what is worthy of discussion is the whole question of alleged imbalance in the various forces, services and areas of Government responsibility and activity. I believe those who did not know before know now that, when this question was raised earlier this year, I made known my willingness to discuss it and the whole subject with the Leader of the Opposition. I agree it is worthy of discussion, but it is not the Bill that is worthy of discussion, it is the subject of imbalance – real and alleged.

The Hon. Member, attempting a certain objectivity, still found it difficult to remove himself from his old horse. First of all, in this Bill, there is no question of Security Force or Police Force. Secondly, the Inquiry such as it is to be, is not limited to the Police Force. But then we had a typical dissertation on the history of the Police Force, the fact that it has been an instrument of our colonialist masters and all of that. But the Commission that has been appointed is not going to limit its inquiries to the Police Force. Mind you, one has got to concede that in a colonial Police Force there has been, and still is abroad, a certain amount of brutality which one does not find in the metropolitan Police Force. That seems to be one of the inevitable concomitants of colonial rule. Men, otherwise gentlemen in their homeland, become monsters when they go abroad, or perhaps they only export monsters; but that is not the question for discussion. The question is whether or not we should confer these powers so that the Commission which has been appointed can carry out certain inquiries.

May I say that the Hon. Member also confuses Police Force with Security Force. There are, in the country, three forces which together form the Security Force, but the Hon. Member did not raise this question again. Be it clear that the Government has very clear ideas on the purpose for which this question with respect to imbalance was raised. It is clear what should be done if the community is to be properly integrated. The Opposition raised the question of imbalance and the Government is anxious that no one should have real or imagined grievances in the context of our multiracial society.

It is perfectly sensible to adopt certain sociological approaches and to seek to supersede with Guianese the expatriates in the Force while ensuring the inculcation of a common nationalist sentiment and outlook. All this makes sense in words, if not otherwise. What the Hon. Member must appreciate, however, is that these sophistications are not so readily appreciated by persons upon whose minds there has been some work on the part of interested and cynical political groups. In the circumstances, therefore, the Government asked a international organisation, with the highest possible reputation, to amount a mission to look into this question and see what recommendations it may have to make. If the Government had come forward with recommendations, it might have been suggested that the recommendations have been coloured by political considerations.

I want to assure my Hon. friend, who obviously came here merely to say his piece, that we appreciate some of the observations he has made at the level of the *soi disant* socialist, but the fact is that this Commission has been appointed by the C.I.J., at our request, to look into the question of balance or imbalance and to make findings as to whether, in its opinion, such imbalances as exist are proof of discrimination and are harmful to the community. That is all there is to it.

The Government proposes to proceed with the exercise. The Report is expected late September or early October. The Government is not unaware of the shortcomings of the Police Force, and many other forces. The Government views with concern this head counting, this talk about balance in every office. The Government proposes to take certain steps in respect of this, but this Commission will proceed with its work and that is what we are interested in today.

If the Hon. Member feels disposed to discuss the question with myself or any Member of the Government we will be most willing to enter into discussions with him. We do not casually dismiss him because he represents a point of view, a point of view struggling to be heard, a point of view with no merit, but which, in the context of democracy must be given the courtesy of consideration. The offer which I make to him I make to all Members of the Opposition, but the Commission will sit. Hence I ask that this Bill be read a Second time.

Motion on the Extension of Proclamation of Emergency: 8th October, 1965

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move the Motion standing in my name on the Order Paper. The import and purpose of this Motion is in terms of the provisions of the Constitution, more particularly Article 14, to extend the period of the Emergency to the 17th January, 1966. If, of course, the situation changes and the Government is of the view that there is no longer any necessity for having certain provisions of the Emergency extant, then that period can be shortened by an Order. I commend the Motion to the House.

Mr. Burnham (Replying): The Motion which I proposed is a simple one. The reason for proposing the Motion is a simple one. Every state has the right to protect its people from acts such as those which we have witnessed over a period of time. We have debated this question on at least three previous occasions this year. The Government has demonstrated its sincerity by its willingness to release -

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Chippy Graham?]

Mr. Burnham: - three detainees recently.

It is a little difficult to understand the constant allusions to democracy from those who dishonour democracy within their own party; who do away with elections within their own party; who, according to the evidence of the Hon. Member Mr. Bhagwan, downgrade people for racial reasons. It is a little difficult to understand some individuals who know for a fact that during the disturbances which we had, they themselves were involved and took a callous attitude towards the people.

It is my submission that we have had a particularly interesting contribution from the Hon. Member Mr. Bhagwan, but it is rather in the air on a question like this. It is flowery. In parts it was very revealing. In fact I took such a long time before getting up to reply because I thought that his ex-colleagues would have wanted to reply to the remarks which he made. But let us be serious.

Assuming the relevance of some of these observations made by this new non-political Political Party which calls itself the CNR, where are the proposals? We are entitled to some proposals and suggestions. There may be talk about a number of strikes. Unlike our predecessors, we accept the fact that there have been strikes. Unlike our predecessors we have set a new minimum wage. Unlike our predecessors we have set up machinery to look into the workers' grievances which, in many cases, we have discovered have been legacies for over a number of years.

We are not unmindful of the attitude of some employers who believe that the accession to office of this Government means a return of the old days, and we have made it quite clear that there will certainly be no return of the good old days, when workers were treated as less than human beings. But whatever may be said about these subjects, the fact remains that it is Government, the executive, that makes the decision. That is one of the rules of the game. It is no question of whimsical usurpation of power.

The little individuals do not understand the difference between a Government that is supported by 54 percent of the electorate and a Government which was supported by 42 percent of the electorate.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Why don't you tell Sandys?]

Mr. Burnham: That is what we told Sandys and perhaps that is why your 'much-writing' Leader wrote to him.

I want to assure the House that the detainees will be kept there no longer than is considered necessary.

Now we hear a certain legalistic sophistry coming from my Hon. and learned friend, about the descent into constitutional vandalism. What does all that mean? When you have a written Constitution, there is premised the fact that there are acts which are *intra vires* the Constitution, and there are acts which are *ultra vires* the Constitution. If my Hon. and learned friend considers this Emergency an act of vandalism, there are courts in which he can protest. It is a little disconcerting to see that those who benefited from the indulgence of the courts in a famous election case, the gasolene case to wit, should be now talking about the integrity of the same court. It is an ingratitude for a Doctor of Philosophy to attack the integrity of the Supreme Court; a more indulgent court to him I have never seen.

There is, first, the machinery for testing the validity of the Proclamation of an Emergency. Secondly, regardless of what may be said, there is a Tribunal to which appeals may be made.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Did Jordan go to it?]

Mr. Burnham: Yes. I have made an offer in this House quite seriously, but if there is any scintilla of truth in any of the remarks of the Hon. Member, Mr. Moses Bhagwan, it is this: to the Members of the Opposition the detainees are political footballs.

I once offered the Hon. ex-Attorney General the opportunity of discussing with me – on his letterhead he has the words 'Formerly Attorney-General'. I have never seen a member of the legal profession do that. That is vulgar. As I was saying. I offered the Hon. Member, Dr. Ramsahoye, the opportunity of discussing with me what he considered the weaknesses inherent or endemic in the articles in the Constitution with respect to the tribunal. I have not had the advantage of hearing from him in writing or orally.

I have offered to the Leader of the Opposition the opportunity of our coming together and discussing the question of these subversive acts and acts of violence and making a common appeal. I have been unsuccessful. I would say to the Members of the Opposition that the ball is really in their court, on this question. The Government is particularly anxious to have discussions on setting up a tribunal which is considered more efficacious for dealing with appeals by those persons who are in detention. The Government is anxious, and repeats its anxiety by way of offer to discuss with the Political Party in opposition ways and means of collaborating to bring to an end to the state of affairs where Government property and semi-public property are the objects of wanton and vandalistic destruction. The offer is here.

If this offer were accepted and then Government proved adamant, proved unreceptive to suggestions and proposals, then, indeed, there were grounds for this long diatribe on the extension of the Emergency.

By talking about democracy, there may be a certain little capital to be gained by people who praise States where the powers of arbitrary arrest and detention are much more far-reaching than those conferred by the Emergency Proclamation on this Government. It may be good political capital for them to forget their present friends, whom they visit so regularly, and then to come here and deliver dissertations on democracy, but what the Government wants is certain amount of seriousness.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** In America, black people are shot down in the road.]

Mr. Burnham: They shoot them down in America and that is bad, but they shoot them down in the People's Progressive Party and take two foreigners to rule. Let me repeat the lines:

"Had I but served my God with half the zeal I served my King, he would not in mine age have left me naked to mine enemies."

As I was saying, we are open to suggestions. I have said so to the leader of the People's Progressive Party. We are open to suggestions; we are willing to indulge in talks. In the meantime, if the Opposition believes that it can gain political capital and give the impression of being unbending revolutionaries by refusing to talk, the Government cannot be blamed for executing its duties in the way and in the manner it thins fit.

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** Remove the barbed wire.]

Mr. Burnham: We have time. If the situation improves, the Opposition can be assured that the Order will be revoked. If the situation does not improve, another Motion will be passed.

[Mr. Ram Karran: You can't do it on your own; the Yankee must tell you to remove it.]

National Cane Farming Committee Bill – In Committee: 19th October, 1965

Mr. Burnham: As the Hon. Minister of Agriculture said, all of us on the Government Benches are sympathetic to the point made by the Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran. This hardly seems to be the Ordinance in which you can deal with a question like that. Let us look at the structure of the Ordinance. If you say that the Committee is to fix a reasonable price, since it is provided that every one of the members of the various sections of the Committee has a veto, you will never get a reasonable price that is agreed, if there is any conflict. There is other machinery which the Government proposes to bring into operation for this purpose.

The ex-Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Hubbard, whose presence we welcome today, ought to appreciate that the question of price-fixing of a product is really connected with the marketing of the product – any organisation or machinery you may set up for the marketing of the product. I should like to say, quite clearly, that it is proposed to set up machinery for the fixing of a reasonable price, in all the circumstances, taking into account the so-called 'waste' of bagasses which is supposed to accrue to the farmers, so to speak.

The Members of the Opposition cannot be more concerned than the Members of the Government. It seems to me that the Rip van Winkles, though they did not sleep for twenty years, have now awakened with a certain solicitude for the cane farmers. This Government is in the process of establishing certain machinery for the decolonization of the sugar industry, giving a greater and dominant say to the people and to Government in the running of the sugar industry.

The point is taken but, in the proper place, within the proper niche, within the proper institution, it will be taken care of. May I, on behalf of the Government, express my deep gratitude to the Hon. Member Mr. Ram Karran for this proposal which, in any case, the Government had in mind.

Motion on the Second Reading of British Guiana (Constitution) (Adaptation and Modification of Laws) Bills: 19th October, 1965

A Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to make provision in view of the British Guiana (Constitution) Order in Council, 1961, for the conferment on the Governor of powers expressed by law to be exercisable by the Governor and Legislative Council.” [The Premier]

Mr. Burnham: I beg to move that Standing Order No. 46, more particularly paragraphs (2) and (3), be suspended to permit the passage through the House, of Bill No. 33 – British Guiana (Constitution) (Adaptation and Modification of Laws) Bill, 1965.

[Question put, and agreed to.]

[Standing Order suspended.]

Mr. Burnham: This is really a tidying up operation, which we have to go through before independence. Wherever in any of these old Ordinances there appears the phrase “*Governor and Legislative Council*” it should mean – especially in the case of the Rules and Regulations Ordinance – the Governor in terms of the Constitution on the advice of the Council of Ministers. To reserve the right of the Legislature where the peoples’ representatives sit to pronounce, there should be provision for allowing all Orders to be annulled within a certain time if it is the wish of the Legislature.

I, therefore, move that this Bill be read a second time.

Mr. Burnham (Replying): There seems to be a certain amount of misapprehension. The last speaker who, I would submit, used his time aimlessly would have us believe that this measure, if enacted, would keep away from the Legislature any control over delegated legislative powers, and that there would be no opportunity given in the House to review, revoke, amend or alter, any regulation, rule, or order, promulgated by the Executive. That is not the intention.

He who runs may read that it is proposed under paragraphs (a) and (b) of Clause 2 to make it compulsory for the validity of any such rule, regulation or order, for it to be laid on the table here, leaving at the same time the right to any Member of the Legislature, within a period of 14 days, to move an annulling motion.

[**Mr. Hubbard:** It may not be tabled.]

It is reasonable for all men to believe that others will behave and operate as they would. It is reasonable for those who have been a part of the previous administration to believe that their successors in office will keep from the Order Paper for two years Motions that are tabled by Members of the House, but we, for example, put on the Order Paper a Motion by the Hon. Member, Mr. Benn, and then he turns around and withdraws it so that it falls to the ground, and we now hear his colleague, the ex-nominated Minister of Trade and Industry, accusing us.

[**Mr. Hubbard:** Motions have not been circulated yet.]

Mr. Burnham: In any case it will take us seven years to be in a position to compare our behaviour on this question with that of our predecessors.

Let me say this quite clearly: I am not going to accept any Amendment with respect to the time within which a Motion will be debated. I am prepared to say quite clearly that any annulling Motion may be brought up within a reasonable time – by reasonable I mean no more than a few days after the expiry of the time during which it may be tabled.

Now, these newly-arrived democrats are insisting that a Motion be brought up at the end of the 30-days period. How can a Motion be brought up at the end of the 30 days? That would be to deny the Members of this House the full period as provided for in this enactment. The Hon. Member, Dr. Ramsahoye, said we were hiding behind the truth. How accurately he spoke, though unintentionally! The truth is that this Government proposes to table every Motion, and every regulation or bit of subsidiary legislation which previously had to be made by the Governor and Legislative Council, and will give the House of Assembly an opportunity to pass an annulling resolution.

I hear for the first time that there are provisions in our laws giving legislative power to the Governor and Legislation Council. I would be very grateful to the Hon. Member, Mr. Chase, - and let me say in all humility that there are times when a junior may teach a senior – if he would attract my attention to the provisions in our law that give legislative power to a body corporate called ‘the Governor and Legislative Council’. I know the ‘Legislative Council’; I know the ‘Governor’; I know the ‘Governor-in-Council’, but perhaps that is the reason for my wearing glasses, for I have never seen any enactment giving legislative power to ‘the Governor and Legislative Council’.

We have absolutely no intention of taking away any power. Let them table better Motions. I have taught them before.

The other question that has been raised is the shortness of notice. There are, I understand, at least four lawyers adorning benches of the Opposition. There is no lawyer worth his salt if on Saturday he gets a Bill like this and he has not in his office the facilities or documentation to discover what are the Ordinances and laws affected.

[Mr. Chase: Are you seriously saying that?]

Mr. Burnham: When I was in private practice I would have been able to discover this within no more than 24 hours.

[Mr. Chase: Liar!]

Mr. Burnham: Give me back my books. You cannot read them.

If this were a question of withdrawing completely from the House of Assembly any opportunity to debate or amend any subsidiary legislation, I would have agreed that longer time would have been necessary, but I do not agree, in the circumstances, that it is necessary. Let us take the Roads Ordinance. The Roads Ordinance gives to the Governor and Legislative Council power to specify weight and types of vehicles that should go on to any public road. It gives the Governor and Legislative Council the power to declare a public road. That is one Ordinance.

Then there are certain provisions with respect to Crown Lands. Let me assure the Hon. Member, Mr. Hubbard, that there is no question of trying to sell out, and even if there had been a question of attempting to sell out, since it is here that the legislation will come to this House of Assembly, there can be no opportunity, for selling out what with the myopic Mr. Hubbard suddenly turned farsighted, because he would have the provisions before him, and he could use an annulling resolution on one of the rare occasions when he attends this House, and all will be well.

What is the difficulty? What is the trouble? The Hon. Member, Dr. Ramsahoye, ought to know that there is a tendency in cases of this type to give the negative power to the Legislature, the power to annul, the power to amend, the power to alter, so that one does not necessarily have to go through a formal or wasteful debate if the Assembly is generally of the opinion that the legislation ought to be enacted. But as long as any section of the Assembly feels to the contrary, the right is there. That is the general practice throughout the Commonwealth now, the removal of the emphasis from the positive resolution and placing the emphasis, in the sophisticated circumstances in which we have to live, on the negative.

When a Legislature used to consist of leisured gentlemen, when the theory of Government was that there should be the minimum of interference with the life of the community, when the theory was that the Government's duty was to hold the ring for other persons in the private sector to have a Roman holiday, then there was time for this leisurely approach to subsidiary legislation. But once the Government seeks to organise a society, seeks to take an important and dominant role in the organisation of the society and the course along which it must travel, the tendency throughout the world has been towards a negative rather than positive resolution.

In other circumstances, I might have ignored the tendency to prevarication on the part of the Hon. Member Mr. Hubbard, but I think it

necessary that it should be placed on record since he thought it fitting with his wonted vulgarity to introduce these allegations with respect to the Premier's taking rent even for the period when he was not occupying -

[Interruption]

[Mr. Hubbard: I never suggested that. I made it perfectly clear that the Hon. Premier had handed back the money to the Treasury.]

Mr. Burnham: Many apologies! For once my Hon. friend has not given evidence of his lineal descent from Ananias. The suggestion that there ought to be placed a time limit within which the Motion should be debated in this House is unworthy. If the Opposition wants to question the *bona fides* of the Government it can do so. If the Members of the Opposition think that the undertakings given by this Government will be dishonoured, then they have the right to say certain things. It is not my Government's intention to accept such a suggestion by accepting that sort of an Amendment. I hope an Amendment will be moved in conformity with the Standing Orders. They can debate their Amendment, but, unless those on this side follow the disarray which we are witnessing on the other side, I can assure my Hon. friend that the Amendment will be rejected.

Financial Paper No. 14 of 1965 – Committee of Supply: 22nd December, 1965

Mr. Burnham: We have listened with patience. We do not propose to accept the advice or the proposal of the Opposition. The Volunteer Force will continue to exist. When the Guyana Defence Force is set up, it will become the reserve or territorial force.

Members of the staff have been dismissed. One particular member of the staff was dismissed on recommendation to the Governor by the then head of office, which head of office had not been appointed by this Government.

There has been another dismissal and that action was on the basis of the individual's files, and was really done by the Public Service Commission. No one was dismissed to make way or room for anyone else.

There has been a third dismissal in the general interest of the Service.

I appreciate very deeply the interest but deprecate the inaccuracy of my learned and Hon. friend. There have been no appointments of relatives to jobs which had to be advertised. The present Civil Service Head of the Commission's Office was sent there from the Ministry of External Affairs as it is understood that any public servant, whose services are required outside of the country in the External Affairs Department, can be transferred and has to accept the transfer. In fact, perhaps the youthfulness of my learned and Hon. friend prevents him from recollecting that the gentleman's predecessor was appointed to the office without any advertisement, and that properly as he was a public servant on transfer from one section of the Department to another.

I do not go into the personal relationships of the members of the Public Service. If the information comes to me I accept it. In this case I wonder whether my Hon. and learned junior could here or elsewhere communicate the information which he has at his disposal and if there is any impropriety I shall have it remedied. But, so far as I am aware, all persons from Guiana who left Guiana recently for the Commission's Office are public servants. That is all I know. They are public servants from Guiana.

A certain basic literacy is assumed in this House. The legend to item 3, to which reference has been made, reads as follows:

"Voted provision proved inadequate due to increase in salaries consequent upon the revision of salaries."

I would say the money is to be used in the manner stated.

So far as the emoluments and allowances paid to the London High Commissioner are concerned, I am surprised that anyone who has travelled as far as Peking, as the Hon. Member has done, would fail to understand that diplomatic overseas representatives are fairly well paid.

I can assure this honourable House that the salaries and allowances paid to our High Commissioner in London are inferior to those paid to any other High Commissioner in London.

Those who understand English would appreciate that an allowance is not a salary. The High Commissioner receives one salary and certain allowances which are concomitant with the office and in no way unusual.

The Legislature is a place for vocal exercise. If the young Hon. Member had taken the trouble to look at the Estimates, he would have seen that listed under the Premier's Office are seven, and not three, Messengers because apart from the office proper, there are places like the Archives and G.I.S. If the Hon. Member had taken the further trouble to read, he would have seen that it includes labourers and charwomen.

I concede that in these days the charwomen do polish the floor generally and the general appearance of the offices has improved. For instance, instead of enamel washbasins and mugs, we now have sinks and running water. It is a question of standards: number one, the general standard has to be kept up; number two, they are not messengers alone but messengers and labourers who bring the number to seven and not three; and number three, I would say that more work is required in keeping the offices clean.

My friends over there are attempting to do some work but they are missing the point all along the line. In so far as the item here is concerned, the legend says this sum is predictable. What I can say, however, is that nowhere in these Supplementary Estimates will one find an item similar to the one which we had in the last House when we were asked to pay the damages of the libel committed by the then Premier.

A remark was made, concerning the Department for which I am responsible, that the Attorney-General's *fiat* has been withheld in a number of cases: I would ask the Hon. Member, through you, Sir, to give me a list of these cases in which the Attorney-General's *fiat* has been withheld. This is a serious indictment that a citizen has been denied justice. If the list is submitted to me, I shall look into the matter.

Season's Greetings: 23rd December, 1965

Mr. Burnham: I do not intend to duplicate the felicitations and festive wishes given by the Leader of the House. But I should like to announce to you, Sir, and to my legislative colleagues, that, in keeping with the spirit of this festive time, I shall keep open house for all my friends, and I would cherish the attendance of my legislative colleagues on Sunday.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Property Tax (Amendment) Bill: 29th December, 1965

Mr. Burnham: Before the Hon. Minister of Finance replies, I would just like to observe that the Hon. Member Mr. Luck brought to my attention the addition of the term 'reasonable' in respect to the definition of 'market value'. I have had a discussion with the Attorney-General and I have given an undertaking to the Hon. Member – apparently he does not accept my undertaking – that when we proceed with this Bill in Committee we will reserve the definition of 'market value' until I have had an opportunity of discussing it fully with the Attorney-General, whose opinion I value more than Mr. Luck's. If, perchance, in view of the judicial definition – not the definition in Stroud's, the insertion of the word 'reasonable' does alter 'market value' as judicially defined, the proper correction will be made.

If not, it will remain. I refuse to advise myself because I have learnt over many years that he who is his own lawyer has a fool for a client. It is also necessary for me to speak very clearly - I only had a foolish client in the case of *Luck v Sharples*.

It is necessary for me to speak on certain matters of principle that have arisen here. First of all, let it be clearly understood that this particular bit of legislation, its principle, and the details, find the unstinted support of the Government. I am not unaware of the fact that in 1962, when the question of the gift tax was first mooted and discussed, that the PNC which I lead supported it.

Well, now, it is to my mind the epitome of idiocy for those sitting on the other side – who until the 14th of December, 1964, were responsible for the collection of this tax – to turn now and accuse this Government of administrative incompetence for not having collected the tax during the years 1963 and 1964. With more brashness than intelligence, my learned and Hon. friend, Mr. Luck said that the introduction of the gift tax would have been reflected in an increase of the estate duty. I have had a look at the figures for the relevant years over which the gift tax is alleged to have been collected, but I did not see any increase in the estate duty.

May I remind my Hon. friend that the Hon. Gentleman to whom he referred, died during the administration of the PPP Government, when the gift tax was still on the books. So, I really cannot see these arguments. He died before the PNC and UF Coalition came into office and, therefore, before there was any suggestion.

[**Mr. Luck:** Hold an investigation!]

Mr. Burnham: We shall hold an investigation to your father's estate when he dies, and the Speaker knows what I am talking about.

As I was saying, when an investigation was made of the manpower that has to be used for the collection of the gift tax, the \$200 collected all the years before this year did not amount to an appropriate reward, or recompense for the energy involved. It seems to me that when the estate duty does not reflect an increase, the tax is not worthy of its salt. Unlike those who utter shibboleths and continue to rely at all times on certain nebulous and 'un-understood' principles, we are realistic enough to realize that if this tax is not bringing in money, it is diverting energies which can be used for the collection of other taxes. It is yielding \$200! It is unworthy of its salt!

[**Mr. Wilson:** You have not paid your income tax yet.]

Mr. Burnham: The Hon. Member is unaware of the fact that income tax is deducted at source. I remember William Pitt hoping that, unlike Walpole, he would not remain ignorant in spite of age.

Now with respect to the Net Property Tax, the tax is not being abolished. It is simply this: It has been alleged that, first, if you give concessions to new industries, you ought not, if you want to encourage investment, to levy on them this property tax. All right! The argument has been put forward and we are trying it. Secondly, it has been pointed out that if tax payers of this tax were allowed to purchase in Government investments twice the amount of tax for which they are liable, domestic savings would be increased, more money would be available for developmental works. Incidentally, there is a greater contribution within Guiana towards this; more money from our country as distinct from money coming from loans and grants outside would be available. Therefore we are offering those who are prepared to pay twice as much to purchase securities, an opportunity to do so.

Now what is happening to some of these infants is that they are assuming – you see the difference between my Minister of Finance and you is that he has matured with age and experience – that the same percentage which was given on the savings certificates would be given here. If you look at the legislation you will see that what is stated is that if you invest twice as much as your tax commitment in a named or approved security, you will liquidate your tax for that year. I assure my Hon. friends that in so far as this Government is concerned, the securities are not going to be securities similar to those which were offered earlier this year. They are not going to mature as rapidly and as lucratively.

But let us be honest about a few things. It is a little difficult to understand this belated advice from members of the Opposition, as to reorganisation of the Income Tax Department, when for seven long years they did absolutely nothing. It is a little difficult to understand the cheek of the Opposition to accusing people of ulterior motives when you have in the Opposition people who purchased Cuba bags without permission;

who turned around a commission to their Party trading office, namely GIMPEX; people who have just come back from Peking where they went to make surreptitious trade deals; people who sold this country down the drain to the tune of \$3 million for \$¾ million worth of work done by Del Conte or what have you! We are not talking about the considerations which were passed under the table.

As I had reason to observe, those whom –

[**Mr. Luck:** You will emulate.]

Mr. Burnham: That is why the Lucks will always be richer than the Burnhams; that is why I will not come into the category of having to pay property tax. The position, therefore, is that it does not lie with them to make these accusations. Every time, from this side of the House, there has been an accusation of dishonesty there has been proof. There is the auditor's report of Del Conte; there is the auditor's report on the paper bags. There is the *ipse dixit* on the same gentlemen, of Dr. Jacob and Mr. Benn.

Let us, for goodness sake, criticise principles; let us not ascribe to people dishonest motives; let us not, in spite of the meagreness of physique of some of us, try to emulate the Shakespearian bloated character Falstaff, accusing other people of our own ills.

Let me say as Prime Minister that this Bill is being put forward seriously.

[**Mr. Luck:** For the privileged.]

Mr. Burnham: This Bill is being put forward on the basis of an agreed Budget statement made when those who are here today defaulted on their duties to the public, whom they are supposed to represent. This Bill is put forward on the thesis that it will encourage further savings and investments and I, unlike some of these lesser beings, will not be afraid to come back to this House -

[**Mr. Luck:** And change your mouth again.]

Mr. Burnham: - and have this Bill repealed if it does not achieve the purpose for which it is drafted.

This is no attempt – some of the richest men prattle most about the working class; men who own hundreds and thousands of acres of land and who fleece farmers! But not one of the Members of the Opposition is a pauper, except the secretary of the Maha Sabha. Not one of them! Everyone of them is loaded. Rich men, every single one of them, and who are they attempting to deceive? These people who sat here and refused to increase the minimum wage! Whose leader said “*Not a cent more*”, whose leader on the eve of Election said “*I will give you \$4.00 a day if, but, whereby, wherefor!*”

What did the People's National Congress say? They said "*return us to office and we pay you \$4.00 a day retrospective to 1st October*". The first act of my Government -

[**Mr. Luck:** What about the Gift Tax?]

Mr. Burnham: The first act of this Government was to keep its promise with respect to the \$4.00 minimum wage. We hear this prattling about the working class. Can this Opposition which disgraced the seats on this side of the House for many a year -

[**Mr. Poonai:** Bring out the Sugar Report.]

Mr. Burnham: These people who disgraced the seats on this side of the House for many a year, let them tell us what they have done for the working class of Guiana. What have they done? My Hon. friend and would-be trade unionist, Mr. Harry Lall, can only point to a destructive strike that brought about racial tension. What wages were ever raised, except under terrific struggle? What wages were ever raised by that Government, in a public sector, except by a few cents when there were prolonged strikes. The working-class Government! Look at them! Father, forgive them! Those who profess atheism ought to be thankful that there is a God who forgives.

In keeping with my undertaking given to the Hon. and learned Member Mr. Luck, the Government proposes to defer consideration of this proposed Amendment to Clause 2 until there has been time for discussion with the Attorney-General and also with Mr. Luck if he cares to offer his opinion to the Attorney-General. As we have to sit tomorrow in any case, the Government proposes to proceed with the rest of the Bill, reserving this Clause alone for deliberation tomorrow.

On a point of order. A Motion for the deletion is not an Amendment. What the Hon. Member can do is vote against the inclusion of the Clause.

On a point of Order. One does not move the deletion of a Clause in Committee, one votes against its inclusion.

Certainly it is now time that this sort of empty remark comes to an end. The purpose of having the returns is to ascertain whether the would-be taxpayer has been avoiding the payment of income tax. Now if a particular company, having been granted pioneer status does not have to pay income tax, what is the purpose of compelling that company to file the returns? As soon as the pioneer status is over, naturally the company will then have to file these complicated returns to show whether or not there have been evasions. This is the sort of stupid bureaucracy which carries us nowhere. They are not taxable because you have already made an official decision that they are not taxable being pioneer industries. Little minds hold on to things without understanding the rational.

I must thank my Hon. and learned friend for the suggestion that I see points of law quickly. I am afraid that, as far as my interpretation of this Clause goes, the purchase by a company, which has pioneer status, by another company would not entitle the former company to exemption with respect to the more recently acquired property and income, because the exemption is particularly referable to a particular type of property and to the income from that property.

I am also afraid that I lack the categorical approach of my Hon. and learned friend. My wider experience in the law always leads me to believe that you can have more than one interpretation. I feel that, if my Hon. and learned friend believes that he has a point, he may well give this House the benefit of a proposed Amendment so that we can deal with it. As at present advised, I do not see the loop holes. If he sees the loopholes and he is very anxious that these loop holes be blocked, his is the right to offer an Amendment. I am assuming that he is speaking seriously. It is quite possible that his Amendment may be otiose in an attempt to make the matter pellucidly clear, but we may be encouraged to accept *it ex abundant cautela*. We await his good advice.

I am not going to reserve this matter. If men, who can claim to be responsible members of the legal profession, can come here and make statements, then they should back those statements. The Hon. Mr. Luck says that there is a loophole in the clause. I say as a lawyer that I see no loophole. Let him offer an Amendment and I will consider it. I, as a Queen's Counsel, see no loophole, but it is quite possible that my learned junior may be right. I will not reserve it, and no amount of suavity will change this decision.

This is all empty talk. What the Hon. Member Dr. Jacob does not seem to understand is this: the taxpayer does not discharge his liability by purchasing the security to the extent of his liability. He has to purchase to twice the extent of his liability. What the Hon. Member does not further understand is that he does not end his liability for all time but for the particular year of tax, so if he wants to go on doing this, this is a means to the Government to get money for development work. Further, the Hon. Minister of Finance has already indicated that it is not going to be one of these high-yielding short term securities. I cannot really see the difficulty which the Hon. Member is experiencing but I remember him at school and I see his difficulty now.

[Dr. Jacob: I saw yours too.]

Mr. Burnham: Transferability does not make the investment of security mature and, therefore, it does not matter who holds it and for what purposes after its maturity. Now, secondly, if a company is by law or contract obliged to provide certain funds for pension rights, and has bought securities if it cannot meet its obligations, it is going to be in breach either

of the law or of its contract. If, perchance, it happened to pay persons entitled to pensions with those securities, those persons are entitled to say that they were not paid their pensions or their gratuities because they were not paid something which can immediately be converted by the Government. All that my learned friend is doing is confusing a very simple issue. We are not going to make it non-transferable so if any company wants to use this investment for funding it is a matter for the company. If it does not yield enough to service its obligations, it is still going to have to put more. This is the last time I shall do my learned friend the honour of replying to any of his remarks.

Property Tax (Amendment) Bill Second and Third Readings: 30th December, 1965

Mr. Burnham: I have had the advantage of holding discussions with the Attorney-General on the question raised with respect to the definition of 'market value' in Clause 2. I have also had the advantage, together with the Attorney-General, of reading a Zanzibari case which went before the Privy Council in 1901 – the case of the **Foreign Security v. Charlesworth**. The reference year is 1901, Appeal Case, page 373.

I have found that those who have practised law for any time will appreciate that antiquity does not detract from the validity of a decision. The Hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye will instruct the young fellow on these matters. The Attorney-General and myself have come to the conclusion that the definition of 'market value' which appears in the proposed Clause 2, gives the same definition as did the Privy Council in the case of the **Foreign Security v. Charlesworth**. In the circumstances, the Government does not propose to alter the definition.

Mr. Chairman, I think that the field of politics gives one a certain licence, but on the other hand, it should not remove from anyone a sense of professional integrity. It is a little unnerving, to say the least, to hear a member of my profession attacking the authority of a case which dates back to 1901. His senior, Dr. Ramsahoye, will tell him that since Lord Hardwicke there has never been any greater authority on equity. Since Lord Eldon there has never been a more authoritative statement on the doctrine of reconversion..

As I was saying the antiquity of the authority does not destroy its validity. This is a 1962 edition of *Stroud's* at which my learned friend looked at yesterday. Yesterday he did not question the authority of the Zanzibari case, and, incidentally, it is a little difficult to understand how these *soi-disant* anti-colonialist mentalities want to impugn the jurisprudence of the Zanzibari case because it was in Zanzibar and not in the United Kingdom. But I make a concession to his colonial mentality and would remind him of the fact that this is a Privy Council authority, and if he will ask his more learned – this is a descriptive term, rather than a term of courtesy – if he would ask his more learned friend, Dr. Ramsahoye, he would tell him that the Privy Council's jurisprudential eminence is concaving with that of the British House of Lords. Perhaps he never learned that, or if he did learn it, he has forgotten it.

Now, let us look at the definition of market value as it appeared in the original Ordinance, Ordinance No. 19 of 1962:

“ 'Market value' with reference to any property at any date means the price which in the opinion of the Commissioner that property would have fetched on that date in open market.”

Of course, my learned friend was not even within the precincts of this hallowed building then. What does this mean? This means that the term 'market value' is not justifiable, because it is defined as being that value which the property would have fetched in the opinion of the Commissioner, and one knows that once the right to form an opinion in such circumstances is given to any person, official, agency or corporation, the opinion is not justifiable.

Therefore what the Commissioner could have done under the original Ordinance is just to say, "*In my opinion the market value was X.*" Now, to introduce the concept of 'reasonableness' is to take in the final analysis the *ratio decidendi* of the opinion of learned members of the Privy Council in the Zanzibari case, for in that case there was this argument of what was market value. It was said that for this type of property around the corner so many hundred thousand rupees was received. For the same type of property around another corner at the same time, in the same year, and same locality, a different sum was received and, therefore, the Court went on to say, "*Look, 'market value' would not necessarily mean what the same property, or similar property, in fact fetched*", because the facts before the Court show that there was a great disparity as to price for identical types of property. The Court said, "*What could reasonably have been received, putting aside things like sentimental value or unusual need*".

So far as I am concerned, I am satisfied with the definition in the dictum of the Zanzibari case. Incidentally, it was decided by the Privy Council. My learned friend can inveigh as long as he likes, he will be completely unsuccessful. If his contention is correct, and if he can find any reasonable and learned Court which will accept his contention that this is a loop hole, I can assure him that the competence -

[**Mr. Luck:** But their friends can do it.]

Mr. Burnham: That is most vulgar. You do not impugn the judiciary in this House by suggesting any friendship. You ought to know that, you of all people!

If my learned friend, or anyone whom his clients may choose to brief, can succeed in persuading a reasonable and learned Court that this a loophole, as he imagines, I can assure him that by that time the Legislature will still be competent to block the hole, but, as at present advised and subject to vagaries of human fallibility, I have never been sure of anything than I am now.

Second and Third Readings of the Legal Practitioners (Amendment) Bill: 30th December, 1966

Mr. Burnham: This is a Bill to amend the Legal Practitioners Ordinance, Chapter 30. The main purpose of this Bill is to change the qualifications which are necessary before one can become articled in order to become a solicitor with a right to audience in the Courts of this country.

The changes have been chiefly in accordance with certain changes which were carried out in the United Kingdom a few years ago. At the moment a person who has qualified as a solicitor in the United Kingdom can practice here as a solicitor and, until recently also, anyone, qualified as a solicitor here, could after a period of enrolment gain the competence to practice in the United Kingdom.

We thought we should try to bring together the qualifications so that no difficulties may arise, and the opportunity has been taken to leave greater scope than there was in the original Ordinance, Chapter 30, for fixing the qualifying examination. If one looks at Chapter 30, for fixing the qualifying examination – I am subject to correction, of course – one would find the various Universities at which one could earn a degree which would count. The qualifying examination and the Universities were clearly set out, but it is proposed in this new Ordinance to leave more freedom of action to the Attorney-General who can add to the list of Universities. When one looks, for instance, at the old list one would see that in the majority of cases the older Universities were taken into account. I do not speak at any length on it..

The Hon. Member Dr. Ramsahoye informally brought to my attention yesterday what he thought was a weakness in this Bill: he mentioned that these new qualifications, which are in many cases higher than those previously required, would come into effect as from the 1st January, 1966, and that anyone who had the old qualifications prior to 1st January, 1963, and had entered into articleship within a certain time could still proceed only up to the 1st January, 1966. Dr. Ramsahoye's opinion, which he says is supported by the profession, and which I think is very reasonable, is that a further six-months period of notice so to speak ought to be given. Therefore, in so far as the higher qualifications are concerned, it is proposed, at the relevant time, to move in an Amendment fixing the date of application to the 1st July, 1966, allowing a further six-months period.

There is a minor Amendment which I shall introduce later, and I do not think it is necessary to mention it now. I would like to make the observation that this Amending Ordinance was proposed some time ago and it was originally proposed to encompass provisions against that most disgusting and unethical conduct of touting. On this occasion no such provisions appear, because in the opinion of the Attorney-General

whose opinion, incidentally, I share wholeheartedly, this is a matter on which there ought to be the fullest consultation with the two professional bodies representing Barristers and Solicitors. For instance, we know that these professional bodies have assumed to themselves effectively and efficiently the right to discipline their own members for indulging in touting in other countries. It may be that we will not be able to achieve that. We may not be able to succeed in having these two professional bodies here exercising the fullest sanction against tout-users but, at least, it is our opinion that they ought to be fully consulted – their views as well as the views of the Legal Reform Committee. As soon as these views are canvassed and the opinions obtained, I give the undertaking that the necessary legislation will be introduced. In the circumstances, I beg to move the Second Reading of a Bill entitled an Ordinance to amend the Legal Practitioners Ordinance.

Mr. Burnham (Replying): I am to assume that there are no further contributions from the Opposition. It is interesting to note that there does not appear to be any great difference or divergence of opinion on this question. The proposal with respect to the enlarging of the Disciplinary Committee and the number of nominees which the Chief Justice can make will be looked into I must concede that, speaking for myself, I did not advert to it when I looked at the previous draft Bill. It will be looked into, and the advisability of enlarging the Committee will be considered.

So far as touting is concerned, I concede that since I have been in practice in 1949 there have been proposals from time to time to put an end to it. I must share with the three Members of the Opposition the feeling that there is a section of the profession that does not seriously want to put an end to touting. I must concede that, from my personal knowledge, I have known leaders of the Bar who have employed touts. That is quite improper because, in the first place, the leader of the Bar is not supposed to see a client directly. He takes an oath when he takes silk that he would practice in the same manner as an English Barrister does, which means that he ought not to see clients directly, and therefore touts would not be in a position to bring clients to him. I must concede that this is a fact.

We, however, propose to consult the two branches of the profession. But I should like to say this: If our latest act of consultation does not meet with positive and reasonable recommendations to put an end to this disgusting and inglorious practice, the Government will proceed pretty early in the New Year, to pass the necessary legislation with highly penal sanctions, to abolish the practice of touting.

It must not be assumed, when we are in this forum where exaggeration frequently is the order of the day, nor should the impression be conveyed, that every member of the legal profession employs a tout or has ever employed a tout. It must not be assumed that every member of the

profession indulges in some of these disgraceful practices or that every member of the profession is opposed to the abolition of touts.

The remarks made about members of the Police Force I have heard made before. I have not had a criminal practice for the last six or eight years. As my professional colleagues will know, I am a civil practitioner. I have heard allegations made about members of the Police force and Prosecutors.

[**Mr. Luck:** Only heard?]

Mr. Burnham: I said I have heard these allegations made, I have not gone to the trouble of saying whether I believe them or not. I do not know them of my own knowledge, but I think they are made with too much frequency to be without some basis.

This is something that ought to be looked into because the members of the Police Force, whether they are apprehending offenders or alleged offenders, or carrying out prosecutions, ought to be impartial in every respect. It is a disgrace to the Force and I hope that all the necessary disciplinary proceedings with a view to dismissal will be taken in any case where there is direct evidence. It is most reprehensible and disgusting. It is not within my power or the power of any Member of the Government to dismiss a person like that but, certainly, there are disciplinary proceedings which can be taken and, if they establish the commission of this type of offence or the perpetration of this type of behavior, then a person like that has no right to be in as noble a force as the Police Force.

I have listened with great interest to the contribution of my good friend, the Hon. Member Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud. He introduced a new dimension – the treatment of lawyers to their clerks. He must be speaking the truth when he said he found that the only President of the Bar Association who was sympathetic to the cause of the clerks was your humble servant. What a pity that his reactionary employer and his colleagues thought fit, the year after, to throw the same President of the Bar Association out of office. It is interesting to know that subsequent Presidents of the Bar Association have had similar political persuasions to Mr. Persaud and it is interesting to know that he had to pick out the leader of the PNC to whom to pay his tribute for his sympathy to the working class. I have always said that the PNC is the party which truly represents the working class.

[**Mr. Luck:** You are stretching this compliment too far.]

Mr. Burnham: I will now, in the tradition of the season, allude to some humorous facts. I am not so sure that Mr. Persaud would have found himself on the same side as another person who contributed with respect to the proper payment of clerks. But let bygones be bygones; some have

forsaken the legal profession for the sheltered harbours of the teaching profession.

The question of proper payment of clerks is not really one for an enactment of this kind. It is one which should be looked at from the point of view of the Ministry of Labour. Mr. Persaud's proposals for a Wages Council or for a Commission of Inquiry to propose the minimum rates will be carefully and favourably considered by the Minister of Labour. But I am wondering whether the clerks do not consider it in their best interest to form or be affiliated to a trade union and put themselves in a strong bargaining position. What is likely to happen is that even if Government uses – as it is proposed – either of the two types of machinery for fixing minimum wages, very soon those minimum wages may become outdated, and the tendency amongst employers is to treat minimum wages as maximum wages unless the workers are organized in such a manner as to push the wages and emoluments above the minimum that has been fixed. That is a suggestion to Mr. Persaud and I can assure him that he still has my very active sympathy.

The question has been raised as to the reduction of the stamp duty of £64 – because it is really £50 plus £14 – which has to be paid on admission to the practice of the Bar as a barrister. It is something worthy of note and worthy of consideration. I can give no undertaking but I shall certainly put this to the Cabinet.

There was one other point which was raised by the Hon. and learned Member Dr. Ramsahoye and that was that we should attempt, in so far as qualifications for becoming legal practitioners are concerned, to raise those qualifications even further and perhaps, as in some countries, demand a degree.

I can see the advantage of having a degree but, as at present advised, I really cannot recommend making it compulsory. What I should like to see however, is that those who practice law, or those who qualify as lawyers, are not put in a strait jacket, or along the road with a set of blinkers on. Too many lawyers know nothing about life or any other subject except law which some of them have really crammed from Marston Garcia's *Nutshell* series.

Mr. Burnham: Just before the suspension was taken I was observing that I find it a little difficult, as at present advised, to suggest to the Government that it should be compulsory that those who want to practise as members of the legal profession should have University degrees in addition to their qualifications. I said, for myself, what I think is needed is that lawyers, as well as other professionals, should not be persons who have just gone through a professional course or subjects immediately akin to such professional courses. They should go through much wider courses. They should learn more about other subjects; they should learn at least more about the humanities instead of being merely desiccated professional machines. That is a matter which we can consider later.

I must repeat my agreement with many of the criticisms and give an undertaking that prompt action – the promptest in the circumstances – will be taken to remedy those abuses to which I have been referred during the course of this debate. I now move that the Bill be read a Second time.

[Question put, and agreed to.]

[Bill read a Second time.]

New Year Greetings: 30th December, 1965

Mr. Burnham: I am informed and verily believe that this is the last bit of business that this House will be transacting before the expiry of the year 1965. As we all know 1965 has been an interesting, and exciting, and an historic year. 1966 promises to be more exciting, more interesting, and is likely also to occupy more pages of Guianese history, for in 1966 we shall be on our own. We shall be masters of our own country, in deed and in fact, in theory and in practice. It will entail a greater sense of responsibility in the country as a whole on the part of Ministers and citizens of the county generally, and, more specifically, the Legislature which will definitely be the highest authority or the highest tribunal in the country.

In these circumstances, I, on behalf of the Government, wish you, Sir, and Mrs. Alleyne a good, happy and successful 1966. I am really wishing you the stamina, the health and strength to stand up to the considerable challenges which will fall upon you and your good staff.

Similarly, I would also like to extend the usual New Year felicitations to other Members of the House. I am wishing them continued strength and happiness and the resilience of spirit to take life as it comes, to accept independence as a fact, and to cooperate with all sections of the community in making Guiana a truly great place. I feel we should take this opportunity of exchanging customary wishes for a really good 1966.

I should like to tell my friends, learned and otherwise, on the other side of the House that, though we have crossed words several times in this House, I have never ceased to admire their pertinacity. I have never ceased to admire their capacity for wit and humour, especially of the Guianese type. Believe me, if those qualities were to be missing in them in 1966 that would be most disappointing and the proceedings of this House would have lost some of its splendour.

Happy New Year to you, Sir, and Mrs. Alleyne. A happy New Year to my colleagues in this House who are responsible to the people of Guiana and who will be taking on new burdens and new tasks in the New Year.

