

JANET JAGAN, O.E.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY SPEECHES

VOLUME 1

The Legislative Council 1957-1961
Senate 1963-1964

Janet Jagan, O.E.
National Assembly Speeches Volume 1
With a Preface by President Donald Ramotar
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PREFACE

Janet Jagan was an outstanding and remarkable woman, a great leader and played a central role in Guyanese and international affairs.

She was born in Chicago on the 20th October 1920. It was there that she met the young Cheddi Jagan, a dental student from British Guiana. They married and Janet followed her husband to the then colony in 1943.

What was significant is the fact that most people who migrated almost always go from a poor to a rich country. Janet moved from the richest country in the world to one of the poorest, and a colony at that.

On arrival in British Guiana she, together with her husband, plunged into the social and political life in her new homeland.

Early in 1946 she founded the Women's Political and Economic Organisation (WPEO) together with Ms. Frances Stafford and Winifred Gaskin. This gave expression to Janet's belief that women had to establish their equality with men.

Later that same year, on November 6th, 1946 she founded the Political Affairs Committee (PAC) together with Cheddi Jagan, Ashton Chase and Joslyn Hubbard.

The PAC was the forerunner to the People's Progressive Party (PPP), which was founded in January 1950. Janet was its first General Secretary and the first editor of its official organ, *Thunder*.

Janet Jagan dedicated herself totally to promoting the welfare and interests of the Guyanese people.

In her long distinguished career she led from the front. She was the first woman to contest elections in Guyana. In 1947 she contested for a seat in the legislative council and narrowly lost.

In 1951 she became the first woman to be elected a member of the Georgetown Town Council. In 1953, she was among the first women to be elected to Parliament; the other two were Jessie Burnham and Jane Phillips Gay. Janet became the Deputy Speaker of that Parliament. That made her the first female to hold that position.

That was a challenging period in our history. Janet Jagan faced many difficulties. The colonial power tried slandering her and eventually sent her to prison for her political activities.

Janet, however, was an extremely strong person. She faced those difficult years and fought heroically for the unity of the Party as she fought to defend the people.

In 1957, Janet became a Minister of the PPP Government. She held that position until 1961. Her stint as Minister of Labour, Health and Housing is still remembered to this day. She expanded health services to almost every part of our country. She began the housing drive and many schemes stand today as monuments to her labour of love.

In 1961 she stayed out of Government to concentrate on strengthening the Party. However, the struggle got very intense and after the death of Claude Christian, the then Minister of Home Affairs, Janet was put to replace him.

She resigned in protest because the police failed to inform her of the massacre that took place at Wismar. It was all a part of an international conspiracy to remove the PPP from office. Much of this has been documented and is now open due to the partial release of documents from the US State Department and the UK Foreign Office.

In the period 1964 to 1992 Janet worked hard to develop the Party's press. She edited the *Mirror* and *Thunder*. She did a lot in administration and headed the Party's International Committee.

She was a great humanitarian. She loved children greatly and wrote many books for them. She was an extraordinary kind person and very generous. Having had the good fortune of working closely with her, I can testify to her great kindness and concern for her comrades.

In 1997 after the passing of Cheddi Jagan, Janet was again thrown into the centre of things. She became Guyana's first female Prime Minister having replacing Cde. Samuel Hinds who was elevated to the Presidency.

She was our Party's Presidential Candidate for the 1997 elections and won our biggest victory in history. Her stint as President, however, did not last long. She demitted office on August 11, 1999 due to ill health.

However, in the period that she was President she withstood great pressures from an opposition that descended into the use of the most vile racism to attack her personally. She took it all and continued to work for the Guyanese people.

After leaving office she did a lot of work to promote culture. The collection now housed at Castellani House benefited greatly from her labour. She chaired the board until her passing.

Throughout her life she displayed great courage, determination and a powerful intellect. Those are the qualities she left us in the People's Progressive Party, the Party she served at its very leadership until March 28th, 2009.

She had to overcome a lot in her political life. In her personal life too she confronted many challenges. The fact that she was denied the right to return to the country of her birth, the US, to visit her sick father and could not go to attend his funeral must have been personally very painful to her.

Despite all of that she held no bitterness for all that she had to endure. At the time of her untimely passing she remained one of the most loved and respected personalities of our country.

It is not surprising that recently she was recognized by *Time Magazine* (March 2011) as one of the sixteen most rebellious women in human history.

Janet Jagan will always be remembered for her outstanding contribution to Guyana. These volumes of her speeches in Parliament are a very small part of her voluminous works as a journalist, a political activist and just a wonderful personality.

President Donald Ramotar

Biographical Summary of Janet Jagan

- Name:** Janet Jagan, nee Rosenberg
- Date of Birth:** October 20, 1920. Chicago, Illinois, USA.
Died March 28, 2009
- Personal :** Married August 5, 1943, to Dr Cheddi Jagan, has two children: Cheddi (Joey) and Nadira
- Education:** University of Detroit;
Wayne University;
Michigan State College;
Cook County School of Nursing

Political Career:

- 1950:** Co-founder and General Secretary of the People's Progressive Party.
- 1953:** Deputy Speaker of the House of Assembly.
- 1957:** Minister of Labour, Health and Housing.
- 1963-4:** Minister of Home Affairs and Senator.
- 1973, 1980,
1985, 1992:** Re-elected to Parliament.
- October**
- 1992:** First Lady and Ambassador to the United Nations.
- March**
- 1997:** First female Prime Minister and Vice-President.
- December**
- 1997:** President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

Editor's Note on Janet Jagan

Janet Jagan was an outstanding and remarkable figure in both Guyanese and postwar anti-imperialist politics, who played a central role in the political life of her adopted country for more than sixty years.

Born in Chicago in 1920, Janet Jagan met and married her husband Dr. Cheddi Jagan whilst he was studying dentistry in the USA. Both were passionately committed to politics, and upon returning to British Guiana in the 1940s they became co-founders of the Political Affairs Committee which, in 1950, turned into the People's Progressive Party (PPP). Janet Jagan was appointed as both its first General Secretary and the editor of its journal *Thunder*. She also became the first woman to be elected to the Georgetown City Council, Guyana's first female Deputy Speaker, the first female Cabinet Minister under self-government, the first female Prime Minister and finally the nation's first female President after the PPP won the elections in December 1997. She resigned in 1999 due to ill health, and died in Georgetown Public Hospital on 28th March 2009.

These two volumes contain Janet Jagan's speeches made in the Legislative Assembly and Parliament during her lengthy political career. Although they have been compiled in chronological order, they do not contain a complete record of her extensive contribution to Guyanese politics as both the 1953 Official Reports and those for sittings held between 1975 and 1997 are currently unavailable. Nevertheless, the speeches that are reproduced here clearly demonstrate Janet Jagan's unswerving support and continuous fight for the rights of the nation's underprivileged people, whether it be in terms of housing, health, pensions, working conditions or the ongoing need for economic, social and political reform and development.

Janet Jagan entered the House of Assembly for the first time in 1953, when she was appointed Deputy Speaker. Together with her husband Dr. Cheddi Jagan, the poet Martin Carter and a number of other ministers and PPP members she became a political prisoner following the suspension of the Constitution by the British Government later that same year. When fresh elections were held in 1957 and the PPP returned to office, she was appointed Minister of Labour, Health and Housing. During 1963-64 she served as Minister of Home Affairs and Senator, but resigned her role as Home Affairs Minister when she was unable to control the police force that had not intervened when extreme acts of violence were committed by opposition henchmen. She was returned to Parliament at successive elections held in 1973, 1980, 1985 and 1992.

When her husband Dr. Cheddi Jagan was inaugurated as Executive President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana on 5th October 1992, Janet Jagan became First Lady and served for six months as Guyana's Ambassador to the United Nations. Following the death of her husband in March 1997,

Janet Jagan then became Prime Minister and then finally served as President following elections at the end of that same year.

In addition to her extensive parliamentary activities, Janet Jagan was editor of the *Mirror* newspaper for almost twenty-five years where she remained a relentless critic of the PNC government. She also wrote hundreds of articles on topics as diverse as The Iraq War, Yasser Arafat, Nuclear Power, Rising Crimes Against Women and Guantanamo Bay, to name but a few. Together with her lifelong political interests, Janet Jagan also believed passionately in the value of Guyanese literature and culture. She wrote and edited several books for children including *When Grandpa Cheddi was a Boy*; *The Dog Who Loved Flowers*; *The Lure of the Mermaid* and *Patricia the Baby Manatee*.

Janet Jagan received many awards during her lifetime, including the Woman of Achievement Award from the University of Guyana, the 1997 Gandhi Gold Medal for Peace, Democracy and Women's Rights from UNESCO and Guyana's highest honour the Order of Excellence (O.E.). She will be remembered as not only as the devoted wife of Dr. Cheddi Jagan, but also as a champion of human rights and a formidable political force in her own right.

Dr. Lynne Macedo
Yesu Persaud Centre for Caribbean Studies, University of Warwick

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Motion on the Second Reading of the Town and Country Planning (Amendment) Bill: 20th September, 1957

Mrs. Jagan: In moving the second reading of this Bill, intituled:

“An Ordinance to amend the Town and Country Planning Ordinance,”

I should like to point out that section 8(5) and (6), of the Town and Country Planning Ordinance, Chapter 181 reads:

“(5) When the Governor in Council approves a scheme under this section, the Central Authority shall cause copies of such schemes to be made available for public inspection at the prescribed times and places, and shall within the Gazette and in such other manner as they may think fit notice of such approval.

(6) A scheme when approved by the Governor-in-Council under this section and published in the Gazette shall have full force and effect as from the date of such publication.”

This Bill seeks to allow notice of publication to be made in the *Gazette* rather than the actual publication of the schemes and plans.

It would be appreciated that the publication of any large scheme such as the Greater Georgetown Plan must entail great expenditure – in this case, unnecessary expenditure since the Ordinance gives persons the opportunity to examine such schemes.

So this amending Bill provides that early notice should be given in the *Gazette*, and it seeks also to provide for the coming into force of a scheme after the publication of such scheme by the Governor-in-Council. Retrospective effect of this Bill is also sought to enable the Ordinance to be operative from October 1, 1951.

I believe persons would be more concerned with the possibility of being committed to examine these schemes. That seems to be the intent of the original Ordinance: to allow persons to have full knowledge of and to be able to examine in full detail what these schemes and plans comprise of. I do not think any member of the public needs to fear that he or she would not have an opportunity of knowing in full what these plans and schemes may be.

Therefore I do hope that Hon. Members will give this Bill their fullest support.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: There have been quite a few criticisms of the Bill which have

been ably replied to by the Member for Central Demerara (Mr. Raj) and the Attorney General. The Hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Gajraj) raised the point that the Georgetown Town Council was interested in the granting of applications. However it is well, when considering his point of view, to bear in mind that the Georgetown Town Council does not have an architect and it does not have a planner.

I have been advised that at a later date authority will be put into the hands of the Town Council, and when that time comes some changes will be made. I am also advised that there is a joint committee representing the Central Board of Health, the Town Council and the Central Authority now considering alterations to the bylaws for building and land development.

There have been some harsh criticisms about the question of retrospective legislation and the fact that those who framed this law made a slight mistake which came out in the recent case of *Barclays Bank vs. the Central Housing and Planning Authority*. However, it was a matter of an error and errors do occur not only here but I am sure, quite frequently, in other places. It was not a fundamental mistake.

The question of haste has been heavily criticized. The Hon. Member for Central Demerara quite well pointed out what actually is the position. I think we all realise the rather dangerous position and the various things that would happen if the state of things were to continue too long.

I understand, too, that the Georgetown Town Council has not the convenience of dealing with building applications, without consulting the Central Authority. This Bill is merely seeking to give lawful application to the intention of the law makers and I think Members need not fear that advantage would be taken of the rights of the community. Again, I would urge Hon. Members to give their fullest support to this Bill, which has as its objective merely to rectify a minor error which has existed for some time.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill: 5th December, 1957

Mrs. Jagan: Sir, I beg to move the Second Reading of a Bill intituled:

"An Ordinance to amend the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance with respect to the application of its provisions to domestic servants."

In moving the Second Reading of this Bill, I should like to point out to Hon. Members that the purpose of the Bill is to make domestic servants who are injured in the course of their employment eligible for compensation under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance. This Bill seeks to place domestic servants within the boundaries of the Ordinance and thus protect them in the same way as the majority of workers are protected.

I would also like to point out to Members that domestic servants are the second largest group of workers in British Guiana, but they are, perhaps, the least protected by the legislation in this country. Domestic servants as a whole total somewhere in the vicinity of 8,000. Whether the worker is injured in the factory, the field or in the kitchen the laws of the country should protect that worker. That is why, at this late stage, we are now seeking to protect the worker who is employed in a private capacity in a home or in a kitchen.

From what we understand the incidence of accidents to domestic servants in homes is very low, and for that reason the premiums on the insurance policies that will have to be taken out under this Ordinance will also be very low and very reasonable. I can assure Hon. Members that the premiums on such policies will not be a burden on the housewife or on the employers of domestic workers.

I would like to carry Hon. Members of the Council back to the history of the development of the idea of bringing domestic workers under this Ordinance. The original Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1934, was patterned on the Trinidad Ordinance and on the Mauritius Ordinance which, unfortunately, did not include domestic workers under the terms of the Ordinance.

In 1944 the then Commissioner of Labour recommended that domestic servants should be brought under the terms of the Ordinance. Unfortunately there were delays and a Committee was appointed to consider amendments to the Ordinance with a view to including domestic servants in the 1934 Ordinance. This Committee was appointed in 1948, but it recommended that only domestic servants employed in public service, i.e., restaurants, hotels, etc., should be brought under the terms of the Ordinance. The Committee did not recommend the inclusion of domestic workers

employed in a private capacity in homes.

In 1950 another Advisory Committee gave consideration to the Workmen's Compensation Ordinances and the Committee suggested that the employers of domestic servants should be urged to take out insurance policies voluntarily – it was not recommended that it should be brought into the law.

In 1953 the Domestic Servants Advisory Committee recommended that domestic servants be placed under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, 1934. Today we are putting forward an amending Bill which seeks to remove the exemption of domestic servants from the provisions of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance. I should like to mention that domestics are included under the Workmen's Compensation laws in countries like the UK and USA. In the USA there is Federal legislation on the subject, so you will see that this is not a new approach to the question.

I think Hon. Members of this Council will appreciate the urgent need for including domestic servants under the terms of this Ordinance, because they certainly need the protection that it affords. Very often domestic servants receive injuries during the course of their employment and they have to go through expensive lawsuits in order to get compensations.

I am sure Hon. Members will agree with me that this category of worker in British Guiana has not been given the fullest protection in the laws of this country, and we should certainly do whatever we can to assist in framing our laws to give them the necessary protection. This measure is one of the first moves in the direction of bringing needed protection to domestic workers. My Ministry is considering means of giving them fullest protection.

I urge that all the Members of this Council give their fullest support to this Bill, so that this very large category of workers in British Guiana may enjoy some of the privileges and protection of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.

Statements by Members of the Executive Council - T&H.D. Ferry Service Strike: 13th December, 1957

Mrs. Jagan: I beg to make a statement. It is announced for the information of Hon. Members that the Government proposes to appoint a Committee to consider and advise on the services at present included in the Schedule to the Public Utility Undertakings and Public Health Services Arbitration Ordinance, 1956 (No. 44). The Committee will advise whether there is any necessity to remove from the Schedule or to curtail any of the services at present listed. The precise terms of reference of the Committee and its personnel will be announced later.

The Ordinance restrains employers and employees in services listed in the Schedule from engaging in a lockout or a strike without first giving notice of a trade dispute so as to give an opportunity for settlement by negotiations or failing that, arbitration.

In the meanwhile, pending the Committee's examination, the Government wishes to emphasize that the service listed in the Schedule to the Ordinance are still essential within the meaning of the Ordinance and the procedures laid down in the Ordinance must be observed, should any of the employers or employees falling within those categories so described engage in an industrial dispute.

Motion on Continuance of the Rent Restriction Ordinance: 13th December, 1957

Mrs. Jagan: I beg to move the following Motion –

“ ... Be it resolved that the Rent Restriction Ordinance (Chapter 186) shall continue in force for a further period of one year up to and including the 31st day of December, 1958.”

I believe that Hon. Members will fully appreciate the necessity for this Motion and for the passing of this Motion which will continue the Rent Restriction Ordinance in effect for the year 1958. I do not envisage that there will be or there is need for much discussion on this Motion. However, I would like to state for the information of Hon. Members that my Ministry is at present fully reviewing and examining the whole Rent Restriction Ordinance and its application, and in so doing it is giving careful consideration to the Sharples Report on this very Ordinance.

We hope in the not too distant future to be able to put the views of the Ministry on this subject to Hon. Members, so until that time I do not think much can be done on this question – which, of course, is of tremendous importance to all of the people in British Guiana – except to keep the Ordinance in force for another year.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill 1958 - Budget Debate: 30th January, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, I have a few remarks I wish to make. In no way do I intend to make a comprehensive speech on the Budget. That will be left for the Leader of the Majority Party. However, there are certain items concerning my Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing which have come up during the discussion, and so I feel it would be necessary for me to clarify a few points. Quite a few remarks have centred around certain aspects of housing and the hospitals, and I have listened with great interest to the remarks made around the table. The Hon. Member for Georgetown South said that this room should be the place in which trumpets of discontent should be blown. It also seems to have been a room where the trumpet has been blown for a few other things. It is unfortunate that the level of discussion and criticism has not always remained as high as it should and I must confess my disappointment when it did sink below a certain level to which I think discussions in this Hon. Council should not descend.

However, I have listened with great interest to the Members representing the various Political Parties and various shades of opinion. We have heard the front and rear attack from the People's National Congress. We have heard the Parliamentary Leader of the United Democratic Party. We have heard the Parliamentary Leader of the National Labour Front. We have heard the Parliamentary Leader of the Friends of the Inter-American Relations Committee, and we have heard the Nominated Members. I must say that some have certainly brought forth criticisms which we, as a Majority Party, must take careful note of, and I can assure Hon. Members that the criticisms which were seriously and sincerely given will be attended to.

I listened with great interest to the last speaker, the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, and I fully agree with some of his comments on the need for streamlining and coordinating some of the Government services. He could not have a firmer advocate than myself. In the short time I have been in office I have been endeavouring to streamline those departments which fall under my Ministry and I have found that the Department of Housing certainly, if I may say so, requires considerable streamlining and coordinating which is at present going on.

Much criticism has been levelled at the fact that there has been retrenchment in housing. I should like to point out, however, that not all the criticisms were fully accurate. Certainly, there has not been any retrenchment to the level of 600 workers. That is far above the number of workers who have been retrenched. Certainly, this Majority Party does not want to see retrenchment of workers, and regrets indeed that it has fallen upon its shoulders to face the unpleasant task of having to scale down a scheme which was going at full speed. That scaling down has been necessitated by the

funds available. I believe that Members who have studied the Five-Year Development Plan are fully aware of the fact that the total amount allocated was \$14 million to build 4,500 low cost houses. It is clear at this time that even with the full expenditure of that \$14 million the target of 4,500 houses could not be reached. The Hon. the Financial Secretary made that point quite clear.

Perhaps Hon. Members would be interested in knowing what the programme for 1958 entails. Under construction at this moment are some 1,100 odd houses, and under contract to be constructed is something short of 1,000, which means that, no doubt, during 1958 some 2,000 houses should be produced. All of these were contracted and arranged for before I entered the Ministry and during the period I have been in the Ministry, there have been no new works engaged in because, as I have mentioned before, the full sum of the money allocated has been either spent or contracted for.

In other words, the money will have to be spent as soon as the contracts which have been already made and allocated for, have been completed. There are thousands of people who today are having difficulty in finding decent homes or even a shelter over their heads. There will have to be some continuation of the housing programme for 1959, and we hope that our endeavours to find money will be successful. The Ministry has been very busily engaged in many aspects of the housing problem. I may mention one arising out of remarks of the Hon. Nominated Member.

The question of the allocation of houses is certainly a very serious one. It is one to which I have given a great deal of attention so as to be absolutely sure that people who need houses are given houses. That, of course, has always been a source of discontent for quite some time, and I have heard many arguments that people who do not deserve houses have been allocated them. I have found it a very serious problem and one that does require at all time very careful and close attention.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown Central made reference to the fact that it may be necessary to rent houses. Perhaps he is not aware that the rental housing programme is at this stage subsidised. I think most Hon. Members would realize that the rental housing programme charges cannot fully cover the actual cost of the buildings, and, of course, the lower rental houses at \$5 and \$8 per month are naturally more subsidized than the others.

I heard reference made here that there would not be sufficient lands and that the Ministry of Housing had given up its rights to certain lands. I may mention for the information of Hon. Members that the lands referred to were never purchased by this Government, but were earmarked in case it was necessary to have more land for housing purposes. There is quite a bit of available land controlled by the Housing Department at this very moment which can take off quite a number of houses. I think there need be no fear that there will not be sufficient land for houses. The land that has been earmarked for Government houses will be used for housing people who

are desperately in need of homes.

I may mention under the Heading of Labour, that certain remarks were made by a Member – I am sorry he is not present to hear what I say. One remark was that this Government has made no effort to bring in any minimum wage laws for working people. Of course, that is not true. One has only to remember the recent Order in connection with quarry workers. I may mention, too, that one aspect of the Minimum Wage Orders that have taken up considerable attention is the question of the enforcement, and the Ministry has been very keen to see that all the minimum wage laws on the Statute Book of this country are being enforced.

Mention too was made of the Essential Services Ordinance, and I do believe Hon. Members will remember my announcement here in this Chamber that a Committee had been established to inquire into the Schedule of the Essential Service Ordinance. I do believe Hon. Members have already seen in the newspapers the announcement of the names of the Members of that Committee, and it is hoped that the Committee will meet as soon as the Chairman returns from a holiday abroad.

Now, practically every Member has discussed the question of a hospital and quite rightly so, because to everyone health and medicine are very important indeed. I do not think there is one person in British Guiana who is not interested in health and medicine. It is the universal desire of all people to have a good medical service in their country, and therefore on the question of a new state hospital for Georgetown we are very interested. Like many things these days – you will forgive me Mr. Speaker – there is some deliberate distortion of what is and what is not. I was obliged last night to interrupt the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central who was making certain remarks which I had also seen in the press and which were utterly ridiculous and improper.

I have heard the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central suggesting that money allocated for the construction of the Georgetown Hospital was being used for drainage and irrigation. Nothing could be more ridiculous, nor more wicked than to make such a suggestion. If the Hon. Gentleman had taken the trouble to use his eyes a little more than his mouth, he might have studied the Development Programme for 1956-60. Nowhere in the programme is there any amount allocated for the construction of a new hospital for Georgetown.

We find, however, one item which is an unallocated amount at the end of the list – an allocation for health which states "*Further hospital and dispensary services - \$929,960.*" The asterisk at the bottom of the page shows that it is proposed provisionally that the greater part of this sum should be utilised in improving the existing hospital services in Georgetown. For financial reasons it is unlikely that the Clarke Proposals for a new hospital will be implemented during the next five years.

With regard to the other Development Estimates for 1958, the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central read to us last night that the sum of \$679,960

was allocated for the reconstruction of the Georgetown Hospital. There was one thing he neglected to read which referred to that item. It says: "*This includes the cost of other services.*" The \$679,000 referred to under the Head dealing with the reconstruction of the Georgetown Hospital is the unexpended balance remaining from the \$929,960 which I mentioned as for further hospital and dispensary services. Of that total the sum of \$110,000 has been allocated for the purchase of hospital equipment, and \$140,000 for the settlement of ex-patients at the Mahaica Hospital.

We certainly are giving serious consideration to the construction of a new hospital for Georgetown. I am sure that there will be very few people who would not want to see a new hospital in Georgetown. We found in our deliberations that it would be difficult to finance this huge project which is estimated at \$11 million, but we were hoping to use up some of the unallocated amount.

I think the Hon. Member, Mr. Gajraj, did mention that it might be advisable to have a progressive building of the hospital, and that is the actual plan which the Government is studying at the moment. The plan of the architect, Mr. Davis, indicates that the hospital could be constructed in sections over a fairly long period of, perhaps, ten years. It has been stated in the press through a release from the Ministry that we are presently engaged in studying all aspects of this gigantic proposal. I would ask Hon. Members to have a little patience and remember that Rome was not build in a day.

I have also listened with keen interest to the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central who, unfortunately, is not here at the moment. He referred to the Party's Manifesto – a document which is very dear to my heart. The Manifesto of the People's Progressive Party sets out the policy of the Party and many of its hopes, wishes and aspirations. I have heard criticisms to the effect that we have not done this or that; we have not kept our promises; and when are we going to do this or that. I can refer to eighteen different items which we have either done or started to do since we took office.

I would like to remind some Hon. Members that they should not permit their impatience to run away with their good senses. I have not yet seen a Political Party in any part of the world that could, in 4½ months, complete all of its programme. It is indeed fantastic for anyone to suggest that a Political Party which happens to be the majority Party in the Government could possibly begin every scheme that I have heard several Hon. Members uttering around this table.

Before we could start all of the schemes mentioned by Hon. Members it would be necessary to get large sums of money. I would ask Hon. Members to have a little more patience and be more reasonable in their criticisms. We want good criticisms; we want a good healthy Opposition because that is the basis of good government, but let us not make foolish, unnecessary remarks and expect the impossible.

For those who may or may not have attended any of our pre-election meetings, I can safely say that this Party made no ridiculous promises to the electorate. This Party promised the people that they would get honest and sincere representation, and that efforts would be made to ensure that the Government represented the wishes of the people.

The Manifesto referred to represents our aspirations; it is a guide, and we are doing our best to achieve everything possible for British Guiana because we want to see this country going forward. With your permission, Sir, I would like to read a few words from the Manifesto which states:

“In the confusion of lies, confessions and personal abuse to which some politicians and Political Parties have resorted, the real issues of the present election campaign are becoming sidetracked.

It is well at this time to remember that the real issue in British Guiana is the ending of colonialism.”

Statements by Members of the Executive Council - Workers at Sir Lindsay Parkinson Company: 7th January, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: I would like to make a brief statement arising out of the debate in this Council on 4th February, 1958, in connection with the Labour Department. When the discussions took place, Hon. Members will recall that I made a statement concerning Sir Lindsay Parkinson Company's labour dispute. The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, in referring to the situation stated, not once but twice, that his union had not received any reply from the Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing following the interview which the Ministry had with the workers at Sir Lindsay Parkinson Company.

On further investigation I found that the letter which the Hon. Member mentioned had not been received, had really been delivered by hand on the 3rd February, 1958, the day before the debate took place. I merely wanted to clarify the matter for the information of this Council.

Development Budget – Housing Retrenchment of Workers: 7th January, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: I would like to make a few remarks in connection with what we have heard about the Housing and Development Estimates. I have listened carefully to the remarks of the Elected and Nominated members. I find that on the one hand the Nominated Members who were part of the Interim Government have devoted their time to apologising for the previous Government, whereas Members of the Elected Group to whom I have listened have more or less devoted their time to attacking the present Government and its housing programme. Perhaps a careful blending and appreciation of the two may bring us a more realistic approach to this situation.

I have heard some of the Hon. Members, particularly the Hon. Member of North Georgetown, making a plea for the people in the lower income group who are in dire need of houses. The Hon. Members should be reminded, and I am convinced of it, that the housing aspect of the development programme was brought about primarily by the great interest and the persistent agitation of the Majority Party during the last seven years of its life. It was from the persistent attention the Party gave to this problem in British Guiana that this Government was forced to appreciate the intensity of the problem and to seek means of solving it.

One of the means of solving this problem was the introduction of a Five Year Housing Development Programme in an effort, at the time, to enhance the achievements of the Interim Government and to endeavour to satisfy the people who were obviously dissatisfied at the time.

A great deal of money has been spent on housing – no one can deny that. In the entire Development Estimates housing has the biggest bite. If we examine Agriculture with \$4 million; Drainage and Irrigation with \$13 million; Education with \$3 million; Hospitals and Dispensaries with \$3 million; Land Settlement with \$4 million; we find that the \$14.3 million allocated for housing is a considerable amount. There is also \$4 million which has been allocated for the building of houses by the Credit Corporation. This is in recognition of the great need for solving the housing problem in our community. The overall amount spent on housing must be added to the considerable amount spent from the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund in the housing of sugar workers.

The amount allocated for housing in the Development Programme, as everyone knows, will be finished in 1958. Our entry into the Government at period when the gross amount of the money had been spent on housing is perfectly clear. We have no alternative than to recognize the existing fact that the amount left to be spent on housing was not much, and expenses would have to be reduced. The retrenchment which followed as a result of

the poor planning of the Programme cannot be blamed on this Government, as I believe certain Members on the other side of the Table would like to do. It is merely the natural result of the exhaustion of a certain amount of money which was allocated to be spent. If one is building a house and the house is finished, the people who are building the house can no longer continue to build.

With regard to the question of retrenchment in the Housing Department, I have been particularly diligent in seeing that the retrenchment was done on a broad basis and was not limited to the workers. That was done in an effort to produce as many houses as possible with the amount available.

I notice that the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, referred to certain posts in the Housing Department and he has urged that they be filled. If he can recall what took place during the discussions on the Estimates in the Finance Committee, he will remember that I advised the Committee that there had to be a certain amount of cutting down in the staff so that the suit would fit the cloth. In the retrenchment we sought to dispense with the people who were not absolutely necessary to the Housing Programme in 1958. It certainly would have been foolhardy to keep a large staff without money to build houses.

It will be remembered that I made a statement regarding this matter sometime ago. I notice that the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, does not only want repetition but he wants it said four or five times that he can, perhaps, understand it. I said that this Government would make every effort to find funds to continue the Housing Programme. I do not know whether he wants that repeated again and again. That is the desire of this Government because it fully realises the large number of people who are suffering from bad housing. This Party has dealt with the question for several years and it has urged previous Governments to solve the problem.

I repeat that this Government is not so foolhardy as to keep engineers, architects, etc., without having money to build houses. If during 1958 we are successful, as we hope, in finding funds to continue the Housing Programme, we will do so.

Our policy is to be realistic, and that is the situation as it stands. The position is that we have so much money at our disposal, and we are spending it as wisely as we can. That is precisely what we are doing at the moment. As Minister in charge of this Department I must confess it is a delicate point to make, but I have gone into some of the serious problems and I cannot heartily endorse the Hon. Member's point, from my own experience. Perhaps it is too delicate for me to speak on in this Council.

On this question of retrenchment it has been said that this is quite wrong. As I have said before, it has pained us very much to see it happen. It is necessary to understand what is happening in the world generally. This may be a Sputnik world but it is also a sad world in other respects. One has to appreciate the report of the I.L.O. which I heard on the BBC, that from the 1957 figures there is trend toward increasing unemployment and an

increase in the cost of living of people. These are facts that are not happy ones, but we have to face them; and Members of the "Opposition" must not be so foolish as to accuse the Majority Party of bringing this retrenchment upon the people. The pressure of world events has affected many countries and we are feeling it here. I would ask Members of the "Opposition" in all sincerity to think twice or thrice before they make hard remarks suggesting sectionalism or racialism on our part.

I would say this, that a country divided against itself cannot stand. They must still be the "Opposition" because we want opposition, but we ask them to look at British Guiana as one nation, which must move forward and not be divided against itself and pulled down. I sincerely hope that every one of us has a sincere interest in seeing this country move forward.

I have noted the very complicated questions of the Hon. Member, Mr. Robin Davis. I do not think he expects me to give him detailed answers today or to produce a list. I would suggest to him that he ask the questions in the normal manner, or if he does not wish to do that, then I would invite him to the Ministry and we can get out the figures he wishes to have. I think he can take his choice.

The Hon. Member, Mr. Tello, who loves to read, read us a letter by one Mr. 'Something' – I did not get the name. In that letter the person quite rightly praised British Guiana's Housing Programme and mentioned that it was laid out quite attractively. I have had the privilege of seeing the housing scheme from the air, and there the benefits of planning by a well-qualified Planning Officer can be seen to the best advantage. The roads, and areas, reserved for community efforts, etc., look very beautiful. The gentleman mentioned admired our Programme and he spoke of the efficient and well thought out plans.

On reflection, and this is not particularly criticism of the scheme, I believe that most of the officers will admit at this stage that one of the shortcomings of the Housing Programme was that it was not well planned in advance, due to the fact that they were trying to reach the quoted target of 4,500 houses within a certain period. The effort at speed has brought about ill effects which we find in any Programme aimed too much at speed. Over-emphasis on speed is reflecting itself now; we might say that some of the hens are coming home to roost, and this is giving some Members grey hairs.

Those are the remarks I have to make about Housing. I regret I cannot say something about staff – the Acting Commissioner, the Planning Officer, the Planning Commissioner – but this is something in which the Minister has absolutely no say and is one for the Establishment.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill: 27th February, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill intituled –

“An Ordinance to amend the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance.”

I would like to take this opportunity to explain to Hon. Members some of the background material to this Amendment of the Ordinance. In going through the files leading up to this stage where the Amendment is being brought to this Honourable Council, we noticed that as far back as 1937 workers who had filed claims for compensation against their employers had been finding some difficulty in going to the judicial district where the accident occurred, for the court proceedings.

An interesting case in point is one in 1937 where a worker was killed in the course of his employment in the Potaro area, and his family in putting forward their claims to the employers found it very expensive to travel to Potaro together with their witnesses and lawyers who lived in Georgetown.

This Bill is seeking to improve that situation, and to make it more convenient for workers who are filing claims for compensation. There was another interesting case of a worker who was injured in the North Western District. He found it exceedingly difficult to travel to a distant area for the purpose of the claims in Court.

Eventually several applications were made to the Governor in Council asking that cases be dealt with in the Georgetown Court. In most of the cases I have seen before me, the workers have been from Georgetown or New Amsterdam, and the people had gone to distant areas to work. In this course of their employment they had either been injured, or met their death in distant areas.

There was one case in 1953 in which the worker complained that he had travelled eight or nine times to court in the Corentyne district, and the case had been postponed on each occasion. The worker found it very expensive to take his lawyer and witnesses to the court. Eventually he used up all of his money in travelling and was unable to attend court.

In 1957 the Saw Mill and Forest Workers' Union made representation to the Ministry and the Labour Department asking that its members, who were employed in the North Western District, be allowed to bring claims for workmen's compensation in the Georgetown judiciary. Arising from those representations made by the Union in January, 1957, we finally moved to this stage where we have before us amending legislation which will enlarge the choice of jurisdiction under this Ordinance, and bring it into line with similar jurisdiction in civil matters.

I may mention for the benefit of Members, that this Bill will enlarge the scope of applications under this Ordinance. It will apply to all proceedings under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance and not only to claims by workers in connection with accidents.

I may also mention for the benefit of Members, that the Acting Chief Justice has been consulted on the proposed Amendment to this Ordinance and he concurs with it.

You will find that there is a considerable expansion of the original procedure in this Bill. Previously, certain matters took a very long time to reach a satisfactory conclusion. I speak in terms of the various petitions and applications which the Governor has had from time to time from workers asking that their cases be heard in courts closer to their place of residence. In fact, as recently as two months ago, we have had an application from a worker who was injured in Mabaruma, and who asked that his claims for compensation be heard in the Georgetown District.

I would ask Hon. Ministers to give their support to this Bill, because we are convinced that it will assist the workers who, unfortunately, have to make claims for compensation and make their task easier.

In this Bill Hon. Members will notice that, in substitution for Section (a) of Clause 34 we will be inserting this: "*that the proceedings for compensation, or in respect of any other matter under this Ordinance.*" That is the particular Clause I referred to when I said that this Bill has gone further than the previous one, in taking into consideration other matters besides the filing of claims for compensation. In the previous Ordinance the claims had to be filed in the district where the accident took place.

If Hon. Members will read the draft Bill they will observe the wording "*or to which they will observe the wording or to which both parties mutually agree, or in which the employer ordinarily resides, or has a registered office or particular place of business.*" That actually will meet all cases, because in the majority of cases the employer's place of business or residence is in the city of Georgetown. Therefore Georgetown is the most convenient place for applicants to have their cases heard. We must also remember that the majority of barristers reside in Georgetown, and it is more convenient for them to handle cases in Georgetown. At the same time, when the witnesses and doctors live in Georgetown the case will be handled much quicker.

This is the result of several years' of experience in the shortcomings of this particular section which we wish to amend, and we have now submitted this Amending Bill. I ask Hon. Members to support the Bill.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: I have listened with interest to the comments of the Hon. Members, and I am happy to know there seems to be support for the Amendments. I look forward with interest to the amendments which will be submitted by the Hon. Member for Georgetown South.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown Central has raised some interesting points. If he has any particular examples of long delays in the hearings of workmen's compensation cases, I would ask him to inform me and efforts will be made through the Attorney-General's office to see what can be done to speed up these matters.

The Hon. Member for Central Demerara very precisely stressed some very important points, in particular, the one dealing with countries, which I had neglected to explain when I spoke and I thank him for bringing up these matters. I would ask all Hon. Members to give this Bill their further support when the time comes.

Strike in Bahamas – Royal Commission Requested: 27th March, 1958

[Mr. Tello: Be it resolved:

“That this Council respectfully request the Secretary of State for the Colonies to appoint a Royal Commission to investigate the causes of the recent strike in the Bahamas.”]

Mrs. Jagan: I would like to say a few words on the Motion by the Hon. the Nominated Member, Mr. Tello. He has raised a very interested point and one in which we in British Guiana must be interested, since it involves the conditions affecting persons who are our neighbours and friends.

Before I proceed, I would like to add one minor amendment to this Motion, that is, the addition of the words *“and the need for constitutional reform”* after the word *“Bahamas,”* in the last line. I will explain why I am putting forward that amendment.

The causes of the recent disturbances in the Bahamas are rather deep-rooted and it certainly involves the constitutional question in that area. We all know that the people in the Bahamas do not enjoy universal adult suffrage. In fact their franchise is hopelessly restricted to persons who own property.

I would like to read for the benefit of Hon. Members a very excellent description of the Bahamas situation in the mildly left *New Statesman*, a London publication of 25th January last:

“The familiar pattern of striking colonial workers and landing British troops is now being repeated in the Bahamas. Behind the usual picture of racial discrimination and poverty among the workers who provide luxurious comfort to American and British tourists, there lie two hidden issues.

On the one hand, there is a struggle within the labour movement for control of the trade unions; on the other, accumulated political frustration within an archaic constitution.

The labour legislation of the Bahamas is the most outdated of any British colony, excluding even the right of association guaranteed by the International Labour Organisation.

In the efforts to build an industrial movement it is perhaps inevitable that personal and political ambitions will develop. But deeper than the industrial issues lies a concentrated anger against the small group of businessmen who have used the property-dominated franchise to maintain their political oligarchy.

The Constitution itself is controlled by the House of Assembly and can be abrogated, but not reformed, by Britain. The attempt to build trade unions and fight for labour rights in such a situation of political frustration may well produce an

explosion.

There is now only one adequate answer to the degenerate political, economic and social conditions of the Bahamas; a Royal Commission should be appointed to report on every aspect of the situation which provokes such deep and widespread discontent."

So we can see that our Honourable Nominated Member is not alone in these demands for a Royal Commission. He seems to be solidly backed by the editor of the *New Statesman*. It means that in this publication it is admitted that the situation there is one of a deep nature, involving the labour laws, complicated by racial segregation and the fact that the political rights of the people have been restricted.

Even the ultra-right *New Commonwealth* of the 3rd of February this year supported this – and this is the mouthpiece of the colonialists.

With all respect, of course, I do not wish to go into the causes of it, but I wish Council to be aware of the opinions of persons and publications, and for that reason I feel that the views of the conservative *New Commonwealth* may assist, I will not go into anything dealing with the actual strike. The *New Commonwealth* in its issue of February 3rd pointed out that the Bahamas today is paying the price of the failure of the business interests to consider the coloured people's point of view. The magazine stated that three years ago the pot was boiling and that the situation called for judicious action. The colour problem was there, but was largely ignored by the powerful business group who were concentrating on not losing the booming tourist trade which has kept the Bahamas alive.

I think that in my remarks I have brought out the point embodied in my Amendment, asking that our request for investigation should also include the constitutional questions, which I think is very important indeed in the Bahamas.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Bakeries – Hours of Work (Amendment) Bill: 10th April, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: Sir, in moving the Second Reading of a Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to amend the Bakeries (Hours of Work) Ordinance”,

I should like to explain to Hon. Members that this amending Bill seeks to remedy a defect in the Principal Ordinance which, Hon. Members would observe, was amended in 1951. This Bill provides a penalty for bakers who are now breaking the law.

I have had discussions with the B.G. Labour Union on this Bill and it is very much in favour of it. It appears that this piece of legislation has been gathering dust for quite a long time.

The Principal Ordinance was passed in 1946 and that Ordinance called *“the Bakeries (Hours of Work) Ordinance”* prohibited bread-making between the hours of 7.00 p.m. and 5.00 a.m. except in the work of setting sponge.

British Guiana’s legislation follows the I.L.O. Convention – night work in bakeries is prohibited. Those who have ratified the I.L.O. Convention include Argentina, Bulgaria, Chile, Columbia, USA and UK, etc. Further, our legislation which follows the I.L.O. pattern is in some respects well in advance of this type of legislation in certain colonial territories. I think the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, made reference to this fact at one time in the Legislative Council.

Our legislation was arrived at through the joint consultation between the proprietors and the workers. Further, sometime after the 1946 Ordinance came into effect it restricted baking at night. Bakery proprietors complained that they were facing unfair competition from self-employed bakers, who did not employ other persons and were baking at night and producing fresh bread in the early morning. It was felt that they were competing unfairly with large bakeries that, by law, were forced to do their baking during the day.

In 1951 there was an amending Ordinance, No. 23, which extended the Ordinance to the small bakers who did not employ workers. The amending Ordinance of 1951 did not specifically make applicable the other provisions of the principal Ordinance, that is, this Section regarding penalties in the case of a breach of the Ordinance by those persons who were brought within the scope of the Ordinance. Therefore the object of this Bill before the Council is to make the provisions applicable to self-employed bakers. Hon. Members will observe that the provisions before the Council exclude the requirements of Section 7 of the principal Ordinance which deals with the keeping of a register of employees.

From 1951 this Amendment was on the books, but because of the lack of

a consequential Amendment the actual intention of the Ordinance was negative. We are seeking at this moment to insert the necessary bit of legislation in order that the intention of the Ordinance can be applied.

I would ask Hon. Members to approve the passage of this amending Bill, and help throw off some of the dust that has gathered for quite a few years, so that this admirable piece of legislation which is in line with the I.L.O. Convention and in keeping with the most modern trends will be placed on our Statute Books.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Member, Mr. Gajraj, has raised some very interesting points, and is asking for a postponement. I am not at all inclined to agree with this respect for a postponement. It has been postponed long enough.

His point about the limitation of the rights of self-employed bakers, I think, has been stretched too far. If we want any information on this aspect, we can consider that self-employed barbers and shopkeepers, for example, have prescribed hours. This is an effort to fulfil the conception of the Ordinance and to avoid any variations which have gone on in the past.

The Hon. Member, Mr. Tello, made his point quite clearly that this question of self-employed bakers is one of the excuses which have been used in the past to slip around the Ordinance. I may mention, too, that health and sanitary conditions are very important where an item of food such as bread is concerned. Some years ago Mr. Good, before the introduction of this Ordinance, wrote an interesting report on the conditions existing in bakeries. In some bakeries the conditions were filthy. Sanitary conditions were terribly lacking, and workers were found to be lolling around and sleeping on the premises. With bakeries doing their work at night there was no possibility of checking up on the sanitary arrangements, because sanitary officers were hardly ever on duty during those hours. By having the work done in the day time the officers are able to check on this type of work, the production of an important food item for human beings.

From that point of view the Bakeries (Hours of Work) Ordinance is very valuable, leaving aside the question of the long hours of work which made the bakeries earn the name of the greatest sweat shops in the country. Every effort has been made to remove this form of mediaeval slavery from our country, and in the same way I think efforts should now be made to see that the aims of the Ordinance are not retarded. I would ask the Hon. Nominated Member (Mr. Gajraj) to reconsider this matter and give his support to the Amendment.

Mr. Speaker's Departure: 15th April, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: Before you close the meeting, I would like to take this opportunity of wishing you a very pleasant trip abroad. I hope that the opportunity given to you to attend this very important Conference will be of benefit to you in your position as Speaker, and to us as Members of this Council. We wish you a most successful and happy trip abroad.

[Applause]

Government Housing Estates and the Rents Charged: 7th May, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: I can only say that the facts and figures reveal that the \$17 apartments are subsidized. I am not making an excuse; I am just stating facts. The type 105 apartment is subsidized to the extent of \$74 a year. In other words the real rental is in the vicinity of \$23 per month. Whereas the type 112 apartment is subsidised to a lesser extent by \$72 a year. We all know that the \$5 apartments are subsidised. \$158 a year goes in subsidizing this type of apartment. The Government of British Guiana is subsidizing the Government Housing Estates in Georgetown and its environs to the tune of \$100,000 a year.

It is clear that even though the rents are high for people who are unemployed and who are underemployed and receive low wages, they are still being subsidized. It still means that the taxpayer is bearing it, and it means further that it is a perpetual drain on the economy of the country. The question is, how much can British Guiana afford in the way of subsidy for housing? The Hon. Member, no doubt, is suggesting an increase in the subsidy. The economic situation is not in such a healthy state at this moment that we can offer any promise of going much higher.

I would like to mention just a slight correction. The Hon. Member who moved the Motion brought out the point that a certain percentage of a man's income should be devoted to house rental. He quoted high and low figures and made the point, that the Guianese workers in Georgetown would be spending roughly 30 percent of their income in the rental of a \$17 a month house. Perhaps because we went to different schools, I find that my mathematics make it 18½ percent of the average working man's earnings, if he is renting a \$17 a month apartment house.

There has been much said about the Government being a rapacious landlord. The facts do not exactly reveal that. They reveal that only 17 or 18 percent of all the tenants pay their rents regularly, and at the 31st March, 1958, out books showed a considerable amount of money outstanding - \$31,119.84 as arrears of rents. This indicates that Government is not exactly a rapacious landlord, because some of the tenants do owe rents for periods extending beyond one year. I have never heard of any case of a tenant being evicted by the Government for nonpayment of rent, unless that person's case has been thoroughly investigated and every possible attempt to assist in solving that person's problem has been made.

We have been lately revising the cases of those persons who have very large arrears of rents, and who, in the opinion of the investigator, should pay their rent as they are in receipt of an income and are in employment. For the information of the Hon. Member I may state that we have been very carefully examining the cases of those tenants in arrears of rents, and we

have been giving the utmost sympathy to such persons who are unemployed or underemployed. But we cannot help not having too much sympathy for those who, we know, do receive adequate earnings. In many cases the rent collector checks with the employers. There are even Government employees who are in receipt of substantial incomes but do not pay their rents. I want the Hon. Member to know that we have not added a hardship to any legitimate case of a tenant who is in need. I know they will be horrified at the large amount of arrears of rents, and will press that we collect all arrears.

There is no doubt that the Housing Department will have to be run on an economic basis. It is not proper for me, on this Motion, to discuss the past administration of the Department; but I think Hon. Members will remember the remarks I made here some weeks ago when I promised that as soon as the criminal investigation is completed I would examine the necessity for an investigation into the Housing Department. However, the Hon. Mover of the Motion is interested in an investigation from an entirely different point of view. He has complained that Government has attempted to extract as much rent as possible from the tenants.

The Hon. Mover has mentioned as a fact that the drainage on the Government Estates is very poor. I can quite agree with him that some of the drainage is in a shocking condition. We had the good fortune to ask Dr. Friend, Sanitary Engineer attached to the World Health Organisation, to examine the housing areas. Although he was tremendously busy with some other work which had brought him to British Guiana, he took time off to examine the Government Estates, and from my brief discussion with him I understand that quite a lot has to be done to improve the situation. We are at this moment awaiting his report. It is unfortunate that we have never had, and do not at the moment have, a Sanitary Engineer. As far as I can understand, it is a fairly technical question, and the mistakes now in existence would not have been committed if we had someone with his ability to advise us at the proper moment. That is something of the past. We will have to build the present and face the future. We have to do our best to improve the position. All I can say is that I see no point in our doing anything until we have his advice, because I see no one else qualified to advise us. I anticipate that his report should reach us in a short time; we are going to receive it along with his report on the matter which brought him to British Guiana.

There was some discussion on the question of the allocation of houses. That is a very interesting question. I believe the Ministry has spent a great deal of time on this question. I am not one to boast, but I cannot help at this moment boasting a little in saying that I am proud indeed of the way in which the allocation of houses has gone on since I have been in the Ministry. I challenge anyone to come forward and tell me that someone who did not deserve a house had been given one during the past nine months. I have made it a point that persons who live under miserable conditions or have no house to live in, and persons who have large families are those to

whom priority is given. It matters nothing to me whether a person is related to me or not; no person is given a house who does not deserve it. Preference is given only on the grounds of need. We have been very careful to see that the houses and apartments which are so much needed by people are given to those who need them very much and deserve them very much.

I have heard some discussion about the Tenants' Association. If I may speak frankly, we all have our little groups or associations, so that we can appreciate the Hon. Member's concern. If we were to go by rumours, I am told that a little group did speak to an anonymous Member who advised them not to pay their rents. I do not believe it. I cannot believe that any Hon. Member of this Council would so advise people who can pay rents. I am sure the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central would not make such a statement. I am sure that the Hon. Member would encourage the members of the Tenants Association to make all efforts to pay their rents. I will say this: this question of rent is a very ticklish one. Every day I get people coming to me and saying "*I need a house, I will pay the rent.*" But I know hundreds of people are not paying their rents and we feel that those willing to pay and who can pay should be helped first.

It is not for Government to give housing accommodation to people and then throw them out on the road. They would find it a problem themselves to find houses. There is this point to be considered. When there is too much money outstanding for house rents, and when the subsidy is too great, it means that in the overall picture the amount that can be spent on new houses would necessarily be low. My view on the matter – and that has been my view in seeking a cleanup of the Housing Department – is that I would like all the money available to be spent on new houses. That has been my order in the Ministry – that whatever money can be saved is to be used for new houses.

Unfortunately, the question of further amounts for the Housing Department is uncertain at the moment. The question of the future of the Housing Department is constantly under discussion. We know that the ultimate responsibility for running the Housing estates must be the responsibility of the Local Authorities. That is an important problem. It will engage our attention later on, but I may mention that we are already moving into that sphere of thought.

The Hon. Member spoke about the question of the lack of markets in the Housing Scheme, and the fact that there are no churches, schools, etc. It is not altogether true to say that there are no churches and schools. I believe the idea he meant to convey was that there was not sufficient of them. I do know that there are church bodies who are at this moment making preparations to build churches, and the question of schools will be taken up. We have run into a complication which I cannot discuss at this moment – one involving the transport in lands.

We want to see a shopping centre opened early. We are fully aware of the hardship caused by the lack of shopping facilities for residents in the

housing estates which are outside of the city. Shops and other commercial enterprises would have been set up earlier if it were not for a very complicated legal hitch which still presents itself and will have to be solved.

The Hon. Member is asking for an investigation into the conditions existing on Government Housing Estates and the rents charged. I cannot see the necessity for such an investigation. The whole question of rents is tied up with the country's economic position. The amount of money which has been spent on housing – and every bit of it was needed – is still out of proportion to the real needs of this country. We are going around in a vicious circle. If we spend our money on social services and housing and do not increase the ability to earn; if we do not increase the national income, the productivity of the country, the very people for whom we wish to provide those services would not have the earning capacity, and would then be dependent on more social services. The money has to come from somewhere, and if our vicious circle is not opened, and if the economic problems of this country are not properly tackled we are getting absolutely nowhere. Mr. Courbois, the expert who came here last year to do some work on Agricultural Credit, said this:

“Whatever the reasons for the past utilization of capital may be, there has been a shift in the policy of the Corporation as well as in other Government agencies, from the policy of developing production, which was advocated by the World Bank Mission, to developing expenditure on social services and housing.”

Mr. Courbois, in his voluminous report, makes the point that the World Bank Mission stressed that capital expenditure would have to be devoted to developing production. If production was developed, if our national scheme was increased, the money for social services and housing would then follow. Unfortunately, in our Development Programme which will end in 1960, the stress was shifted from that advocated by the World Bank Mission to one of social services and housing, and the reason for this was largely political, which most of us should recognize.

How long are we going to continue in that dead-end direction? Are we going to continue until we reach a dead-end, or are we going to take the bull by the horns and realize that this country has to be developed, and that huge sums of money have to be spent in the building of the national income? It is all well and good for Members of the “*Opposition*” to ask for millions more to be spent on social services. We know that millions should be spent, but if we have a limited national income are we to spend it on social services and not build for the future? You cannot show me the man or woman who would not prefer to work and earn his or her own living, and with that money purchase what he or she needs. People do not want free houses, but to be able to work and earn sufficient money so that they can pay their rent and shop bills. People do not want charity, but an opportunity to earn a decent living and this Government recognizes that that is

the chief point that faces us. If we are going to submerge the economy of this country in constant expenditure of money which we do not have, on purely social welfare schemes I predict that we would end up bankrupt in a very short time.

In closing I, therefore, reiterate the fact that I cannot see the necessity for supporting the Hon. Member's Motion for an investigation. I feel that the conditions in the housing schemes which are unsatisfactory are being properly looked after by representatives elected by the people who are interested in cleaning up those sections of Government which have not been operating as they should. We are interested in looking after the welfare of the people. I feel that an investigation of this nature would be superfluous, and I must remind Hon. Members that I promised that I would examine the necessity for a proper type of investigation which may be necessary when certain criminal investigations now going on are completed.

Motion on Government Tenants' Arrears of Rent: 7th May, 1958

"Be it resolved:

That this Honourable Council recommends to Government the appointment of a Committee to investigate the reasons why tenants in the Government owned houses in the vicinity of Georgetown have not been able to pay their rents regularly."

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Member for Georgetown South is asking for an investigation of the reasons why tenants of the Government housing scheme in the vicinity of Georgetown have not been able to pay their rents regularly. I would say that that is not properly a matter for investigation; it is a matter which is constantly being investigated. It is under review from day to day: we have references from time to time on this very difficult problem of why tenants are not paying their rents.

The Hon. Member made the point that the earning capacity of the individual should be related to the rental charged for the apartment. In reality there is that relation. Hon. Members will remember that there are apartments rented at \$5, \$8, \$13, \$14, \$16, \$17 and \$18 per month. If a person has an income of say \$80 per month quite obviously he would be allocated a \$17 apartment. Ability to pay the various rentals is investigated by a Committee. In the case of a domestic who might be earning from \$18 to \$25 per month, it would be recommended that person be given either a \$5 or \$8 per month apartment. From my knowledge of the activities of the Committee since we have reorganised it and reorganised the basis of its allocations, we have found that it is absolutely necessary to go very carefully into the question of earning capacity. Some people, unfortunately – and it is quite understandable – are so anxious to have housing accommodation that when they are asked if they can afford a \$17 apartment, quite a few say "yes" in their anxiety to be housed, and it is only later on that it is discovered that they are unable to pay that rent. It would have been better if they had realize that the Committee would sympathetically consider their problem, and if there was no \$5 per month apartment their application would have been deferred until one was available.

There is no doubt that some of the allocations in the past show that there are persons in \$17 per month apartments who cannot pay that rent. Conversely, there are persons in \$5 per month apartments who can afford to pay more, and in recent months we have been exchanging such persons. We have recently carried out quite a few exchanges. A person in a \$17 per month apartment whose earning capacity is not high enough, or whose position may have change – which happens quite frequently – is changed over to an apartment of a lower rental. A person may be earning \$75 per

month and may be able to afford to rent a \$17 per month apartment, but later on he may lose his job and get another at a lower salary. His earning capacity is thus changed and he cannot pay the rent of the apartment he occupies. When the rent collector reports to us that such a person is a genuine case he is switched to another apartment with a lower rental. We make such exchanges quite frequently because they are absolutely necessary.

The Hon. Member spoke of levies; the question of evicting persons who do not pay their rent and so on. Levying on persons who do not pay their rent is certainly a very painful process. I can assure Hon. Members that not one of us wants to see this process carried out; we feel it very deeply, but in some cases it is necessary. We have to face facts. Before any levies are carried out we investigate the conditions relating to the matter.

I have, personally, investigated several cases where levies had to be carried out. I recollect, if I may be permitted to say this, that in one instance while discussing the list of arrears with one of my officers, I came across the name of a clerk working in the Housing Department who had been left out. I told the officer: we have no friends in this matter, and we are doing no favours. I do not care who the person is, if he can pay his rent and does not pay he should be treated like everyone else. I made it abundantly clear that whether the person was the uncle, cousin, sister or brother of any officer in British Guiana he or she would have to pay, so long as he or she had the ability to do so.

Therefore, I can safely say that we examine very carefully all cases before levying on people. We want to collect the rent in order to carry on the Housing Department's Programme. In cases of genuine distress the matter should be turned over to the Social Assistance Department.

Hon. Members will remember that the White Paper on Housing which was laid out some time ago included provision for turning over to the Social Assistance Department those people who were unable to pay their rent, and pointed out that the Department would assist them, after due investigation. However, that responsibility has not yet been shifted to the Social Assistance Department.

The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, made that point and, quite rightly, there are such cases. Those cases should be the problem of the Social Assistance Department. I am not referring to the Palms when I speak of social assistance. I am speaking about the money which people receive as social assistance. I have frequently made the point that it would be cheaper for the Government to give social assistance to very needy cases, rather than taking over the full responsibility of housing people at the Palms which, in the long run, is more expensive.

The Hon. Member posed a problem as to the reasons why people do not pay their rent. I think in the debate preceding this we went into that problem very fully. It is a recognized fact that unemployment which is on the increase, and underemployment which is also on the increase are some of the reasons why some people do not pay their rent.

However, I do not see that a Committee is required to go into this matter. Ask any rent collector. Anyone who is prepared to take a brief tour around the area will find out very quickly why some people do not pay their rent. Some say that they do not have the money to pay; others do not pay because Government is the landlord; some do not pay because enough money is not left from their earnings to make two ends meet, and so on. I do not think an investigation will help the situation. Knowing the reason why some people do not pay their rent does not help the people, and will not increase their earning power.

Our problem is largely an economic one, as I have mentioned previously. A larger earning capacity, a fuller utilization of the resources of the country, greater capital expenditure and increased productivity are the things that are going to increase the earning capacity of the working people of British Guiana in order that they will be in a position to meet their everyday needs and demands.

Unfortunately, the two Motions debated here today are interrelated, and some of the points made in the previous Motions were made in this one. I would say this is closing, that the question of the future of the Housing Programme and the necessity for Government-aided housing scheme is apparent. Similar conditions exist in Trinidad, all over the West Indies, in England and elsewhere.

We will have to try and meet the problem, perhaps, in a slightly different fashion from what it has been in the past. Our Ministry is at this time considering ways and means of helping to relieve the housing situation, despite the absence of money which is so hard to get.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Rent Restriction (Amendment) Bill: 30th May, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: I beg to move the Second Reading of Bill No. 14 – A Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to amend the Rent Restriction Ordinance.”

I would first like to express regret to Hon. Members that there has been a certain amount of delay in the consideration of this Bill in its Second Reading. There were various reasons for this. The last delay arose over the efforts made by my Ministry, in consultation with the Hon. the Attorney-General, to see if there was any possibility of introducing a clause in this Bill to cover a matter raised by the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central. However, after examining the possibility of the suggestion the Hon. Member made, we found it impossible to implement it.

Section 30 of the Rent Restriction Ordinance, Chapter 86, places a restriction on the payment of a premium by tenants in addition to the payment of rent increase. Under Subsection (4) of that section, where the tenancy is for a term of five years and upwards, the restriction on payment of premiums does not apply. This section of the 1941 Ordinance is based on the 1922 Ordinance which in turn had been based on the 1920 Ordinance. The same provision appears in both of those Ordinances.

Looking at the United Kingdom’s Rent Restriction law, we find that the term is fixed at a minimum of 14 years, instead of 5 years as in our legislation. This provision of the United Kingdom’s legislation was repealed in 1948, where as ours exist to the present moment. It is my view – and it is for this reason that I have brought forward this particular Bill – that subsection (4) of section 20, gives undue advantage to landlords, and its use has been abused

In the present circumstances, where the demand for housing accommodation exceeds the supply, there is a greater temptation to use that Subsection for the purpose of overcoming the provisions of section 20. I have received representations to the effect that some landlords are using subsection (4) and are entering agreements with tenants which cover a period of six years. In other words, by entering an agreement which allows for payment of a premium a landlord can receive more than the rent which is fixed by law. Hon. Members will observe the proposed Amendment, which was circulated some time ago and has been circulated again today. It will be moved in the Committee stage. This amendment makes it clear that after this Bill becomes law, premiums due on existing contracts will no longer be payable.

I think Hon. Members will appreciate that the intention of the Rent Restriction Ordinance is to protect tenants from excessive rents. For that rea-

son it has laid down and the means whereby rents are fixed, and the means whereby there can be an upward movement of rents through an increase of rates and taxes, etc. With this amendment which we now propose, it will mean that a distinct abuse of the existing law will stop. That is the real purpose of this Bill.

I mentioned at one time that we are still examining the Report of the Sharples Committee on the Rent Restriction Ordinance. I understand that the people are very much concerned about the present Rent Restriction Ordinance, and there is some opinion that there should be changes made. A working committee that was appointed to examine the Sharples Committee's Report is still engaged in its investigation. I spoke to the Chairman of this Committee a short time ago to find out when he thought he would finally submit the Report, so that we could have something to go on. He assured me that the results of this examination were very complicated, but their Report would be ready soon. It would not be so easy when we come to discuss that Report, unless a careful examination of it has been concluded.

I know that the Property Owners Association are very much interested in the Bill. In a communication which they have sent around I think they have expressed their point of view quite well when they said that the Bill seeks to deny a landlord of his right to charge more rent even if his tenant is willing to enter into an agreement to pay an increase of rent, at the same time providing himself with security of tenure for several years. They admit that if we repeal this Section of the Rent Restriction Ordinance they would not be allowed legally to charge more rent. I feel that it is the intention of the Rent Restriction Ordinance to see that landlords do not charge more rent than is stipulated by the law, and I cannot see how we could allow in the law a section whereby there is a means of getting round the intention of the law.

It may be argued that a tenant need not enter into such contract if he does not wish to do so, but from my experience with persons who have entered into contracts I have found that it was not because the tenant wished to enter into the contract but because he had to do so or not be allowed to rent the premises. In other words, if a person wants to rent a particular house and the landlord says he must enter into a contract, the would-be tenant has to decide how great is his housing need and how difficult it is to find other accommodation.

Those are the points I wish to put before Hon. Members in moving the Second Reading of this amending Bill. I hope that Members have had full time to study the implications carefully, and I do hope that they will give their support to the passage of the Bill.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: The matter raised by the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, can be discussed in Committee when he moves his Amendment.

I notice that the Hon. Member for Georgetown South (Mr. Jai Narine Singh) stressed that in his opinion this Bill is designed wholly and solely to assist the big man, the capitalist, to use his own words. He went so far as to make the solemn promise that it would receive his support if it helps the small man. I shall hold him to his promise. He went out of his way to tell us that he was the champion of the working class people, but one has to examine how fully his words give effect to the meaning of what he was saying.

There are many who say that they are fighting for the working people as a shield to put forward arguments, as in this case, for the landlord. It is my view that this overemphasis of the fact that this is legislation against the working people was done because he, perhaps, has been lobbied by the Property Owners' Association people whom I see coming to this Legislative Council Chamber very frequently.

If he wants to fight for the Property Owners' Association he should say so clearly, and act like the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks. We respect Mr. Fredericks' views. It is better to recall a spade a spade than to call it a shovel or pickaxe. It is our intention to put forward this Bill to protect the small man and to help reduce the cost of living. Where injustice exists we must do what we can to eradicate it. I may be wrong, but it is my view that an injustice exists in this matter.

I want my friends on the other side of the Table to read the document I hold in my hand. It might persuade the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central and the Hon. Member for Georgetown South to believe that this Bill was brought here because injustices were done to several people. Certainly they cannot deny the information in the contract I have in my hand. I will pass this contract to the Clerk to hand to Hon. Members so that they can read it for themselves. This contract is one in which the tenant is asked to pay rent at the rate of \$25 a month.

[Mr. Burnham: I am the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central, but I never said that no hardships existed. I admitted that, and I criticise the Hon. Member for Georgetown South for saying that there were no hardships. I have been told of such hardships.]

[Mr. Jai Narine Singh: I said that I was supporting anything to help the small man.]

Mrs. Jagan: In this contract, despite the fact that the tenant is asked to pay the sum of \$25 a month as rent, paragraph 4 states:

"The tenant hereby agrees to pay the landlord at the end of each year the sum of \$204 in addition to the monthly rental of \$25; being the annual premium payable by the tenant to the landlord."

In addition to the \$25 a month rent, the tenant was also called upon to

pay a premium of \$17 a month on the first day of each calendar month. The annual rent and premium are subdivided into a monthly payment. The tenant therefore pays \$25 rent and \$17 towards the premium monthly. I wish the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central to see this document.

[Mr. Burnham: I have seen such documents and have been able to interpret them.]

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Member for Georgetown South said that I was doing a favour to a particular group. I wonder what particular group this Bill is seeking to favour? Is it the small tenant, or the large commercial tenant who pays \$200 a month? Injustices exist and will continue to exist until this Bill remedies them. I hope that Hon. Members will join with me in seeking to eradicate these injustices by making sure that the intention of the Ordinance is fulfilled. It is the intention to place restriction on rent, and to prevent people from overriding the Ordinance by forcing people to pay premiums in addition to rent.

Motion on Loans to Domestic Servants to Canada: 20th August, 1958

[Mr. Tello:

“That this Council recommends to Government that persons selected for employment as domestics in Canada be granted loans to meet the cost of passages and incidental expenses.”]

Mrs. Jagan: I am very sorry that the Hon. Member, Mr. Tello, in whose name the Motion stands is not here, because I know he was very keen on this Motion and had hoped to be here for the debate. However, he did inform me that he would not be here and that someone else would speak for him. The Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing received a communication a short time ago from the Hon. Minister of Citizenship and Immigration in Canada informing this Government that a quota of 30 women for domestic service is to be granted as from this Colony to Canada.

The distribution of the quotas throughout the West Indies is interesting and, perhaps Hon. Members would like to hear the allocation: Jamaica 15, Barbados 40, Trinidad like ourselves 30, St. Vincent 15 and St. Lucia also 15. In a notification this year we were informed that the terms and conditions would be similar to those of 1957 except that the Canadian employers' application would be included. I think Hon. Members are aware of the conditions under this scheme whereby domestic servants from British Guiana are recruited to function as such in Canada.

Under this scheme the domestics are granted permanent admission on arrival in Canada on condition that after a year of employment as domestics they are free to accept any permanent employment they may so desire. They must be unmarried, of good character, and not have any children. Their physical and mental conditions are carefully examined, and the Canadian Authorities are very strict about the method of examination, X-rays, etc. So the women recruited from British Guiana have to undergo a rigorous medical examination including X-ray examination – I may mention that the women who are on the verge of being selected are now undergoing X-ray examination in British Guiana.

Fifty-six women have been selected from a very large number of applicants, and those 56 are undergoing training at the Carnegie School of Home Economics. According to the strict requirements every person would not be able to fulfil all the medical requirements of the complete medical examination.

I should say on this question of financial aid for these domestics that it came up before in 1956. When the first batch was recruited a request was put forward that they receive financial assistance. This request was rejected.

In 1957 a similar request was put forward and was rejected by the Government. During this year there have been several requests that a loan be extended. We have had requests from the B.G. Domestic Helpers, Washers and General Workers Union, and we have a resolution from the Women's Auxiliary of the Peoples' National Congress on the subject.

In approaching this question, we have to examine the conditions that exist in other parts of the Caribbean. The Hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) has read out correspondence from Barbados which indicates that the Government of the Colony has made loans to the domestics there.

But the same is not true as regards the Government of Trinidad. In fact the Government of Trinidad has gone as far as this Government in that it merely offers free medical examination. As far as I understand, the training of the domestics is a charge on the Government which is devoting some \$700 towards this expense.

While on this subject I may mention that the Committee of the Carnegie School of Home Economics does not have any teacher who is aware of the conditions in Canada and what the Canadian housewife will desire of the domestics in that country. This is a very interesting point. However, I would say that in the course of training there have been one or two Canadian women who found it convenient to go in and give lectures to the girls so that they could get an idea as to the preferences and desires of the Canadian housewife, and be in a better position to understand the conditions of work when they go to Canada.

As it is a matter of loans for immigration abroad it was necessary to communicate with the Secretary of State for the Colonies to see if there were any objections. Only a few days ago a reply came and there was no objection. Therefore, today we are able to reply and say to the Hon. Mover of this Motion that this Government will be prepared to make loans towards the amount of the domestics' passages. The actual details will have to be subjected to the approval of the Finance Committee of this Council. The loans will be made to deserving cases and not necessarily in all cases. It will be a sum not exceeding \$200 which will be repayable over a period of two years. There will be a payment of interest of 6 percent per annum. Each loan is to be guaranteed by a known surety resident in British Guiana.

There was a discussion on the question of guarantor and the possibility of making arrangements similar to that of the American Farm Labour Scheme. We found it would be too great a burden to the Canadian Government to ask for that system to be carried out – part of the wages of the domestics to be deducted in Canada for transmission to this Colony. I think the difficulty is that it cannot be compared with the scheme for the Farm Labourers, whose employment is much different than that of the domestics. Their wages can easily be got at for deductions towards their loans.

One Hon. Member mentioned the question of the need for a greater quota of domestics for recruitment to Canada. The Domestic Helpers, Washers

and General Workers Union had put forward that request and suggested that the Hon. Ministers and the Governor who were then in London for talks with the Secretary of State, should take it up. My Ministry cabled the delegates in London requesting them to have a discussion with the Canadian Government on the matter. A cablegram was received that discussions were held at the Canadian Embassy in London and our case for an increase in the allocation of domestics from this Colony was put forward. Therefore we have to wait for the official information which may be forthcoming on the subject. I do not think we can have too much hope for an increase in our allocation as it depends so much on the employment needs of Canada. That country is also facing a very severe unemployment problem at the moment.

But some Hon. Members may feel that our advances in loans to the domestics from British Guiana should be similar to those granted by the Government of Barbados. I would like to say – not being caustic on the question – that the situation in Barbados is not exactly the same as in this Colony. It is true that we face a very severe unemployment problem, but at the same time Barbados faces another problem which we do not face in this country, and that is, the problem of overpopulation. In that small island of Barbados, overpopulation makes it necessary for that Government to be more interested in immigration than another country which is not overpopulated and should like its people to remain.

The financial position in British Guiana is rather tight at the moment, and it is felt that the amount of the loan offered should be substantial help to the domestics who should be left to raise the balance needed which, we assume, they can do with the savings that they have. Therefore, I would like to signify my agreement with the Motion but with a very minor change. I would like to move the deletion of the words “to meet” and the insertion of the word “towards” in substitution therefore.

Motion on Clemency for James Wilson: 4th September, 1958

[**Mr. Ajodha Singh:** I beg to move the following Motion:

“Be it resolved: That this Council records its horror at the sentence of death imposed on James Wilson by the State of Alabama and respectfully requests His Excellency the Governor to forward through the appropriate channel the appeal of this Council to the President of the United States of America praying him to exercise his clemency.”]

Mrs. Jagan: I should just like to say a few words on the Motion. Certain Hon. Members have commented on the form of the Motion. I would be in full agreement with any changes in its form, but I think the most important aspect is that Members feel something should be done in the matter. I think that Hon. Members of this Council agree that we should express our protest against this 15th century act which might take place in Alabama tomorrow.

It is reported in the *Trinidad Guardian* of 1st September that the Federal Government is joining in the protest against the death sentence passed on James Wilson, and I think Hon. Members may be interested in learning what the Federal Government had to say on this particular issue. They have sent a cable to Her Majesty's Ambassador in Washington requesting him to make representation against the execution of James Wilson. There is no doubt that this unusual act of the Court of the State of Alabama, USA, has caused worldwide protest, and I am sure that the majority of people have awakened to the realism that such a tremendously wrong and iniquitous law exists in the USA. Most of us associate a death sentence with the major offence of murder, and in this 20th century to hear of the death sentence being passed on an individual for theft, is most unusual, and brings to mind those dark early times when people were hanged for horse-stealing. Certainly the theft of a few cents cannot warrant such a sentence.

I feel that it is fit and proper that we, Hon. Members of this Council, should record our protest and join with the many in all parts of the world who are doing the same thing at this moment.

Motion on Committee to Revise Greater Georgetown Plan: 29th October, 1958

[Mr. Jai Narine Singh:

“Be it Resolved: That this Council recommends to Government the appointment of a Committee to revise the Greater Georgetown Plan.”]

Mrs. Jagan: This Motion calls for the appointment of a Committee. While the discussion which we will have here on this Motion will no doubt be of great value to those who do our planning, I cannot see the necessity for the setting up of a Committee.

As the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, mentioned the Ordinance does specify that the Central Authority can apply to the Governor in Council for reallocation and re-planning. The present Central Authority in my opinion is a fairly good cross-section of our population; it consists of persons who are not only interested in the affairs of the city in particular but are capable persons. On this Authority, which at the moment is revising and examining further proposed revisions to the Greater Georgetown Plan, we have as Chairman Mr. Barker, a very capable officer who is a highly qualified Town Planner and I think one of the best in the Caribbean; the Mayor of Georgetown; Mr. Hackett, Mr. McCowan; a representative of the Trades Union Council (Mr. Pollydore), a housewife (Mrs. Benn), a Member of the Legislative Council (Mr. Bowman), the Town Clerk of New Amsterdam (Mr. Dow), the Director of Public Works; Mr. Hamid and I think, one or two others. So I think the Central Housing and Planning Authority at the moment is representative of the people concerned. They know what is necessary and they are in a position to reflect the needs of the people.

With this in view I cannot accept the recommendation of the Hon. Mover of this Motion, although I do agree it is an excellent opportunity to discuss the Greater Georgetown Plan. He mentioned some of the problems that have arisen as a result of the existence of the Greater Georgetown Plan. I know and many others are aware of the shortcomings of the Plan, and since I have been Minister I have been making many efforts to rectify some of those I am aware of.

Alexander Village is one case in point. There is no doubt that if the recommendations of the plan are carried out in respect of Alexander Village, it would mean that a very large number of persons resident in the village would have to remove. This is not only a costly venture but one that would cause a great deal of inconvenience to persons who have been resident there for many years.

To this end, in February of this year, there were very important discussions held at Government House under the Chairmanship of His Excel-

lency, at which conference Mr. Parker of the Demerara Company was present. The question was raised as to what could be done about the difficult position in Alexander Village. Mr. Barker, the Town Planner, as a result has started a survey of Alexander Village. He is urging completion of this survey, after which time we will be in a better position to know what specific proposals can be made to improve the situation, but I have no hesitation in saying that we should de-zone Alexander Village and leave it as it is at the moment – a residential area.

It is a problem that is engaging our attention at this time when there are many difficulties involved in the transition of the Plan, and it is one that is taking a little time. It is most unfortunate that the Government of British Guiana did not take the opportunity to solve the Alexander Village problem when it first presented itself. About six years ago the Demerara Company I understand made an offer of this area to Government free of cost, with certain provisos – that the Government should guarantee arrears of rent and so on. A large number of people, including myself, felt that was a very good offer and that it should not be rejected. However, there is no point crying over spilt milk. I doubt if the Company would again consider making this generous offer.

We do have millions to spend on housing and certain encouragement will have to be given to people to improve the houses they live in or rent.

We have a Committee which has been examining the Rent Restriction Ordinance Report of the Sharples Committee. They have been sitting in Committee for a very long time – for such a long time that I am not sure whether they will ever report – at any rate I had a talk with this Committee and I asked them in their considerations if they could examine the possibility of putting proposals to Government for the ways and means of encouraging people as well as private enterprises to build and to improve the existing buildings so that we will not have the tremendous deterioration of buildings in the City.

We have been examining the legislation that the Ministry of Housing in Trinidad has put before the legislative Council in this respect. This is one of the motivating factors in trying to keep Alexander Village as residential, rather than creating a bigger problem by removing it. The same applies to La Penitence West, Government purchased this area some time ago and it was intended to be part of the industrial zone, according to the Greater Georgetown plan. The Central Housing and Planning Authority in the early part of this year recommended that the La Penitence area should be a residential area, and this has been in effect since the 22nd of February, this year.

The various technical details in making this decision a reality or, in other words, in thus revising the Greater Georgetown Plan are still before us, with the Attorney-General's Office examining the various legal complications. It of course means removing it from the immediate area and including it in the residential area, where, in reality, it is.

Those are matters which the Central Authority has already gone into

and is doing its best to improve. It is another example of the point I made that there is no real necessity for a Committee to be established to make such recommendations, as one already exists and is considering some of the very important changes. In fact, I think the Ministry and the Authority have their fingers on the pulse of the situation.

I would say this, too, that the Town Planning Department is what I call very progressive, with a really good outlook on planning and the Greater Georgetown Plan. They believe in flexibility, at least I have never noticed any rigidity in their outlook. This is not the experience I had when I was a Member of the Georgetown Town Council. Then, if one attempted to suggest any change of the Costello Plan one was met with the attitude that the Plan was the work of an expert and it could not be changed, as it was in the best interests of the city. Now that the Plan is being treated in a progressive and flexible manner I have no fear over any changes coming into being.

The people of Albouystown were suffering because they were unable to repair or to improve their houses, as that area had been declared part of the industrial zone. At the moment, there are no restrictions against ordinary repairs and improvements of buildings. There is, however, a "*no compensation*" clause in case there are subsequent changes in the layout of the area in relation to slum clearance. The Central Housing and Planning Authority has, however, recommended that this "*no compensation*" clause be dropped, and we may expect this to be dropped, and we may expect this to be implemented shortly. Most of us realises that the sum required to clear the slum areas of Georgetown would be beyond the possibilities of the Government. It would cost a tremendous amount of money and perhaps it would not be worthwhile to clear and remove and put people into new houses. The housing needs of the community are growing at such a rapid rate that it is more practical to build new houses to accommodate the ever-expanding population. So that the Hon. Mover's suggestion that property owners in Albouystown are not allowed to rebuild, repair or extend their homes is without foundation.

The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, referred to some of the changes in the Plan that has taken place recently. I would like to refer to an important change in the Plan which took place this year. It is one in which the integration of the various income groups in the City has been encouraged. In the Plan, as it existed before this amendment, there was segregation of income groups into zones for lower, middle and upper income groups. The Central Housing and Planning Authority recommended the removal of segregation and its removal was brought into effect this year, and I consider that a most interesting amendment of the Plan. In order that Members may understand what is meant by this amendment I would like to read a few words from comments by a Town Planner in the United Kingdom, Dr. Thomas Sharp. In discussing the need to remove the segregation of income groups he says:

“As a result of governmental activity in the housing of the working classes, we have now in every town or city in the country whole estates devoted entirely to the housing of one particular wage earning group of population.”

Then he refers to the difficulties which this segregation has led to in the United Kingdom, and he adds:

“Whether or not one believes in the ultimate desirability or possibility of a classless society, there is nothing whatever to be said in favour of these segregational tendencies in English life. There is everything to be said against them.”

This impediment has been removed from the Greater Georgetown Plan as regards new residential areas, so that in the areas now being developed – some by private enterprise and others which no doubt will be developed by Government – segregation of classes will be removed.

The Hon. Mover of the Motion mentioned the little problem that exists as a result of the removal of three bridges over the La Penitence punt trench. He referred to it in connection with the Greater Georgetown Plan, and to the necessity for building roads, bridges, etc. In the particular case of the bridges that have been removed from the punt trench, I wish to make it clear that that was entirely a private matter concerning Bookers Estates, Ltd. Owing to certain legal technicalities Bookers Estates would not allow bridges to span their punt trench, because of the liability they would encounter in case of accident. It is a fact that they own the land on both sides of the punt trench, but Government is at the present moment examining the possibility of putting bridges across the trench to assist the population. However, two questions have arisen – the question of the ownership of the land on which the bridges would be made, and we are engaged in discussions with Bookers and are seeking advice from the Attorney-General's Office on the question of putting up bridges on land owned by a private company.

But I do not think that particular problem does in fact come under the discussion of the Greater Georgetown Plan. However, I wish to make it clear that the Central Housing and Planning Authority and my Ministry had nothing whatsoever to do with the removal of the bridges, as has been alleged by some persons. I understand it was entirely a private arrangement in which Government had no part.

The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, raised an interesting point when he said that it is good and sound town planning practice to review and revise a town plan every five years. Our Town Planner has so stated in his Annual Report of last year. I have no hesitation in agreeing that the Greater Georgetown Plan is now being revised, and that the various technical details for the further revision of the Plan, including the possibility of extending the limits of the Plan, are now under consideration. Detailed plans to bring this into being are engaging the attention of the Central Hous-

ing and Planning Authority, the Ministry of Housing and the Town Planner.

I wish to thank the Hon. Member for Georgetown South for raising this question of the Greater Georgetown Plan in Council, and having a full discussion on it. I would ask him not to consider the nonacceptance of his Motion as in any way a rejection of the idea of a review of the Plan, which is being fully considered at the present moment.

Raising of a Matter of Privilege: Inaccurate Press Report: 5th November, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: I wish to bring to the attention of this Council the fact that I am not at all happy about some of the reporting of the press. The *Daily Argosy* in its issue of the 30th October last reported the debate concerning the Greater Georgetown Plan and in doing so made certain errors.

In a letter to the *Argosy* on the 30th October, I pointed out the errors or mistakes made and asked that they publish a correction.

I fully appreciate – and right now there is a very splendid example – that it is not always possible for members of the press to hear everything that is said, and that it is not always possible for them to hear accurately. It was for that reason that I took the opportunity of writing to the Editor of the *Argosy* pointing out the mistakes that he, or I should say, his newspaper made.

Unfortunately, that newspaper did not have the courtesy to correct these remarks or to publish my letter. I feel that this is a very dangerous practice because if Members of this Council are reported as making statements they did not make, the public which must depend on the newspapers for knowledge of proceedings in this Council, will be misdirected.

In this case, for example, I am quoted as saying that the Central Housing Authority had nothing to do with the putting down of bridges, as was alleged by some people, over the punt trench at La Penitence. I really referred to the pulling down of bridges and I mentioned in my letter that it might be a typographical error, but certainly the putting down of bridges and the pulling down of bridges are two different things, and the public was therefore bound to be misdirected.

This issue of the *Argosy* further quoted me as saying that the Central Housing Authority had recommended the non-segregation of the lower income group. It was not so at all. This was a misunderstanding of the discussion on the desegregation of income groups. The paper went on further to say that Albouystown was being developed without segregated classes. This, of course, was entirely wrong; no such statement was ever made. In the discussion on Albouystown, we dealt with an entirely different aspect of the Greater Georgetown Plan, that is, the repair and extension of existing buildings and the construction of new buildings. At the same time I made reference to the fact that a compensation clause was at the moment being included where the construction of new buildings was going on.

Members of the public reading this Report would be left with the wrong conception. I am only at this moment bringing this matter to the attention of the Council, but I would be obliged to move a Motion to protect this Council and the public.

Motion on Trade Mission to Brazil and Venezuela: 5th November, 1958

[Mr. F. Bowman:

“Be it Resolved: That this Council recommends to Government that a mission be sent immediately to Brazil to ascertain whether the Brazilian Government is interested in establishing an outlet through British Guiana, and to discuss the question of trade between two countries:

And be it further Resolved: That the said mission be sent also to Venezuela to explore the possibility of trade with this Colony”.]

Mrs. Jagan: This is long overdue and any effort to establish closer contacts with our immediate neighbours is indeed a worthy venture. On the eve of the suspension of the Constitution in 1953 the then Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Chase, had actually made arrangements to leave for Brazil on a similar mission. I understand that his plane ticket and hotel accommodation were already booked but, unfortunately, the efforts to establish trade links with Brazil fell with other things in 1953.

I was forcefully drawn to the conclusion that British Guiana is very much a part of South America when I visited the Rupununi area just a few days ago. One cannot miss the very close link between British Guiana and Brazil when one observes the mode of dress, the architecture, the language and the other customs in the Rupununi Savannahs and compares them with Brazilian customs.

If I may be permitted to go slightly beyond the recommendations of the Hon. Member for Demerara River, I think that, while it is necessary to establish trade links and communications with our neighbours, we should have very many more opportunities for a valuable exchange of experience and knowledge. There is no doubt about it that we can gain very much from our neighbours in the South, the Brazilians, when it comes to the question of the breeding of cattle, the development of our leather industry and many of our crops. One of the things which has been terribly neglected is that we have not drawn from the knowledge and experience of our neighbours who have similar soil and climatic conditions.

I recall that we spent a considerable amount of money on experimentation in the production of cotton and, incidentally, got nowhere, while our neighbours in Venezuela have been cultivating cotton for a number of years and are already manufacturing cotton goods. Certainly there is very much for us to learn from our neighbours in many fields.

I may mention that in the field of medical science Venezuela and Brazil have made certain strides and contributions which could be of benefit to

this country. Quite naturally we suffer from similar diseases and infestations of particular breeds of mosquitoes and insects. Already we have had visits from two W.H.O. experts who are Brazilians and who, because of the intimate knowledge of conditions there, were able to make extremely valuable contributions to our health problems.

The Hon. Member for Central Demerara mentioned the question of cultural links which, obviously, would develop through our trade contacts. There is no doubt that we have already a fairly limited friendly relationship in the exchange of students – I should not have said that, because the Government of Venezuela receives students from British Guiana, but I do not think we have any reciprocal arrangements here at the moment.

In the field of medical aid Venezuela has been most helpful in giving us assistance by taking care of medical cases which we were unable to handle.

At the moment we have also approached the Brazilian Government for similar assistance. While this relationship exists between these countries, I feel that something more substantial should be developed. It is for that reason that I feel the Motion before us is a valuable one, and I heartily give it my support.

Motion on the Suspension of Standing Order No. 48: 6th November, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: I wish to move that Council grant me permission to take the Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to consolidate and amend the law to regulate the opening and closing hours of certain shops and the hours of work of shop assistants; to provide for the welfare of shop assistants; and to provide for other matters connected therewith”,

through all its stages today. Notice of this intention was given in a note from the Clerk of the Legislature dated 1st November.

One of the reasons that prompted me to ask Council to allow the Bill to be taken before seven days should normally elapse from the time it is printed to the time it is taken for the Second Reading is that, I understand it is the intention of the Council to go into recess. Another is, the provisions of this Bill, if agreed upon by Members of the Council, will be of great benefit to those shop assistants who may hope to receive benefits under this Ordinance during the Christmas period.

A very special request has come from the Clerks Union asking that efforts be made to have the Bill taken through all its stages before Christmas. Therefore I would ask Members of Council to grant such permission, because I do think that the provisions will be of benefit to many employees in British Guiana. I may mention that I am asking for permission in accordance with Standing Order No. 48.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Shop (Consolidation) Bill: 6th November, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to consolidate and amend the law to regulate the opening and closing hours of certain shops and the hours of work of shop assistants; to provide for the welfare of shop assistants; and to provide for other matters connected therewith.”

In moving the Second Reading of this Bill I would first like to thank Members for allowing the Bill to go through today. Going into the background of this Bill, I should mention that there was a Committee appointed on the 2nd July, 1955 to consider the Shops Ordinance, 1944. The Chairman of the Committee was the Commissioner of Labour, Mr. Ramphal, and the other members were:

Major Weber, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Acting), Dr. Subryan, Deputy Director of Medical Services, Mr. J. St. F. Dare and Mr. J. L. Rayman (representing the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce), Mr. I. C. F. McLean, M. B. E. (representing the Berbice Chamber of Commerce and Development Association), Mr. Pararam Tarachand (representing the Junior Chamber of Commerce), Mr. Savil Munroe and Mr. A. I. Zitman (representing the B.G. Trades Union Council), Mrs. J. B. Singh, M. B.E., with Mr. E. A. Richards, Inspector of Labour (Secretary).

The terms of reference of the Committee were:

“To consider the Shops Ordinance, 1944, as amended from time to time and in the light of its operation, to make such recommendations for its revision as may be deemed desirable.”

One of the significant recommendations of the Committee was that there should be a new Ordinance rather than amendments of the 1944 Ordinance. The Committee actually submitted a draft for a new Bill when it completed its findings on June 1st, 1956. One of the important recommendations of the Committee was that the Christmas period, which under the present Ordinance is the working days immediately preceding Christmas Day, should be reduced to the eight working days immediately preceding Christmas Day. This recommendation was put forward by the Clerical Workers' Union, and the Chamber of Commerce offered no objection. However, there was, as the Report says, an irreconcilable stage reached on the question of overtime for those eight days of extra hours before Christmas Day. The

Clerical Workers' Union felt that clerical workers should be paid overtime for the extra hours worked during the Christmas period. The Chamber of Commerce representatives and other Members of the Committee did not agree, and this was one of the points on which I had to make a decision. Members will note that in the Bill we have decided to pay the workers overtime at the rate of time and a half for the extra hours worked during the Christmas period. This was one of the reasons why I was anxious to get this Bill passed in time for the Christmas period, so that the workers may enjoy the benefits of the Ordinance if Members agree to pass the various Clauses.

There was also disagreement on the extra hours worked on the day preceding Good Friday, and I made a further recommendation that those extra hours worked be considered as overtime.

Another recommendation in the Report is that barbers' and hair dressing establishments be removed from the Ordinance and placed on the same footing as restaurants and parlours. The Committee agreed that it was a hardship for barbers and hair dressers to observe the same closing hours as other shops since, as we all know, many people do go to have their hair trimmed after work.

Another recommendation abolishes the wages differentials between parlours and restaurants, and puts them on an equal footing. There has been an amendment of the definition of "*shop assistant*" which carries the meaning of any person employed in the business of a shop. This has been done because the point was raised that where shop assistants were employed in a shop after working hours many occupiers or employers used the excuse that the shop assistants were not employed at the time and were there for other purposes. This extension of the definition is a further protection to shop assistants, so that they will not be exploited by certain employers or occupiers in the use of their labour after the closing time of shops.

On the question of overtime the recommendation has been made, and is in this Bill, that the period of overtime shall not exceed 20 hours in any one month, or two hours in any one day, and that all overtime shall be paid at the rate of time and a half. Employers are required to inform the Police of their intention to employ shop assistants overtime.

The Clerical Workers Union did submit a letter to me today recommending certain amendments to this Bill. Evidently they are worried over section 8 (2) (B) concerning the information to be supplied to the Commissioner of Labour in connection with the people who are working overtime. They feel it would be a violation of the law unless certain extra provisos are included in the Bill.

However, on careful examination of the Bill, we feel that the period of overtime in which a shop assistant may work and the time in which it should be recorded are quite satisfactory to the Commissioner of Labour. I have no fear that there can be a violation of the intention of this Bill.

Hon. Members will observe that there is an increase in the period for the

luncheon interval which has been extended from one hour to one hour and a quarter. It is felt that the increase is necessary because several shop assistants have to travel some distance to their homes during the luncheon interval, and the extra quarter of an hour would give them sufficient time to take their meals.

It will also be observed that seats will now be provided for male and female shop assistants under this Bill. This is one of the recommendations contained in the Committee's Report.

In October last year another delegation from the Union put forward several points. One concerned the payment of overtime, to which I have already referred, during the Christmas holidays, and the other relates to the question of increased penalties as well as terms of imprisonment for second and subsequent offences by employers.

On examination of the various matters, Government does not think it necessary to increase the penalties as suggested by the Union. At the time I met the delegation from the Union last year they also raised the question of the payment of overtime to shop assistants who were called upon to work on the day before Good Friday. You will find that proposal embodies to this Bill.

I would like to mention at this stage that it is unfortunate that this Bill was not taken earlier. It was my intention, after assuming the post of Minister of Labour, Health and Housing, to introduce this Bill into the Legislative Council in order to have it passed into law before Christmas 1957. However, as a result of discussions which the Ministry held with the Union, it was quite clear that the proposals made by the Union could not be incorporated in time to get the Bill through for Christmas last year.

The Union also promised to submit to the Ministry certain legislation in connection with the penalties observed in Australia in the Shops Ordinance. We had urged the Union to allow us to go ahead with the Bill last year, but the President of the Union stated quite clearly that he preferred that the Bill be postponed rather than have it taken to this Council in its present form. He also informed us that the draft Bill at that time was quite unacceptable to the Union.

During this year there has been a further examination of the Shops Ordinance, and we discussed the question of extending the hours of work in shops so that, at least, on one day in each week shops could be opened after the normal hour of 4 p.m. to enable people who work during the same hours to do their shopping after work.

We had long discussions with the Trade Union Council. As a matter of fact the Trade Union Council, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing had such discussions. Unfortunately the T.U.C. did not agree to the proposal for a late opening of shops one day a week, and the various discussions as well as the exchange of correspondence on the subject further delayed the taking of the necessary action on the Bill.

Further, there has been a modified form of the acceptance of the idea which Hon. Members will find in this Bill wherein there is provision that on Fridays shops might be opened from 9.30 a.m. to 6.15 p.m. with the permission in writing of the Commissioner of Labour. This is not an obligatory clause; it is permissive for the owners of these shops who wish to remain open beyond the usual time on Fridays. This does not mean the extension of the working hours of shop assistants, because on that particular day you will observe that they will start to work two hours later than usual in the shops desirous of offering this facility to their customers.

Members will observe that I have circulated a sheet with certain Amendments which I desire to move at the proper time. The second Amendment on the sheet concerns the provision wherein shops will be allowed to remain open on Fridays from 9.30 a.m. to 6.15 p.m. This Amendment will permit a fifteen minute break after 4 p.m., so that the remaining hours will not be a burden to the shop assistants.

I may mention that one of the Amendments suggested in the Report was that delivery boys should be included in the definition of shop assistants, so that their hours of work would be controlled. The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, raised an important point with me and pointed out that if the delivery boys were to work the same hours as shop assistants it might create certain difficulties in that shops would have to be closed at 4 p.m. while many deliveries have to be sent out after that hour. In order to allow delivery boys to work during the hours when their labour is required and yet protect them by the limited number of hours, we have put down for approval at the proper time an Amendment to Clause 17 where we have added a new sub-clause (1) and the words "*the delivery of goods.*" I am very grateful to the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Hubbard, for drawing that point to my attention.

In our discussions with the Union they raised the important point which is also embodied in this Bill, that is that before the commencement of any overtime the shop assistant shall be given a fifteen minutes break. That was not a recommendation of the Committee's Report, but it is an important aspect of the Bill.

The Committee in its recommendations referred to the necessity for the medical examination of shop assistants who handle food. We have discussed the matter with the Medical Department, and it is proposed to introduce into the Public Health Ordinance some protection for the public in connection with employees who have to handle food.

I know that there will be many minor points which will be raised by Members when we move into Committee stage. That, of course, is quite natural and inevitable. I will only ask Hon. Members that we proceed with a certain amount of rapidity. I do not think that we should rush through this Bill, but I would ask that we do not prolong our discussions for too long a period because I feel that this Bill will be of great benefit to shop assistants in British Guiana.

One of the aspects which is important, when studying the Report of the Shop Workers' Advisory Committee, is that in practically all cases there was an agreement reached between the employers and the employees' representatives. Therefore there should not be any opposition on important matters where agreement has already been reached.

I do not anticipate any very strong opposition on any of the important Clauses of this Bill either from persons interested in the commercial community or persons interested in the Trade Union field.

I feel that a lot of time was spent in committee sessions. Members sat for a very long time preparing this Report and drafting this legislation. There have been certain changes but they have been for the benefit of the workers and represent some effort to give them further protection.

The criticism has been levelled that many of the provisions of the Shops Ordinance and perhaps other laws have not been fully implemented. There is no doubt that there have been evasions of the law relating to labour: one of the Ordinances most frequently violated is that concerning the rates of wages of shop assistants. I doubt if it is necessary for me to mention the various methods used to slip round the Ordinance, for I think everyone here is aware of the shameful behaviour of some employers of labour. No doubt this may gradually cease, but there is no law that is foolproof. It can also be said that workers have benefited from the introduction of minimum wages and maximum hours. This Bill is an effort to wipe out some of the violations of the law, particularly that pertaining to maximum hours and the use of workers at times when they should not be employed – exploitation of their labour.

Consequently, I feel this Bill will accordingly improve the lot of shop assistants in this country, and for the employer I do not think this will be any hardship. I would appeal to Members to cooperate in this effort to get the Shops (Consolidation) Ordinance in force in time, so that the workers may benefit early from its provisions. I therefore take this opportunity of asking Members to consider this Second Reading of this Bill.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: First of all, I would like to disabuse the minds of Hon. Members of the impression that Government is rushing this Bill through. Government has no particular reason for rushing this Bill and, if it is the desire of Hon. Members, I am prepared to have the Bill deferred for consideration at a subsequent meeting. I think that the Members around this Table, having had the Bill in their possession from Saturday until yesterday, are sufficiently intelligent to read and understand the provisions contained in it.

If Hon. Members desired more time to study the Bill, they should have raised objection at the time when I moved that Motion that the Bill be taken through all stages without giving the usual notice of seven days. If Hon. Members had put up a reasonable excuse at the time, I would have been the

first person to accept it. This Bill can be passed in time for Christmas if we take it next week or the week after. I was hoping to get this Bill through before Council goes into recess, and that is one of the reasons why I ask Members to give early consideration to it.

I did not want to blame the Union, but it is quite apparent from my remarks that the long period of delay was in keeping with the wishes of the Clerical Workers' Union. I could have brought this Bill before this Council last year and have it passed in time for Christmas 1957, but I was asked by the Union to hold it up. I did not want to stress that point, but since two Hon. Members, who are also members of the Trade Union Council, are blaming Government for holding up this Bill, I am forced to make it abundantly clear that the Union is responsible for the delay.

For the Hon. Members information I should like to quote from my file –

“The President of the Union says that the draft Bill is quite unacceptable to the Union in its present form, and that the Union would prefer to wait until next year rather than accept what they consider a “half-baked” measure now.”

I did not hold up the Bill; the Union requested the delay, and the note in this file can prove that. I am not criticizing the Union for causing the delay, but I object to Hon. Members of this Council, who are also members of the T.U.C. and who have participated in the delay, accusing me of the delay.

With regard to the Committee's Report, it is regrettable that it was not circulated to Hon. Members long ago. However, in my opening remarks I made it quite clear that this Bill embodies the recommendations of the Report. On the several points on which no firm recommendations were made by the Committee I, as Minister, made the necessary decisions. I am sure the Union will have no objections to such decisions because they are in keeping with its recommendations.

Perhaps the most important point in this Bill, which no one seems to be discussing, is the fact that shop assistants employed during the Christmas period will now receive overtime, if Hon. Members choose to pass this Bill in time for Christmas. Otherwise, the shop assistants who work during the Christmas season will not receive any overtime.

Hon. Members have tried to pick holes in the Bill. They have not seen that it is intended to provide for the payment of overtime to shop assistants during the Christmas season and the day preceding Good Friday. These points were not agreed upon by the Committee, and the Chamber of Commerce was against the payment of overtime.

Certainly those Hon. Members who have raised objections to this Bill cannot reasonably do, because I, as Minister, have made decisions leaning on the side of the workers on the points on which there were differences of opinions, in an effort to get better conditions for the workers.

There are several points which have been raised by Hon. Members. The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, and others raised the question of ex-

exemptions which exist in this Bill. One of the exemptions which were quoted by Hon. Members was the one exempting certain shops from the opening hours laid down in the First Schedule to this Bill. Hon. Members should understand the reason for such an exemption; it is not an exemption that can be applied arbitrarily; it is one which will be used in particular areas of British Guiana where such exemptions are required.

For example, in the River Districts and other remote areas shops frequently have to be opened and closed in order to suit the movements of vessels and steamers as well as the convenience of their customers.

In many of our river districts, if shops were to follow exactly the opening and closing hours, it would create a situation where (1) many shops would not be able to do business, and (2) persons travelling long distances in corials or steamers would reach their destination and find themselves unable to purchase.

These exemptions were made warily and with much care, not indiscriminately. I can assure Members that such exemptions are not lightly given.

There was another question raised on this matter of shop hours. Many Members spoke on that, and I would ask them to read from page 16 of the Report. Quoting from paragraph 5.38 states:

“Under the Second Schedule of the Ordinance, shop assistants could be kept in a shop for an extra half-hour after the closing hour for two purposes, viz.,

- (a) serving customers who were in the shop before the closing hour; and*
- (b) dispatching or delivering orders received before the closing hour.*

The Employers’ Representatives thought that those purposes should be extended to include -

- (c) checking and balancing cash;*
- (d) cleaning of food stores for hygienic purposes; and*
- (e) tidying counters.*

The Workers’ Representatives were in favour of (c) but not in favour of any extension for the purposes of (d) and (e). The Employers’ Representatives, however, insisted that the purposes should be expanded in accordance with (d) and (e) above. An independent member thought that the extra half-hour should be allowed shopkeepers without any conditions attached as is the case in Trinidad. The Committee remained divided in its views on extensions for purposes (d) and (e).”

It was an extra half-hour and no more. This indicates clearly that the employees’ Representatives, including two members of the Clerical Workers’ Union and one member of the T.U.C., were in disagreement with the two items, which were not included, but in agreement with the balance.

I have heard some talk about the extra half-hour, which brings the hours

per working day from $7\frac{1}{4}$ to $7\frac{3}{4}$ and that it would be a great hardship on the worker. I do not think that is so. This is the present practice, and there is no change in the existing law. I cannot see how Members could make such a point of it. Neither Union made any representation that the half-hour should be made overtime - it was only yesterday that I received a letter from them in which they referred to it. They never made representations before. They had ample time to bring it to me - there was no restriction. They agreed with the Report for there was no Minority Report on this point. Hon. Members here are bringing politics into very important labour legislation. Let us leave that out for the moment and get on with the shop assistants' interests. At this zero hour, Members who are fishing around for something to say in the debate, should not bring in things that would raise a hornets nests.

Mention was made of the form of register to be kept and the relation of the duties of the Commissioner of Labour to this. Under the Bill the Commissioner of Labour is authorized to prescribe a register, but it was discovered that actually, the form prescribed did not coincide with the form in which mechanical accounting is being done. Many large firms have expensive accounting equipment which could not follow the present form. Opportunity is now being taken to give to the proper authority the discretion it will need to satisfy these firms.

This variation of the form of a register of wages, I am confident, will create no hardship on the employees or the employers, and further, I do not feel it will lead to the abuse of keeping a register. Certainly this is not the intention of the Department of Labour; they must be satisfied that the register is being properly kept.

Mention has also been made by Hon. Members of the question of sanitary arrangements and the Clauses which permit certain exemptions in this respect. I am as deeply interested as Members, and perhaps more so, that all these conveniences should be existing for all employees and particularly women employees. Certainly it is unfortunate that in British Guiana many of our sanitary arrangements are not as adequate as they should be, and it is the intention of this Bill to provide the required number of sanitary conveniences for shops or other business establishments. But it must be remembered that in some areas where it may be necessary to build one, two or three latrines there is just not the space, and I refer particularly to the city of Georgetown where some business establishments have been existing for many years. They are crammed close together; so that if the provisions of this Bill were to be carried out to the letter, it would mean that certain establishments would have to be told, "*supply certain conveniences or else go out of business.*"

The exemptions in these cases I am sure will be permitted only after care and discretion have been exercised, It may be structurally impossible to build such conveniences in certain cases. The intention is not to lower standards but to improve them. I know that the Municipal Health Laws take

into account the number of sanitary conveniences and these must be observed.

Quite a few Members, particularly the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, spoke about penalties. I do know that all Members feel strongly that if the penalties are not high enough many employers will offend the law. I can see with them quite a distance because I myself have not been fully satisfied with the penalties imposed by magistrates on offenders. They have not been strict enough.

We find that in some instances magistrates do lay on a minimum fine or a very low fine, and it is quite true that in many cases this does not deter an offender. However, I do not think the intention of this law will be enforced by the removal of trade licences. It is a very easy thing for a person who has been more than once an offender and who has had his licence removed to get over this, as he has merely to transfer his business to his wife or son, or whoever it may be. It certainly would not be difficult to hurt him by a penalty of imprisonment, but I do not feel this is necessary.

I think that if persons are vigilant and if employees and trade unionists working with enforcement officers would step up their activities, much more could be done in that direction. As an example, I may quote the case where the B. G. Labour Union took great interest in the Bakeries Ordinance. Their members have been very quick to report to the Ministry and the Labour Department offences committed by certain bakeries. By their vigilance certain prosecutions have been made; and this is one example of the value of the trade union taking interest in the question of enforcement.

There has been a great deal of talk today and yesterday about the inclusion of delivery boys in the terms of this Bill. I would ask Members to turn to page 4 of the Report. The Hon. Member of Georgetown North did us the pleasure of reading from paragraph 5.8, but he made the understandable error of forgetting to read the whole sentence. There are such things as half truths and part-truths. The paragraph says that the Committee gave careful consideration to the question of delivery staff and decided to give them an equal number of working hours with that of shop assistants, I have not gone against those who applied much study to this Bill. I have followed them to the dotting of the "i"s and the crossing of the "t"s. It is important to note that the Committee gave careful consideration to the matter and made a unanimous recommendation.

There is no question of disagreement on the inclusion of delivery boys as shop assistants, their inclusion in the number of working hours per day, but their exclusion from the normal opening and closing hours. That is the intention of those who sat on the Committee, including the member of the Trades Union Council and two members of the Clerical Workers' Union. If they felt that it was a disadvantage that was the proper time to raise the matter. The Union could also have raised it during the several discussions I have had with them, when they very correctly took a firm stand on the question of payment of overtime for extra hours worked during the Christ-

mas period. They were quite correct in that and I supported them wholeheartedly. I may mention further that the clerical Workers' Union has had this Report, with the draft Bill proposed by the Committee, in its hand since it was submitted in 1956. Therefore all the union's representations were made with an eye on the Report, the knowledge of the discussions and also the possibility of bringing those further matters to the attention of the Ministry.

There has been no rushing of any decisions. The Union, which is part and parcel of the T.U.C., has had full discussion, and certainly the Member of the T.U.C. who sat on the Committee should have correctly transmitted the decisions to his Council which appointed him to that Committee. As watchmen in the interest of the workers I feel that if there were any points which could harm the working man they could have brought them up, or the Union in its discussions could have brought them up, and I who have had much experience in trade unions would have noted and carefully eliminated any provisions in the Bill contrary to the interests of the working people. Therefore I feel that Hon. Members have been making the point about delivery boys a sort of *cause célèbre*. It is unfortunate that some of the very fine points raised in this debate have been overshadowed by the unnecessary nagging and cantankerous attitude of one or two Members who seem to be following the practice of opposing for the sake of opposition.

We appreciate many of the very important observations made by Members, and we have endeavoured to look into them carefully. The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, mentioned the question of notification of overtime to be worked, and he felt that if an employer had to employ one of his workers overtime he may not know he had to do so in advance. He may receive a shipment of goods and the Customs officer may have cleared the items too late. In such circumstances the employer can telephone his notification to the Police and follow it up with a letter later.

Mr. Tasker also referred to the question of the Christmas period, and wondered why the period of late opening of shops had been reduced from 15 to 8 days. I understand from those who sat on the Committee that both sides – the employees, the employers (the Chamber of Commerce) – felt that there was not sufficient business done at Christmas time to require 15 days for that activity. Therefore, both sides agreed to reduce the period to 8 days. However, it is clear that the 20 hours per month overtime which is permissible under the Bill, will also be allowed during the month of December. In other words, if a shop assistant works overtime during the Christmas period he may also, if he so desires, and if his employer wishes, work 20 hours in addition to that as overtime. This provision was introduced perhaps because there is general increased activity in the receipt and marking of goods at Christmas time.

On the question of enforcement, the point was made by one or two Members that legislation which cannot be enforced is of little use. I do not entirely agree with that view, although quite clearly it is never wise to put

forward legislation which cannot be enforced. Yet one must agree that even the passing of laws which raise the standard – in this case of the working man or woman – do help to raise standards in general, even though there are unscrupulous individuals who persistently avoid the law or find means of slipping around the law. When all is said and done, even if enforcement is not as good as it should be, there is some value in always raising standards. However, the Labour Department's staff has been increased so that there are now three enforcement officers. This should make the means of enforcement somewhat better, and as Minister of Labour I can say that I have been extremely interested in seeing that our legislation to protect working people is enforced. I have had on many occasions to urge that enforcement officers pay more frequent visits to some of the more distant areas where the enforcement of laws is not always so easily carried out. I have had the cooperation of the Labour Department in sending those officers around the country, particularly to visit the sawmill industry in the remote areas where there has been no great observance of the law.

I would like to make an appeal to certain employers who in the past, while not paying overtime for the Christmas period, have paid bonuses to some workers. I do hope that such employers who have been giving bonuses to their workers will not now withdraw those bonuses because they have to pay overtime. I think that that would be going backwards, and I do not feel that overtime and bonuses should be linked together. A Christmas bonus, I think, is an employer's gift to his worker for serving him well, with the hope that with the extra money he may enjoy the Christmas period. The Union representatives, in discussing this question and asking that overtime be paid, mentioned that in some business establishments the employers felt that they were easing their consciences by giving bonuses and not paying overtime. There are many establishments which never give Christmas bonuses. That is one of the reasons why the Union was so persistent in the demand that overtime be paid for that period.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) asked me to comment on the question of Government trading concerns not being governed by this legislation. Workers in such establishments are not covered by this Bill which only applies to those who hold trade licences. Government trading establishments do not have trade licences. This no doubt is based on the theory and the assumption that Government is always a good employer, but I agree that the Hon. Member has raised an important point.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown Central (Mr. Burnham) made the very caustic remark that the Chairman of the Advisory Committee, the Commissioner of Labour, made certain recommendations with which the Minister disagreed. I do not know if I am allowed to refer to behind the Table conversations here, but the Commissioner has assured me that that is nonsense – that there was no disagreement, and that all the recommendations of the Committee have been observed in this Bill. Perhaps it is just another "*red herring*" drawn across the trail. I would like to emphasise the point

that this Bill does offer greater protection for workers who worked beyond half an hour after closing time.

There is a clause which says that no employer shall allow shop assistants to remain in the shop during prohibited hours even if they do so of their own accord. The trade unions and the Ministry are aware that frequently there is a certain amount of collusion between an employer and an employee when an employee is found on the premises after hours. Frequently the employee, to save his job, says "*I came here to sit and chat with my employer.*" This clause reinforces it so well that it is still an offence. So there is this added provision to prevent the exploitation of employees by making them work longer hours than those prescribed in this Bill.

If Hon. Members feel that they were unable to absorb the several provisions in the Bill between Saturday and now, and if they feel that the late circulation of the Committee's report has put them at a disadvantage, I am quite prepared to allow the Bill to be taken later, provided they agree to have it completed before the Council goes into recess. As far as I am concerned I am quite prepared to forego the recess if Members desire two weeks to consider the Bill. I am interested from the point of view of the working people to see that they get the benefit of the provisions in the Bill in time for Christmas, so that they have a better Christmas.

Motion on the Third Reading of the Shops (Consolidation) Bill: 28th November, 1958

Mrs. Jagan: I beg to move the Third Reading of a Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to consolidate and amend the law to regulate the opening and closing hours of certain shops and the hours of work of shop assistants; to provide for the welfare of shop assistants; and to provide for other matters connected therewith.”

[Mr. Tasker: Under Standing Order No. 52, I would like to move an amendment to the Hon. Minister’s Motion in order that the Bill may be recommitted to Committee for the specific purpose of considering a further amendment to the First Schedule to the second proviso.]

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Members Amendment actually proposes to give employers three alternatives while the Government Bill provides two, because, as the Hon. Member mentioned, the shop proprietors already have the alternative of deciding whether they observe the normal hours or keep their shops open from 9.30 a.m. to 6.15 p.m. The Hon. Member’s suggestion that shops should be permitted to be open from 7.30 a.m. to 6.15 p.m. brings into consideration the question of using the provision of 20 hours’ overtime per month.

The argument put forward by the Hon. Member has some merit, but I feel that one of its shortcomings is that the Bill lays down the number of working hours per week and per day for shop assistants. It allows a limited number of hours of overtime in a month, but there is some difference between allowing shops by legislation to be open two hours extra per week and having that period included as overtime. Overtime is a voluntary form of work, in that a worker may choose to accept overtime, or if he has some other activity he may not choose to work overtime. But if a shop is allowed to be open for two extra hours on Friday the shop assistant will no longer have that privilege of electing to work overtime or not. The hours of the shop on that day will have been extended and he will then *ipso facto* work two hours extra on that day. So that I feel that the subtle effect would be an obligation on the worker to work two hours extra per week, which I do not interpret as being the intention of this legislation.

While it is true that the hours have been extended two hours later on Friday, primarily for the convenience of consumers, we were very careful to limit the number of opening hours on that day, purely to protect the

shop assistants. While I appreciate the point made by the Hon. Member that the shops may tend to lose a certain amount of business on Friday morning, I think that in the long run, if the shops accept the Schedule which was passed on the last occasion they will find that perhaps they are doing more business in the last two hours of the day, which would compensate for what they may lose in the first two hours on Friday morning.

One reason for the decision that there should be two hours' extra work once a week is that a great number of people in Georgetown are unable to shop because of the closing of shops at 4 p.m. The Hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) mentioned that employees would like to get off at 4 p.m. in order to carry on their normal domestic activities, and he did mention that persons generally got others to do their shopping. But shopping is a domestic activity, and if the shop employees are to be inconvenienced somewhat by working later hours for the convenience of the public, we do not want shop assistants to be inconvenienced by an obligation to work an extra two hours a day.

The Junior Chamber of Commerce did raise a certain number of points which the Hon. Member for Georgetown North brought forth, and in his remarks the Hon. Member laid emphasis on the fact that in considering this Bill Government paid too much attention to the wishes of the employers. I hardly think the employers would agree with his submission. On the contrary, on those points on which the Ministry had to make decisions, those decisions were made on the side of the workers, and particularly in regard to the payment of overtime for extra hours during the Christmas period. Therefore, although I see much merit in the Amendment proposed by the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, at this stage I do not think it would be advisable for us to accept it and incorporate a proviso in the Bill to allow shops to open from 7.30 a.m. to 6.15 p.m. on Fridays.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill - Government Information Service: 18th February, 1959

Mrs. Jagan: I have listened with great interest to the comments made by the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello. Last night he raised the question about the G.I.S. being used as an instrument of the Majority Party. I gathered that he meant more than the Majority Party in the Government but the Majority Party as a Political Party. I took time off this morning to examine with my eyes some of the G.I.S. news broadcasts, because what one hears with the ears cannot be as fully regarded as what one sees.

I have before me a number of scripts from the G.I.S. news broadcasts which, I think, will be of interest for us to examine and see whether the allegations made by the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, are correct. Let me take at random the G.I.S. newscast of Thursday, January 29, 1959. The first item concerns Dr. Frank Dixey, Director of Overseas Geological Surveys and Geological Adviser to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. That does not mention any Member of the Majority Party, except to say that he conferred with the Director of Geological Surveys, Dr. R. B. McConnell, the Hon. Dr. Cheddi Jagan, Minister of Trade and Industry and the Hon. Edward Beharry, Minister of Natural Resources, etc.

Then the newscast mentioned that world exports of fresh fruit in 1957 amounted to well over eight million tons.

The next item refers to the new Resident Tutor in British Guiana for the University College of the West Indies, Mr. Harold Blackmore, who was expected to arrive in the Colony on February 14.

The next item concerns the General Manager of B.G. Airways who was leaving the Colony on a business trip. The Minister of Communications and Works is not mentioned here.

The next item deals with British Guiana's trade, industry and general economic development, and mentions that there was a discussion between Dr. Cheddi Jagan and two members of the Canadian Trade Mission to British Guiana. It mentions that Mr. C. R. Stollmeyer, and Mr. James A. Roberts were there. It also mentions that Mr. Roberts expressed the view that Canada did not know enough about the trade and economic problems of British Guiana and stressed the need for a Commissioner for Canada here. I think it is, perhaps, unfortunate that the Hon. Minister of Trade and Industry happened to be at the conference and his name was mentioned!

Now we come to an item which, I believe, must have raised the Hon. Member's anger. This newscast states:

"The Minister of Trade and Industry, the Honourable Dr. Cheddi Jagan, will attend a meeting of the East Berbice Union of Local Authorities tomorrow morn-

ing. The meeting will be held at the Sheet Anchor Anglican School, East Canje. It begins at 9.30 a.m.

Before returning to Georgetown on Monday, the Minister will meet members of the Berbice Chamber of Commerce at their request."

This item is one of the topics to which the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tello, refers. He seems to be annoyed with the frequency with which the G.I.S. uses the names of Ministers. I know much more about this item, so I can speak on it from the point of view of the Political Party to which I belong. If the G.I.S. was acting as a propaganda weapon for the Majority Party it would have mentioned also that Dr. Cheddi Jagan was holding ten public meetings, and it could have assisted the Majority Party by mentioning that there would be a meeting at Rose Hall Village at 4.30 p.m., one at another village at 6.30 p.m., and one at Cumberland at 8.00 p.m. Unfortunately, the G.I.S. did not assist the Party in that direction. It merely mentioned that appointments of the Hon. Minister of Trade and Industry in his capacity as a Minister and pointed out that he would be attending a meeting of the East Berbice Union of Local Authorities to discuss problems, perhaps, affecting his Ministry and other Ministries, as well as his appointment with the members of the Berbice Chamber of commerce. Surely that cannot be called a news broadcast in the interest of the Majority Party.

The next item deals with the Third Caribbean Fisheries Conference sponsored by the Caribbean Commission scheduled to be held during July this year in St. Martin. The name of an Hon. Minister has not been mentioned. We have not seen the name of the Hon. Minister of Natural Resources in this.

The next item states:

"A United Kingdom Information Office is shortly to be established in Kampala, Uganda on the lines of the U.K. Information Office set up in the West Indies ..."

Let me give you a few more examples from the G.I.S. newscast for Wednesday, January 28, 1959. It states:

"The Local Authorities at la Grange and Bagotville on the West Bank of Demerara have decided to pool their resources to provide a better potable water supply for both districts ..."

No mention has been made of the Hon. Minister of Natural Resources. The next item:

"Fourteen year old George Culley won the first prize in the 1958 Garden Competition at Buxton ..."

The next item:

“One hundred and seventy-four candidates have been nominated to contest the seventy-two seats in the Trinidad County Council Elections to be held on the sixteenth of next month.”

The next item:

“A lecture will be delivered at the Lodge Community Centre by two officials of the Credit Union League.”

The next item:

“St. Stanislaus College will be holding its Speech Day celebrations on Friday evening at 6.30. The Speech Day event which is the first of its kind to be held since the end of the last war will be attended by His Excellency the Governor, Sir Patrick Renison.”

The next item:

“The newly appointed Law Reform Committee is holding its first meeting tomorrow afternoon at 5.30. The Committee which comprises the Chief Justice, the Attorney-General, Barrister H.A. Fraser, Solicitor Edward de Freitas and the legal Draftsman will convene at the Chief Justice’s Chambers. The chief Justice, Sir Frank Hold, will preside at the meeting.”

Now we come to an item which concerns me. It states:

“The Minister of Labour, Health and Housing, the Honourable Janet Jagan will declare open the new Post Office at Queenstown on the Essequibo Coast during her three-day visit to that area over the coming weekend. The Minister will leave Georgetown for the Essequibo Coast on Saturday morning. On Sunday she will visit residents at Airy Hall and Sands-Golden Fleece. On Monday morning she will interview persons at Colony House. She will return to the city later the same day.”

If the G.I.S. was working in the interest of the P.P.P., it could have assisted me in my other activities outside of my Ministerial responsibilities as the Member in this Legislative represents Western Essequibo.

I also held a political meeting on Saturday evening. The G.I.S. did not help me with that. I also held a meeting to form a group in a particular area where my Party did not have a group. Those were activities which were entirely divorced from my activities as Minister, and the G.I.S. made no effort to include them in the G.I.S. news broadcast, because those concerned are fully aware that they have no place in a G.I.S. broadcast.

Legislators, who are Ministers, in any Political Party, have a dual personality. At certain times we have to perform functions in an official or

Ministerial capacity, and at other times, as the representative in a constituency or as a Party Member. It is correct that these activities are divorced from each other. I would not want to make the mistake of using the Information Services incorrectly. If the G.I.S. wanted to be the propaganda arm of the Party, it has had many occasions to do so. For example, it could have reported that the P.P.P. donated scientific instruments to Central High School.

As I am quite anxious that the Hon. Member should be a little convinced, I will make available a few facts. From 1st November, 1958 to the present date, we find that the names of Ministers are mentioned in 72 out of 696 news broadcast items, and in newspaper releases the Ministers, mentioned either by name or by office, are in 32 out of 448.

If we now come to the question of Ministers speaking on the radio, we will find that Ministerial broadcasts are slightly over one percent of Government broadcasting time. Certainly this is not a very high percentage to be used by Ministers over the radio.

The Hon. Member said that every time he turned on the radio he heard the names of Ministers referred to. Perhaps he is objecting to the fact that Ministers do go here and there and take an active interest in the work they are doing. Am I to be condemned as Minister of Labour, Health and Housing for showing so much interest in the health programme and to visit cottage hospitals or health centres in the country? Is it incorrect to say that the Minister of Health visited Nabaclis the other day to see the sites for health centres? I wanted to see these sites myself, because if there is anything wrong with them later on I will have to take the blame. Ministers do not travel here and there to enjoy themselves, but to see conditions for themselves and to examine, for example, water supplies at first hand, to see in fact Welfare and Maternity Clinics in session, to see farmers working in their fields, to see factories in operation, to see hospitals without being announced, to visit schools and see what is happening, to see chicken farms, to see farms raising coconuts and to do all the various things required.

Are we to be criticised for being so terribly interested in the problems of British Guiana that we take time which can be spent at the desk to visit places and then turn afternoons or evenings into desk time, while most people are enjoying themselves? If the Hon. Member is suggesting that this type of publicity was not on the air during the time of the Interim Government, then he is saying that the Members of the Interim Government did not move about as we do. Perhaps, if they did move about as we do, they would not have made so many mistakes. Many of the housing sites were chosen incorrectly. There is one, for example, at Springlands, which we are having a devil of a time putting right. The wrong type of house was chosen, the water supply question was not gone into properly, and so on. We are now correcting the mistakes made by previous Governments.

We move around quite a bit in order to do many official acts that should be done. If the G.I.S. were to say that the Minister of Education would on Wednesday next pay a visit to, say, Cornelia Ida School to see the condition

of the school buildings, what would be wrong about that? Is that offensive? Is it offensive for the people of Cornelia Ida to know that the Minister is so interested in their problems that he should come to visit the district to see things at first hand? Or is it that Members of this Legislative Council, who may not agree with the Majority Party feel a bit irritated that we are getting ahead with the job, despite attacks by members or, perhaps, the press?

If the Hon. Nominated Member feels offended and feels that the G.I.S. is being used as a tool of the Majority Party, let him cast his mind back to the time when the Majority Party was not the Majority Party, and let him see if he can recall that not only were the policies and activities of the Government of that time highlighted, but the G.I.S. used its time to attack the P.P.P., which was not in favour with the Government. If he does not realise it, I would remind him that the G.I.S., to my mind, has not used its position to attack the "Opposition" Parties; it has not slandered or attacked or used any sort of means to put the "Opposition" parties at a disadvantage. It has merely used its position to discuss the policy of the Government and the activities of the Government as well. Certainly that is a great difference. Certainly we have more to be discontented about than the other side. But we take our licks, and we are accustomed to doing so. Our skin is tough. The Hon. Nominated Member is so thin skinned that he cannot take a factual examination and discussion of the achievements and activities of the present Government – they seem to hurt him more than anything else. It surprises me that he should become so petulant over such a trivial thing.

Let me remind him that in all 72 instances out of 696, mention was made of the Ministers as such. To refresh his memory, I will read from another series of broadcasts of the G.I.S. Wednesday, January 7; the G.I.S. newscast tells that "A posting box has been erected at a central spot at Annandale on the East Coast, Demerara"; "The Lower East Demerara office of the Drainage and Irrigation has been removed from Triumph"; "The Financial Secretary, Mr. Essex, to deliver a broadcast on the Budget, over Radio Demerara"; "The British Council will start another course on parliamentary Government next week at Manchester, Corentyne"; "Two streets built by Aided Self-Help were opened yesterday afternoon at Hopetown on the West Coast, Berbice"; "The long dry season has given the people of Tearn Village on the Berbice River a chance to begin work to bring into use one hundred and twenty-five acres of land which has long been lying idle". In each of those there is no mention of the Majority Party Ministers. "A new telephone directory is now being prepared for 1959."

We have here the only item in the whole newscast that mentions a P.P.P. Minister –

"The Minister of Natural Resources agreed today with the proposals to provide rationed supply of water to Rice Farmers in West Demerara. The plans agreed upon are intended generally to prevent rice and sugar production in west Demerara from being adversely affected by the present water shortage."

We go on to the next item – “the Government Technical Institute will be conducting a ‘Building Today’ course as from the thirteenth of this month.” Finally, “An Order in Council published in an extraordinary issue of the Official Gazette today declares the danger of paralytic Rabies spreading is over.”

There you have another broadcast with only one mention of a Minister, the Minister of Natural Resources. It does not even call his name. How offensive could that be to the listening public?

The Hon. Nominated Member drew our attention to the *B. G. Bulletin*. He said the *Bulletin* is only a weapon of the P.P.P. I have here a copy of the *Bulletin* of 14th February, 1959 – I am sure Hon. Members know how well it is now printed, more attractively than the old one. Look at the first page. There is a huge picture with the words, “Villagers Hail Inspiring Self-Help Leadership.” I am afraid I cannot see any Minister there. “Better Potable Water Supply for two West Bank Demerara Villages” but no mention of the Minister of Communications and Works. “Loan for Village Improvement Works”, the money to be used for Drainage and Irrigation projects, road building and community centre project” but no mention of the Minister of Community Development and Education. “Cottage Hospital for Mahaicony” – this comes within my Portfolio, and there is no mention of that. In the article below this, the story is told that self-helpers in the Beterverwagting section of the Beterverwagting-Triumph housing scheme completed their houses and these were handed over to the house builders by the Hon. Mrs. Janet Jagan, Minister of Labour, Health and Housing. I am sorry I was there. Then there is – “450,000 lbs. of Corn for Trinidad”, and this item tells how the Minister of Natural Resources, Hon. Edward Beharry, was able to negotiate this, while he was in Trinidad. I wonder how one could have told this story of the sale of our corn without mentioning that the Minister assisted in it.

Page 2 deals with foreign items of news, and the biggest is one about “The Intangible Bond that Binds the British Commonwealth of nations together.” Turning to page 3, we find that “Rosehall Local Authority is developing a new Housing site with a \$25,000 Government Loan”, and there is no mention of any Minister. “14-Year-Old wins top Prize in Gardening Competition”, and again, there is no name of any Minister. In fact, on the second and third pages there is no mention of any Minister. Also on page 3 is the item “Fertilizer Increases Rice Production” and the Minister of Natural Resources is not mentioned.

We come now to the centre pages, which perhaps offend, because in a circle in the centre is the picture of the Minister of Natural Resources, and the picture of the Director of Agriculture is below this. The pictures around the circle tell of the work of the Department of Agriculture – pig and cattle rearing, development of citrus, tobacco and other crops, and a few other things. Also mentioned is the fact that the Minister of Natural Resources praised the work of the Director of Agriculture, in an address to the Senior Officers of the Department of Agriculture at their Annual Staff Conference. It is a means of giving those people who read the *Bulletin*, mostly people in

the rural areas, an idea of the activities of the Department of Agriculture.

Page 6 has no mention whatsoever of any Minister, but here is a *R.P.A. Newsletter* which sets out some of the recommendations of the Governor's Rice Committee concerning milling, and a news paragraph about the registration of the Lower Demerara River Cocoa Producers' Cooperative Society. But on page 7 there is an item concerning a broadcast on the Government's Health Programme for 1959, and the G.I.S. committed the terrible error of publishing my photograph. I shall have to ask them not to use my photograph in future. I agree that it was unnecessary

Does the Hon. Member say that the publication of a broadcast on an important aspect of the health of the community should be left out because it happened that the Minister of Health spoke on a subject within her Portfolio? I think it is important that people should have an idea of our Health Programme for 1959. In the Health Programme we do not find fabulous plans which cannot be implemented, but concreted down-to-earth plans which are being implemented with this year. Some aspects of the Plan are already moving, and it can hardly be said that such things as the establishment of Health Centres and an anti-filarial campaign are not matters to be publicized.

On the back page of the *Bulletin* there is the comic strip, "*Life With Sweet Sago*", but no picture of any Minister. In fact there is no mention of any Minister, but there is an article headed "*Oils and Fats Contract Extended to end of 1959*" "*Copra Price up: Fry Oil Price stable*". It is a report of a press conference held at the office of Dr. Jagan, Minister of Trade and Industry, who explained that at the recent Oils and Fats Conference in Trinidad the price of copra went up and he succeeded in keeping the price of fry oil at the present level, which means that copra producers who could not make a decent living with present prices will get an incentive for better and more production, but the consumer will not pay more. Is it wrong to say that these things happen?

I have not found a single item in this *Bulletin* in which Ministers say they are going to do this or that, but merely announcements of facts. I have not explained these things because I love the *G.I.S. Bulletin*. I have merely done so because I think it is worthy of examination and explanation. I think the Hon. Member has caused our Legislative Council debates to degenerate into silly and petty complaints by Members. I thought this Legislative Council was a body in which important matters of policy would be discussed. I have heard Members grumble that they are being rushed into passing an item if someone has the temerity to rise and request that the matter be put to the vote. I have listened to Members discussing a minor item for an hour and a half, and no one has complained, but I would suggest that we spend more time on solid matters which can help our country. Whether we sit on that side of the Table or on this side I must assume that all Members have the same burning desire to see our country go forward.

Will our country go forward if we spend countless hours of Legislative

Council time in tearing little bits of paper and grumbling about all sorts of inconsequential items? Let's get down to the things that count. Let the other side of the council criticize; that is their right, and if they criticize well the country will benefit. I do not think there is anyone in this Chamber, particularly on this side of the Table, who would in any way object to criticisms, but we hope that such criticisms are kept on a high level which all of us can understand and appreciate, and which we can utilize for the betterment of our country.

School Feeding Programme:

Mrs. Jagan: I may mention that only this morning I was examining the expansion of this scheme to include more school children and pregnant women. In the report I was examining I also saw the report of the Government Medical Officers who indicated that the milk reinforced with biscuits had brought about a substantial change in the children who have been receiving this additional diet. They indicate that the lack of vitamins, which gives a certain pattern of manifestations in children, has been considerably reduced. It is felt that the introduction of this scheme for school children is absolutely necessary.

I may mention for the benefit of the Hon. Member who said that the cost will be considerable, that the Medical Department at the moment is making every effort to include this distribution at the lowest possible cost to this Government. I understand that it may cost this Government about \$7,000, and Finance Committee may later be asked to vote this sum of money. It is intended that this milk will be distributed from the Infant Welfare Clinics and certain dispensers who go into the remote areas will look after its distribution there. I cannot emphasize sufficiently what this additional diet of biscuits plus milk means to the school children.

Motion on the Second Reading of Local Government (Valuation of Property) Bill: 25th February, 1959

Mrs. Jagan: I can only presume that the last speaker was speaking on the Motion before the Council, but in listening to him I had a very difficult time trying to find out what his objection to Clause 39 had to do with the Motion for Deferment of the Bill. If the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Gajraj, does not like Clause 39 which deals with the powers to be given to the Governor -in - Council to make Regulations, surely the correct time to voice his objections, as he well knows, is when this Council goes into Committee.

I presume that Members of this Council appreciate the reason for discussing a Bill. We are here to go into the Bill and discuss it fully. Members need not ask for a postponement of the Bill in order to voice their objections and, obviously, they will vote in the manner in which they are so inclined. I cannot see how a deferment of the Bill will assist Members in understanding it any better.

Hon. Members can see that this Bill was published on the 3rd January, 1959. If Hon. Members stand up here and confess openly that they have not yet studied the Bill and would like it deferred, then it shows that they are not showing very much respect to this Honourable Council. I would ask Hon. Members quite seriously to get on with the job. We have a tremendous amount of work to do. We have this Bill, another very lengthy one, and the financial position of the country to consider in relation to the Budget. I feel that any further delays will only prolong the work we have before us.

I can assure Hon. Members that this side of the Table has given this Bill very careful consideration. It was not brought here at a moment's notice. We have already deferred the Bill on one occasion to allow Members to have more time to peruse it. The Hon. Minister of Community Development and Education who is piloting this Bill has spent many long months going into the various aspects of it in the greatest detail. For Members to come here and suggest that this is a hasty bit of legislation, merely shows that they do not understand the situation. I would not speak any longer because I am anxious for us to move at the most rapid pace possible without infringing on the right of all Members to express themselves freely. I am sure that Members in this Council will not agree to the allegation that they have not been given an opportunity to express their points of view on this Bill. I would suggest that we start moving and do the work we have before us.

Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill - Inspector of Labour: 3rd March, 1959

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Nominated Member is raising the same point he raised in the Finance Committee: his dissatisfaction with the fact that Government has not seen fit to increase the hierarchy of the Labour Department. Examining the position, one sees that there will be an increase in the staff of the Department – from five to six Inspectors of Labour and from nine to ten Assistant Inspectors of Labour. If you add to those all the others on the Fixed Establishment – the Statistical Officer, the Chief Clerk, and so on – it gives you a total of 32 civil servants on the Fixed Establishment in the Labour Department, and above them are one Commissioner and one Deputy Commissioner of Labour.

I have examined this proposition very carefully, and I have rejected the addition of another administrative officer because I do not feel it is necessary. I feel that the Department of Labour is functioning at the moment and can continue to function for the next year with the addition of two others to its staff. I am tremendously interested in preventing unnecessary expenditure of public funds, and myself and my colleagues have been working to keep down the cost of government in British Guiana. Where it is necessary that certain Departments should increase their staffs because of expanding work, we will have to examine very carefully the expenditure on such Departments.

I am constantly amazed by the comments of the other Members of this Committee, on the other side, who protest against taxation and protest against every attempt the Members on this side of the Table make to keep down expenditure. I do not know what they want I do not know if they think we are magicians pulling rabbits out of hats. If this country is to get ahead, we will have to economize.

If another senior officer is not appointed, this is not going to destroy the Department as it is. Hon. Members raised a hue and a cry that the Inspectors of Labour will not have an opportunity for promotion. Create another post, they say. At the moment we have a Commissioner and a Deputy Commissioner. There will always be some who cannot reach the highest posts in the Government; that is inevitable. We create posts when they are necessary in the interest of good government. Under "*Medical*" Members will see that some posts have been created for the purpose of expanding our health services. I have given this matter the fullest consideration, and as Minister I would like to assure that Hon. Member that I have spent a great deal of time examining it. It was not a hasty decision of mine, but one which I have gone into very carefully.

I am sorry I have been unable to convince the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis. Perhaps he is not as interested as I am in the economy of this

country. What I find to be a pity is that the last two speakers made certain remarks on the Motion for the reduction of this post and then asked the Hon. the Chief Secretary to give further consideration to the matter. In a previous debate the same Hon. Members expressed the view that Ministers should be given a greater measure of responsibility, but in this instance where a Minister has something to do with the creation of a new post some Hon. Members are totally dissatisfied with it and desire to put the responsibility in the hands of the Official Members of this Council.

It is known that Ministers do not pick and choose the personnel for posts but in the establishment of new posts it is fortunate that the Minister concerned has a say in the matter. As I have already mentioned in the question dealing with the Medical Department, the Minister had something to say in the creation of the new posts. I hope Hon. Members will realize that Ministers have nothing to do with the picking and choosing of personnel to fill vacant posts.

In reply to the remarks made by the last speaker on the question of the hierarchy in the Labour Department, I can say that I have noted in my several months as a Minister that the tendency in Government Departments is to create larger and larger Departments. I am not referring to the Labour Department specifically, but I have observed that there is a tendency in Government Departments to extend the Departments beyond what they should be. There is a tendency to create little kingdoms and kingdoms within the Government. I very much fear that if we follow all of the Motions and recommendations of Members on the other side of the Table we may end up with a larger expenditure and commitments than we had expected.

The Labour Department has been working quite well in the past, and I am sure it will continue to function well this year. We have been interested in increasing a number of field officers and not necessarily senior officers as the Hon. Member for Georgetown North thinks. We need more field officers. One of the shortcomings of the Department is that there are not sufficient visits paid to the remote areas in the North West and other places. We have another field officer to do that kind of work but he is not a senior officer. You will observe that provision has been made for one additional post of Inspector of Labour and one additional post of Assistant Inspector of Labour. There are a number of junior officers, and I am quite satisfied that two senior officers are sufficient to run a Department of that size.

It is quite obvious what is happening to the Hon. Member. He is protesting the reduction of allowances under this Head and he has further noted that it is my hope that the additional Labour Inspector will be travelling further. He cannot reconcile the two points.

I would like to remind the Hon. Member that not everybody in this world spends money or travels wisely. Some people still hop into a car just to make a few miles. During the war there was a policy of rationing the supply of gasoline to users of cars. There were certain reasons for this, and one

of them was that people should make extra efforts to restrict or limit the use of these items, but this did not prevent or prohibit persons from travelling much.

We are trying to have an economy Budget. We are going through a rather difficult period. We have made efforts to reduce expenditure which we feel can stand reduction without disturbing the functions of the Departments and their officers. We feel this is for the good of the whole country. It will not prevent the Labour Department or its officers from functioning as they should. We feel that by doing this it will make the officers conscious that they are spending Government money and that they must spend it with caution. We are encouraging officers to be more patriotic to their Government and to watch every cent they spend.

I have every confidence that the officers of the Labour Department will during 1959 perform their duties very well. They will travel as much as is necessary and yet at the same time keep their eyes on the travelling expenses and know how to prevent unnecessary trips and adopt other methods of saving money.

For example, I have heard from conversations of others what has been done. Three officers of the Government on three different missions to New Amsterdam, and who know each other, rather than going to three separate vehicles to New Amsterdam and back would travel in one car. These are economies that can prevent excessive expenditure. In the Medical Department, for example, one officer might be going to a district and another officer also going there for another purpose. The same vehicle can be used for these officers going in the same direction. These are the things we are trying to encourage, and I do not know why Members are trying to prevent very sincere efforts on the part of Government to keep down costs.

Sanitation Public Officers:

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Member is inquiring about the transfer, I presume, of the Labour Department to another site. It is true that the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour have been working out an exchange of premises whereby the Department of Labour should move over to the Main Street site of the Teachers' Training College, and the College move to the premises of the Labour Department. The idea of this change is in the interest of the Teachers' Training College programme. It is felt that the building in which the Labour Department is now housed is sufficiently large and more appropriate for classrooms and for the housing of students. I believe it was felt that the Main Street site would be suitable for the Labour Department for one important reason – that the location is more central.

The Hon. Member raised another point about the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. I presume that is what he was referring to. At the

moment the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund office is housed at the bottom flat of the Labour Department building. I understand that the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee has purchased a property in Kingston where it is intended to build a new office. I have been quite interested in this project because I have been following with great interest the activities of the Committee and, quite frankly, I am not satisfied that there should be such a large expenditure of money from the Fund for the purchase of a very expensive property to build what I gather will be a very elaborate and very costly building to house that office.

Medical -Deputy Director of Medical Service:

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Member, unfortunately, is much too vague for me to answer his question. From time to time during the last year – and it will continue this year – there have been experts coming. Experts in the medical field have come for a specific purpose. For example, we have just had two experts here in the field of typhoid disease, and they came here to examine and find out whether British Guiana would be a suitable area for research in that field. I have had a talk with them and they are of the opinion that British Guiana would be a very interesting site for them to do their research in typhoid.

In about a month we will be getting another expert in the field of venereal disease who will use British Guiana as the central point from which he will move to other areas in the Caribbean. We are also waiting for an expert in nursing services to come here. She should have come with Dr. Rodriguez a few weeks ago, but there was some change in the plans. When she comes she will concentrate on the field of nursing services.

We have another expert coming to advise us in the field of inoculation against polio, so that when the Hon. Member speaks of a team of experts I do not know what he means. We have had many experts and we are having others, but each expert or group of experts comes to work in a specific field. If the Hon. Member would mention which specific field he feels that there will not be sufficient information or statistics, perhaps I could help him.

I think the Hon. Member has not been properly advised. In the medical field, which is very broad, there are experts in specific aspects of medical research. We have still with us two gentlemen who are doing research in malaria in the remote areas. In all of the cases of experts who have come and are coming this year I have had talks with our administrative doctors, and they have never yet expressed to me that there would be difficulty in supply any information which the various experts have required. I do not think the problem which the Hon. Member has posed has arisen.

The Hon. Member compares the fact that there is one Senior Physician to three Senior Surgeons. While he admits that he is not saying that the country does not need three Senior Surgeons, he wonders how that com-

pares with the quantity of the work done by the Senior Physician. The Surgeon has a greater amount of actual work and he spends more time with his patients than the Senior Physician.

There are really two different aspects of medicine. As a matter of fact the range of surgery is so very wide that the Surgeon can specialize in different fields. One of our Senior Surgeons has just returned from abroad and he is a specialist in bone surgery. I am of the opinion that both branches of medicines are equally important. The activity of the Physician is a slow-moving type of work.

I have not been aware before this moment that there was a need, or an expressed desire that the establishment be increased by more than one Senior Physician. The Department concerned has never brought it to my attention, and I cannot recall hearing anything about it in this Council. This is the first time the point has been raised.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: I was referring to the Senior Physician.

I am prepared to examine the Hon. Member's suggestion with the Director of Medical Services and to promise to go into the matter. The Hon. Member questioned my mentioning the fact that specialists in the field of surgery were very important and, perhaps, he misunderstood me to mean that specialists in the field of medical science were not as important. I did not mean that. All of us know that in the field of medicine the specialist physician, the product of the twentieth century, people depend on the various specialists particularly for a diagnosis of particular diseases.

A rich country can afford a number of specialists in all fields of medicine; it can afford specialists for diseases of the heart and various other diseases. Unfortunately, we are still a poor country, and I believe that such specialists as we can afford to acquire should be those who are capable of dealing with the greatest number of diseases in this country.

At the moment we have specialists for ear, nose, tuberculosis and eye diseases. We have not yet reached the stage where we can afford specialists for heart, kidney and skin diseases. There is no doubt that specialists in surgery who have had a lot of experience has a greater chance of doing a good job without making mistakes.

For example, the General Surgeon has to handle delicate bone surgery, but he might not know as much about the matter as a specialist in bone surgery. He might not know everything about the various aspects in bone surgery, and he might not be able to say whether an operation will result in permanent disability or otherwise.

When I referred to the Physician I used the word "*slow-moving*", because the Physician observes his patient over a long period. He prescribes medicine for the patient and watches the effect of the treatment. He may not have to spend as much time on each patient as a Surgeon who has a more

rapid turnover of work. The Surgeon has to consider symptoms and make quick diagnoses; he may have to spend two or three hours in doing surgery and watching his patient for a long period. Whereas the Physician, perhaps, spends a long time at work, he moves at a slower pace in watching his patient. I will go into the matter with the director of Medical Services and see what can be done.

Medical Superintendent, Mental Hospital:

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Davis, has raised a most interesting point: the problem of staffing the Mental Hospital. I paid another visit to the Hospital in order to discuss the whole problem of building a new wing to replace the one that was burnt down a few days ago.

Hon. Members will no doubt hear more when we reach the stage of replacing the building, but I think Hon. Members are fully aware that we are moving in the direction of replacing the western block. I would like as a side issue to inform Members that the staff of the Mental Hospital is to be highly complimented for the manner in which they handled the situation when the fire occurred. It is astounding that no one was injured or that no one died, and that people escaped.

When I examined the place and saw the conditions after the fire a few patients were excitable, some dangerous and others were locked up in their cells. It was surprising that all patients were taken out before the building collapsed.

Coming to the question of the need for a specialist – a Psychiatrist – I fully agree with the Hon. Member. Although I am a Minister I am the severest critic. When I went to the Hospital my first impression was that it was a veritable snake pit. Fortunately part of the snake pit will be replaced, and it is perhaps a happy coincidence that the worst part of the Mental Hospital burned down.

What is more distressing about the Mental Hospital is the fact that there is no specialist there. There is not the amount of hope as there should be for patients there that they can return to normal life. Since coming into this Ministry I have been fighting to get a Psychiatrist for this Hospital. The Director of Medical Services and I have had several discussions with the Chief Secretary in an effort to bring a Psychiatrist to British Guiana. We have tried to make the salary and conditions as attractive as possible, and we have advertised as widely as possible.

While I am on his point I may say that a Guianese is being trained in the field of mental health, but he will not be completing his training for some time.

In the meantime we need a specialist here urgently. The only hope in our search for a doctor comes from a discussion we had last week with Dr. Rodriguez of the World Health Organisation. We asked his Organisation to assist us in our search and he informed us that he believed he had a

suitable doctor to take up the post. We are now at the stage of seeking to work out such an arrangement. If we are fortunate to get a Psychiatrist, it would improve the Curative part of the Hospital; the new wing will only be an improvement, and the return of the Guianese doctor in two years will also help. But let me say this: an institution with as many patients as the Mental Hospital will really need more than one Psychiatrist.

We probably can use three, but one of the difficulties with the mental specialist, like the scientists and engineers, is that they are greatly in demand in the world market. There are not enough of them, and they can choose the job they want and the salary they want, as well as the country they want. British Guiana cannot compete in the market as well as other countries.

I think I understand what the Hon. Member means, but I think he is not fully aware what he himself means when he says that we need trained mental nurses. Of course we do. We need persons who are specialists in the field of mental nursing, but one cannot be a specialist until one is first a nurse. He is under the impression that an attendant can become a specialist nurse. An attendant cannot become a specialist nurse until, first of all, he becomes a fully qualified nurse. It is then that that person may go into the field of mental nursing.

We have at the moment a Matron at the institution, a highly intelligent woman. I see the Attorney-General nodding his head vigorously; he was with me yesterday. Government officers and Ministers who have visited the hospital are most impressed with this young lady who is a perfect example of a fully trained and qualified mental nurse, but there is a vast difference between a trained mental nurse and an attendant.

I pursued the possibility of training attendants, as such, with the World Health Organisation in the hope that they could offer us a special scholarship which we could use to send away Mental Hospital attendants who showed promise, but they have informed us that there is no such training for attendants, as such, and that if an attendant wishes to go further into the field he must first of all go through the normal period of nursing training. Government has assisted in the training already of, I believe, three or more persons in the field of mental nursing, and I understand they wish to expand in that field.

Casualty Officers:

Mrs. Jagan: I think Hon. Members should know that one of the real troubles in staffing the Service is the question of emoluments. One of the terms of reference of the Gorsuch Commission was the question of the emoluments of medical officers. It is not only in the Casualty Department that we are understaffed but the entire Medical Service of British Guiana is greatly understaffed, and perhaps the recommendations of the Gorsuch Commission may improve the situation.

I would like to clear the Hon. Member's mind on one point. I am not sure that he understands what a Casualty Office is. The Casualty Department deals with casualties, emergencies and accidents. People are admitted to the institution not only from the Casualty Department, but from the Out-Patients Department, or for treatment by specialist officers. So that there are various other ways of entering the institution.

There is one trouble we find in the institution, and that is that if a Casualty Officer had to deal only with casualties he might get through his work, but we have the unfortunate habit in this country of people taking to the Casualty Officer persons suffering from ailments that are not of an emergency nature. Some of the officers do complain that much of their time is taken up in doing what is strictly outpatients work.

Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing:

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Member referred to the inefficiency and the incompetence of the Ministry of Labour. I do not know whether he was referring to the Minister or the Ministry of Labour. I can only say that I have the highest regard for the efficiency of the staff of the Ministry who, I think, are doing a very fine and wonderful job. To give just one example, there are occasions when we have urgent work to do, and members of the staff are quite capable of dispatching all the correspondence dealing with emergency work within the same day – sometimes within an hour after a decision is made. I do not call that inefficiency or incompetence; I call it first class work.

The Hon. Member has suggested that there should be a reduction in the total vote of the Ministry, but if he would cast his eyes to the other side of the page he would see that there is a decrease in the travelling vote. The Ministry has also made a reduction in transport.

If I may touch for one moment on the question of passing this Budget and getting ahead with the job, I may say that people will be employed immediately after we pass the estimates with respect to sea defences, water installation, drainage and irrigation and many other jobs on which hundreds of people will be employed and will receive wages. That is for the Hon. Member's information. It is impossible for us to give the exact number of persons who will be employed, but I know there are many contract jobs and other large outstanding works which will commence when Hon. Members get down to passing this Budget. I do not feel that this is the proper place for a general debate.

Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill - Supreme Court: 5th March, 1959

Mrs. Jagan: The Ministry of Labour has been examining this question of the need for increased staff at the Registry in order to cope when the work in the Department. Among other things the Registrar of the Supreme Court is also the Registrar of Trade Unions. It is quite true that the over working of the staff is associated to some extent with the lack of supervision of the Registrar's duties in respect of his responsibilities as Registrar of Trade Unions.

The Ministry has quite recently been considering the question of transferring certain duties from the Registrar to another officer, or have additional staff provided in the Department.

With regard to the unsatisfactory report by auditors on the accounts of the Transport Workers Union and the Mine Workers Union, it is causing the Ministry of Labour grave concern. The lack of close supervision by the Registrar of Trade Unions has, perhaps, allowed this position to develop and deteriorate.

Arising out of the question of the dissatisfaction with the administration of the funds of some Trade Unions, the Ministry has examined the question of whether the Registrar of Trade Unions has sufficient power to properly take care of all matters arising out of the faulty administration of Trade Unions. In the light of the two cases in point, it will be necessary to bring before this Council during the course of this year legislation which will tighten the supervision of trade unions in order to prevent a recurrence of this matter. If the duties of the Registrar of Trade Unions are not transferred to another officer, it will be necessary to increase the staff in the Registry.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Customs (Amendment) Bill: 12th March, 1959

Mrs. Jagan: On the subject of fruit juices, British Guiana, as all of us know, is uniquely endowed with having one of the largest varieties of fruits. I would first of all say it is advisable, from the point of view of home economics and health, to use the fruits that are in season and in abundance when they are in season from time to time. If Guianese could get into the habit of utilizing fully the fruits that are in season I think they would find that there would be an adequate supply of the necessary vitamins. For example, when supplies of oranges or grapefruit are low, certainly an enterprising mother or wife can make a lovely drink from tamarind, which has a lot of vitamin C in it, and from soursop. Fruit juices can be made from mangoes, sorrel and limes. These are a few examples of what we can use to make refreshing drinks which have the same vitamin content. We should make full use of local fruits when they are in season rather than allow them to go to waste, as so frequently happens.

I do not think it is necessary for me to reply to the Hon. Member's remarks which I think were very childish. Perhaps because we are on the theme of children he came down to the level of a child. He does bring these debates down to a low level. I wanted to reply to the Hon. Member when he said that I knew very little about raising children, because perhaps he felt that the care of my child was not so personal, but I want to remind him that the Government of British Guiana restricted me to the city of Georgetown for about three years, and during that time I gave very close attention to the raising of my child.

Motion on the Seconding Reading of the Animals (Control of Experiment) Bill: 1st October, 1959

Mrs. Jagan: In moving the Second Reading of the Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to amend the animals (Control of Experiments) Ordinance, 1957”,

I should like to mention the reasons why it is necessary to amend this Ordinance. The origin of the Bill is that in 1956 the Secretary of State for the Colonies suggested to Government that it was desirable to introduce legislation to control experiments with animals. The Government of British Guiana followed the Jamaica law of 1949 which was used as a model. A Bill was accordingly introduced in the Legislative Council in 1957 and was passed by that Council as the Animals (Control of Experiments) Ordinance.

Arising out of the necessity to formulate Regulations under that Ordinance it was found that the definition of the word *“experiments”* lead to a certain amount of difficulty. The director of Agriculture expressed his anxiety over the definition and felt that there was need to distinguish between experiments on animals under laboratory conditions, such as were performed under the Central Medical Act, and the more general and extensive work of the Veterinary Surgeons of the Department of Agriculture. A Committee was set up with representatives of the Medical Department and the Department of Agriculture to consider draft Regulations. I have here before me two of the comments of the Veterinary Officer of the Department of Agriculture who said that the Ordinance as it stood at that moment would affect the work of Veterinary Surgeons in their routine activities. He wrote:

“This Ordinance directly affects all veterinary surgeons in their routine work. It is common practice to experiment in the sense of testing a theory, or in an endeavour to discover something unknown. Since one is dealing with animals unable to express themselves, such experiments, in one way or another, are often the only means of successful diagnosis.”

The Veterinary Officer felt that if the veterinary surgeon had to fulfil the intention of the law as it stood it would put a considerable hindrance on his work. He wrote:

“It is difficult to differentiate between experiments and experimental treatment. The giving of an injection is an act which produces pain; the firing of a horse produces pain. This is treatment, but so often is it not also a trial and a hope of achieving certain results?”

Following the discussions between the Medical Department and the Department of Agriculture, and the comments of those concerned, it was felt necessary to introduce the amendments contained in this Bill to amend the Animals (Control of Experiments) Ordinance, 1957. Hon. Members will note that we now have before us a new definition of the word "experiment" which limits it to

"any experiment calculated to give pain performed on any animal which interferes with the normal health or comfort of that animal, but does not include any test carried out on an animal by a qualified person as an aid to the veterinary diagnosis of the condition of that animal."

I think Hon. Members will see the point; that we are now making a greater distinction between experiments such as those carried out on animals in a medical laboratory under the direction of a scientific officer, and the normal testing which has to be done by a veterinary office to find the correct treatment for an animal.

Subsection (2) of Section 8 of the Principal Ordinance is being amended by the deletion of the words "twelve months from the date on which it is granted" and by the substitution therefore of the words "such period as may be stated therein." This is to broaden the activities within the Ordinance to prevent it from being circumscribed to 12 months.

Finally, the other amendment is to introduce a new Section 11A in the Principal Ordinance which gives the Director of Medical Services the power to cause all places specified in licences and permits granted under the provisions of the Ordinance, to be inspected and visited from time to time by inspectors for the purpose of seeing that the intention of the Ordinance is fulfilled. Subsection (2) gives the Governor power to appoint inspectors for the purposes of the Ordinance, or to assign the duties of inspectors to appropriate officers.

I do not think that Members will find this a controversial Bill, and I would urge them to consider it favourable, as its intention is merely to make the work of our veterinary officers easier, and to withdraw the restrictions which formerly existed in the performance of their duties. I formally move that the Bill be read a Second Time.

I beg to report that the Animals (Control of Experiments) (Amendment) Bill has been considered in Committee and approved without amendment. I therefore move that the Bill be now read the Third Time.

Development Programme 1960-1964: 6th November, 1959

[**The Financial Secretary:** *“Be it resolved: that this Council approves of the schemes and allocations as set out in the Development Programme 1960 – 1964 – Sessional Paper No. 5 of 1959”.*]

Mrs. Jagan: I think that at this stage it might be useful if I amplify some of the remarks made by the Hon. The Financial Secretary in connection with those aspects of the Development Programme which fall within my Portfolio.

Members will observe that the Health Programme, which will call for \$893,000 for the five-year period, includes some new and interesting projects. We have given a great deal of thought to the Health Programme for 1960-1964, and I think, quite rightly, the greatest emphasis has been put on preventative medicine, in the belief that it is a far wiser policy to spend more on prevention so that the final bill for curative medicine will ultimately be less.

In this respect, Members will notice that there will be a continuation of the Health Centre Programme which began this year, and the 1959 plans for Health Centres include 24 structures. These will not be completed this year, and will run into 1960. However, in addition to the 24 structures – which are already budgeted for and which, of course, are not shown here – we have put in an extra number of 10, which we feel will complete the network of Health Centres throughout British Guiana. With the addition of these Health Centres either a midwife or a health visitor will be stationed in the area. She will reside in the building. The basic services provided for will include measures against diseases, and inoculations against polio, typhoid and smallpox. Educational work will be done at the Health Centres and maternity and child welfare clinics held. Some of the administrative work in connection with sanitation will be done there also.

What is even more exciting is the Environmental Health Sanitation Programme which is going to improve greatly our health position in British Guiana. In the Environmental Health Sanitation Programme, Hon. Members will note, British Guiana is collaborating with W.H.O. and U.N.I.C.E.F. On examining the Environmental Sanitation Programme one might find it dull having to read about abattoirs, sewerage disposal drainage trenches and the like, but anyone who knows the health problems of British Guiana must be aware that most of the diseases come from conditions of very poor sanitation and of inadequate water supply. A survey of sanitary conditions in British Guiana disclosed that 18,000 families either lack any means of excreta disposal or are in need of replacements. This programme will provide for some 12,000 latrines using the most modern techniques, methods

which W.H.O. has worked out in many underdeveloped countries such as British Guiana. Special attention has been paid to the high water table in British Guiana, and a special type of raised latrine has been designed. These will be raised on concrete blocks and placed about two feet from the ground. A number of them will be used in rural schools.

In fact, there will be a two-pronged attack on poor sanitation in rural schools. Many country schools do not have proper sanitation and running water where children can wash their hands. Many school children remain on the school premises from morning until afternoon, taking their midday meal in the vicinity of the school. Provision will be made to bring our country schools up to date in this respect.

Members will recall that last year we put in the Estimates provision for two new posts within the Medical Service, one being Sanitary Engineer and the other Health Educator. This is to be effective from 1960, so that the plans to have a local person trained as Sanitary Engineer and another person trained as Health Educator can get started. This country has never had a Sanitary Engineer, and he will be a welcome addition to the staff of the Medical Services. He will be concerned with the improvement of sanitation throughout the country. The question of health education and the appointment of a Health Educator are important aspects of the Environmental Health Programme. Hon. Members who have gone into the subject will appreciate that Health Programmes in the past have been weak, in that we have never had proper educational campaigns going hand in hand with health improvement projects. This has been unfortunate, but it will soon be remedied.

For example, we expect in a matter of a month or less to begin a National Polio Preventive Campaign. To properly carry out such a campaign persons especially trained in the field of health education should prepare the ground work, so that the campaign would have the full participation and understanding of the people of the country. With a Health Educator and a team equipped and trained in health education and the techniques, the winning over of goodwill, assistance and understanding could be properly attained.

In the past we have not had this advantage, so that much of our health educational work has just dragged along for the simple reason that we have never had the proper personnel. The officers in our Medical Department have had so many other responsibilities and so much work to do they could not devote the time and attention necessary for health education. For the Environmental Health Sanitation Programme a Health Educator from the World Health Organisation will come to British Guiana and will guide and help to train the local counterpart appointed in this Colony.

Food sanitation is also a very important aspect of our Environmental Sanitation Programme. Twenty new slaughterhouses will be erected throughout the countryside. I need not remind Hon. Members that the handling of food, and in particular the handling of certain fresh foods that

can be the source of disease, is not properly controlled, meat being one of our most apparent problems. Many of our villages have no slaughterhouses.

Animals are slaughtered and skinned, and even sold under the most shocking conditions. Anyone can go along the roadside, as all of us have done, and see carts carrying meat along the dusty roads – meat uncovered and exposed to dirt, flies and contamination. We certainly get our share of disease from these unhygienic conditions that exist. There will be this expenditure of money in the establishment of 20 new slaughterhouses, and additional sanitary inspectors trained in all aspects of control of food and food sanitation will be working that field.

I may mention that aside from the Environmental Sanitation Programme the Medical Department and the Ministry are at the moment preparing new legislation which should come into effect sometime next year, dealing with Foods and Drugs. This will give further protection and provide further control of the sale and distribution of foodstuffs. Most experts in British Guiana feel, as I do, that at the moment we do not have adequate and proper control of food, and for that reason we have more disease than we should have.

Another aspect of our Environmental Sanitation Programme will be the control of waste disposal. At the moment the only good systems of waste disposal in British Guiana are in our urban areas where there is control of such disposal. It is proposed in this Programme to institute a system of dumping of refuse in a controlled manner to prevent the breeding of insects, rats and vermin, which will allow for the reclamation of many acres of low-lying land. In other words proper waste disposal can have the double effect of properly disposing of waste and using that waste to fill in land and get the greatest benefit from it.

I feel confident that the Environmental Sanitation Programme which has been so well worked out by our experts will be well worth the expenditure which we are asking this Council to provide. I doubt that we will hear any objection to this expenditure of money which will go a long way. We have recently had the very good news in our discussions with the W.H.O. on this subject, that they will probably be willing to add to our Environmental Sanitation another Programme for the expansion of our pure water supply. Hon. Members will note on page 52 of the Development Programme that an amount of \$2.8 million has been set aside for pure water supply. Actually it is in the Public Works sector of the Programme.

Quite recently we have had a Ministerial change of Portfolio in which the subject of water supply has been moved over to the Ministry of Health. This is something which I had been most keen on ever since I assumed responsibility for Labour, Health and Housing. I have always felt that a pure water supply is a health problem and not merely a mechanical problem to be solved by engineers in the Public Works Department. My anxiety to see an improved water supply in this country linked up with the solution to our health problems has finally reached the stage where it has been

recognised at last that water supply is a health and sanitation problem. W.H.O. seems interested in assisting us in our programme, and quite possibly we may find in our Five-Year Development Programme that we will actually have a greater pure water supply programme than the one proposed in this Development Programme.

I think that is wonderful news for British Guiana, because for many years our pure water supply Programme has been moving at such a slow pace that it has been unable to solve the problem of our increasing population. No one will deny that a great deal of disease in British Guiana, a great deal of the ill health of our country communities in particular, comes from the fact that people are still today, in 1959, drinking water dipped from wayside trenches. If Hon. Members visit the countryside, as I do, they must have seen women dipping their buckets into trenches daily, and using that very water to cook food, wash kitchen utensils and to serve as drinking water for all the members of their family. So it is not surprising that this country has a high incidence of intestinal diseases. We can only eradicate such diseases by improving our sanitation and water supply. I feel that the money we are spending in this Programme will be money well spent for this purpose. No country can allow its people to drink filthy or contaminated water, or to allow its people to live under insanitary conditions.

I want too to discuss the other two important aspects of our Preventive Health Programme which involves the expenditure of some \$82,000 on malaria eradication and some \$105,000 on filarial eradication. Only this morning I was in conference for three hours with a gentleman, Dr. Bye, who has been sent by W.H.O. to examine our filariasis problem. I was extremely impressed with Dr. Bye's comprehensive examination of our filariasis Programme, and in his exhaustive study of our problem he has given great praise to the work that Dr. Adams and his group have done so far in the eradication of filariasis in this country. However, a great deal more work will have to be done in that direction. It has been noted that it is the chief cause of morbidity in British Guiana, and thus requires the greatest attention. It has been estimated that between 20 and 25 percent of the population is infected with filaria. In the pilot schemes that have been conducted fairly recently some 30,000 persons have been given blood examinations and have been treated with special drugs. The degree of success which this pilot project has achieved is reassuring, and gives promise that if sufficient attention is paid in the next five-year period to the control of this deadly disease, we may succeed in eradicating filariasis from British Guiana.

In our discussions we have seen the need to set up a special unit of the Medical Department devoted to the study and treatment of filariasis. I am indeed hopeful that we will get the assistance we hope to get from the international organisations. There is a great deal of opinion that British Guiana may be one of the best countries in the world in which to study certain aspects of the disease in order to arrive at improved methods of eradication and treatment.

Malaria, we may say, is an old problem. We cleared this country of malaria sometime ago and we are to spend money on it again. The facts are the same. In certain areas of British Guiana, particularly in the North West District and the Pomeroun, we find that malaria has flared up again, and there are cases that have been reported.

I can remember sometime ago having discussion with some Malariologists who came from W.H.O. to discuss this same plan for which we are seeking money today. One of the doctors, a prominent Malariologist from Venezuela, confirmed that there is malaria on the border between Brazil and Venezuela, and he said that both countries were very much concerned over it.

As regards malaria, Dr. Courtney, an expert on the disease, advised us that we should carry on the campaign; and it is on the basis of the examination by the malaria experts that we have put in this Programme the sum of \$82,000 for malaria eradication.

I might mention something about the Water Programme. Members might note, at page 52 of our Development Programme, that the work for the pure water supply would be divided into three sectors. The first will be areas where there is no water supply at the moment, and the sum of \$1,328,500 is to be spent in that sector; the sum of \$759,500 will be spent in the areas with water supply but with poor or no distribution.

One of our problems, of course, is that if you have a good well in the area and there is no means of carrying that water to the various people, human nature being what it is, some individuals will not walk even a quarter of a mile or more to fetch the water. It becomes a burden and the distribution of sufficient pipelines then becomes a necessity. The third sector will be the areas with a good supply, but because of the increasing population there will have to be improvements and further extensions.

I cannot help making a few remarks at this stage, keeping in mind what my Hon. Colleague, the Member for North Georgetown, said when he terrorised this Council with the prediction that British Guiana's tuberculosis population would jump sky high because of our dusty roads. Unfortunately, the Hon. Member is not really conversant with medical problems otherwise he would not have made such a silly statement.

I, of course, fully agree with his remark that dust is a nuisance. It is one thing to say that dust is a nuisance, but we must be cautious not to confuse dust with disease. I wish to point out to Hon. Members – and I have made frequent trips to New Amsterdam – that you will not get tuberculosis from the dusty roads.

In our Medical Development Programme there are two other items which are not, strictly speaking, preventive but which are necessary adjuncts. They are improvements to two of our country hospitals – the Suddie and Lethem hospitals. In the Suddie hospital at the moment there is a terrific overcrowding of beds in the Maternity Ward. It has no proper Labour Room and no Nursery for newly born babes. In the proposed extension to the

Suddie hospital there will be facilities for more maternity beds, for an up-to-date Delivery Room and an Antiseptic Nursery Room. It is felt that these are necessary additions for one of our rural hospitals which, at the moment, has difficulty in coping with the work under present conditions.

All of us are disappointed at the inability of the Development Programme to include an amount for a new Georgetown Hospital. My Ministry has been working, for a very long time, on plans for a new Georgetown Hospital hoping that the money would be available in the 1960-1964 Programme. After a full examination of all the pros and cons of this somewhat controversial subject we arrived at the conclusion that the answer to many of our medical headaches, at the moment, would be a new hospital to be situated in the city of Georgetown.

When I first went into the Ministry of Labour, Health and Housing and examined the proposals for a hospital, I found that the plans were much too elaborate for a country as poor as British Guiana. They were, obviously, for a country of some wealth. In the meantime. I have been working along with my Ministerial Staff and the Medical Staff to trim it down as much as possible and to bring the total cost of a public hospital somewhat in line with what this country can afford. Those who may have studied the proposals for a hospital in Georgetown will recall that the idea was to build a hospital on the northern compound of the present hospital site. The method of construction would be more expensive than building it on a new site for the reason that there will be a progressive pulling down of buildings and putting up of buildings.

The new hospital which had been proposed prior to my advent would have been the type of building which would be very costly to a country such as British Guiana. We have eventually worked out and designed a hospital which has cut the original estimated cost by several millions, building on a new site and horizontally, so that the same number of square feet of space would be obtained at a lower cost. All of these points have been examined quite carefully and preparations have been going on up to this moment. Members will remember that the Hon. the Financial Secretary had referred to the Secretary of State's announcement that the Programme would be reviewed in 1962, and there might be some possibility of adding, at that stage, the two larger projects – the Georgetown Hospital and the East Coast Road. And in the dispatch from the Secretary of State mention was made that plans for these two projects should continue; so we have taken these words at face value and will continue with plans for these projects in the hope that in a few years' time the financial position will be improved.

I have heard criticisms – the usual song and dance – from the other side of the Table like the old dance hall entertainers. They have not changed their footwork in the last few years. They are singing the old song that the Majority Party favours only one section of the community. This, of course, is all said with a certain tilt of the voice so that one would imagine that

some sinister Programme is going on – that one section of the community is being put at a disadvantage, because certain people represent constituencies outside the city, whereas other sections are not. We heard the same thing when the electricity debate was going on. I presume that the Hon. Members who would supposedly be splitting that section of the community would be splitting themselves because most of the Members live in the city and will suffer or enjoy whatever exists because the emphasis in this Development Programme is on the economic sector. Too much emphasis cannot be put on the social sector, when people have higher annual incomes or as our national income rises people will be in a better position to take care of many of their social needs without being dependent upon the State for such requirements. I dare say most people would wish to do that.

In the Housing Programme for 1960-1964 the sum of \$5 million will be spent on housing and, according to the plan which we have in mind, that amount will be largely spent on urban housing. How that could be understood or construed as being a sinister effort to harm the residents of Georgetown, I cannot understand? We are anticipating the construction of some 2,000 buildings which no doubt will be in Georgetown. In the proposed Housing Programme we hope to scale down the overhead cost of construction – something which crippled the previous Programme – and to make available apartments at a lower rental than in the previous period. The decision to build \$17 apartments was not wholly realistic because we have found that a great many people of the working class find it difficult to pay that rental. If all goes well, we will be building a type of apartment which will be rented at a figure lower than \$17. We hope to continue our self-help housing drive and to go on with some hire-purchase houses. At the moment we are examining certain proposals from a private concern which has made offers to the Government concerning building on a deferred payment basis. One or two of the proposals look quite attractive.

The question of credits for rural housing is one which will be examined and developed more fully. At the moment some money has been set aside for loans for rural house-building. I do not know if all the Members on the opposite side feel that rural housing in this programme will be at the expense of urban housing. Two Members who spoke on this subject seemed to be suggesting this, and perhaps their views are not worth replying to. Credits for low income house building cannot easily be applied to urban housing. These are suited to rural areas where one does not find so many problems attached to the acquisition of house lots.

We hope, in connection with the problem of land acquisition for house lots, to be able to work out something with the local authorities and this will include a system of credits. Some of the \$6 million which is set aside for lower income housing by credits cannot be equated to the \$4 million for outright building. The return from the investment or the loans obviously is much quicker. In the latter case, 15 to 20 years is a long time to wait for the recovery of capital expenditure.

I hope I have not taken up too much of Hon. Members' time, but I felt it was necessary to explain some aspects of the proposals for health and housing which perhaps might not have been fully understood.

Motion on the Industrial Disputes Tribunal: 18th November, 1959

[**Mr. Rupert Tello:** *“Be it Resolved: that this Council invites Government to introduce legislation to provide for the establishment of an Industrial Disputes Tribunal in the Colony.”*]

Mrs. Jagan: We have an interesting Motion before us today in the form of the Hon. Nominated Member Mr. Tello’s advocacy of an Industrial Disputes Tribunal. This question has been gone into very carefully by all of us and we have listened to the excellent claims put forward by the chief advocate of an Industrial Disputes Tribunal, the Mover of the Motion. Not only did I listen carefully, but I made notes, and frankly, I am unable to determine what the Hon. Mover wants.

Is it compulsory arbitration, or is it not? That is the question. At one moment he suggests that Government should issue an invitation to employers to take the option of pursuing to a final decision an issue or dispute through a tribunal, and at another moment he speaks of voluntary machinery; yet at another moment he informs us that he wants compulsory arbitration based on the Industrial Disputes Tribunal which exists in the United Kingdom. Then, again, he tells us that he is not proposing to take away anything that at present benefits the worker nor, he says, is he seeking to impose anything on the employer or the employee.

If compulsory arbitration does not impose anything on the employer or the employee, then I do not know what it means. I understand compulsory arbitration to enter the picture when either side in a dispute notifies the Minister of Labour of their inability to solve a dispute – to use common language, when they are in a *“deadlock”* – and it must then go to arbitration. The dispute must then go to arbitration, and there is no question of an option.

Reference to the Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour and National Service for the year 1958, issued by Her Majesty’s Stationery Office, will help us to have a clear idea of what obtains in the United Kingdom. This Report states at page 92:

“Under the Industrial Disputes Order, 1951, which superseded the Conditions of Employment and National Arbitration Order, 1940, disputes could be reported to the Minister by a trade union, an employers’ organisation or an individual employer. Provided certain conditions were satisfied regarding such matters as the nature of the dispute and the use of existing joint negotiating machinery, the Minister was required to refer the dispute to the Industrial Disputes Tribunal for settlement. An award of the Tribunal became an implied term of contract between the parties and was therefore enforceable in the civil courts.”

Note the use of the words, "*the Minister was required to refer the dispute ...*" There is no question of an "*option*". I cannot regard a compulsory method of settling a dispute as an amicable manner, but I would term a voluntary settlement as amicable.

From what the Hon. Mover said yesterday I am left with the impression that he is uncertain in his mind what he really wants: compulsory arbitration by statutory provision or a body through which workers and employers can seek arbitration in a voluntary manner? It is most confusing, because he told us today that what he was asking for was what already existed in the United Kingdom, and it would only be supplementary in the present situation here. What astounded me was that he said he had been urged by trade unionists to bring forward this measure. Have they studied it? I wonder.

He said that the Industrial Disputes Tribunal had contributed to economic progress and harmonious relations in the United Kingdom. That surprises me. Let me continue from where I left off, and quote again from the Annual Report of the Ministry of Labour and National Service, at page 92:

"The success of this form of compulsory arbitration as a means of settling industrial disputes had depended very largely on the willingness of employers and of unions to cooperate in making the system work. When the Order was introduced in 1951 it was made clear that it would be reviewed at any time and at the request of either side of industry. During a review by the Government of Defence Regulations made under emergency legislation, the British Employers' Confederation, the Trades Union Congress, the nationalised industries and Local Authority interests were consulted about the desirability of providing permanent legislation for some form of compulsory arbitration. The consultation showed that the parties were at variance on the continuance of compulsory arbitration and the Minister in the absence of an agreement decided to bring the Industrial Disputes Order to an end.

Accordingly, on 30th October, the Industrial Disputes (Amendment and Revocation) Order, 1958, was made ...; it provided that the Industrial Disputes Order should cease to have effect on 1st March, 1959, and that reports under that Order should not be admissible after 9th December, 1958."

The Report goes on to show how many cases were dealt with under the Tribunal or referred to the joint machinery under the Order or were subject to conciliation.

So that in the United Kingdom in October last year the Industrial Disputes Tribunal was abolished, taking full effect from March, this year. Apparently, the Mover of the Motion did not realise this.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown North, whom we all know is a prominent trade unionist, said we should try to bring our legislation up to the standard of that existing in the United Kingdom and the United States so

far as progressive measures are concerned, and that we must take guidance from those countries, which have highly organised unions. What guidance must we now take from them? I do not know. As Minister of Labour I saw fit to examine the contents of this Motion. Did the Hon. Mover or his colleagues take time to find out the ramifications of the Motion before us? Can they tell us categorically what they want? Can they say that we must follow the United Kingdom where they have already found that there are weaknesses in the Act and have revoked it? What are we to do? I think the Hon. Mover should be up-to-date in what he brings to the Council rather than have a long debate on what does not exist in the United Kingdom. However, my job is not to criticise the Hon. Member. I am sure he has brought his Motion in all sincerity, but there we have it.

Another thing that surprises me is that the Mover is insisting that the Government should accept his Motion, yet at every move we hear it said "*We do not want any Government interference; hands off! We do not want Government to interfere in our trade union affairs.*" There was a big song and dance about the Wages Council. The T.U.C. complained that it was reducing the militancy and strength of trade unions, but what is this Motion seeking, if it is not interference? What is this if it is not, in the words of the three Members, removing the right of trade unions to strike taking away their most effective and long fought for weapon? Under compulsory arbitration you do not strike.

We have been told that Wages Councils weaken the Trade Union Movement. If that is so, as they have declared, I cannot see how they can ask for compulsory arbitration which ultimately weakens the militancy of trade unions. The Mover admits that we do have a form of compulsory arbitration in the Essential Services legislation. That is true. Whether it has worked satisfactorily or not is a question which is receiving the full consideration of the Government at this moment. We have grave doubts that the Essential Services Ordinance has served its purpose and is to the advantage of the workers of this country. The matter is under review at the moment.

One of the speakers – I think it was the Hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) – referred to the fact that only the Government workers are well organised and have this form of arbitration. Although the Mover of the Motion pointed out quite correctly when he spoke on the last occasion, that there is already provision by collective bargaining for the voluntary settlement of disputes in a number of industries – sugar, bauxite, sawmilling, waterfront and mining – which, taken in conjunction with those covered at the moment by the Essential Services Ordinance, takes care of a great number of our workers in British Guiana. There are some small groups of workers which the Mover mentioned are not so well organised and would need this assistance. I wonder how much it would help them. At the moment those industries which are not well organised, for example the timber industry, the soft drinks industry and the printing industry, are having Wages Councils established which, in a way, I think will help to solve some of

their problems. In other words, we seem to have existing machinery already to assist the smaller trade unions. We do not want to stifle their growth; we do not want to kill them. We want them to grow.

I am a firm believer in each union fighting its own battles. If trade unions do not learn to fight their own battles they would be smothered to death by paternalism. I feel, and I had to tell the T.U.C. on the occasion on which they asked me to address their Annual Convention in 1958, that it is not this Government's intention to mother the Trade Union Movement. We want the trade unions to stand on their own feet and fight their own battles as all trade unions have done in the past. I do not think they should be molycoddled; they must learn the hard way. A strong and militant trade union does not grow by having all its problems solved beforehand. If the strike weapon is the only weapon left in the arsenal of a trade union, then use it. Workers learn by the use of the strike weapon, and they learn to fight for what they want.

The three Members who have spoken have waved before my eyes a copy of the Manifesto of the People's Progressive Party. Of course I have a much better copy, one with the picture of the Leader, which shows that it is much more authentic. It contains the same statement of policy which the Mover quoted. It is true that in our Party's 1957 Manifesto we did advocate the principle of compulsory arbitration. We also mentioned the American National Labour Board as a good example of what can be done by a progressive Government. The Hon. Member quoted a portion of a paragraph from the Manifesto. I shall read the concluding portion. It says:

"That is why the P.P.P. advocated compulsory arbitration and the establishment of a National Labour Board by a progressive government representative of a majority of the people of the country."

An examination of the American National Labour Act, or the Federal Mediation Act, indicates that it promotes collective bargaining and encourages and assists the two parties who have reached a deadlock to settle their differences. There are no coercive or compulsory powers. The difference between the United Kingdom Act, which has now been abolished, and the American Act is that in the United Kingdom they were using compulsory arbitration which they have now seen fit to abolish, while the Americans have been using a form of arbitration with no coercive or compulsory powers.

I am quite willing, if Hon. Members on the other side wish, to postpone consideration of this proposal until another day. We have learnt that the Secretary of State for the Colonies has informed I.L.O. about the removal of the Industrial Disputes Tribunal in England, and that they are in consultation, I understand, on the question of a modification of the General Industrial Disputes Tribunal. We gather that they may be thinking in terms of having some form of Wages Councils to deal merely with wages and not

with other aspects of differences between the two parties. At the moment they are still in consultation, and it may be wise to wait and see if there is any important modification which may be of interest to us here.

I do not necessarily agree with the stand taken by some Members, that we should follow slavishly what is done in the United Kingdom, and what the British Trade Union Movement advocates, but since my colleagues on the other side of the Table are such strong advocates of the British T.U.C. and have told us in no uncertain terms today that whatever exists in the UK is progressive, and that we should emulate their legislation, I should imagine that they may want to have second thoughts on this whole matter. We have had second thoughts about our recommendation in our Party's Manifesto in the light of present developments, in the light of the fact that compulsory arbitration has not proved wholly satisfactory in the United Kingdom, and the American pattern of not having compulsory arbitration.

We have been often accused of being so rigid in our thoughts that we are unable to move with the times. We have been accused on numerous occasions of not having that flexibility which is required. Let us say this is an example of our flexibility and our ability to appreciate what is happening in other parts of the world. In this case we have appreciated the fact that compulsory arbitration has not been a total success in the United Kingdom. As I say, I do not subscribe to that pattern, to that group which strives slavishly to follow what goes on in the United Kingdom, but from time to time we can learn and benefit from the pattern of development in other countries. In this instance I have seen the wisdom of not establishing compulsory arbitration in British Guiana at this time. My main reason is that I fear – and I say it with all sincerity – it would be the weakening, if not the destruction, of the militancy and growth of the Trade Union Movement in British Guiana. We want to see a militant Trade Union Movement standing on its own feet and fighting its own battles, not leaning at a 40 degree angle on the Government.

I hope Members will appreciate some of the points I have made, and if they want to accept the advice I have given them to reconsider this proposal, it is up to them. I would urge – perhaps I should not – that Members should not come into Council and make categorical statements which they cannot back up. They should not tell us that compulsory arbitration is a booming success in the United Kingdom when in fact the Act has been rescinded some months ago. If they had done some research they could not have failed to discover what the truth of the situation was. They had the energy to pursue and find a Manifesto of the People's Progressive Party. Certainly, they could have used that same energy to find out what was happening in the United Kingdom and how successful it was.

I do hope when the Mover of the Motion replies he will clarify what he wants. I am in utter confusion to know what he wants. Is it voluntary arbitration or is it an Industrial Disputes Tribunal? In moving the Motion he should have put to us what he had in his mind, and not tell us that he

wants an Industrial Disputes Tribunal based on the UK. Act, and he wants voluntary arbitration. He said that we are only supplementing our voluntary legislation by statutory legislation. He tells us that it would not impose anything on the employer or employee. I challenge him. It does impose something.

I regret that I have had to be so caustic in my remarks, but I have, since last Wednesday, been thinking over what the Hon. Member had said, and I found that he keeps weaving and turning. Do you want compulsion or you do not want compulsion? I await the Hon. Member's remarks on that; but under the circumstances as they exist we cannot support his Motion.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Medical Practitioner's (Registration) Bill: 29th December, 1959

Mrs. Jagan: In moving the Second Reading of the Bill intituled -

"An Ordinance to provide for the Registration of certain persons as Medical Practitioners",

I wish first of all to apologise to Members of this Council for not giving them sufficient notice of Government's intention to take the Bill through all its stages today. Due to the fact that the Legislative Council was prorogued and the form of meetings since the publication of this Bill did not permit it, the First Reading was not taken. We did not think it was necessary to have a meeting specially to move the First Reading of the Bill.

Members are however aware that it is necessary that this Bill should be taken through the remaining stages by year-end in order that we may not have to come to this Council again to seek further temporary registration of Medical Practitioners.

During last year's debate in this Council Members, particularly the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, and the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central, asked Government to bring forward permanent legislation in order that medical practitioners whose degrees are not normally accepted by the British Medical Council can be registered here under certain conditions. There I am sure that Members will be happy that such a Bill is now before us.

I recall the point being made on the last occasion that the reason for the delay in bringing forth this permanent legislation was that there had been very strong opposition from the professional bodies concerned - the British Guiana and the British Caribbean Branches of the British Medical Association.

These bodies have expressed their disapproval of any form of permanent registration of a person having a foreign degree not accepted by the British Medical Council. We have not rushed into this Bill for two reasons. Firstly, there was no great urgency since there was a great number of doctors in this category waiting in line for this problem to be solved; and, secondly, we wanted to give very careful consideration to the position expressed by these professional bodies.

This we have done and Hon. Members will notice in the Bill that we are asking that permanent registration be given to any doctor coming to British Guiana with a foreign degree not accepted by the British Medical Council once that doctor will have worked at an approved medical institution. By an approved medical institution is meant any of the public hospitals, the St.

Joseph Mercy Hospital or the Seventh Day Adventist Clinic. If, after a period of five years, however, that Medical Practitioner has proved that he can do good work, he will be allowed to be permanently registered on the recommendation Medical Board.

The Hon. Nominated Members, Mr. Fredericks, has circulated to this Council amendments to clause 5(1). On further examination and discussion with my colleagues, we have agreed to accept his amendments which would mean, in fact that we will be reducing this period of five years to three years – the period we might say, of the doctor's apprenticeship. We have agreed to this in spite of the fact that the British Medical Association although they were opposed to permanent registration at one stage, had given a form of approval to a period of five years; but they are not prepared to go further than five years.

In order that the Bill could have a simple passage and in order to facilitate the doctors who might wish to give service to this country, we have agreed to the amendments put forward. It is considered desirable that permanent provision should be made for the registration of Medical Practitioners who have foreign diplomas. Now and again we do get doctors who are not trained at the accepted universities but who had still had good training and who, also, may be qualified to give good service or, perhaps better service than other doctors.

I, personally, am not one who is over impressed by the university at which a person studies. The university is important, yes, but I feel that the character of the individual, his ability to absorb learning, his work and his general aptitude and intelligence are, perhaps, more important than the name of the university. It is unnecessary to recall that this country has had doctors, fortunately only one of two, who have been trained at the best universities and have gone into service and have proved to be wanting one way or another. It is true that the British Medical Council is very much concerned over this question of universities, but many of our neighbours to the south of us and to the north train their professionals at their own universities, and from what we have seen the results are not too bad at all.

Therefore, I am happy to see we have got over the hump and we now agree – I hope Hon. Members do agree – to bring in this form of registration so that doctors who may wish to remain in British Guiana and continue to practice outside of the institution may do so as permanently registered Medical Practitioners once they proved to be of good calibre and capable of performing their duties as they should at an approved institution.

I would ask Members to give this measure their full support and, perhaps, give a sigh of relief that next year we shall not come to this Council and ask for a renewal of the Temporary Registration Bill.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: I appreciate Hon. Members' basic support of this legislation

and I shall seek to answer some of the points raised in the debate. The Hon. Member for Georgetown South has spoken of capsule. Well, I have been trying to visualise him as a capsule coming out into space.

[Laughter]

Mrs. Jagan: Some Members seem to have misunderstood one or two pints of importance. At the moment there are several Universities outside of the United Kingdom which are recognised by the British Medical Council and whose graduates may be registered to practice here: for example, graduates from certain medical colleges in India, Scandinavian countries, Belgium and Germany. This means that certain Universities outside of Great Britain are acceptable to the British Medical Council – but the Council does not recognise degrees from universities all over the world. We do have on our Statute Books a piece of legislation initiated by the present Minister of Trade and Industry which allows Graduates of Canadian and American Universities to be registered here. I am perfectly in agreement with the remarks of the Member for Georgetown South that there are important medical schools and institutions in the United States where many people from British countries go for study or treatment, including Sir Anthony Eden.

There are difficulties to be overcome, for while there are Universities which have a good standing in their own countries, for one reason or another they are not accepted by the British Medical Council. Not exactly because their standards are not high enough, but because of reason of reciprocity.

One Member suggested that we should accept graduates from any University and not just those accepted by the British Medical Council. That, of course, raises this question: who rates the Universities of Ecuador, Venezuela, South Africa, France, Cairo or Russia? I am aware of no international body that has a list of accredited Universities.

It is a very puzzling question for any to decide which Universities are the best. That is one of the reasons why we have accepted that there should be a three year probationary period whereby a doctor from a University that is not recognized will be allowed to work in an accredited institution and to prove his worth. The three years is the period during which a doctor from a foreign University will be observed; he will be watched; he will be guided and, no doubt, the opinion of his colleagues and, most of all, his medical superior will be important methods whereby his aptitude and capabilities are determined.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown South made some remarks that we are wrong to give these doctors licence to go into institutions and, perhaps, butcher or kill. Certainly, it is better for a doctor whose degree is somewhat uncertain to work in an institution and not go into private practice immediately. In an institution he is not alone. There are other doctors to

help him and guide him and if he is making mistakes, these mistakes can be corrected soon enough before harming people.

The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, has asked for an explanation for the reduction of the apprenticeship period from five to three years. Speaking quite frankly, five years were accepted by the British Medical Association (Caribbean Branch) and the Medical Board, but my personal view has always been that three years were sufficient. I feel it is only fair and reasonable to say that you must be able to judge a man's qualities in three years. I do not think it really should take five years to determine whether a man is a good doctor or not; and as I said before, the person no doubt to have the last word will be the senior medical officer in the institution in which the medical practitioner serves. No doubt, if the medical practitioner is not up to standard not only will he fail to be registered but he will also fail to be employed in the institution. Therefore, I feel that three years is a long enough time to see what a man is made of.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown South referred to the fact that certain medical practitioners – certain specialists – in the hospitals are squeezing the last cent out of the patients. That is wrong and that is to be prevented; and if the Member will give me all the facts of the case I will bring them to the attention of the Director of Medical Services as I have already brought to his attention half-a-dozen cases since consultation practice is allowed.

I wish to make it quite clear that the consultation practice which is allowed specialists employed by the Government means that the specialist can only see a patient recommended by another doctor. When I say he can only see a patient I mean he can only receive a fee from a patient recommended by a private practitioner. Any patient entering the Public Hospital or going to the Outpatients' Department can see a specialist without paying a fee and the specialists are not allowed to charge a cent of any person who is unable to pay.

I see the Hon. Member shaking his head. Human nature being what it is I would not doubt that there are violations of this. I hear a number of complaints myself. I know the Hon. Member knows that the introduction of consultation practice is not permanent but it is for a limited period during which the Government will observe how it works out. If it is found that the specialists are taking advantage of persons not able to pay it will be necessary to discontinue the practice. Because of the shortage of doctors and because, we might say, a pistol was put at the head of Government and Government not wishing to see the public suffer, this form of service was allowed to be introduced. But I say categorically, if consultation practice proves to be unsatisfactory mainly from the point of view of the patient who is unable to afford it being taxed, it will be stopped. It is entirely up to the doctors themselves to see that the consultation practice is run on a straightforward basis. If the Hon. Member knows of any case to bring to my attention I will give every assurance that I will investigate if fully because I have no intention to allow patients to be exploited.

One Hon. Member discussed the question of the Medical Board having the last say in determining if a person to be registered. To some extent the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker answered that when he said that some professionals are incapable of determining if a person should be registered or not. I am not sure if it will be in the public's interest to allow automatic registration after three years. It might work all right in most cases but there is the possibility that one or two may slip through without having a proper professional valuation of the candidate with a foreign degree; therefore, I am in favour of retaining section 4. I think we will have to retain it during this period. If it is possible that, after working under the Registration Bill for some time, we see it is unnecessary I think we can consider that alternative.

I hope I have answered some of the points raised by Hon. Members and I would ask that the Bill be read the second time.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill Budget Debate: 18th January, 1960

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

I say that now because so frequently Members seem to have the wrong idea and, perhaps, it is deliberately done. In fact, this Government has gone out of its way to bring into effect the Land Registration Ordinance

which actually assists persons, who have been unable to establish title, to establish title to lands. Do you want any better proof than that? We have considered this one of the most important bits of legislation brought to this Council during our term of office. This is not to take away land from people; this is not to convert freehold into leasehold, but assist in establishing titles to persons who, because a great deal of time has been passed from one generation to the next by various marriages, etc., it has been difficult to establish title without going to Court.

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

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

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

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

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

The Hon. Members also discussed at length the question of specialists' fees and allowances. Perhaps it is not fair to say it, but it is a fact that the Hon. Member did not fully understand what he was talking about. Some of his criticisms are no doubt justifiable, but let us start from the beginning. The Hon. Member is under the impression that specialists receive overtime pay. That is not correct. Specialists do not receive pay for overtime work at night. The Hon. Member has confused them with hospital doctors who have had an extra burden placed upon their shoulders owing to the shortage of staff and having to work an excessive number of nights per month. The allowance of \$20 per night, to which the Hon. Member referred, has

nothing whatsoever to do with the specialists, but is paid to the institutional doctors.

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

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

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

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

It is not true to say that specialists do not give service to those who cannot pay. That is a slander against many of the country's best doctors. I wonder what Members think the doctors do all day? They go through the

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

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

Those who know me know that I am not particularly kind to people who I find have victimised or have oppressed others.

["Hear, hear"]

Mrs. Jagan: As far as I am concerned, those who injure others or exploit others have no sympathy from me. I am glad Hon. Members agree and I hope they will not be the first to start protecting those guilty persons. I would ask Hon. Members again to try to cooperate. From year to year I ask this, but not one legislator has ever had the energy or the interest to carry his complaint beyond the Legislative Council. That is not the answer. Such cases cannot be tackled properly unless all the points are brought to our attention.

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

I know that Hon. Members are critical, but I wonder how critical they

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

Hon. Members are as concerned as I am about our difficulty in obtaining a mental specialist, a Psychiatrist, for our mental Hospital. They readily agreed last year to the provision of a very handsome salary for a Psychiatrist, but in spite of the very handsome salary offered we have so far been unable to obtain one, because of the general world shortage of such specialists. In the circumstances I feel that Members should appreciate that every effort ought to be made to hold in the Government Service those specialists who have been giving service to this country. The Hon. Member for Georgetown North rattled off a list of specialists' fees which those gentlemen receive monthly. I am sure that Members appreciate that the Income Tax Department also would have a detailed record, so that the Government does not lose as much as one would imagine.

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

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

Motion on the Second Reading of the Labour (Amendment) Bill: 26th January, 1960

Mrs. Jagan: In moving the Second Reading of Bill No. 3 of 1960, the Labour (Amendment) Bill, I would like to point out that this Bill seeks to amend our Labour Ordinance, Chapter 103, which is the basic labour legislation in British Guiana. This ordinance was enacted in 1942 and provides for the regulation of the relationship between employers and workers, and for the settlement of differences between them; also for the appointment of a Commissioner of Labour, a Deputy Commissioner of Labour, Inspectors of Labour and Assistant Inspectors of Labour, who are empowered under this Ordinance to administer the various provisions of the Ordinance which was primarily designed for the benefit of workers.

The Labour Ordinance incorporates provisions of a number of International Labour Conventions which had been adopted, from time to time, by the International Labour Organisation. The I.L.O., as we know it, is an agency of the United Nations with the object of promoting social justice and up-to-date labour legislation, and to promote the best labour relations. To this end it collects and disseminates labour and social conditions, formulates them to national standards and supervises their national application. The United Kingdom Government is under an obligation to ensure that any convention it ratifies is applied to any of the British non-self governing territories with the exception of those where such labour conditions might make any of the conventions difficult to apply. By application is meant the bringing of such codes into the legislation of the country or including them in the administration of the Labour Department.

It was found that the provisions of two of the International Labour Conventions accepted by British Guiana were not fully reflected in the provisions of our legislation, that is our Labour Ordinance, and in accordance with the obligation to implement such conventions we found it necessary to amend the Labour Ordinance.

As Members will recall, the Bill was originally published for general information in the *Official Gazette* of the 31st January, 1959, and was put on the Order Paper of the Legislative Council and given its First Reading on the 6th February, 1959. Before the notice of the Second Reading of the Bill was given, it was discovered that certain other amendments to the principal Ordinance were necessary. Subsequently, representations were received urging further amendments, and thus the original Bill was withdrawn before the Council on the 1st October last, in order that the Government could consider the further suggested amendments.

In the revised Bill now before the Council, Government is implementing the resolved I.L.O. Conventions and has introduced one or two other amendments which it feels would bring the Ordinance up-to-date. I might men-

tion that one of the amendments which has caused this delay was the interpretation of the word "employee" and the prohibition of certain categories of employees such as domestics.

The revised Bill before us today seeks a number of changes, most of them minor, which will satisfy our local conditions. The Bill seeks mainly to provide for the supplying of information with respect to the particulars of wages and any change in such particulars to employees of all classes. Secondly, it provides for additional conditions to be attached to the payment of wages. Thirdly, it empowers the officers of the Labour Department, when on visits of inspection, to carry out such inquiries as they consider necessary to satisfy themselves that the provisions of the law relating to the employment of persons are being strictly observed. The power sought to be given to Labour Officers in this respect included the right to ask questions of employers or members of the staff, to require the production of books, to enforce the posting of notices and to take samples of materials used and handled. Opportunity is also taken to clarify the scope of the power to enter and inspect premises in which labour is employed, conferred by Section 38 (1) (a) of the Ordinance and to effect in Section 38 (1) (c) a verbal Amendment rendered necessary by the repeal and re-enactment of section 31 (4) of the Ordinance by the Accident and occupational Diseases (Notification) Ordinance, 1955. This is, of course, important for the fulfilment and application of the Labour Ordinance, and I believe those Members of Council, who are trade unionists, will appreciate this Amendment.

The Bill also seeks to introduce a provision similar to section 10 (1) (j) of the Factories Ordinance, Chapter 115, authorizing Labour Officers to be accompanied by members of the Police Force when on visits of inspection where they reasonably apprehend serious obstruction in the execution of their duty. I have heard, from time to time, trade unionists expressing the need for such an amendment to give protection to an Assistant Labour Inspector on the job when he anticipates obstruction in the course of inspection.

The Bill further seeks to prescribe that a Labour Officer, when on a visit of inspection, shall, in normal circumstances, notify the employer of his presence, and that the employer shall grant to his employees and their representatives every facility for communicating freely with the Officer. This, of course, does not require the Inspector to do so on any occasion which one might consider abnormal. Members can appreciate that if a Labour Inspector is examining a premises he must be given the fullest opportunity to interview the employees at the factory or premises. If he is not given that cooperation, one can quickly see that it would be extremely difficult for him to find the truth of the problem which he is investigating.

This Bill also seeks to provide for the issue of credentials to Labour Inspectors and Assistant Labour Inspectors for production on demand at premises which they visit in the course of their duties. This particular insertion, I recall, is a result of representations made to the Ministry of La-

bour, Health and Housing that such credentials would be an important addition to the Inspectors' equipment, you might say, when he is on his job of inspection.

Provision is also made in this Bill whereby Labour Officers, even after leaving the Public Service, should not reveal commercial or manufacturing secrets made known to them while carrying out their duties. Again, this is a protective measure for employers, who felt that such secrets may have been revealed.

The Commissioner of Labour, under this Bill, would be authorized to approve the arrangements made by any employer for the keeping of paylists and statistics of earnings in order to confer upon the employer the benefit of greater flexibility in relation to such arrangements. Under section 40 (b) of the Labour Ordinance, which this Bill seeks to repeal, paylists and statistics must be kept in a form prescribed by Regulations.

Again, this Bill seeks to repeal sections 27, 30 and certain provisions of sections 48 and 49 of the Labour Ordinance which, in effect, exclude domestic and menial servants from the application of the Ordinance, except where it is expressly stated otherwise in the Ordinance. I mentioned to Members earlier that this particular amendment to the Bill was one that was responsible for the unfortunate delay in bringing this Bill before this Council. However, I think Members will agree with me that on further examination of this repeal amendment, they will appreciate the benefits it will bestow.

Finally, this Bill seeks, in accordance with International Labour Conventions, to repeal section 36 of the Labour Ordinance, which contains sanctions against employees in certain contracts of service. The Labour Ordinance which we are today amending is the basic labour legislation of British Guiana, and the amendments are primarily to provide greater protection for both sides. I anticipate that Hon. Members will agree that the amendments before us today are designed to improve the Labour Ordinance, and to bring it up to date with the implementation of International Labour Conventions.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: I want first of all to correct the erroneous statement made in relation to this Bill by the Hon. Member for Eastern Demerara who, in discussing it, attempted to mislead this Council that cinema workers would be exploited and would have to work longer hours because of the extension of the period of showing-times for the cinemas. That this is incorrect is seen in the Labour Ordinance, which deals with the minimum wages for cinema employees and makes it quite clear that an employee working in excess of the normal hours shall be paid "*for every part thereof at 1½ times the rate at which he will be paid, etc.*" So it is not correct to suggest that this in any way will harm workers in the cinema industry.

I am glad the Hon. Member now realises and has now become aware of what the Order in Council states. We heard the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central singing his old theme song which, quite frankly, my ears have become accustomed to during the past two and a half years – that by doing anything that is done in England we are moral slaves. The fact is that in all the modern metropolitan countries people have long ago abandoned the idea that one must not attend cinemas or enjoy oneself on the Sabbath. Modern society has changed its outlook, and Sunday, although recognised in Christian countries as the Sabbath, is no longer regarded as a day on which one must remain inactive and not sing, dance or go to the cinema.

In countries which have somewhat similar patterns of life to what we have in British Guiana – all of our neighbours as far as I am aware, in South and Central America enjoy this same privilege that we seem to be fighting about today. Surely we all know that British Guiana is not a Catholic country, but in the Catholic countries of South and Central America, where the majority of the inhabitants follow the Catholic religion, the people go to cinemas on Sunday. They are opened from about ten o'clock in the morning until the evening. Those are Catholic countries where the Church has a tremendous influence, yet there is not this narrow outlook that is shown here today. I am sure that if the debate on this simple amending Bill were to be read abroad people in other countries would be amazed to find that in 1960 people in this country are afraid to have cinemas open at four o'clock on Sunday. It is foolish.

I cannot understand how we can have a controversy about something as simple as that. How can any Member of this Council think that by opening cinemas at four o'clock on Sunday afternoon we are preventing people from going to church? If a person is interested in going to church he would go to church whether it is morning or afternoon. Whether the cinema doors are open or not would not determine a person's attendance at church. The cinema is the least of the doors open to persons who do not want to go to church. I could name some that we all know – restaurants, bars, picnics, dances and others I cannot mention here. All are open to those who wish to stay away from church. Why then should we close down the most innocent of the pleasures? I think most members of the Church hierarchy would prefer to see their flocks at the cinema rather than at the bars in Georgetown.

I feel that Members are being emotional about this and a bit old fashioned. I would remind Members that this is 1960. We cannot force people into the churches. It is the duty of the Church to make its services sufficiently interesting and attractive for people to attend. It is not our task to shut all the doors to enter and, presumably, they would knock on the doors of a church. It is a wrong philosophy.

The Hon. Member for Western Berbice raised a most important question. British Guiana is a multi-religious community; it appears that almost every religion in the world is represented here. We all know that the Chris-

tian religion does not dominate the life of British Guiana. We have in very large numbers people of other faiths, and the Hon. Member has quite rightly pointed out that if we were to prevent people from entering cinemas on Sunday afternoons in order to protect the Christian churches we would certainly have to close the cinema doors on Friday to protect Muslims, Seventh Day Adventists and those of the Jewish religion, for whom the Sabbath begins on Friday at sundown and extends throughout Saturday.

The question of linking up cinema shows with religion was, I think, the first mistake made by the Legislature. I think that if in countries which take their religion far more seriously than we do in British Guiana, such as the Latin American countries, cinemas are open from ten o'clock on Sunday mornings, I can see nothing so sacrilegious about opening the doors of cinemas in this country on Sunday afternoons when people have had a long period to attend their churches, if they were so interested.

I would ask Members to erase from their minds the idea that this is a controversial Bill. I am quite convinced that the community outside this Legislative Council does not seriously regard it as controversial, but will breathe a sigh of relief that in this little country where opportunities for amusement are fairly limited, people will be able to have pleasure and entertainment at a cinema on Sunday afternoons without causing any disturbance in the community. Perhaps we are all – I would not say wasting time, but perhaps this is a storm in a teacup. I cannot see a storm greater than that in a teacup in the controversy we have today.

Constitutional Delegation to London: 5th February, 1960

Mrs. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, what is the “*representative delegation*” that seems to have concerned Members around this Table so very much during our discussions yesterday and today? Members have conceded a little bit that the Majority Party did get the majority of votes cast in the last General Elections. I should say that this is about as far as they did concede. What is democracy? Is it not a reflection of the people’s will through the process of voting? If 100 percent of the people, more or less, go to the polls, that is the will of the people. Are we not in this 20th century going to recognise the rights of people endowed with the privilege of voting or not voting, under adult suffrage?

One of the arguments put up by the Hon. Member for Demerara River was that we should have compulsory voting. I think most people would object to compulsory voting. Well, then, if we accept what every nation accepts, Universal Adult Suffrage, and we pass the test of the will of the people, then what have we here in the Legislative Council, putting aside those Nominated Members who were thrust upon the community of British Guiana? We have a Legislative Council of 14 Elected Members, nine elected by the majority group. What is the will of the people, then? The will of the people was reflected in their votes. Examine their votes.

Five persons elected on tickets other than that of the People’s Progressive Party had less votes than one Member of that Party so elected. The Leader of the Majority Party received from the people of his constituency more votes than the Members for New Amsterdam, North Western District, North, South and Central Georgetown. Those are hard and true facts which we cannot overlook. Added to that were eight other Members of the Majority Party who were elected. So, the people elected as they wished; and so the choice of the people will sit here and reflect their wishes until another election comes, then the people will make their choice again in true democratic fashion. How, then, must we sit here and worry our souls and say there should not be representation on the delegation to go to London made up of three Members of the Majority Party, three Members of the other Elected group as well as one Member of the Nominated group? If that is not justice, equality and fairness, I cannot understand what is.

Here we have Members saying that the only just thing would be the amendment offered by the Hon. Member for North Western District, in which he proposes six gentlemen elected from the Opposition, three from the Majority Party, and two Nominated Members. Of the seven Members of the Opposition, two obtained their votes from the Majority Party and thus represent P.P.P. votes. How could it possibly be fair for six out of seven persons to come from the Majority Party? Is it just that six Elected Mem-

bers who, in a total count could not have received as many votes as two or three Members on this side of the Table, should go to London with three Members from the Majority Party?

The Hon. Member for Georgetown Central told us that all minority views should be represented. He pleaded with us that though he did not agree with the views of the minority group, they must be represented. But does he really mean it? I have here, before me, the Report of the Constitutional Committee of last year, in which the minority views of Messrs. Burnham, Jackson and Kendall were recorded, and in the record of their views of the electoral system – the system which is known as proportional representation – they said this:

“It is also proposed that any party obtaining less than 15 percent of the votes cast should not be allocated any seats but such seats as it may be mathematically entitled to should be distributed proportionately between the other parties which have obtained more than the 15 percent minimum. This recommendation is aimed at discouraging small parties which under the P.R. system may lead to instability.”

If we are to adopt the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central’s recommendation in the Constitutional Committee’s Report, we will see that the two Parties that have seats here from 1957, other than the Majority Party and the People’s National Congress, namely the U.D.P. and the N.L.F., would not have been represented in this Council because they held less than 15 percent of the votes cast. Therefore, there would be no expression of any minority views. So why tell us about the deep concern for the minority when he proposed that any minority group which got less than 15 percent of the votes cast would be shifted to the winning Parties? In a sense he has suggested that the Hon. Member for New Amsterdam and the Hon. Member for North Western District would be absorbed in the two Parties; so I do not know why there is this terrible concern? I am more concerned with what the delegation would do when it gets to London than with the counting of noses as we are doing during this debate.

Mr. Tom Paine, who lived 200 years ago, had some caustic words to say on this question of freedom and independence, and he reminded us, I quote:

“Every nation that does not govern itself is governed.”

Do we want to continue to be governed? How long do Guianese wish to be governed from outside? Members of this Council have stood on their own two feet and have urged that we should not get independence in British Guiana. What a shameful stand that anyone in this day and age should be afraid of independence – should shy away from independence. The days are long past for such utterances. Would that Tom Paine were alive to help us in British Guiana to put some sense into Guianese as he did the

Frenchmen and Americans 200 years ago.

If 200 years ago man believed in the equality of man and the right of man to govern his own affairs, what a pity it cannot be done today? Indeed, when he said these words:

“There are the times that try men’s souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will in this crisis, shrink from the services of his country;”

How many stand here and shrink from the services of their country? He goes on:

“but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

We have in this Council many summer soldiers and sunshine patriots.

I felt ashamed as I listened to some of the debates of men who should know better – men who, at one time in their lives, had the ardent desire to see this country free from outside rule and colonialism; yet today, when the moment to which all of us worked assiduously for 10 years has come, what do we find? They are fatigued by the struggle.

“Those who expect to reap the blessings of freedom, must, like men, undergo the fatigues of supporting it,” said Tom Paine.

We have undergone the fatigues of supporting the fight for freedom in B.G. and if necessary, will continue. We cannot be fatigued in this struggle.

I would plead with those who go to London to remember the basic issues. Forget personalities; remember what were our basic and original desires. Tom Paine, quoting from Lafayette, says:

“Call to mind the sentiments which nature has engraved in the heart of every citizen, and which take a new force when they are solemnly recognized by all: For a nation to love liberty, it is sufficient that she knows it; and to be free, it is sufficient that she wills it.”

Can we be free unless we will it? These are words written 200 years ago by a great patriot who gave much to the movement towards the independence of France and the United States of America. Would that we had more Tom Paines today!

I have been disturbed, also, in listening to this debate, by the level to which it has dropped. How can certain Members stand in this Legislative Council and say those shameful and shocking things which we heard yesterday? I felt like covering my face in shame for everyone in British Guiana when I heard words dropped from the mouth of the Hon. Member for Eastern Demerara which made this room more like a pig sty than a Legislative Council. It is a pity and a shame that we should allow this Legislative Council to go so low. Why should the Member bring his bitterness and

chagrin at being rejected by the Majority Party to this Council? Let him cover his shame in another way and not burden this Council with his filth.

We are not alone – thank goodness for that – in our desire, in our anxiety to see this country independent. We are grateful that we are not alone. The Convention People’s Party of Ghana has cabled the Majority Party these words through the Secretary:

“Regarding impending London Constitutional talks Convention People’s Party send you best wishes for success in name of freedom, unity and peace. We march forward together to glorious destiny.”

Why would they cable us in this way? – because Ghana knows the blessings of independence. Ghana has blossomed like a flower since she has become independent. The trade balance of that country, which previously showed an excess of imports over exports, has now reversed, with a greater volume of exports than imports. I saw some eyebrows lifted when I said that Ghana has blossomed. Any new country making its way like a child growing up, has troubles. I would be the last to stand up and praise everything that has gone on in Ghana, but I say that the blessings of independence have brought to that country a great change, and I predict that the Government will safely and quickly iron out the difficulties that exist at the moment. It is far better that they solve their difficulties themselves than that another power should sit there and make decisions for them.

Mr. Azikiwe, President of the Senate of Nigeria, has also written us in connection with this delegation, expressing his satisfaction and his good wishes, for, he writes:

“...We are one with you and the People’s Progressive Party in your great struggle to liberate your country from foreign rule. We have been through the crucible and are now on the threshold of obtaining our independence. As far as we are concerned we would not allow any internal bickering to make us serve from our objective. We wish the People’s Progressive Party continued success in its endeavour, and we pray that the leaders and members of the P.P.P. will continue to struggle with fortitude until their goal has been achieved. Sincerely yours.

Nnamdi Azikiwe.”

The last I shall quote of the many letters we have received is also from a well known freedom fighter who stands on the same pedestal with those other gentlemen. It is from Mr. Dom Mintoff, of Malta, who writes:

“Your letter of Dec. 30 has left a great impression on me and my friends. Indeed the Colonial Office has attempted to bring about the destruction of our movements by the same subtle and brutal methods employed against the People’s Progressive Party in British Guiana I can think of no better wish than that our two countries will cooperate and work together with other oppressed nations for freedom and independence.”

The countries not yet independent are with us in our struggle for independence. Those which have achieved theirs are with us in our anxiety to reach independence. But who are against it? – some Members of this Council. These are the ones everyone is urging should go to London to tell the “*great white father*” that we do not want independence. Is that really what the delegation is for that we should go before the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the “*great white father*”, and say that we do not want independence? Do we wish to remain slaves and say, like Uncle Tom, “*We shall be thankful for whatever mercies you can bestow upon us?*” Is that the stature of a nation, or is it the stature of kindergarten children? I would urge that the kindergarten and teenage members of this Council grow up and face the challenge before them, and not urge upon this Council that the delegation to London should be packed with those who do not want independence. Is that the object? Must those Members go to London to say that the Majority Party is dictatorial, and that it wants to ruin the nation?

The Majority Party fought the election like every other party and, having won, it is now the Government. When the others are capable of doing the same they will have the same burdens upon their shoulders. Why should we not do all in our power to see that this country becomes independent? Can anyone seriously accuse the Majority Party of being unfair, in the Amendment moved by the Minister of Natural Resources? Quite clearly and simply we say, let us have three Members and the other Elected Members have three, and let us have one Member from the Nominated side. What could be more equitable? Does the Secretary of State for the Colonies want to sit there and hear the views of every single individual? If so you can go outside and find 50 more persons to send – all with different views. The Secretary of State will have a verbatim report of our discussions. He has studied the verbatim reports of the Constitutional Committee’s meetings and he knows the views of everyone here.

The Hon. Member for the North Western District (Mr. Campbell) claims that he represents the Amerindians of British Guiana. I challenge him on that. As the representative of Western Essequibo I represent a great number of Amerindians, and I venture to say that I see them more often than the Hon. Member sees his constituents. I would also venture to say that I give them perhaps more detailed representation than he does. I represent the Amerindians in my constituency; they have a voice as all of us represents the Amerindians in his constituency it is not necessary for him to go on the delegation purely and simply because of that.

Let us not refuse to accept the democratic process in this Council. Let us not be so immature as to accuse the Majority Party of dictatorship, because it follows the pattern of political parties. We have heard enough in this Council about certain Members not being allowed to voice their particular views when they were members of the Majority Party. We take our cue from the Mother of Parliaments in the United Kingdom as to how political parties operate. We know that some Members of Parliament sit in the House

of Commons year after year as backbenchers and never speak. Nor do they have an opportunity to make any major decisions, and if they vote contrary to Party policy out they go! If that is dictatorship, well that is how political parties work. It works that way in England and the United States of America. Many backbenchers do not utter a sentence in the House of Commons.

It is ridiculous for us to be treated like kindergarten children and to be told that that is dictatorship. If discipline did not exist in a Party we would not have a Party System, and we would be back to the stage we were in before our Party was formed in 1950. I do not know if some Members wish us to go back to that stage. Political parties have grown in this country through the persistence of this Majority Party, and they shall continue, and no doubt British Guiana will evolve like most democratic countries to the two-Party system. Should we be charged because there is no proper two-Party system? We have done our part and we have a solid bloc. Must we be condemned and criticised because those on the other side of the Table have not yet formed an effective solid bloc? Must we be called dictatorial because the "*Opposition*" cannot muster enough strength to call itself a real and true Opposition? Why must we be condemned for the sins, omissions and shortcomings of other political groups? Why must we be condemned, persecuted and slandered in this Council? Nevertheless, we are used to it, but now and again we must reply, as I am doing today.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Workmen's Compensation (Amendment) Bill: 12th February, 1960

Mrs. Jagan: *"An Ordinance to amend the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance."*

In moving the Second Reading of this Bill I would mention that on the 28th November, 1958, I placed before this Council the Report of the Workmen's Compensation Advisory Committee, and no doubt Members have gone through the Report carefully. This Committee was appointed by the Governor-in-Council on the 19th of October, 1957 – soon after I became Minister of Labour, Health and Housing – and its Terms of Reference were:

"To examine Section 2 (1) (a) and Section 8 of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, Chapter 111, and to make such recommendations as it may deem fit."

The Chairman was the Commissioner of Labour; independent members – Mr. John Durey, M.B.E., Dr. B. B. G. Nehaul, Mr. C. Lloyd Luckhoo, Q. C., and Mr. J. H. McB. Moore; representing the B.G. Sugar Producers' Association – Dr. G. D. Giglioli, O.B.E.; representing the M.P.C.A. – Mr. D.P. Sankar; and representing the B.G. Trades Union Council – Mr. A. G. Perry and Mr. A. McLean.

The recommendations of the Committee, as set out in its Report, are sought to be implemented in this proposed legislation before us today, with one variation which I will explain to Members.

Members may ask, quite rightly, why this Report took so long to be implemented or to reach the Council. I myself was very disturbed on a number of occasions over the delay in completing all the necessary work to bring the recommendations up to this stage, but there was in fact a great deal of preparatory duties to perform, such as examining the recommendations, having discussions with the T.U.C., the Ministry of Labour, officials of the Labour Department, the Attorney-General and other Members of the Law Officers Department.

Coming to the recommendations of the Committee, the first I want to mention is that which revised upward the figure, from \$1,800 to \$2,700, as the maximum income for a person receiving compensation. In other words, the Committee felt that with rising wages and various monetary changes since the Workmen's Compensation ordinance was put into effect, it was necessary to widen the income range for those persons who would be able to receive compensation under the Ordinance. So that in this Bill an amendment is sought to subsection (1) of section 2 of the Principal Ordinance to give effect to this maximum.

The Committee also recommended that workmen's compensation should

cover all manual workers without any restriction on incomes, and Members will note that in the Bill before the Council there is the deletion of the section which prescribes a maximum for manual workers in the Principal Ordinance. The Committee recommended that on the understanding that any person who does work of a manual nature is more liable to accident than, say, a secretarial worker. In other words, a man on a job, if he is highly skilled and who is earning \$300 or \$400 per month, should be covered and need not be confined to the wage limit of \$2,700 a year. There are, however, specialised workmen who have high incomes and who would be out of the range; but this does not alter the fact that they may have an accident at any time – a far greater possibility than it is with white collar workers.

There are minor amendments, such as that dealing with the definition of “a year”. There had been difficulty about this and the Committee recommended that “a year” should be a period of 12 months immediately preceding the date of the accident. Members of the Committee, however, recommended that there should be an increase of 50 percent on all figures relating to money in section 8 (1) of the Principal Ordinance. Therefore Members will find in clause 3 of the Bill that subsection (1) of section 8 is to have various amendments, which include the substitution of \$2,700 for \$1,800 and \$5,400 for \$3,600, to give effect to this increase.

One of the most controversial aspects of the Committee’s Report was Recommendation 7. Members will recall that under the existing Ordinance if a worker is to receive compensation for the first three days of his accident he must be incapacitated or ill for a period of 12 days. The Committee recommended that this should be altered to provide that if the incapacity lasts less than 10 days no compensation shall be payable in respect of the first three days. It will be observed that I have not accepted this recommendation – the only one, by the way – and this Bill asks that where the incapacity lasts three days the worker shall be paid for those three days of incapacity. No doubt there will be some discussion on this point and I do anticipate that one or two Members will raise it.

In my discussions with the T.U.C., I asked them why it was that their two representatives on the Committee supported the Report asking that where the incapacity lasts less than 10 days no compensation with respect to the first three days shall be paid. I added that I was aware that at public meetings and demonstrations that T.U.C. had passed resolutions asking that this 12 day period be reduced to three. I could not understand their change of views. Eventually they agreed to support me in whatever action I took – either agreeing to the Majority Report or agreeing to the removal of the waiting period. They wrote the Ministry of labour to that effect. So I am anticipating that the T.U.C. would support this amendment, which in fact carries us back to what was accepted in 1934 but was subsequently changed, at what I feel was a disadvantage to the workers.

I have known of cases where workers suffered real injury and were incapacitated not necessarily 10 days but, say, seven days, and they received no

compensation for the first three days of that period of seven days because the law stated that they had to be incapacitated for a period of 12 days before they could receive compensation for the first three days.

The employers have used the argument that if there is no period of waiting there will be malingering on the job; that the workers who may not really be seriously injured but may have a strain of some sort, which is not so easy to diagnose, may hold out a little longer. But they claim that the 12 day period makes it difficult for them to do so, except they are really injured, for such a long period.

I know that in one or two industries the management claims that the workers are always using the excuse of back injuries, and they claim the workers are malingering. I, personally, do not support the contention that because a man or woman suffers an injury which is not so easy for the doctor to diagnose because of the nature of the injury, that he or she should suffer by not having the fullest compensation.

We all know that in the sugar industry back strains are frequent because of the nature of the work. I have had workers coming to me frequently with injuries caused by the fetching of cane across the planks which carry them from the cane cultivation to the punt. It is not easy for a doctor to state specifically that there is a strain. He has to rely on the complaint and diagnose on the description given by the patient. The X-ray does not reveal anything because it concerns muscles and not bones, and it is necessary to take the worker's word for it and also the various factors concerned.

I know this will mean a great deal to the workers in all the heavy industries because there is frequent injury in certain industries; not as some employers say, that the workers desire compensation and are malingering or are seeking ways of not working. I do not subscribe to that trend of thought. I believe that the workers do not want to be injured; but in the heavy industries like sugar and timber, we find a number of accidents which cannot always be avoided. There is no doubt that with better techniques, better management and improved precautions, we find that the number of accidents in many industries is going down.

I am always favourably impressed when I visit the two bauxite industries in British Guiana to note the amount of attention they devote to this question of accident. The Reynolds Metals Company at Kwakwani has a notice board indicating the number of accidents it has in a month, and the workmen do their best to keep the figure as low as possible. The same thing I noted at the African Manganese Company where the desire to keep the accident figure as low as possible is instilled in the workers. All these things help the Company and, obviously, the workman to give long and healthy service. The Committee also makes a very important recommendation, 9, in their Report in which they say this:

“(3) Notwithstanding anything to the contrary provided in this Ordinance, in the event of permanent total or permanent partial incapacity following temporary

incapacity no deduction shall be made from any lump sum payable in respect of such permanent total or permanent incapacity by reason of weekly or half monthly or other periodic payments having been made during temporary incapacity."

In other words, where the workman is temporarily incapacitated and receives his payments under the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, such payments shall not be deducted from his lump sum payment if he is totally incapacitated or partially incapacitated.

There are cases where a workman is injured and during the first few days or weeks it is not always possible to determine the full extent of his injury. It is not always possible for a doctor or surgeon to determine the degree of incapacity. Whether it is merely temporary incapacity or permanent incapacity or partial incapacity, the workman receives money for a few weeks and sometimes months.

When the final assessment is made of the incapacity and the lump sum determined under the present law, the amount he received up to that day is then deducted from his lump sum. In some cases it does not mean much, but in others it is a substantial sum; and cases have come to our notice where the final assessment has been made and the worker has already received more than the total lump sum which should have been allocated to him.

The Committee has recommended, then, that all payments up to the point of determining the degree of incapacity should not be deducted. You will find this recommendation embodied in the Bill before us. You will further find a slight extension of that to include persons who die as a result of accident. In other words, a person may be receiving periodic payments for a period and then he may die as a result of the accident. Normally, from the money his widow receives – the lump sum payable for the loss of his life – an amount is deducted in accordance with the money he had received as payment while he was alive. We are suggesting in this Bill that no such deduction should be made in the case of the death of the worker. It seems to Government that this is abundantly fair.

In the case of the worker who is totally or partially incapacitated and who must face life and earn a living with a disadvantage which may preclude him from finding employment, it is only fair that he has a reasonable and just amount of money to start in his attempt to find work with at least a lump sum which has not been drastically reduced by money which he had received during the period he was undergoing treatment.

We have, too, another very important amendment to the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance – a recommendation of this Committee concerning the question of light work. We have had the experience that when a doctor examines a worker who has been in an accident, he may say that the worker is fit for light work. The worker may then go back to his employer with the medical certificate saying that he should be given light work. We then get many complications when light work is not available and such

worker may or may not be getting assistance or compensation during this period. The Committee recommended this:

"...that 'ability to earn' should be linked with 'availability of work' whether with the employer concerned or with other employers. It was suggested that in such cases the employer in whose employment a workman was injured ought to do everything possible to find alternative work, and if this was not possible the workman himself should make every effort to find such alternative work. If such work is available and the workman does not avail himself of it, his compensation should, in that circumstance, be reduced."

Therefore, the Committee recommended that the word "suitable" and the word "available" be inserted to give greater clarification of the intention of the Ordinance in this respect.

Further, the Workmen's Compensation Advisory Committee dealt with the question of what is the age limit of an adult and a minor. They made recommendations. In clause 2 a minor is defined as a person who is above the age of 14 and an adult is a person of 18 years and over.

Members will note that the section dealing with the funeral expenses has been slightly altered in keeping with the present-day costs of funerals, from \$38 to \$50. We have checked with the funeral parlours and found that \$50 will be considered an appropriate figure.

Members of the Committee further made this recommendation; that in a case where persons wish to have medical referees in circumstances where the employee is dissatisfied or the employer is dissatisfied with the certificate or the opinion of the doctor, they either can request the Commissioner of Labour or the Director of Medical Services to appoint a medical referee. Previously, one had to apply to a Magistrate for the appointment of a medical referee. This is rather a difficult or tedious procedure. To make the procedure easier it has been recommended that the application should be made to the Commissioner of Labour instead of to a Magistrate, and clause 8 of the Bill seeks to make that amendment.

I believe I have covered the important recommendations of the Workmen's Compensation Advisory Committee. I think they did a very good job in their examination of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance. As I have said, the amendments proposed in this Bill follow, with one exception, the recommendations made by the Committee. I feel that the Bill provides for very valuable amendments of the Workmen's Compensation Ordinance, and I am convinced that the improvements will provide greater guarantees to workmen who may suffer accidents.

I do not anticipate that Members will raise any serious objections to any of the provisions of the Bill. I think we should all be anxious to give the fullest protection to workers who may be involved in accidents. We have gone through this Bill a number of times with a fine tooth comb, searching for any errors or omissions. My advisers are of the opinion that we have

covered all the points necessary to be dealt with. I welcome hearing the views of Members on this most important Bill and I hope they will give it the support that is necessary to make it law. I formally move that the Bill be read a Second time.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: I am indeed gratified at the general acceptance this Bill has received from Members of the Council who have already spoken on it. The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, as was anticipated, raised certain objections to what is proposed in the most significant clause of the Bill, the one eliminating the period of qualification for workmen's compensation in the first three days of injury. The Hon. Member has expressed his concern, and perhaps alarm, that the number of accidents may possibly increase as a result of the repeal of the section of the Ordinance under discussion.

I am sorry I do not feel that the Hon. Member's fear will become a reality. There has been much talk about the question of discouraging malingering, and the Hon. Member is of the view that the retention of this section, with the implementation of two days' reduction, as suggested by the Committee, would make the position much better.

I have another point of view which I would like to express on the subject. I wonder, when we examine it very carefully, if we really must fear that there will be malingering if we remove this section, because the law as it exists at present provides that in order to qualify for the receipt of the periodic payment of compensation for temporary incapacity in respect of the first three days a workman must be incapacitated for at least 12 days. The Committee has recommended that the period be reduced to 10 days.

I would invite Members to look at it in this way: If a workman wants to mangle or to fool his employer about the state of his injury I would say that the law as it stands now encourages malingering, because in order to get paid for the first three days the workman must appear to be ill for 12 days. In other words, if a workman is really not incapacitated or unable to work, in order to get payment for the first three days he is going to moan and groan for 12 days so as to get his compensation. I am sure we will get far better results in this approach which is more honest. If a workman is injured he is paid for the period during which he is incapacitated. What is the sense of saying you have to be incapacitated for 10 or 12 days in order to be paid for the first three days? It is illogical.

I do not know if the Hon. Member appreciates the point I have made. Government in its consideration of altering this single recommendation of the Advisory Committee did not hastily come to its decision. It was examined from every single angle. We felt that it would not be in the interest of the worker to perpetrate it, and it can be said that the removal of this clause in the long run is ultimately going to satisfy the employer. I think both sides will support this Amendment, which has been made after very care-

ful consideration.

One other point I would like to mention, on this question of malingering and accidents. It is my view that only a few persons who are completely mentally unhealthy will seek accidents. All of us do our best to avoid accidents. There are very few people in the world who go out of their way to get into accidents, even though they know that they would get some money in compensation. People think of it quite carefully before making such an attempt because they know the risk of the accident becoming a far greater one than anticipated. We have to remember that. Only the other day I read of a man who planted a bomb in an aeroplane in which his wife was travelling, in order to collect the insurance if she died. Only a man who is mentally unhealthy can do such an act.

I would add that to avoid the realisation of certain fears we should adopt the suggestion of the Hon. Member for Georgetown North, that employers should educate their workers in the prevention of accidents. To a great extent also it is the responsibility of the Trade Union Movement to educate its workers of their rights under Workmen's Compensation laws and of their responsibility in not exaggerating complaints and not pretending that any injury is greater than it is. I think the Trade Union Movement is prepared to take the responsibility on its shoulders and to see that none of the laws to protect the worker is abused.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown Central has raised a legal point which the Hon. Attorney-General is examining and which, I believe, will more appropriately come up when we reach the Committee stage.

I thank Members for supporting this Motion and, for the most part, this Amending Bill.

Workmen's Compensation Bill – In Committee: 17th February, 1960

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Nominated Member referred to the question of democratic votes during our discussion on the selection of the Constitutional delegation. I was then referring to the question of adult suffrage and the reflection of those votes by the Elected Members of any Legislative Council. In this case, an Advisory Committee had been set up by the Government to advise. I think it is an accepted principle that Advisory Committees are for that very purpose – to advise – but not necessarily to dictate. In the case of this Advisory Committee it sent in an excellent report advising the Government, and the Government in its wisdom has accepted about 99 percent of its recommendations, but no Government is bound to accept every recommendation of any Advisory Committee. If that were so, there would be no need for a Government.

As Minister of Labour, I sit as an Elected Representative of the people to judge what is best for the Government and the people of the country. I give my views on the advice received, then I consult my Colleagues. There is a further examination of these views under the Chairmanship of His Excellency the Governor-in-Council and then a decision is made. In this case, I mentioned to Members that a thorough discussion and examination of the recommendations of the Advisory Committee was held in the Ministry of Labour and in the Executive Council of Government. We did not rush to make up our minds. We examined everything very, very carefully. I am quite sure that all factors were most carefully considered and weighed.

It is true that the Committee unanimously agreed to the reduction of the period from 12 days to 10 days, and it was for that very reason that I called in the T.U.C. and asked them what was their position, because I know that the T.U.C. had been clamouring for months for a removal of the three-day waiting period, yet their two members had supported its retention. I had them at the Ministry and said: *“What am I to do as Minister of Labour? I have seen your resolutions on it and I have heard the need for this change at public meetings. That is why the Committee was set up with two members of the T.U.C. on it. What am I to do? If I come forward and agree to this report you will say that I have gone against the T.U.C. and if I do not follow the recommendation of the Committee.”* I put it to the T.U.C. and they gave me a verbal suggestion as well as putting it in writing. I will read to you what the B.G.T.U.C. wrote on the 9th July, 1958.

“The T.U.C. accepts the Report as a good one and pledges to honour and support its implementation, but as you will realise the original stand of the T.U.C. on the removal of 3 days waiting period, forces the T.U.C. to be critical on that part of

the recommendation of the Committee, however, as previously stated the T.U.C. would not oppose its implementation but will certainly support any Governmental arrangements to remove the 3 days waiting period if Government thinks it advisable."

Therefore, the T.U.C. threw the ball into my lap and said: "You are the Minister of Labour, whatever you say we are with you. We will back you 100 percent", which they are so doing. So I am aware of the fact that the members of the T.U.C. had long felt the need for this change, and also aware of the fact that the member representing the M.P.C.A. had submitted a minority report removing himself from the recommendation of the Majority Report which deals only with the waiting period.

The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, has pointed out that we are the only country having 100 percent compensation and now we are making it more difficult for the employers by also removing the proviso for the 12 day period to the 10 day period recommended.

On many occasions in this Council we have asked whether we should or should not follow what exists in other territories. No doubt it is a good guide to use what exists in other territories or what does not exist, but at the same time we cannot be slavishly led by what exists in other areas. Sometimes British Guiana can be ahead of other areas and can be more progressive than other areas, and it is true that by the Bill before us, if it is accepted, we may be a little ahead of other territories in workmen's compensation legislation. What is wrong with that? If we have better laws for the protection of our workmen I think it is better for the country as a whole.

As I told Members on the last occasion, on no account would we urge any change in the law which would encourage malingering by an injured worker, or would we urge workers to be dishonest in relation to the law which protects them. I have said that it is the responsibility of the Government, the employers and the Trade Union Movement, to educate workers to their responsibility – that they must never take improper advantage of any law that is for their protection. I think that workers in the main appreciate this. Unfortunately, there are always one or two who would try to take improper advantage of the law. I reminded the Hon. Member on the last occasion we spoke, that in my view removal of this waiting period would improve the situation. As the law now stands, if a worker is injured, his injury must last for 12 days if he is to be paid for the first three days. But if that worker feels better by the sixth day and he knows that he has to be incapacitated for 12 days so as to be paid for the first three days, he may make it appear that he is still unable to work so as to get compensation for the first three days.

We have removed this incentive to dishonesty. Pay the worker if he is injured and unable to work. Why shouldn't he be paid his normal wages? He is not only suffering from an injury but he is unable to take his pay packet home. I also made the point last week that a normal human being

does not seek an injury. A worker is not going to go out of his way to get injured unless he is mentally ill. An injury is usually the result of an accident; sometimes it is due to carelessness on the part of the worker, and sometimes the carelessness of the employer, but more frequently it is the result of an unanticipated event or obstacle.

I cannot agree with the amendment. I do not feel that it would be in the interest of the workman whom this Bill is seeking to protect, nor do I think it would be in the best interest of the country or the employers to have this change made.

Motion on Flag, etc., for an Independent British Guiana: 25th May, 1960

"Be it Resolved: That this Council recommends to Government the appointment of a Committee to –

(a) design a national flag and a coat of arms; and

(b) recommend an appropriate name for a politically free and independent British Guiana."

Mrs. Jagan: I rise to speak on the Amendment. I agree with the last speaker that this is a matter of national concern and certainly one which can be brought forward for discussion at a level at which the whole Council can be represented.

It is however regrettable that some Members in discussing things like a name for an independent Guiana, a national song and a national flag could have chosen this occasion to display a very low grade of spite. Such behaviour we have seen frequently of late and some Members are so practised in it that they can start off and go on like a mechanical doll which has been wound up and set off. The Hon. Member for Demerara River has no occasion to pat himself so much on the back. More of that and I feel that he would have fallen overboard.

I agree that this is a national issue. Let us all get together and not squabble about it. For that reason we will accept the amendment proposed by the Hon. Member for New Amsterdam. This is not an issue over which we should shout at each other. Let us be friends: let us work together in this very important national issue. I feel that it is sufficiently important to have its place on the Order of the Day. For anyone to suggest that a matter of this importance should be thrown into the waste-paper-basket, or wait until others come up and give certain Members an opportunity of expelling their spite and frustrations in this Council, is rather ridiculous.

I think we have had, with a few exceptions, quite a worthwhile debate on this Motion. I am willing to accept the suggestions made by the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, although I do not agree with him completely, that artists are incapable of dealing with matters on certain committees. We have a number of capable musicians in this country and several of them have shown that they are hard-working, sensible, individuals although they have a flare for artistic genius. I am counting on the fact that the Select Committee will call in our prominent artists and musicians for consultation and advice so that they can play their part although they are not on the Committee.

I will urge the Select Committee to move at a somewhat faster pace than they did when dealing with the Land Registration Bill. They took a longer time than was necessary to deal with that piece of legislation. I regret to

say that a number of members did not turn up regularly at meetings of the Committee, and for that reason a number of meetings had to be postponed because of the lack of a quorum. I hope that, in future, Select Committees to be appointed by this Council will have a much better record and a quorum at every meeting.

Motion of Sympathy with People of Chile: 1st June, 1960

“Be it Resolved: That this Council expresses its profound sympathy with the people of Chile in the serious calamity which has befallen their country. And be it further resolved: That this Council recommends to Government that steps be taken to render financial and other forms of material relief.”

Mrs. Jagan: I second this admirable Motion moved by the Hon. Member for Georgetown North. I think every Member in this Council, representing as we do, in one form or another, the people of British Guiana, feels the utmost sympathy for the people of Chile who have suffered such misfortunes as tidal waves, earthquakes and so on. Moreover, we who also live on the South American continent must feel a brotherhood for all those people living in this area.

Certainly theirs is one of the greatest disasters the world has seen in many a year. The people of British Guiana should express their sympathy through the correct channels, so that the people of Chile will appreciate that they have friends and sympathisers all over the world. I agree that we should take steps to see what relief other than financial is possible. Only a few days ago I was approached by an organisation which felt the same way and was anxious to send blood to Chile. However, because of the geographical position, I found, speaking to the doctors in charge of the blood bank, it would have been very difficult to send blood to Chile and in the quantities which we have available here.

It is appreciated that this is a small country and that we would have to contribute within the limits of our resources, I understand that there is a move afoot for certain organisations in British Guiana to get together and collect money and clothing and other things which might assist the people in their time of disaster. So that with some assistance from Government added to that, I think British Guiana would be able to express its sympathy in a tangible way. I take pleasure in supporting the Motion.

Motion on Employer – Employee Profit Sharing: 16th June, 1960

“Be it Resolved: That this Council recommends to Government the enactment of legislation whereby employees will share in the annual profits of employers.”

Mrs. Jagan: I had thought that other Members would have had something to say on this Motion. I have examined this question and found that there is a wealth of information on the subject. Attempts have been made in other countries to put into effect these profit-sharing schemes, and with the little information at my disposal I have examined the efforts made by the Government of India to introduce legislation of this type. From what I have seen – and the amount of material available at the moment is not very extensive – the subject is one that requires very careful examination. It is certainly not one which we could just say off the bat *“Let us introduce legislation.”* I think it would be wiser to consider the experience of other countries in this effort, and in particular what happened in India. From what I have read, the effort did not prove to be successful in that country.

On the limited information I have on the subject I would not wish to support the Motion or to condemn the proposal out of hand. Therefore, if the Hon. Member is willing, I would prefer to suggest that a Committee be set up to examine the possibility of introducing such legislation in British Guiana. Perhaps the Committee would have, as its first task, to communicate with the Governments of other countries which have gone into the subject and examined it in detail. If the Hon. Member would agree to a slight change in his Motion I think it would be worthwhile for us to go into it. I am suggesting that he change his Motion to ask that a Committee be set up to examine the possibility of introducing legislation whereby employees would share in the annual profits of employers.

Motion on the Second Reading of Amerindian (Amendment) Bill: 27th October, 1960

"An Ordinance to amend the Amerindian Ordinance".

Mrs. Jagan: This Bill which is before the Council raises the type of reaction which, possibly, could have been anticipated. It also gives some Members the opportunity of discussing the next General Election. I would not like, at this stage, to enter into any discussion on the next General Election except to say, perhaps, that some Hon. Members may not be with us after the next Election.

I am sure, in discussing this Bill, Members must be fully aware that the object of the particular section under discussion is to remove any discrimination that exists against one of the peoples of this country. We hear so much these days about freedom. We even have persons picketing this building, calling themselves "*Defenders of Freedom*", and yet when we come before this Council hoping to bring this freedom to everyone in British Guiana, we find that there are those who say "*no*" – some must be discriminated against, some are not matured enough to enjoy these same rights that all the people of the world enjoy.

I, for one, do not think that the Amerindians are ignorant people or are people different from the rest of us. It is my view that all people who drink rum behave badly when they drink. It does not matter whether they are White, Chinese, African or Amerindian. Some people even behave badly without getting drunk. It is a generally accepted thing that most people who get drunk behave disgustingly, and I rather resent the remark of one Hon. Member here, that if you give an Amerindian drink he will start shooting people. Certainly, it smacks of racial discrimination.

The Hon. Member has explained it much better than I. It smacks of racial discrimination; it smacks of superiority. Given the opportunity, they will behave in the same way as other people behave. The necessity of this section – "*Intoxicating Liquor*" – in our Ordinance is a farce. I would like to know how one could implement this clause:

"No person shall sell, barter, supply or give intoxicating liquor to any Amerindian, or to any person for consumption by an Amerindian."

Amerindians move all over British Guiana. Are we to have them so carefully policed that everywhere they walk they should have the police walking behind them to see that they do not get a schnapp of rum? Why must an Amerindian be refused permission to enter a bar in New Amsterdam or Georgetown? A great number of Amerindians are employed in Government, in industry, some of them have become just as sophisticated as some

people and they enjoy the same type of entertainment and go to the movies. Is the Amerindian to be denied service if he enters the "*Rendezvous*" or the "*Cactus Club*?" Certainly, this is discriminatory. I am not in favour of drinking or, to put it this way, over-drinking. It is a bad habit in this country. I think too many people spend too much of their income on drink. It is not hard for us to remember the number of women who do not receive their husbands' pay packets on Fridays and Saturdays because their husbands go drinking on their way home from work. That problem is much larger than the one we are discussing today.

If we are discussing the question of prohibition, I think we can do that at a later stage; but I have heard Hon. Members, here, complain bitterly on the occasion when the Government was seeking further revenue by increasing the tax on rum. They wept bitter tears over the poor working man who would have to pay more for rum. Rum drinking is a bad national habit in British Guiana.

This Bill before the Council does not intend to give that habit to more people. This Bill merely wishes to set the scales at balance to allow the Amerindian to live in our community just like other people. This is not saying that more rum shops will now be opened in the Amerindian Reservations. That is entirely false. If Hon. Members have that in the back of their heads, I would like to disabuse them of that idea. The same requirements to establish a rum shop at a reservation still exist, and it is not the intention of this Government that this should be allowed.

I am attempting to point out to Hon. Members the inconsistency of having this legislation in our Ordinance and the impossibility of implementing it. I also wish to stress that we want the Amerindian to move around the country to take up employment just like other people. I have seen a number of them who are employed by the Government and who are taking on more responsible positions. I think it will be unfair to discriminate against these people. One must see in our legislation that they enjoy the same privileges that all of us enjoy. It is significant that the Christian Social Council has shown no objection to the introduction of this Bill. We know that the Churches work in all of the Amerindian Reservations and they certainly would keep a keen eye on this aspect of the question.

I would like to urge Members to remember that this question of freedom is a very broad one. We may not always agree with what a person wants to do or what a person wishes to express, but that does not mean that we should deny that person his freedom. The painting presented to the Guianese people by one prominent artist, which was refused exhibition at the Royal Agricultural and Commercial Society yesterday, is another example of what can happen when one only agrees to the particular type of freedom one may wish. In this case, they did not agree with the artist's expression. Some of us may not agree that an Amerindian should drink, but that does not mean that he should be denied the freedom to drink.

In the same way, if someone does not like the painting by Mr. Aubrey

Williams it should not mean that he should be refused the right to exhibit it for all to see. People who preach about freedom and march around this building saying that they are defending freedom, should realise its fullest implication. Some of us may not like to see an Amerindian or anyone else getting drunk, but that does not mean that we should deny anyone his right to get drunk if he wishes to. While the existing law prohibits persons from selling liquor to an Amerindian we know that the Amerindians have their own brew, and that they can get just as drunk by mixing their own brew as by drinking rum.

So that the idea of preventing Amerindians from getting rum is farcical. The existence of the law does not prevent them from taking their own intoxicating drink, therefore, it is a senseless objection to the repeal of that provision in the Ordinance. I would urge Hon. Members to appreciate these points, and that it is not the intention of the Government that liquor stores and rum shops should be set up on Amerindian reservations.

Motion on Second Reading of the Pharmacy and Poisons (Amendment) Bill: 28th October, 1960

A Bill intituled "An Ordinance to amend the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, 1956".

Mrs. Jagan: In the examination of the 1956 Pharmacy and Poison Ordinance, and the practicability of implementing that Ordinance, it came to our notice that in the UK the Restrictive Practices Court examined a matter not on all fours with the problem that faces us of the restriction on trade, but one certainly can bear some relation to our position here. The Restrictive Practices Court declared void the principal restriction under an agreement between members of the Chemists' Federation and the Government. Under this agreement, the sale of drugs and medicines was limited to the members of the Chemists' Federation. The Restrictive Practices Court examined this – and I repeat, it is not a parallel situation, but it gives us much food for thought and does show how closely restrictions should be examined. In their examination of the whole case which, as I said, was declared void, it was their contention that it would not be harmful to the public for the sale of the harmless proprietary medicines to be carried on in shops controlled by the Federation.

I remember reading a very interesting section of the examination during the Court procedure. One of the members asked: *"If I go and ask a druggist for say, a bottle of liver pills, is the chemist or the druggist going to ask me about my complaint?; and if he learns that my complaint was one of the liver, there is obviously one reply he would give me and that is to see a doctor."* Does a druggist, in truth, go into the request of every purchaser who enters his shop? How carefully does he control the sale of proprietary medicines which would, generally, be purchased by name?

In the Bill we have before us, as I mentioned yesterday, our chief task is that of liberalising the Ordinance and, at the same time, seeing that the public is protected in the purchasing of drugs and proprietary medicines which can be harmful. Great care and attention has been given to this question. Perhaps, Members may think we took too much care and attention because we took so much time. A very long time has been spent in this redraft of our Ordinance in the change over from the 1956 Ordinance, which I interpreted as being one largely protecting the pharmacists; and the Bill we have before us today is one which liberalises that Ordinance and, basically, is out to liberalise the sale of drugs consistent with the convenience and safety of the public.

At no time did we lose sight of the fact that the public must be protected. This Bill cannot be regarded as one which merely provides convenience for the public. That is not the intention of the Bill. It is one which will protect

the public and at the same time not create any hardship. There is also no intention in this Bill to take away from the professional group any privileges or rights they enjoy, or in any way reduce their professional status, or in any way to suggest that the profession is not highly regarded in the eyes of the Government or of the public.

In my discussions with one or two pharmacists I have gathered that that is the interpretation, and one or two of them said to me "*Would you allow medical quacks and dental quacks to exist?*" I said "*Of course I would not.*" They said "*If you would not allow untrained persons to practice as doctors and dentists, how can you allow untrained traders to sell these medicines?*" My answer is that there is a vast difference between the sale of drugs that are not advertised – those that are sold by druggists and pharmacist and given to patients by doctors; these require great experience and quite a bit of reading to keep up with the preparation and the sale of poisons, the compounding of drugs and mixtures, and the filling of prescriptions – and the sale of patent and proprietary medicines which are fully labelled, dosages fully indicated, and which are harmless and do not necessarily have to be controlled by a person who has studied in that field.

People are accustomed to buying patent and proprietary medicines by name. My personal view is that a great number of them are worthless and totally harmless. Many of them are mixtures which contain a large percentage of alcohol or water. At a later stage I intend to mention what is Government's intention as far as the importation of a number of these products is concerned. I am quite certain that the pharmacist profession is not harmed by allowing non-pharmacists, untrained persons, to sell these patent and proprietary medicines. It requires no great skill to control the sale of those which are considered harmless and those which contain no poison, or those which contain such an infinitesimal amount of poison that they can do no harm.

I have gone into the question earlier, which is the chief argument, of the amount of harm that can be created when unqualified persons deal with this category of nonpoisonous proprietary medicines. The mere fact that the 1956 Ordinance differentiates in geography indicates that that could never have been a serious contention by those who framed the Ordinance, for in areas where a pharmacist practices, no person other than pharmacist can sell these medicines. But in the rural areas where no pharmacist operates these medicines can be sold by unqualified traders. So where is this question of protection? Is it then that we are only interested in a section of the population that happens to live near pharmacists?

We come then to what I mentioned earlier was the basic philosophy of the 1956 Ordinance, and that was to protect the trade of pharmacists. I do not think that a good pharmacist needs to have his trade protected. It is my view that a good pharmacist, if he wants to make good in his business, in his drug store, can never succeed if he does not also have good business sense. The best pharmacist in the world cannot make a living unless he

knows how to run his business. Druggists do not and cannot stick just to the sale of drugs, poisons and patent medicines. They are bound to go beyond the sale of those things, and we see in this country drug stores which sell almost every object, except cloth and potatoes. And that is a good business sense. I am sure that no pharmacist is going to suffer as a result of the Bill before the council today.

In dealing with another aspect of the Bill we come to section 16 of the Principal Ordinance which provides that persons who actually qualify and have become proficient in their profession as chemists and druggists would be removed from the register of chemists and druggists if they had also become qualified in certain other professions. We have considered that provision in the 1956 Ordinance to be unjust. Therefore Hon. Members will find in the Bill an adjustment of the situation, so that if a person has a dual profession that person should be allowed to practise one or both, as he may see fit. In other words, if a man has become a chemist and then becomes a doctor there is no reason why he cannot utilise both professional qualifications at the same time.

In the 1956 Ordinance a number of hardships were created in respect of sick nurses and dispensers. I have had a number of discussions with our sick nurses and dispensers, and in examining their complaints I have been bound to agree that the 1956 Ordinance has not dealt fairly with them. As Hon. Members know, under that Ordinance if a pharmacist moves into an area where a sick nurse and dispenser had established himself, the sick nurse and dispenser would within a short time be forced to close down his business. Surely this overemphasis on the protection of a pharmacist would not be advisable in a community such as ours, where the sick nurse and dispenser have performed and are still performing a most useful function in the community. In this Bill we propose to remove these restrictions and to give the sick nurse and dispenser a fair chance of continuing to serve their community.

Also under the existing legislation the Pharmacy and Poisons Board has the final word as to whether or not a sick nurse and dispenser should be registered to sell patent and proprietary medicines. This Bill proposes to remove this power of the Board and to vest it in the Governor-in-Council. However, the views of the Board will be available to the Governor-in-Council who will be guided by such views.

The Bill also proposes to remove from the Board the power it now has under section 40 of the Ordinance to initiate any amendments to the Schedules to the Ordinance. I have had, to put it bluntly, sufficient experience of Boards in the three portfolios within my Ministry, to know how they can be stumbling blocks, and how sometimes their views may be channelled too much in one direction. I propose that the Governor-in-Council, whilst taking account of the Board's view, need not await action by the Board for amendment of the Schedules if the Board does not initiate such changes.

Members will also note that in clause 11 of the Bill that it is provided

that the British Pharmacopoeia or the British Pharmaceutical Index will be used in the case of drugs manufactured in British Guiana or imported from the United Kingdom. They will be used as the authoritative reference. They will also be used as the authoritative reference for drugs imported from the United States of America and from other countries.

The Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, 1956, prohibits the retail sale of drugs by a registered pharmacist or other authorised seller of drugs on any premises where the business is not carried on under the direct supervision of a registered pharmacist. Similar prohibition is also placed on registered sick nurses and dispensers within a three-mile radius of any registered pharmacist.

The sale of drugs listed in the Fourth Schedule is prohibited to an unqualified proprietor within a radius of three miles of the business premises of any registered pharmacist. This fourth Schedule includes a number of very harmless preparations, the sale of which, in our opinion, need not be restricted.

When we examine the 1956 Ordinance, especially clause 33, we find great difficulty in interpretation. It is hard to sit back at this stage and blame the previous Legislative Council, or those who drafted the Bill. I have had numerous consultations with my legal advisers and other technical officers regarding the interpretation of clause 33. In fact it became so difficult to interpret that one can safely anticipate that the application of clause 33 could lead only to utter confusion. That, too, was one of the reasons why it became absolutely necessary to think in terms of the amendment to the 1956 Ordinance

In the examination of a number of sections and Schedules that needed revision, we have finally brought forward amendments to 8 sections, 4 Schedules, and inserted 4 new sections which Members can see before them today. The proposed Fourth Schedule in this Bill has been confined to medicines containing a small amount of poison not considered to be harmful. I believe I mentioned before that by no means do we claim that this Schedule is complete. It is obvious that many additions will have to be made as new preparations are examined and their poison content evaluated.

It is possible that some Members may fear that this bill has gone too far in liberalizing the previous legislation. In allowing experienced but unqualified proprietors of shops who have been in the business to sell drugs, we are not at the same time allowing drugs to be dispensed or compounded on such premises. I trust Members are aware of that. We are not allowing prescriptions to be received in premises where a registered pharmacist does not attend. Experienced but unqualified proprietors may not use the title of pharmacist, chemist, druggist, etc. In no way will they be able to advertise, or suggest that the owner of the premises is qualified to dispense, sell or compound drugs with poison in them.

While the sum effect of this Bill is to allow the sale, without restriction, of any patent and proprietary medicine that is considered harmless by those

of us qualified to know, I would like to remind Hon. Members that the matter does not rest there. We are not too happy, as I said a few minutes ago, about some of the food and drugs which enter this country and are sold to the public. For that reason, as you may know, a Committee was set up some time ago to examine the food and drugs situation here and suggest suitable legislation to control food and drugs. I am told that the Committee which, unfortunately, has been sitting for a long time has now reached the stage where it has thoroughly examined legislation in a number of countries; it has gone very carefully into such legislation to see what best suits this country, and shall submit very soon a Report which will suggest suitable legislation for this country.

We know, for example, that some countries are dumping goods here. We are getting inferior canned products – maybe products of a lower quality which are labelled for sale abroad, but are not labelled as to the grade when exported. Some countries are sending us a large amount of patent and proprietary medicines that are not allowed to be sold in those countries because the preparations are sheer humbugs. A number of products that I hear advertised on the radio can do no harm, but many of them can do no good. Many of our people, who cannot afford it, are throwing their money into the drain by purchasing these preparations which are sold even by qualified druggists to a gullible public. It is known that thousands of dollars go down the drain in this manner.

I anticipate that a food and drugs law, which may supersede this law, will be able to control this undesirable feature and prevent the importation of a number of these products which do not help our people, but merely empty their pockets unnecessarily. I am extremely anxious to hear Members' comments on this matter. I have only one regret, and it is that the Bill did not come before this Council earlier.

We are all aware of the fact that licences were not paid last year because this legislation was in preparation. I can anticipate that Members will be rather critical on this point. My answer to it is that this Bill was not drawn up in haste, and no one can say that we have not thought very carefully about it. We have certainly given the fullest consideration to the claims of the various groups concerned, and we have not overlooked the petitions, discussions, etc., which have been put forward by the various persons concerned. I know that the officers in the Law Office and in my Ministry have worked extremely hard to bring forward this Bill that is before us today.

I am sure that the members of our public will be very happy to know that this bit of legislation, which has caused so much unhappiness and dissatisfaction from one end of the country to the other, will now be remedied. I feel certain that Hon. Members will support this legislation, and will see to it that never again shall we bring legislation before this Council which is not sufficiently comprehensive to take into account all sections of the community concerned. I, therefore, take pleasure in moving the Second Reading of this Bill.

[Replying]

Mrs. Jagan: I note that only one Member has spoken on this Bill, so I can presume that only one Member seems to have strong objections to it. I know that the Hon. Member could not have spoken without having interjected his usual personal remarks, and he had to make a rather indecent remark about my crawling through my brief. If the Hon. Member wants to look through my brief he is entitled to do so, but –

I am aware of that possibility, but from our frequent sallies across the Table I know the Hon. Member well enough to understand what he means. We know that the Hon. Member was well briefed himself. Perhaps he may have had, like me, the advice of Government Officers. I am certain about that, and we know that he has had much advice on the matter. That is his privilege. He spoke about the fact that I mentioned the convenience of the public while speaking on this Bill.

I went out of my way never to speak only of the convenience of the public, because it has never been the intention of this Bill to do that; it has always been coupled with the safety of the public, and I have never made the error of mentioning one without the other. The two things are intertwined and cannot be separated. This Government wants to protect the public and at the same time not cause any inconvenience to the public.

It is true that this Bill will permit the sale of harmless, patent and proprietary medicine. Harmless can also include preparations which contain an infinitesimal portion of poison. Examine this Schedule and you will see things like "*Vicks Wild Cherry Cough Drops*." Can anyone of us take enough *Vicks Wild Cherry Cough Drops* to kill himself or herself? With regard to *Ferrol Compound I*, personally, would never take it, but I doubt whether anyone would suffer ill effects from drinking it.

Officers trained in the field of pharmacy, chemistry and so on have examined these products I have referred to – persons with no motive, with no business to do; persons who are neutral in their outlook and can give an unbiased opinion in the matter. That is what we want. I, certainly, would be the last person to allow any preparation to be placed on this Schedule which could be harmful. It is all well and good to say that these products should be solely under the control of the pharmacist in order to protect persons from committing suicide by taking an overdose of certain medicines. That is a laudable excuse, but for practical purposes it cannot prevent certain things from taking place as I have already mentioned.

Despite the fact that pharmacists endeavour to control dangerous drugs, certain things still take place as a result of carelessness on the part of some people who purchase drugs. A woman may go to a registered pharmacist and purchase a pint of *Lysol* for the purpose of keeping her latrine, kitchen, etc., clean. It is her control over the bottle of *Lysol* that counts. Most persons keep disinfectant in their homes, but it can be used for committing suicide.

I may mention that if one considers the preparations which, under this existing Bill, only a pharmacist can handle, one can still see great danger. A woman may ask a registered pharmacist to make up a prescription for her and take the medicine home. If someone at her home wishes to commit suicide, he or she can take an overdose of the medicine. On the other hand, there are several things one can do in order to commit suicide. One can use broken glass and so on.

The Hon. Member spoke about the accumulative effect of these drugs. These drugs have been chosen because there can be no accumulative effect which will harm people. If any error has been made in this matter, his advisers have a perfect right to put their opposition through the correct channel and no one will ignore their proposals. We do not want on this list any preparation which can be harmful.

"Has the Minister had the opportunity of hearing all points of view and of assessing all the aspects of this Bill?" asked the Hon. Member. Yes, I have. My Ministry, my advisers and myself have gone through this Bill backward and forward. As my Permanent Secretary has said *"we have sweated it out."* We have not ignored any point of view; we have not run into this legislation hastily, and it has been well thought out. For a long time we did our best to avoid having to make the radical amendments we now have before us. We have tried to make the changes as easy as possible for all concerned and this is the result.

I have already mentioned that the cooperation which we had hoped to find was not there. It is true, and I believe the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central is aware, that we are going through a transitional period as far as ministerial offices are concerned. The Law Officers, as you know, are examining the suitability of Boards and other Statutory Committees within the ministerial system. A number of them, I believe, will have to go and some will merely be advisory. It is no use a Government having something like the Central Housing and Planning Authority working at cross purposes with it. We say that we want more industries, and a Statutory Board say they will not allow the industry to be set up at a certain place. What is the sense of a Central Government talking about industries when a Board set up as a Statutory Authority can say no? Government cannot work properly like that; we cannot have development and progress under such conditions.

The Hon. Member has asked, as he asks so often in this Council, that we either postpone consideration of this Bill, or send it to a Select Committee. I say no. This Bill was published on the 16th July. Every Member of this Council, who was interested in the matter, had ample time to consult the people concerned and obtain their points of view. It is no use appointing a Select Committee at this stage to spend a few months on this Bill. I am sure that Members had a long time to examine the Bill, and to carry out any research or investigations they found necessary.

When certain Members observe that their cronies are not sitting in their

seats and are gallivanting somewhere leaving the voting strength low, they want a postponement. I do not know whether a Party of two or three Members can have Whips. I beg to move that the Bill be read a second time.

Motion on the Boycott of Trade with South Africa: 16th November, 1960

“Be it Resolved: That this Council recommends to Government that all trade between British Guiana and the Union of South Africa be prohibited.”

Mrs. Jagan: I rise to second this Motion recommending that all trade between British Guiana and South Africa be prohibited. This Council has already had a lengthy debate on this very complicated question of apartheid existing in South Africa. In July, 1952, there was a debate in this Chamber on a Motion moved by the then Hon. Lionel Luckhoo asking that the Council express its disapproval of the racial segregation existing in South Africa. Actually, prior to that time the Hon. Dr. Jagan had tabled a Motion in 1951 asking the Council to consider much the same policy. However, his Motion was never debated, but the debate in July, 1952, is one which took place within recent times, and I believe most Members here are aware of that debate and the keen interest shown by Members of the Council and also by members of the community. With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to quote from the *Hansard* report of the debate on the 25th July, 1952:

“Dr. Jagan: ... But let me assure Hon. Members that what is happening in South Africa today is not merely a racial question. It is above all an economic problem. The Hon. Mover has given us a number of Acts which were passed by the South African Government, but when we examine all of them – whether it is the Group Areas Act, or the Interracial Mixed Marriages Act, or the Population Registration Act – we would see that what the South African Government has done is merely to use the political power which it has to deny economic rise to the masses of the people of South Africa.”

He went on further to say:

“It is not, as I have said before merely a matter of racial segregation. Above all it is a means of using the political power to keep the masses of the people in a subservient state, in a downtrodden state; to keep them half-starved and ill educated. That is the position we are dealing with in South Africa.”

Dr. Jagan went on further to suggest an amendment to the Motion expressing abhorrence at the policy of racial segregation as enforced by the Government of South Africa. His amendment read:

“And be it further resolved that this Council recommend to Government the immediate cessation of all trade with the Union of South Africa.”

So we can see that in 1952 the Legislature debated a more or less similar Motion, and we cannot help observing that what was happening eight years ago in South Africa has hardly changed. The repression about which all of us felt so strongly over eight years ago has perhaps increased, and perhaps one of the bloodiest spectacles occurred quite recently when there was an outrage in South Africa. The outrage was so great that here in British Guiana an Anti-Apartheid Committee was organised not only to express its sympathy with the situation in South Africa but also to take more positive steps, one of them being to urge a boycott of South African goods, and efforts were made to get the Trade Union Movement and other groups to urge their members not to buy South African goods. In fact this Committee went so far as to itemise the various goods this country was importing from South Africa and to advise persons not to buy them.

The Committee also raised a considerable sum of money to send to the families of the victims of the outrage so as to give them substantial financial assistance. I think we can all remember the demonstration that took place throughout the city, led by the Committee, which included representatives of the T.U.C. and the Political Party which I represent. The demonstration, which was perhaps one of the largest ever seen in the city of Georgetown, and which was joined by persons from all walks of life, gave real expression to the sentiments of the people of this country on this issue of what is happening in South Africa.

The Political Party which I represent has for many years expressed its keen sympathy with the struggle now going on in South Africa to bring equality to those people. It has also given financial assistance to them and has taken a firm stand in the matter wherever possible. One particular incident which many of us know about I would like to refer to because it occurred in fairly recent times. The Hon. Dr. Jagan expressed publicly his view that a West Indian cricket team should not play in South Africa under the conditions existing there unless its all coloured team was accepted in full equality. His public statement was very much criticised locally, but one of our greatest sportsmen in this country gave it support. But what is interesting is to know what was the reaction to South Africa, and I would like to read from *Thunder* of September 26, 1959, an extract from a letter to the People's Progressive Party from Mr. D. Nokwe, Secretary General of the African National Congress, who wrote:

"We were greatly impressed when we read an article by Dr. Cheddi Jagan in which he objected to Worrell's tour of our country. We are happy to say that through our joint efforts we were able to make sportsmen understand that the tour would not be in the interests of our struggle. We should express our gratitude to your countrymen for agreeing to call off this tour.

The solidarity of your organisation with the cause of our people inspires us and confirms our belief that our disabilities as well as ours are temporary."

This brought British Guiana into the international light or sphere by taking part in the international resentment of the situation in South Africa.

I would like to refer to one or two instances of what has taken place there in support of this Motion, and one of the reasons why we must not only give moral and financial support to the South Africans who are fighting against one of the greatest acts of suppression in modern history, but also make efforts to bring economic sanctions to bear against that country. All of us are aware that the United Nations has from time to time taken up the issue of South Africa. The Reverend Michael Scott, who experienced much of the oppression there, at one time attempted to speak at the United Nations but, as far as I can recall, his attempt was held back.

I have here an interesting booklet called *The Threatened People*. It refers to the case for a South African democracy, and it is issued by the South African Congress of Democrats, Johannesburg. What I believe is a very moving introduction in support of the case, is a quotation from Abraham Lincoln in 1858 when he was President of the United States. He said, and I quote:

“When ... you have succeeded in dehumanizing the Negro, when you have put him down and made it impossible for him to live but as the beasts of the field; when you have extinguished his soul in this world and placed him where the ray of hope is blown out as in the darkness of the damned, are you quite sure that the demon you have roused will not turn and rend you?”

If you make yourself familiar with the chains of bondage you prepare your own limbs to wear them. Accustom yourselves to trample out rights of others and you have lost the genius of your own independence and become the fit subjects of the first cunning tyrant who rises among you ...”

The writer of this book continues:

“We in South Africa have accustomed ourselves to the trampling out of the rights of others.

We have succeeded in dehumanizing the Negro and in making ourselves familiar with the chains of bondage. Never have we been more familiar with them than since May 1948 when the Nationalist Government was returned to power.

We have seen mounting attacks on the Rule of Law and the rights of the courts; attacks on the freedoms of association and speech and on the rights of trade unions; attacks on civil liberties, with the aim of stilling criticism from those outspokenly opposed to the Nationalist Government.”

We know that in South Africa today those who lift their voices to object against wrong things are thrown into gaol. Many of them are indicted under the Suppression of Communism Act, 1950, and the people who raised their voices were termed communists in South Africa.

A booklet from the Publications Division, Ministry of Information and

Broadcasting, Government of India, states:

“Suppression of Communism Act 1950: This Act, passed in 1950 by the Union Parliament, replaces the earlier Anti-Communism Act. The change was not merely one of name; the latter act is more inclusive. It empowers the executive to take action not only against communists but those who encourage hostility between European and non-European races. While the racial policy of the Union Government does not have the approbation of international opinion, executive action against those who transgress racial laws would not evoke such unanimous disapproval, if undertaken in the name of a crusade against communism. This Act is in reality a measure to suppress just agitation by Indians and Africans for redress of genuine grievances.”

The Government of India’s Information Bureau has supported this general contention made by other writers; that the Suppression of Communism Act is nothing but a cover to gaol and confine people who try to oppose the stratification of society laid down by the apartheid policy in South Africa.

Mr. Fenner Brockway, writing this year in a most interesting booklet called *Africa’s Year of Destiny*, states:

“THE CLIMAX OF CRISIS:

We turn to South Africa, where crisis is moving to climax, South Africa has become the decisive battleground where the issue will be fought to a conclusion between those who believe in racial equality and cooperative association and those who believe in the superiority of the white races and the isolation of the ‘coloured’ peoples in separate communities.”

He attacks the apartheid policy and refers to the pressure in the United Nations. He states:

“Year after year resolutions protesting against South Africa’s apartheid policy have come before the United Nations Political Committee and the General Assembly. The South African delegation has absented itself, claiming that the issue is entirely a matter of internal policy. The sponsors of the Resolution have pointed out that the Charter of the United Nations and the Declaration of Human Rights pledge all the Member States to practice human equality. At the General Assembly in 1959 the resolution was carried by 63 votes to 3.”

Some critics in British Guiana always say that Guianese must not delve into the internal affairs of other nations. Though we have expressed sympathy with similar struggles in Nyasaland, Nigeria, Kenya, etc., those who cannot stand international solidarity always use the argument used by the South African Government when the matter I raised in the United Nations: it is an internal affair.

I believe we have reached the stage where the whole world feels that the situation in South Africa is so intense that it has become the personal concern of many nations and millions of people. Therefore it is the appropriate time that this Legislative Council should take its stand with those countries that have already expressed themselves very clearly on the subject of oppression in South Africa. It is evident that we should go beyond an expression of sympathy, and ask that trade sanctions be introduced.

It is true that the restrictions of International Trade Agreements such as G.A.T.T. have for some time stood in the way of certain countries taking an open stand on this question of South African Trade. This matter has been given careful consideration, and it is felt that, in spite of what exists in such Agreements, the time has been reached when it is impossible for us to take anything other than a definite stand. It is for those reasons that we have decided to give full support to this Motion.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill - Labour Department: 29th December, 1960

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Nominated Member is seeking an increase in the travelling vote for the Labour Department. If he will observe, the actual expenditure for 1959 was \$16,811, and for 1960 and 1961, the estimates are at \$20,340 which, as you can see, is almost \$4,000 above the actual expenditure last year, which will allow for the recent increases that have been made.

Apart from that, I would like to remind the Hon. Member that this Government, while certainly not wishing nor allowing any of its normal and special activities to be curtailed, is seeking economies. We are not a rich country. Our administrative costs have been stretching and growing. Caution and care must be taken to keep down administrative costs. At least, I am sure the "*Opposition*" would agree with me.

In the Departments which fall within my Portfolio, I have insisted that there should be very careful scrutiny of travelling expenses, for we have uncovered, in the several Departments under my Ministry, unhealthy practices within the travelling votes, and we are doing our best to cut out certain rackets which had been existing for many years past. One of the best ways to encourage rackets is to push up travelling votes and let everyone feel there is plenty of money; and then one will find that a trip of 20 miles would be listed as 42 miles.

I was talking to the Minister on my left who showed me certain practices he has uncovered in one of his Departments where travelling votes had been excessively high. Employees of the Government had been putting down ridiculous figures for mileage.

I am not anxious to increase travelling votes where I feel they are not necessary. I agree with the Member that we must not be so tightfisted with the money that our Labour Officers cannot be free to carry out their normal duties; and, also, that they should not be prevented from travelling when exceptional circumstances arise. It is interesting to note that the Department itself puts up these requests for votes. We have not chopped down the travelling vote. This is the business of the Government and the business of the Ministry, and we have gone into this. The Hon. Member is not in my position to have to make these decisions, but I can assure him there is no need for an increase of the vote.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill 1961 - Medical, Superintendent, Mental Hospital: 30th December, 1960

Mrs. Jagan: We have been seeking the services of a Psychiatrist to be Superintendent of the Mental Hospital for some time. I believe Members of the Finance Committee are aware of the special provision we have made in order to make the salary more attractive to the applicants. The matter is in the hands of the Secretary of State for the Colonies who has been dealing with the question of the appointment of the applicant.

My Ministry does not deal directly with it, but, because I am so greatly concerned in the matter, I have been inquiring about it. On each occasion I have been told that cablegrams have been going to and fro. In the meantime a Guianese is in training. We had anticipated that he would have returned to British Guiana this month, but, unfortunately, only a few days ago we received information that due to his inability to pass all the examinations he will have to continue his studies. He may be away for another six months. I understand that the Colonial Office is trying to obtain the services of one Dr. Chaterjie. We are sorry that it was necessary that the return of the Guianese who was sent to be trained has been delayed. We are terribly concerned with this matter, and are now engaged in examining the possibility of strengthening the staff with doctors who may be interested in the subject but are not fully trained for this type of work. We have no specialist in this field in British Guiana.

I know that many Members on the other side of the Table feel as disappointed as my Ministry. This has been one of the subjects which have caused us tons of disappointment because we have not been able to get ahead with the work of rehabilitating all of those unfortunate patients. The work has been held up through lack of qualified personnel. I do not think it would be fair for Hon. Members to criticise this Government for being unable to find a suitably qualified officer. This type of specialist is in great demand throughout the world. The majority of mental specialists do not like to go into institutions of this type. The field of private practice in psychiatry is extremely lucrative and extremely interesting to the Psychiatrist. We actually had some applicants for this post who found the idea of such an institution not tremendously interesting, and that is the problem not only in British Guiana but actually in every country in the world.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill 1961 - Junior Ophthalmologist: 3rd January, 1961

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Member has asked about the two scales of the Junior Ophthalmologist. I think Members are aware that junior specialists have to serve for four years before they are promoted to the senior posts. I understand that this person is supposed to be promoted during this year.

As Hon. Members are aware, there will be integration. Actually, the integration of the Ministry of Health and the Medical Department starts this month and one of the developments out of this integration will be, as he has suggested, the creation of a new post; and all the changes in the movement of integration will, no doubt, be brought to the Finance Committee. I do not think all the final details of the changes have been completed by the Financial Secretary in his Budget, but we shall be getting them during the months to come. However, we are moving in during the month.

Transport and Travelling:

Mrs. Jagan: If the Hon. Member wishes to compare the Medical Department with the Labour Department, I will give him the opportunity to do so. If he looks at page 45, he will observe that the actual expenditure for 1959 was \$16,811. The approved estimate for Transport and Travelling for 1960 and 1961 is \$20,340, which means that the actual amount spent in 1959 was less than that provided for 1960 and 1961. Also at page 60, he will find that the actual expenditure under "*Medical*" was \$84,232 in 1959 and it was larger than the amount provided in 1960, which was \$75,000. In other words, there was less expenditure in 1959 in the Labour Department than there was provision for the next year. In the Medical Department there was a higher expenditure in 1959 than the amount provided for the next year, which meant that the Medical Department had a higher rate of expenditure in 1959 than the Labour Department. Also, if we compare "*Medical*" with "*Labour*" it will be seen that "*Medical*" is a rapidly expanding Department.

During my period as Minister of Health, I have insisted that the Medical Department should serve the areas never before served and that, of course, requires increased expenditure. We are now serving all the riverain areas in this country and, naturally, there will be greater expenditure. Actually, in the riverain areas, you will find the subsistence allowances are greater because they are greater distances away from the base. All these things have been taken into consideration. Why these two questions arose, I do not know.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Appropriation Bill - Social Assistance – The Palms: 4th January, 1961

Mrs. Jagan: I am not aware that there has been any change in the quantity or standard of the dietary. If it is so it is not the result of any efforts to economise, because the same amount of money has been provided for dietary every year. Rather than a reduction, I think Hon. Members will remember that we improved on the standard of dietary. We added one snack meal per day to the basic three the inmates were getting, as a result of a visit by the Minister of Community Development and myself. We found that the last meal was served at four o'clock and the inmates were expected to survive on that until next morning. We therefore asked the Finance Committee for an additional amount of money to provide a beverage and sweet bread.

In that institution, we met more or less the same problems. One is the monotony of diet. Mass cooking is generally not as appetising or as well prepared as individual cooking. The problems at The Palms are being tackled in two ways. One is, we are giving additional training at the Carnegie School of Home Economics to the cooks so that they can get more ideas and techniques; and the other is an improvement of the kitchen. A new kitchen is being built at The Palms. It is a fact that there was a horrible, disgraceful kitchen there all these years, and we are now getting down to providing a modern kitchen which must bring some improvement to the dietary standards.

The Medical Department has, from time to time, examined this question of what to do with the ill and aged persons at The Palms. There have been suggestions time and again to have them transferred to the Public Hospital but, as you know, the Public Hospital is already heavily burdened with what we call active cases – cases requiring immediate treatment. Most of the cases at The Palms do not really require very detailed medical treatment. It is more a question of providing normal bed space, food, some medication and rather elementary nursing care. But if we were to have a medical unit just for these cases, it would be additional expenditure at the moment which it is felt cannot be borne and, therefore, the matter has rested where it is.

Medical people do not feel very strongly that the cases at the Palms, in anyway, would interfere with the well being of the well inmates there. In fact, there is a slight therapeutic value to the matter – the fact that those who are not so ill can give assistance to those who are bedridden. In some cases it gives them a feeling of satisfaction that they are able to do something to help others. I can assure the Hon. Member that no infectious cases would be allowed to cause any trouble to the persons residing at The Palms; and what he is advising may be a long-term policy.

There has been a change, and the plan has been altered. It was found, after most careful consideration, that the Public Hospital laundry had a greater capacity and could handle the clothes from The Palms. We are now experimenting, and we think we can use the Public Hospital for laundering the clothes from The Palms and save money. That is what we are doing at the moment. The Public Hospital laundry is one of the most up-to-date laundries in this area.

Motion on the Seconding Reading of the Appropriation Bill - Development Estimates: 6th January, 1961

Mrs. Jagan: Rip Van Winkle has finally awakened after a long sleep. The Hon. Member for Georgetown Central did not find a single word to say when the Five-Year Development Programme was being discussed in this Council. The Council had to consider and pass that Five-Year Programme without the benefit of the Hon. Member's advice, but I suppose in one year he has thought it over and has reached the conclusion that the General Elections are just around the corner and it is about time he give his considered views to the country. We are happy that he is no longer asleep, although he was caught napping and almost snoring when the Recurrent Estimates were being discussed, and was unable to contribute a single word to that debate. But I notice that the Hon. Member always speaks longer, louder and clearer when he has a good gallery, and perhaps that is why we had to sit here just a little longer today. But that is politics, and, I suppose, some of the things we must endure.

[Mr. Burnham rose and bowed to the Chair.]

Mrs. Jagan: I wish that the Hon. Member would remain in his seat while I answer one or two of his points, but if he is not interested he will walk out.

The Hon. Member has talked at great length on development expenditure to the end of June, 1960. Obviously he is the leader, I presume, of the "*Opposition*", but one gets so confused about his position in the "*Opposition*". At any rate he is the Member for Georgetown Central, and as such he belaboured us with his criticism of development expenditure several months ago. Was he justified in his criticisms? I believe he has a perfect right to criticise; that is his job. That is what he is paid for, and it is his interest to make the Majority Party look as incompetent as possible, but I fear that his conclusions were ill-conceived, and perhaps were not conceived at all, because I do not think he could have done much thinking on the subject to have belaboured us in this manner.

His colleague, the Hon. Member for Georgetown North, told us that at the end of June we had spent less than one quarter of the development allocation. That is not correct, for out of the total of \$16 million allocated for 1960, at the end of June over \$6 million had been spent. That is not one quarter.

I would like to remind Members of one or two points. To begin with, no action on the 1960-64 Development Plan could have taken place until after the Development Estimates were passed in the last week of January, 1960. The majority of the projects in our Five-Year Programme cannot start immediately. In the Housing Programme, with which I am more familiar,

there are many preliminaries to building houses, and those preliminaries must be got through. One is the surveying of the land, and the other is the layout of the land by the Planning Officer. After that stage has been completed, one then has to go into the question of computing costs and obtaining the services of quantity surveyors. All of that cannot be done in one, two or three months; it takes time. Most of the work has now been completed, and if Members had taken time off to read the *Official Gazette* they would have seen the advertisement for tenders for our Housing Programme which are now awaiting examination by the Central Tender Board for building to start.

However, that does not mean that work on housing was stopped suddenly; it certainly was not. Self-help housing has already started and 81 self-helpers are engaged in the city of Georgetown in building their own houses. At the same time the Housing Department has advertised and received applications for 85 house lots at Sparendam which will be sold to residents in the area at non-profit prices, so that people there can get ahead with building their homes. At the same time the Credit Corporation has been giving loans for low-cost housing. I do not know where the Hon. Member got his figures about the amount of money advanced by the Credit Corporation in housing loans. The figures I have indicated that up to the end of June, 1960, over half a million dollars had been loaned by the Corporation for low-cost housing loans up to \$2,000 have been granted, which obviously indicated that over half a million dollars loaned for low-cost housing is nothing to shrug one's shoulders at.

Over half a million dollars was granted in loans up to the 30th June, 1960, for low-cost housing. The Hon. Member made the very drastic statement that Government refuses to spend money on housing under the Development Programme. What a ridiculous, fantastic, and I would say, puerile statement! How can Government refuse to spend money on housing? The Hon. Member did not have the courtesy to sit and listen to my replies to his criticisms, and I refuse to go over them. He also made a damaging statement which I challenged when he was on his legs. He said that the Housing Department had thrown out tenants. It is not true and he knows that as well as I do.

The Hon. Member brings in the red herring about increased rents in the Housing Scheme. He is a member of the Georgetown Town Council and he knows better than I do why rents have gone up. Taxes and water rates have been increased, and the Housing Department was presented with an increased bill from the Town Council. Is the general taxpayer to pay for the increased water rates in the Government Housing Scheme? Is it not true that every tenant in the city will now face increased rentals? I am a tenant and I will face increased rental just as anyone else. So it is unfair to suggest, as the Hon. Member has done, that we are the big rogues sitting here like Scrooges, twisting our hands and saying "*Ha, ha, we will press the tenants a little more.*" Let the Town Council examine its conscience, and let the Hon.

Member cease making these ill-conceived attacks on the Majority Party.

Admittedly, the Hon. Member has every right to be annoyed with the Majority Party. If I were in his position I would have been ready to tear out every strand of hair in my head, if I were a member of the "*Opposition*". I know that the Hon. Member feels frustrated because he is confronted with the achievements and successes of the Majority Party. He has every right to get hysterical in this Council. Perhaps, if I ever get in the "*Opposition*" – although I do not see it happening right now, but in case I get in the "*Opposition*" – I would pull every strand of hair out of my head. I invite the Hon. Member to look at the progress that is going on, but the Hon. Member does not want to see, because it hurts. Those are the bare facts.

Looking at the expenditure for pure water supply: Spending on pure water supply has certainly been rising. Out of an allocation of \$480,000 for 1960, up to the last calculation, 315,000 had been spent on actual works and about \$100,000 had been spent on supplies for those works; and over \$70,000 worth of materials have been reserved for certain detailed and technical works to be done at Bartica. So that in the field of water supply development, we have made extremely good progress during the year, as we have with our medical vote.

One point that has been overlooked by Members of the "*Opposition*" in claiming that there has been deliberate under-spending is this: there is no country in the world, nor is there any spending group with any spending programme that can readily reach its full spending power during the first year. As I cited in housing, it takes organizing, planning and the working out of a number of details before the works are actually started.

If Hon. Members refuse to take my explanation, I will cite what they may consider as another explanation, but which I do not think they can possibly overlook. Last year, I attended, as a delegate, a meeting of the University College of the West Indies, and one of the items on the agenda was the request by the University College that the amounts allocated each year of its three-year Budget Programme, be not adhered to. In other words, the University College is facing the same problem as we are facing here; and that is why it has asked that it should not be required to spend, each year the particular amounts allocated. It takes some months to get things going, and when acceleration reaches a pitch the money not spent in the first year is caught up in the second and third years; and that is precisely our position.

For example, the Tapakuma Scheme – the expenditure, obviously, will not be considerable in 1960; but because our plans have been finalized and the tender document has been prepared and is now being advertised, the expenditure would jump in 1961. These are the practical things that we face, but which Hon. Members do not want to see because they want to find an opportunity to malign this Government. Perhaps, I can assure them that we would not get these criticisms next year because, at least, our Housing Programme would have started already and, as I said, the tender document

is being advertised for the Tapakuma Scheme; and other projects would follow down the line.

An Hon. Member was trying to tell us that this Government is doing nothing about the question of land. Perhaps, he was not here at the opening of the new Session of the Legislative Council to listen to the Governor's address; but when the Governor spoke about land, he did remind us that already 70,000 acres of land were given out. Is that nothing at all? Perhaps, the Hon. Member is not aware of that.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown North spoke to us, at great pains, about the unemployment problem in this country. Surely, he does not think that we are unaware of the problem or that we are so callous that we would not want to solve the problem. Surely, the Hon. Member knows that my Party draws its support from the working people of this country and, obviously, it is the intention of the Majority Party to improve their lot. Perhaps while citing our difficulty in the field of unemployment, it may be well to point out that it is an international problem. It is a problem that every country in the world is facing today. The United States of America, at its minimum, has an unemployment problem of three million people.

[Interruption]

Mrs. Jagan: Someone has told me it is five million people. Canada has an unemployment problem of some half-a-million people. These are the facts of life that we have to face; and no one is excusing the fact that we have an unemployment problem, but it is one which exists throughout the hemisphere and throughout Asia. It will take years of planning to solve this problem.

At the same time, we are faced with other problems which increase our unemployment – for example, the recession that we went through at the beginning of our term of office which affected not only British Guiana but most of the countries of the world. In the sugar industry, because of the weakness of the trade union movement, there has been no effort to halt the mechanization and automation that is going on in that industry, and that, of course, has increased the unemployment figures in this country considerably; plus the fact...

Whenever we have something to say they are always ready on their legs; but the Majority Party sits here and takes every word from the "*rubbish heap*". Perhaps, it is because of their sensitive that they are where they are. May I reiterate: It is the weakness of the trade union movement that allowed this mechanisation to take place, and the gross unemployment in the sugar industry is, unfortunately, the net result of this line.

While I am on this subject may I digress a second to remind the same Hon. Nominated Member, who referred to the fact, that he said the Electricity Corporation is dominated by supporters of the People's Progressive Party. This is, obviously, a stupid statement and can only be regarded as

deliberately malicious. I do not think, if one reads the names of the members of the Corporation, one would find that it is P.P.P. dominated. The Chairman is Mr. H. J. M. Hubbard, Mr. D. F. Macorquodale, Deputy Chairman, Mr. S. G. Wilson, Mr. E. E. Cassell, Mr. J. Edward DeFreitas, C.B.E., Mr. Ashton Chase, Mr. Mohammed Yasin with Mr. R. E. O. Moriah as Secretary. Where has the P.P.P. the majority? I cannot see how the P.P.P. has any control. Perhaps, Hon. Members want to see these Boards and Committees remain in the hands of those who served on them for a long number of years. Perhaps, they do not want to see changes.

The Hon. Member for Georgetown North made a very broad statement. He said the Majority Party has not solved any of the problems of this country. What a childish statement! What a ridiculous statement! I can only invite him to take a look at the Governor's speech which only analyses, roughly, one year's achievements of this Government. Perhaps, one year is worthy of great distinction. Hon. Members fail to note some of the great progress that has been made. The United Nations Organisation has given this country great support; the assistance of the I.C.A. has increased, important survey works and developments are now going on and, actually, there is a great advance in the medical field; water supply, land distribution, land settlement and diversification of agriculture. These are not things for one to turn up one's nose at and say "*nothing has been done*".

One must make proper criticism of what has been done. Hon. Members should stand in this Council and say that nothing has been done. It is not the work of the "*Opposition*" to delude the public. It is the work of the "*Opposition*" to give an honest appraisal and sensible, constructive criticism of what has been done. I urge Hon. Members to awake from their slumber and take a second look.

Motion on the Second Reading of the Housing of Labour Workers on Sugar Estates (Amendment)

Bill: 12th January, 1961

Mrs. Jagan: I beg to move the Second Reading of the Bill intituled:

“An Ordinance to amend the Housing of Labour Workers on Sugar Estates Ordinance.”

This matter has come to my attention on more than one occasion – the necessity to permit the extension and repair of houses built within the provisions of the Ordinance with funds provided from the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. The Principal Ordinance gives to those persons the right to erect and own houses on approved sites. The Regulations made under Chapter 248 provide that:

“(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing sub-regulation, the Committee may make such disbursements for any of the following purposes –

- (a) the housing of labour workers;*
- (b) the improvement of social conditions (including housing and recreational facilities) of labour workers;*
- (c) making loans or grants to labour workers approved by the Committee to enable such workers to erect and own houses on approved sites;”*

I was advised that legally the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee was empowered to make loans for the extension and repair of such houses, and I communicated my views to the Committee. The Committee, however, felt that it is necessary to have a statutory assignment which is given in Chapter 183, Section 4. We did suggest to the Committee that in order to avoid the necessity of having to seek legislative amendment, that the Committee would give a voluntary assignment to those seeking loans for this purpose. After much correspondence, consideration and discussion the Committee was unwilling to accept this type of assignment, and refused to accept the suggestion that a voluntary assignment would be adequate.

Therefore, in order to save any further discussion backward and forward, we thought it would be better to make the small amendment which is before the Council, for the insertion after the words *“approved site”* in section 4 (1) of Chapter 183, of the words *“or to extend, improve or repair his own house on an approved site.”* This will give to a number of persons who now seek to repair their houses or to extend their houses, an opportunity to obtain loans from this Fund. I therefore would urge Hon. Members to support this simple amendment which will mean a lot to a large number of persons. I move that the Bill be read a Second time.

Motion on Statue to the Late Mr. H. N. Critchlow: 2nd February, 1961

“Be it Resolved: That this Council recommends that Government should erect a statute to the great pioneer of labour, the Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, and that the statute be placed at the Bourda Green”.

Mrs. Jagan: The name of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, as the mover has said, is well-known not only in the history of trade unionism in this country, but throughout the Caribbean. Many of us had known and worked with Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, and I am aware of the great contribution he has made to the development of trade unionism in this country.

I can recall, many years ago before the Great Fire when the British Guiana Labour Union used to have its office in Hincks Street, joining with Mr. Critchlow in the organisation of the domestic workers' section of his Union. The two of us used to sit up in the hall many nights for many hours waiting for the one or two or three union members who used to show up. The work, even though it was many years after he had organised this union, was not easy going and, in fact, all his life he had to fight extremely hard to carry over the idea of trade unionism to the people and to encourage persons to join and attend meetings.

In working with him, I learnt a lot about his qualities of leadership and, also, we used to discuss the early days when he was far more active in the movement and agile. As the Legislative Council Member for Georgetown South rightly said, he was, to some extent, rejected in his later years; and we find even today, that some of those who rejected him are now shouting his praise. It reminds one of the biblical saying; *“The stone that the builders reject, the same is become the head of the corner.”*

I can remember marching in a May Day demonstration some years ago and seeing Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow standing outside of his house on Crown Street watching the parade go by. I saw many of those praising him now, hissing Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow; but there was one politician and trade union leader in that crowd who had a very big heart. He went and took Critchlow by the hand and said: *“Come Critch, join the parade; walk with us.”* That was the Hon. Dr. Cheddi Jagan, who was then President of the Sawmill and Forest Workers' Union; and Critchlow walked in the May Day demonstration – in that group where others rejected him. And I remember when they assembled on the Bourda Green, he spoke. There were those who started hissing Critchlow again. They did not want him to speak. The Hon. Dr. Cheddi Jagan said: *“Give him a chance,”* and he was given a chance. These are the things that happened; and it is a pity that in his later years things were not quite as happy as they could have been.

We have not forgotten him. The Hon. Minister of Communications and Works recently named a hydrographic launch "*the Hubert Critchlow*." We have recently named one of the streets in the Housing Scheme after that man; so there are some who had not forgotten him, and do not make public that they had not forgotten him.

I would have liked to support this Motion, but I feel that its asking Government to put up a statue is not the real answer to perpetuate the memory of this great trade unionist. It is easy, in election year, to stand up and say. "*Let the Government build a statue.*" What is a statue? There are countries full of statues. It does not mean anything. It is true, in the past, there may have been monuments of great men, erected in British Guiana, but that does not mean because you have been building monuments of great men that we must keep on building monuments of great men. I believe that there should be something dedicated to the memory of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow; but I am not convinced that there should be a statue. I would honestly prefer something of greater use to the community. What could Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow have wanted? Would he want a statue stuck up in Bourda Green; or would he prefer a scholarship for young men and women to study trade unionism; or would he prefer a trade union hall or some other useful memorial? I am not equipped to state what type of memorial should be dedicated to his memory, but I think it is rather puerile and useless to suggest a statue. It does not mean anything real. His name will be recorded in our history books, and I have no doubt that others will follow our practice of naming objects of frequent use like boats, streets and villages, after his name. Those are things that will last.

I do not think it is the full responsibility of the Government to contribute all the money for whatever memorial is decided. I think the Government should make a contribution by all means, but I think also that the community, and in particular the trade union movement, must make a substantial contribution. Mr. Critchlow came from the ranks of labour, and with little help as well as little education rose to be trade union leader. It is from those ranks that the pennies, ten cent pieces and twenty five cent pieces must be collected to build a memorial. It may be in the form of a scholarship or scholarships. That is why I cannot support this Motion as it stands, although I support the essence of it.

The Mover of the Motion knows that the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Labour spoke to him, and asked him if he would consider altering his Motion to read:

"That this Council recommends that a Committee should be appointed to consider and make recommendations for a suitable memorial to commemorate the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, the great pioneer of labour, and to consider ways and means of raising funds for providing such a memorial."

However, the Mover of the Motion was not in agreement with the suggestion. I thought, perhaps, I could move an amendment to this Motion along those lines, but I was advised by the Clerk of the Legislative Council that this would not be possible because it negates certain points in the Motion. I believe that His Honour the Speaker is aware of this.

I am in the position, therefore, where I support the essence of the Motion that there should be, perhaps, some memorial in the name of Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, but I do not agree that it should be a statue. On the other hand, I do not agree that it should be the responsibility of the Government. I would like to suggest again to the Mover of the Motion that he makes a change in his Motion to include the points which the Government would like inserted: that a Committee be set up to decide what type of memorial should be established, and ways and means of raising money for it. It may well be that the Committee will agree with the Mover that a statue is the best thing. If a Committee, duly established, agrees that there should be a statue, whatever it says will have to be the decision.

I believe that there are so many other wonderful ideas that could be embodied in a memorial for the late Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow that it would be foolish for us to rush things and agree to the erection of a statue. I am one of those persons who feel very strongly about certain customs and habits some people have which are not entirely useful.

For example, I have made a suggestion to the Red Cross that, in the raising of funds for the Handicapped School for Children, they introduce a system that is now quite popular in the United States. When a person dies, rather than buying flowers which means nothing to the dead man or woman, the person who wishes to show his sympathy should send his contribution to the fund, and the fund in turn sends a condolence card to the family saying " *Mr. and Mrs. So and So have contributed to the Handicapped Children's Fund in the name of the deceased.*" In the United States of America you have the Cancer Fund, etc.

I know that when my father died, we received dozens of such cards which meant more to the family, because we knew that rather than sympathisers spending money on flowers, the money had gone to a very useful purpose. That is why I suggest that a statue is not particularly useful but, perhaps, something else would be of greater use to the community, or to the trade union movement in particular. That is why I would urge the Mover of the Motion to indicate that he is willing to make the necessary alteration to his Motion which, essentially, we all agree with.

Motion on Proposed Holiday for General Elections: 27th April, 1961

Be it resolved: "That the day appointed for General Elections in 1961 be declared a Public Holiday with pay."

Mrs. Jagan: I am not certain while I listened to the Members on the other side of the Table discussing the Motion, whether I detected a certain lack of confidence, a certain feeling of uncertainty in the air, a general feeling of insecurity about the Election. Instead of uncertainty there should be a feeling that all will be well, but when one listens to the words of the speakers one sees no justification for the Motion to make polling day a public holiday. May I quote the Hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson) who tells us that the people are more alive to their political responsibilities than before. He also says that they are more alive to the interests of their country; that with August, 1961 coming they are more awakened to their political responsibilities. He said that over and over again, and I agree with him that the people are now more awakened to their political responsibilities and with this awakening comes a very intense interest to participate in the political life of the community.

The actual physical act of going to polling booth and filling a form and putting it into the ballot box – that is the voter the fulfilment of his many years of interest in politics, and there are very few people, to my knowledge, who are really awakened and interested in the welfare of their country who will not go and vote on election day. I know that there are a few who may find difficulty through lack of transport to their polling areas, but those who are really keen will find the means and the ability to make the necessary sacrifice to go and vote, so that the political party they are supporting gets their votes. We have every confidence that people will come out in large numbers and exercise their franchise. We can see no need for a holiday to be proclaimed for that day, because we know that they are politically awakened.

The Hon. Member for Demerara River (Mr. Bowman) tells us that he is supporting the Motion for Election Day to be declared a public holiday because we will have to make a most important decision on that day. I agree with him. We will have to make a very important political decision, and it is the duty of everyone to participate in the making of that very important decision. I have great confidence in the people of this country, and I have confidence that they will come out and exercise the franchise. Polling day does not have to be made a public holiday for them to exercise the franchise. Previous elections have shown that people have come out to exercise their votes, without the day being declared a holiday.

The Hon. Member for Demerara River, in another vein, tells us now that we must have a departure from the old way. That, I found, rather unusual coming from the lips of the Hon. Member who does not seem to like any departure from any old way; and from what I observed from his talks and actions in this Council, he has consistently and persistently fought to maintain the old order of things.

He tells us that on this Election Day a great decision will be taken – whether this country should remain in the West or go to the East. He obviously feels that would be an issue. He tells us that that is the reason why it is terribly important that all must be able to vote on that day. He goes on to say there may be some employers who may not allow their employees to come out to vote on that day.

I understood the point of view from which the Hon. Member was speaking, but knowing of his political affiliation and that he is a member of a Political Party which is obviously and mainly supported by the employer group, I cannot see why he will have any fear that the employers would be reluctant to allow their employees time to vote. From his way of looking at the situation, the only political group that would suffer is the political group which I represent – and we have no fear. So that if the employers wish to prevent their employees from coming out and voting for us, we do want to say: *“We are not afraid.”* The voters who want to see this country go ahead and expand will know how to vote; and it is from this feeling of confidence that the Majority Party – the Elected Members of the Government, at any rate – say we cannot see the need for declaring that day a public holiday.

I cannot help mentioning that, aside from those views I expressed, I sat patiently and I listened to the Mover of the Motion and those who spoke, yet I have not heard one sound argument put up in favour of having Election Day as a public holiday. Perhaps, we will hear of all the countries in the world where Election Day has been declared a public holiday. I have not heard of them, but I am willing to be convinced. Until I hear sound arguments put forward in support of the Motion and contrary to the debates so far, my view is, there is only one possible way one can vote as a result of the discussion and that is against the Motion.

Motion on Ministers to Report on Visits Abroad: 24th May, 1961

"Be it Resolved, that Ministers of the Government be requested to report fully to this Council on their visits within the last twelve months to the United Kingdom, India, East Germany, Cuba and the United States, on official business."

Mrs. Jagan: Sir, perhaps the last speaker is unaware that the Motion refers to official business; and, if he had been present when the question was asked in this Council on a previous occasion about the petition to the United Nations, he would have appreciated, from the reply, that it was a matter concerning the People's Progressive Party as a Political Party and, certainly, not a matter of official business of the Government.

The Hon. Minister of Trade and Industry indicated that he went to the United States of America on private business; that his trip was not paid for by the Government, but he also took the opportunity to visit Washington and New York to put in a little extra work for the Government. So I hardly think that the last speaker's request was based on very considered thought. Perhaps, he may be excused as he was not present at the meeting when we went through this question of the P.P.P.'s petition to the United Nations. It was not a petition of the Government of British Guiana or of the Ministers of the Government. Political Parties' business, I presume, is separate from the business of this Council.

As I said, the Hon. Minister of Trade and Industry informed the Government that he went on private business and that his visit to and from the United States was not paid for by the Government of this country.

I noticed in the Motion, the Member for Georgetown Central speaks of official business by Ministers on their various trips *"within the last twelve months to the United Kingdom, India, East Germany, Cuba and the United States"*, so I can only presume he is not interested in the business trips I took in connection with the U.C.W.I. and the Caribbean Commission. Therefore, it would not be necessary to give him a report on those two visits.

Motion on Second Reading of the Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill: 1st June, 1961

"A Bill intituled: An Ordinance to amend the Representation of the People Ordinance, 1957."

Mrs. Jagan: Sir, it seems to me that while we can appreciate the anxiety of Hon. Members that there should be no violation of the electoral law, and everyone would object to seeing voting done by one person in more than one electoral district or on more than one occasion within the same electoral district, I think Hon. Members are aware that Government has taken the precaution of seeing that that does not happen. I think it is wiser to prevent something from happening than to spend a great deal of time on the question of punishment.

As Hon. Members will remember, following the suggestion of the Hon. Member for Georgetown Central, it was agreed that persons voting will have a mark, or an ink stain, put on their finger in order to prevent them from voting more than once. Tests have indicated that it takes a very long time for this indelible ink to be removed. The Hon. Attorney-General has tested the indelible ink, and I have observed the ink mark on his thumb for more than two weeks. Therefore I cannot see how any person could vote on one occasion; get the ink off his finger, and vote again the same day. That is the reason we have introduced this precaution. While I sympathise with the Hon. Member for Demerara River, I do not think that his fears will materialise.

Motion on Retrenchment of Sugar Workers: 5th July, 1961

“Whereas during the month of May 1961 two hundred and ninety workers of Plantation Port Mourant were retrenched;

And whereas this retrenchment has led to sharp increase in unemployment in the area particularly and in the country generally;

And whereas the employers of these workers claim that the retrenchment was necessitated by the need to mechanise the sugar industry and to stabilize their labour force;

And whereas the policy of retrenchment is being pursued on many sugar estates in this colony;

Be it Resolved: That this Council records its grave concern at the retrenchment of the workers of Plantation Port Mourant and other sugar estates and urges the Government to consider what steps should be taken to prevent a repetition or such acts which tend to dislocate the economy of the country, and which brings about hardship and misery to many families.”

Mrs. Jagan: The Motion moved by the Hon. Member for Berbice River has led us into many paths which appear to be unconnected with the problem before this Council.

In fact the Hon. Member who last spoke has treated us to a tirade of his Party's policy, which frankly I do not think is appropriate to this debate. Therefore, since he has chosen to mention it, one must follow him and pick up the threads he has left behind. The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, challenges the Government by stating that the sugar workers should look to the Government for the solution of the problem of unemployment, and yet when a member of the Majority Party brings to this Council a Motion which basically seeks to relieve the distress of unemployment, the Hon. Member says he cannot and will not support it.

The essence of the Motion is one expressing grave concern over the retrenchment of sugar workers of Pln. Port Mourant and other estates, and urges the Government to take what steps it can to prevent a repetition of such acts. The Motion emphasizes the fact that unemployment has been accentuated by this retrenchment and other retrenchment in the sugar industry. I have figures here which show us that in 1954 it was reported that there were 27,899 workers in the sugar industry and by 1959 that had been reduced to 21,766. That means that in an interval of five years 6,133 were put out of work in the sugar industry.

When we examine the figures of the industry from the years 1950 to 1960 we see a steady rise in the production of cane, rising from 195,651 tons in 1950 to 334,441 tons in 1960. The acreage under cane cultivation had also been going up, rising from 72,300 acres to 98,094 acres. In other words, the

sugar production has gone up, the acreage under cane cultivation has gone up and, as the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, quite rightly said, that was due to the fine work of one of the industry's Officers, Dr. Giglioli, in his control of malaria on the sugar estates. The health of the population on the sugar estates had improved and there was less infant mortality. The population on the sugar estates had increased from 80,000 to approximately 150,000.

The significant fact is that there has been an increase of the acreage of cane cultivation, but a steady decline in the number of workers employed in the sugar industry. Quite obviously this has been not a minor but a main factor in the unemployment problem. Yet those who have addressed this Council have been bold to remark: *"How can a member of the Majority Party bring to this Council a Motion which deals only with one industry?"*

I say the loss of employment to the workers in the sugar industry has been sufficiently significant for us to take interest in it. It cannot be compared with the loss of employment to workers in the other industries. If we examine the man hours, if we reduce the number of workers to the number of man-hours, because it may be said that the policy of stabilization means fewer persons working, we find from the figures available that from 1957 to 1960 there has been also a reduction of man-hours by workers to 237,527 hours. So there is a gradual reduction of the number of human beings who once received employment in the sugar industry but who are not now receiving that employment.

The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, also referred to the fact that the Ministry of Labour has obtained a Professor from U.C.W.I. to come to British Guiana at the invitation of the Ministry of Labour to examine the effects of mechanisation in the sugar industry, the effects on the general economic position of the country, unemployment etc. But we can see the significance from these figures I have quoted, and that, perhaps answers a number of speakers who are trying to say: *"Why bring up this Motion now? Why did you not bring it when the Carnegie Trade Centre retrenched two or three of its employees, or when the Government building project retrenched its employees?"*

We have to distinguish at all times between what is normal and regular employment and what is employment on a specific job. If a man is employed by the Public Works Department to repair a sea-dam, when the work is completed and he is laid off, that cannot be called retrenchment. There is a vast difference between the two types of employment. That is why we cannot accept the amendment by the Hon. Member for Georgetown North (Mr. Jackson).

I would like to clear up a few points and to cross swords with the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Tasker, who very clearly said that 290 workers were not retrenched at Pln. Port Mourant. He said that the estate re-employed 73 of that number. For his benefit I want to remind him exactly what took place in the relation to this matter. Let me go into the details.

The workers of Pln. Port Mourant who were given retrenchment notices came to me, as Minister of Labour, for assistance, and as the result of my discussion with them I requested an interview with the employing company, Messrs. Booker Bros. McConnell and Co.

I had an interview with them and asked them if they could kindly consider the re-employment of the workers who had been retrenched. I pointed out to them that the workers needs were great, and that many of them depend on that employment for a living. I was told that the matter would have to be considered by the Directors. I also took the opportunity at the moment to raise the point which the workers took extreme objection to. That is, they were dissatisfied with the severance pay.

Under an agreement with the M.P.C.A. severance pay is calculated on an average week's earning for over the year of his employment. But the method of calculation of what is an average week's earning is incorrect, because the sugar estate takes the total earnings of the worker for one year and divides that by fifty-two to get what is the average week's earnings. But very few workers in the sugar industry work 52 weeks in a year. I urged that it was simple mathematics for the company to take the total earnings of the worker and divide it by the number of weeks he worked and not by 52, which gives a false average.

They said they could not do anything about it because the union had agreed to it. I made my objection on May 23, and on May 27 I received this letter from them:

"We are writing in connection with the meeting held at your Ministry on Tuesday, May 23rd, between the Minister, representatives of her Department and representatives of this Company, to discuss the retrenchment of 290 employees of Port Mourant Estate. The Minister asked our representatives to reconsider the retrenchment of the workers, or if that were impossible, to re-examine the calculation of severance pay and to give the retrenched workers more notice.

Our representatives explained to the Minister that the decision to retrench 290 employees of the female weeding gang and the boy gang, was taken by the Board reluctantly and after careful consideration, and was based on the fundamental act that there was insufficient work at Port Mourant to keep the whole labour force fully employed, this problem being more acute in these two gangs, which throughout the whole of 1960 had, on average, only about 2 days work a week. Although our representatives said that in these circumstances there was no prospect of the company being able to withdraw the retrenchment notices, they agreed to convey the Minister's request to the Board.

We now wish to confirm that we regret that we cannot reverse the decision to retrench these employees. We believe that our decision, which is in pursuance of the policy to provide full employment for employees wherever possible, is in the long run in the best interests of the majority of our employees and of the industry as a whole.

As regards the severance pay terms, our representatives pointed out that the

formula to be used was that recently negotiated with the M.P.C.A. This agreement is based on the accepted principle that severance pay should provide help to retrenched workers over a period of weeks, generally determined by length of service, following determination of services. This help is in lieu of wages at the time at which they would have been paid in employment. Because of the irregularity of employment, the average weekly wage is taken as being the fairest computation irrespective of the season at which retrenchment occurs. In fact, had these workers in the female weeding gang and boy gang continued in employment, there would have been very little work available to them at the present time and their rate of earnings could have been correspondingly low. In these circumstances we believe that the average weekly earnings basis is a fair one. Employers with 20 years' service will get a minimum of 35 weeks pay. We regret that the period of notice cannot be extended as suggested by the Minister.

Finally, we cannot accept that agreed formula for the computation of severance pay should be changed. We are continuing to examine alternative measures for the alleviation of hardship in respect of these former employees."

I also said it was highly improper to retrench employees without notice and the workers should have been given six months' notice in order to adjust themselves as they would be out of employment. Now they have said they regret they cannot reverse their decision to disperse with the employment of those workers. They refused to withdraw the retrenchment notices to those 290 workers. What happened then is what has been happening in the sugar industry for many years. The trade union organisation had put up no protest.

The workers then came to us, and we put up a fight on their behalf. The employers refuse to abide by our request, but wait later for the union to put up a show fight.

Then the union asked for the retrenchment notices to be withdrawn, and the company decided to withdraw some of the notices. What is further interesting in this case about the retrenchment, is that the union had done the despicable thing to ask, at a committee meeting, that these very workers be retrenched; and in a press notice which I issued, I quoted from the minutes of the Emergency Estates Joint Committee Meeting held on March 12, 1961, at 9.30 a.m., in the Port Mourant Local Accounts Office. At that meeting, the M.P.C.A.'s representative had urged retrenchment – and I quote from the minutes:

"Mr. Sankar, who is Assistant Secretary of the M.P.C.A. said that since 1954, the work was getting shorter every year and that something should be done about retrenching workers as it is not likely that the situation will change. He asked how long it would take Management to give a decision on this."

Then Mr. Narine, Industrial Relations Officer of Booker Bros. McConnell and Company said - and I quote:

“...that any question of retrenchment must be gone into by the Board of Directors and if it is undertaken on such a large scale as suggested by the unions it will be necessary to get approval from London. Mr. Sankar, Assistance Secretary of the M.P.C.A. then asked how soon could the union be told how long it will take to consider the implementation of the general retrenchment.”

We have from the words of Bookers' representative that if the union is demanding such a great retrenchment, the matter has to be referred to London. The union's representative had been forcing the issue that there should be a retrenchment. Mr. Sankar asked how soon could the union be told how long it would take to consider the implementation of the general retrenchment. I quoted this in the newspaper and the President of the union has not refuted it, because it was already in a number of files. The President of the M.P.C.A. said something else. He slandered the workers saying that his representative was forced to call for retrenchment because, he said, the workers demanded retrenchment. When it all came out, it was a lie. The workers did not demand retrenchment. There was one small group of field mechanics who had asked to receive severance pay, but the 290 people retrenched did not ask for retrenchment. With retrenchment they face days ahead of them with no money to buy food; and so the very union, which had brought about the retrenchment, turns around and begs the company. After I had raised the issue, as Minister of Labour, the union turned around and begged the company; and then the company in its dignity, having refused the Minister, reinstates 73 – and that has been going on very frequently.

I listened with a great deal of interest to the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks. Some of the things he said fascinated me. For example, his praises of Puerto Rico have left me spellbound, because only a few breaths before he had let out a terrible blast of fire on this Government for the agitation of the takeover of the 51 schools which, he says, is communism; it is a most despicable thing that should happen in this country – the control of schools by this Government – it is communism, it would destroy the country, etc., etc.

But then we hear him praise Puerto Rico – this gentleman who stands and gives us a dissertation on everything, from economic dynamism to education, the C.I.O. and the United States and a wide range of subjects. I thought he was well read. Perhaps he did not observe the election in Puerto Rico which took place in November, last year. Perhaps he forgot the basic election issue in November, 1960. It was the Catholic Church against the Popular Party and the issue was the control of schools.

The Popular Party fought an open battle with the Church on the question of Church control of schools. When I was in Puerto Rico I read of a priest of the Catholic Church being taken to open court in connection with an election issue. It was the Catholic Church against the Party in power. Because of the state control of schools and the introduction of birth control, the two issues which the Catholic Church would not tolerate, the Catholic

Church put up candidates to fight the election. I am glad the views of the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, will be recorded in the *Hansard*. The issue of which we are accused so vehemently is the one which the very Puerto Ricans had as their election issue. Incidentally, the Popular Party of Munoz Murrin won.

We heard about the United States and the C.I.O. I wonder, if one were to speak on the same issue, if he is aware that the State controls schools in the United States? I wonder if he appreciates that Queen's College and Bishops' High School are controlled by the Government of British Guiana? I want to urge Members of this Council, who are afraid of the indoctrination of communism which will be thrust down the throats of their children, if they feel so strongly they should certainly not allow their children to go to these schools. How foolish some of our speeches can be!

The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, also accused this Government. He asked what is it doing about unemployment? It could not spend the very development money last year. Let me take the Hon. Member on a little trip. I would like to remind him that when this accusation was made last year, we explained that in any Development Programme it takes some time to get things going. Our Development Programme for 1960-64 could not start until the Legislative Council had given its approval, which was sometime in January. After this, the many plans had to be drawn up; technical work had to be done; contracts had to be advertised three months between publication and award, and a very large number of things had to be done.

I can remember being one of the speakers who reminded Members that we would not be so foolish as to deliberately hold up our Development Programme. We cannot obviously "*cut off our noses to spite our faces.*" I reminded them of the U.C.W.I. where I attended as a delegate to discuss their three-year budget. The College asked that they be permitted to spend the money they could not spend in the first year, in the second year because, they said, in the first year it took them sometime to get going, but as soon as acceleration began they would want to spend the full amount they could not spend in the first year, in the second year.

Let me tell Hon. Members here that it was only last week Members of the Executive Council had been examining the problem of finding additional money to spend on our Development Programme this year because we are moving very fast. We are spending more than we have this year, and that is precisely what I and others anticipated last year. The pace is now so rapid that that, in itself, presents a problem. To those who want to suggest that money was deliberately held up last year, I would say: "*Go and study your economics before making these silly, childish, immature statements in this Legislative Council.*"

We are told, also, by the Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, that the United Force – he brings his Political Party into this Legislature – will seek better conditions for the sugar workers.

[Mr. Fredericks: To a point of correction. The Minister of Natural Resources was the first person to mention the United Force in this Council. And for the Minister of Labour's information, I had not replied to all the points made by the Minister of Natural Resources.]

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Nominated Member, Mr. Fredericks, said that he, then, will seek better conditions for the sugar workers; and in the other breath he denies the sugar workers any assistance in their retrenchment by not giving his support to the Motion. How can he deny them his support in a serious matter of life or death, of living or not living, of not working and not having wages and of working and having wages? He says he is going to help them. He also tells us about a pension scheme his party would introduce which would have the sanction of the majority of workers in the sugar industry. One cannot help associating him with or dissociating him from a very prominent associate of his – a political friend of his – who is also President of the M.P.C.A. I doubt he would deny that association. Of course, if he would, let him stand and deny it; and he has promised us that the sugar workers should have a pension scheme which should have the sanction of the workers.

For the information of this Council, I and other colleagues have spent a great number of hours trying to urge the same gentleman and the sugar producers that it was wrong not to give the workers in the sugar industry more information and more notice about the introduction of the pension scheme. However, I wish to assure Members that the President of the union informed us that he had the full confidence of the workers, and had negotiated on behalf of the 25,000 members of the union.

I issued a challenge to the President of the M.P.C.A. who informed me that the workers in the sugar industry supported the pension scheme 90 percent. In order to prove that, I asked him whether he would be prepared to go to the sugar estates on Friday, Saturday and Sunday to explain the pension scheme to the sugar workers to see whether they agreed with it. I told him that a Labour Inspector would accompany him as an observer. That was said to the president of the M.P.C.A. last week, but up to now he has not yet replied. I am still awaiting a reply from him. Representatives of the sugar producers have stated that they do not like the idea, but the President of the M.P.C.A. was either unable or unwilling to accept that simple challenge. Yet we hear in this Council that a certain group to which the Hon. Nominated member, Mr. Fredericks, is associated would not have introduced any pension scheme unless it had the sanction of the sugar workers. One wonders how reliable such statements can be when his colleague tried to force the pension scheme down the throats of the sugar workers.

We also hear the Hon. Nominated Member say that one of the things his Political Party urges is that profits should not go out of the country. I wonder whether he has given thought to that statement.

[**Mr. Speaker:** Time.]

[**Mr. Ram Karran:** I beg to move that the Minister be given another half-hour.]

[**Mr. Saffee:** I beg to second the Motion.]

[**Question put, and agreed to.**]

[**Mr. Speaker:** please proceed.]

Mrs. Jagan: I was -

[**Mr. Fredericks:** On a point of correction, Sir. The Minister associates me with Mr. Ishmael. He is a friend of mine, but I am not aware that he is a member of the Political Party to which I belong. The United Force does not have anything to do with the M.P.C.A. The second point I would like to make is: I did not say that no profits should go out of the country. I said that a percentage of the profits only should be allowed to leave this country, but the greater part should remain for the purpose of reinvestment in the interest of this country.]

Mrs. Jagan: I am glad the Hon. Member has cleared up that point for me. I want to know whether the leader of his Party believes in reinvestment, because instead of investing money here he has gone to Barbados to reinvest some of his money.

We have been given a tirade here, and the P.P.P. has been blamed for the shameful shooting at Enmore. I was horrified to hear the Hon. Nominated member, Mr. Fredericks, standing here and suggesting that the shooting at Enmore was a communist plot. I wonder whether all of the shootings we have known in British Guiana were the result of a communist plot. I am amazed at the intelligence of any Member of this Council who would suggest that the strike at Enmore was communist inspired. Was the trouble at Leonora and Ruimveldt also communist inspired?

A Guianese should know his history much better, and the Hon. Nominated Member should know that in 1948 there was no P.P.P. party. Why blame the P.P.P. for the strike at Enmore? These are the facts of history, and the Hon. Member should learn history before getting up here and lashing out at the P.P.P. The Hon. Member also referred to remarks made by my Hon. Colleague the Minister of Natural Resources regarding the unemployment benefits given to people in the United States of America. Unfortunately, I am unable to say who is correct, but the Hon. Nominated Member has clarified the fact that the American worker receives higher unemployment allowances than the Guianese worker receives in wages.

I wonder whether the Hon. Nominated Member would recall the strug-

gle of the sawmill workers in British Guiana to obtain a decent wage. They had to strike against the sawmill owners and fight every inch of the way until they finally received \$3.00 per day as the minimum wage. He is telling us about the American worker when he, as the owner of a sawmill, has done his best to prevent sawmill workers from getting \$3.00 per day. He should be ashamed of himself for making that statement.

[**Mr. Fredericks:** On a point of correction, Sir. I want to state definitely that at no time have I ever resisted an increase in wages in this country. Increase in wages must come, and the Minister should know that when the cost of a product goes up it will be necessary to compete with other markets.]

Mrs. Jagan: The Hon. Member for Demerara River suggested that the retrenchment at Plantation Port Mourant took place because of political pressure. He said: "*Because of Jagan's agitation.*" I wonder how much support he has in that claim since those very close to him do not seem to consider the retrenchment that took place at Port Mourant to be of much significance.

[**Mr. Bowman:** Sir, on a point of correction. When I referred to the retrenchment at Port Mourant, I was dealing with the closing down of the factory. That came about as a result of Dr. Jagan's agitation. I am not saying that with water in my mouth.]

Mrs. Jagan: I wonder how much support you will get with that. It is meeting the point that mechanization in the sugar industry has taken place to bring political pressure against the P.P.P., and the centralisation of the sugar mill is another effort by the sugar industry to hit back at Dr. Jagan and the P.P.P. Perhaps the Hon. Member should sort that out at a higher level.

The Hon. Member for Demerara River quarrelled with Government and asked why it was not building roads. He said that he had brought a Motion regarding the building of a road to Brazil and Government did nothing about it. Yet he is the same Member who quarrels furiously because the Government of this country is going ahead at a very fast rate with a road to the Interior from Parika to Bartica. In one breath he quarrels when the Government fails to do something, and he quarrels when the Government does something. He does not want the Government to do anything, and that shows the inconsistency of the Hon. Member in his discussion.

He asked why we did not refer to other retrenchments that have taken place. I say that the retrenchment which has taken place in the sugar industry during the last five years which approximates 6,133 workers is a serious enough business for all of us to be concerned with. That is why we are supporting this Motion which records our grave concern, and which asks

this Government to consider what steps should be taken to prevent a repetition because it will dislocate the economy of the country and bring about hardship and misery on many families.

This Motion refers to a specific issue – an issue which affects a large number of people in this country – and I do not see any point in broadening the Motion. If Hon. Members feel strongly about labour conditions in any other industry – the bauxite industry for example – no one prevents them from bringing a Motion to this Council in relation to that and to general retrenchment which is taking place in the industry. It asks no more of this Council than to record its concern, and to take steps to prevent a repetition.

Motion on the Second Recording of the Kitty Railway Lands Bill: 13th July, 1961

Mrs. Jagan: Sir, I have a Certificate of Urgency from His Excellency the Governor permitting the suspension of the Standing Rules and Orders to enable this Bill to be taken through all stages at this sitting, and I will hand it to the Clerk.

In moving the Second Reading of a Bill intituled: "*An Ordinance to make provision for certain lots of land to be transported*", I should like to explain to Hon. Members that under the provisions of the Public Health Ordinance, Chapter 145, as well as the Local Government Ordinance, Chapter 150, no lot of land which is less than a quarter lot, or equivalent to 20 square roods, shall be transported.

However, as Hon. Members may be aware, the Government with its Planning Officer has recently been examining the problem of the Kitty Railway Lands. The Planning Officer has prepared a detailed plan, and it indicates that about sixty persons will be unable to obtain transport because the size of the lots on which their houses are built is less than 20 square roods. Strong representation has been made to Government by the sublessees of the Kitty Railway Lands asking that the lands on which their houses are built be sold to them separately to enable them to get leases from the Government. They fear that, if the land on which their houses are built is sold to other persons to be leased to them they may suffer some form of exploitation from the persons to whom the land may be sold. They feel very strongly about this and they desire to purchase the lots of land on which their houses rest.

In order to carry out this plan, Government has brought this Bill to the Legislative Council which will give these persons the right, if Hon. Members agree, to purchase the lots as recorded in the plan which was drawn up by Mr. Phang, a Sworn Land Surveyor, and is in the Lands and Mines Department.

I would like to urge strongly that, while it is not Government's wish to reduce the standards which have been set and which seek to prevent congestion in our urban area, in this particular case where the houses have been built on the land by sublessees to the original lessee, the people should be given an opportunity to purchase the various lots of land on which their houses are built.

In view of the fact that this is such a simple matter, I hope that I have been able to explain their point of view and that Members will treat this as a special circumstances in order to ease the housing problem of approximately sixty persons.

Statement in the Senate - Notice of Resignation: 1st June, 1964

Mrs. Jagan: On 15th June, 1963, less than a year ago, His Excellency the Governor by instrument under the Public Seal appointed me as Minister of Home Affairs and charged me under the Constitution with, among other things, responsibility for certain matters and Departments of Government. Among these were the maintenance of public safety and public order and the Police Department. A few days later I entered this Senate as a Senator under the Constitution.

I did not expect my Ministry to be a bed of roses. I recognised that my Ministry was of supreme importance. The maintenance of law and order is one of the first duties of a Government. I was also not unaware of the problems that had arisen in respect of the Police Force. Indeed, my appointment was heralded by an expression of these problems in a practical form. No one will easily forget the sordid events that took place on 30th May, 1963, at the funeral of my predecessor and friend, the late Senator Claude Christian. I know that you, Mr. President, will remember this only too well. You will recall that you were in charge of the funeral arrangements and had discussions with the Police on the matter. The Police were advised that there would be a large number of people at the funeral and that the burial place should be cordoned off and other security precautions taken for their safety. In spite of all advice, and indeed, in spite of the disorderly behaviour of crowds at the funeral parlour and at the Brickdam Cathedral, the Police took no precautions. In the event, Ministers of the Government and bereaved relatives and friends of the late Minister were viciously attacked at the cemetery, and this in turn resulted in racial outbursts, grievous injury to persons and serious loss to property later the same evening. A report by the Commissioner of Police on these events stated in part:

"In all 50 civilians were injured, 42 of them being East Indians, 6 Africans and 2 Portuguese. 20 of these detained in hospital, 3 of them being considered as seriously hurt. 3 policemen were injured, none of them seriously. 20 persons were arrested by the Police for varying offences.

3 cars were damaged and 1 shop broken into. There were 20 reports of larceny from the person but most of these involved the injured persons mentioned in the preceding paragraph.

Many shops owned by East Indian businessmen were stoned and windows broken."

Later reports indicated that during the nights Indians were attacked in their homes and beaten and robbed.

These were the events that heralded my appointment as Minister of Home Affairs in succession to Mr. Christian.

I mention the incident to show that at the time I was charged with responsibility for the Police, I had no illusions about the difficulties of the problems confronting me. The events of the time and indeed of February, 1962, had fully shown the gravity of the problem. But I felt that with an earnest and sustained effort and the goodwill of all concerned, the problem would be solved and we would evolve a balanced and impartial Police Force working in cooperation with the Government and the people.

It is now almost a year since I have been in office. And I fear that in spite of all my efforts, I have not been able to achieve this objective. But let me recount my efforts in this direction.

On 26th June, 1963, soon after I assumed office, I warned the Commissioner of Police at a meeting that the situation on the East Coast of Demerara would deteriorate unless steps were taken to assure the public of the total impartiality of the Police. I was constrained to say this because certain actions by the Police had given the impression that they were taking sides. At that time the disturbances were restricted to Georgetown and had not yet spread to the countryside. Two days later, on 28th June, 1963, I wrote to the Commissioner naming a number of incidents which smacked of discrimination by the Police and pointed out that the situation was explosive. I showed how persons associated with the People's Progressive Party were being harassed by the Police, and pointed out that this factor, together with events in Georgetown, would intensify and spread the area of disturbances. On 2nd July, 1963, I again wrote to the Commissioner of Police and advised him to "*put an officer reputed for fairness and not tagged with a political bias*" on the East Coast because the presence of the officer in Charge "*who was a firm partisan of the People's National Congress and had openly demonstrated his alliance*" was a threat to peace in the area. All my warnings and advice were ignored. Police discrimination continued and the result was that the conflict spread to the East Coast.

You will remember, Mr. President, that the 1963 disturbances which occurred in the rural areas did not, in any way, approach in intensity or scale those which occurred in Georgetown, where they started. Yet the Police showed much more activity in the rural areas. I pointed this out in a letter to the Commissioner of Police dated 28th June, 1963. I wrote: -

"The incidents of violence in the rural areas were not in any way on a par with what has taken place in the urban areas. Yet there appears to be more Police action in the former resulting in more arrests than in the latter."

On 15th August, 1963, the Commissioner replied saying that he was conscious of the country's need for a completely impartial Police Force and he sought to brush aside reports of partiality as "*false or grossly exaggerated*". He stated also that "*the number of persons charged in connection with offences*

attributable to the Emergency is 1647 – of these only 651 were of East Indian origin". This means that 39 percent of the people charged were East Indians. This is a high percentage; for the strike and disturbances were practically confined to the urban areas. But these figures, taken in conjunction with others, are even more significant. The record of police searches for the period from the end of the strike to December, 1963, reveals that 61 percent of the searches done by the Police were on East Indians. Yet, by the Commissioner's own figures, only 39 percent of those charged during the disturbances were East Indians. Indeed, even this does not give the full measure of the discrimination. The figure of 61 percent does not include persons other than East Indians who were searched because they were supporters of the Governing Party. This would bring the percentage up to well over 70 percent. These statistics were not available to the people but the evidence of Police partiality was abundantly clear to them.

The result of all this is that thousands and thousands of law-abiding citizens have lost all confidence in the Police Force, will not put themselves under their protection even when exposed to attack and are, indeed, demanding their removal from their respective areas.

The chronicle of instances of Police discrimination would fill several volumes. It is necessary to give only a few instances taken at random. On 25th October, 1963, the Ministry of Home Affairs received information that certain persons at Ann's Grove were reported to have firearms and explosives. This information was passed on to the Police. Nothing more was heard until 9th December, 1963, when the Commissioner of Police replied to the report. He wrote: -

"The information received at the Ministry is far from reliable, and the informant was prompted by political leanings to accuse persons named therein of secreting arms."

The Commissioner appended to his letter a report from the Superintendent of the Division as follows:-

"I have made discreet enquiries into the background and present activities of the persons named and formed the opinion that they are not concerned in any way whatsoever with the trafficking of illegal weapons and do not possess them. I do not consider that it will serve any useful purpose to carry out searches on the premises of these persons as from information obtained they have never been known to do any act which would create the belief that they possess firearms."

The same Police Officer who refused to search the houses of five known P.N.C. members after he had made "*discreet enquiries*" searched the houses of 83 persons, mostly P.P.P. supporters, and found nothing except two licensed shot guns and one person with 50 rounds of ammunition in excess of what he was permitted to have. Did he make "*discreet enquiries*" about

the 83 persons searched? The question is asked, "*Why does the Commissioner of Police condone such brazen discrimination?*" Is it not this attitude which leads to such incidents as that which took place at Ann's Grove when an armed policeman stood by while a man was beaten to death?

Let us look at another incident during the 1963 disturbances. It is well known that the perpetrators of the disturbances used explosives to destroy a number of Government buildings. Among those buildings was the Ministry of Home Affairs which was dynamited on 23rd June, 1963. 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. The man, a resident of Ann's Grove, who had been brought to Georgetown with others for such activities, was apprehended by the Police. Did the Police then make any serious searches? Did they, for example, go immediately to Ann's Grove and search premises associated with this man? Did the Police then search Mr. Burnham and other P.N.C. leaders? No! As is public knowledge, no one is convicted of this offence – the dynamiting of the Ministry of Home Affairs. In reply to the report that certain persons at Ann's Grove had firearms and explosives, the Commissioner of Police had written that the informant was "*prompted by political leanings*". Perhaps the Commissioner would say that the dog, Rio, who traced the Ann's Grove saboteur to Mr. Burnham's office was also "*prompted by political leanings!*"

Indeed, Mr. President, Rio would appear to be thoroughly brainwashed. For when another public building was dynamited – the Department of Housing – Rio ended up at the home of Mr. Richard Ishmael! I would remind the Commissioner of Police of the saying that there are none so blind as those who will not see.

Before completing my observations on events of 1963, I should like to pay a passing tribute to the delicacy of the Police towards a leading P.N.C. activist, Dr. P.A. Reid, in whose yard occurred a great explosion and in which was found buried detonators. The polite and apologetic interrogation of the activist at his home was a nice study in decorum. And, of course, no charge was preferred. Compare this with the treatment of Ministers whose persons were searched and one of whose homes was ransacked by Police and of a husband and wife on the East Bank Demerara, in whose yard, the Police, acting on information, found some explosive material. The couple were dragged to Police Headquarters in the usual Police manner. And yet the Commissioner of Police insists that there is no partiality, no partisanship, no discrimination.

We come now to the events of 1964. The partiality of the Police in 1963, the loss of confidence it created, and the resulting precipitation of violence in rural areas had made a deep impression on me. I was determined to do my best to help establish a Police Force which had the confidence of the community. Examinations for recruits were different and of varying standards depending upon the areas from which they came and I sought to en-

sure that the entrance examination into the Force was fairly conducted, and that all recruits be given just and fair treatment by being made to take one and the same examination at any given time. At the very beginning of the present unrest, on 13th March, 1964, I wrote the Commissioner of Police reminding him of my letter of 2nd July, last year, and pointing out that *"the situation can worsen if any of the groups involved in the dispute feel that the Police are taking sides."* I pointed out that these charges were already being made and mentioned that the Police were firing tear gas shells at people at short range, using the shells as weapons rather than for the effect of the gas. I wrote: -

"You admitted that this was unfortunately the case and informed me that you had issued warnings that gas shells must not be aimed at people ... The fact that you had to remind (your officers) about the correct use of gas shells plus the unnecessary use of bayonets at Non Pareil is sufficient indication that my fears may be justified ..."

I asked the Commissioner why he had permitted the use of tear gas shells and bayonets on peaceful squatters on the East Coast, when he did not take similar action last year even when squatters invaded Government offices. I wrote: -

"Your task is to see that law and order are maintained as impartially as possible. You have to expect a comparison of Police action now with such action last year. If squatters in 1963 could invade Government offices without receiving bayonet wounds it is not too much to expect that squatters should be allowed to sit on roads without being injured."

As was to be expected, the partiality of the Police soon led to further deterioration in relations between the Police and the public. The use of Police to escort scabs to work on the sugar estates further exacerbated the situation as did the clouded picture of events leading to the death of Kowsilia at Plantation Leonora.

In the case of the recent disturbances, as in 1963, there are countless examples of Police partiality. I shall draw attention to one or two of these. Let us take the case of Bachelor's Adventure, for example. On 21st and 22nd May, delegations from Bachelor's Adventure came to my Ministry and drew attention to the dangers to which the people are constantly exposed. A man had been knifed and killed while trying to move his house. I spoke to the Commissioner on both occasions and requested that more attention be paid to the village, as it was evident that the residents were in danger. All the signs of further violence were there. After these warning, a pregnant woman was beaten to death. I have had repeated reports from Bachelor's Adventure that even with Police on the scene at the time of violence, nothing is done. One might tend to doubt these reports if events, particularly at

Wismar, were not so glaringly apparent.

At Buxton, also, the behaviour of the Police followed the now familiar pattern. On 25th May, a man in Buxton was moving his furniture out of his house. When he returned to his house, he found that a number of hostile people had already invaded it. He went for his licensed firearm to protect himself and his family and then the Police arrived. They took him to the Police station and while there, his house was destroyed by fire. Persons allege that houses in Buxton have been set on fire in full view of the Police. This too would be hard to believe if there were not Wismar to remember.

At Meten-meer-Zorg, fire was set to the homes of Inshan Boodram and Rasheed. The Police refused to allow neighbours to help extinguish the fires. They themselves gave no help. And it was not until a British soldier interceded that the fires could be put out.

I spoke to an old man from Buxton last week, whose house was burned almost to the ground. He wanted me to help him get protection so that he could remove what was left. I said that I would speak to the Commissioner of Police and get him Police protection. The old man refused to accept it. He said that the Police would not protect him and he could not risk what was certain attack. He preferred to lose the rest of his life's savings than have anything to do with the Police. This is the attitude of thousands of Guianese towards the Police. This is the grim consequence of discrimination, of the blind eye being turned by the Police to incidents they do not wish to see, of arrest without cause and unjust prosecution, of merciless beatings by the Police of suspects belonging to the People's Progressive Party and of partiality to the supporters of the People's National Congress. Is it any wonder that half the community has no confidence in the Police?

At Vergenoegen, on Sunday, 24th May, a woman and her daughter were attacked by a group of men at their home which is near the road. The attackers fired a shot at the woman but missed. They then attempted to rape her daughter. The husband however, heard the shot and cries and came to their rescue. He saw a jeep passing on the Public Road. He shouted "*Soldiers, come*". On hearing this, the attackers ran. But it was a Police jeep and it did not stop. The attackers came back. Fortunately, the daughter had got away during the interval. They then beat up the father and burned the house down. Up to the time I met the mother, she had not seen the Police except for the brief glimpse of the jeep on the road.

(a) I shall leave the multitude of instances of Police partiality on the East and West Coasts of Demerara and come to the events of Wismar, 65 miles up the Demerara River, on Monday 25th May, 1964. The events on the Coast pale into insignificance before those of Wismar. The heightened violence leading to riots commenced on the night of Sunday, 24th May. I am called Minister of Home Affairs and I am charged under the Constitution with responsibility for the maintenance of public safety and public order. And yet I never, at any time, received information from the Police that rioting

was actually taking place at Wismar. All that I was told was that the situation was tense.

(b) About midday on Monday, I received private information that things were worsening. I spoke to Mr. Puttock at Force Control at 12.50 p.m. after being unable to contact the Commissioner of Police, and I was told that there were sufficient forces there to deal with the situation.

(c) At 2.00 p.m. I met the Commissioner of Police and the Garrison Commander and asked whether British troops ought not to be sent to the area. I was told that it was not necessary, that the Volunteer Force had been embodied, and that an Assistant Commissioner had been sent to assess the situation and report. The action to be taken would depend on his report. I told the two officers that in my opinion, the Volunteer Force would be of no use since it was made up of the very same people who were associated with the trouble. The Volunteers could hardly be expected to take firm action against their own neighbours, friends and relations. Needless to say, my advice was not heeded.

(d) At about 3.00 p.m. just after the conference, I received another private call which indicated that the situation had gone beyond control; a large number of buildings were burning and people were being attacked, raped and murdered. I immediately called the Commissioner of Police who said that he had the same information and was then asking Colonel King to fly up troops. By this time, a section of Wismar had been razed to the ground, the most sordid and unthinkable crimes had been committed, about 172 houses had been burnt and more than fifteen hundred people had become homeless.

Certain basic and fundamental questions must be asked. If the situation at Wismar was serious from Sunday evening, why was the Commissioner of Police not aware of this? Why was it only at midday that he recognised the seriousness and sent up the Assistant Commissioner to assess the situation – when most of the damage had been done? Was it that the Officer in Charge at Wismar/Mackenzie did not properly inform the Commissioner of Police, or was it that the Commissioner received information and did not properly assess the situation? Why was no information given to me by the Police that rioting had broken out at Wismar?

The accounts of what took place at Wismar are shocking and revealing. Armed Police and Volunteers stood by while looting, arson, rape and murder were committed and made no effort to intervene. Two girls, for instance, were being raped on the Wismar side of the river. Persons on the Mackenzie side who saw the incident asked four armed Volunteers who stood by to rescue the girls. The Volunteers refused. Eventually four men from Mackenzie – a member of Demba staff, an officer of Saguenay Terminals and two others – crossed the river and rescued the girls.

Another Wismar resident saw his house pillaged and burned, while two armed Volunteers stood by and watched.

Dozens of such incidents took place in full view of the Police and Volunteers and reports indicate that nothing was done to stop them.

On the West Coast of Demerara, two men were shot and killed by a policeman for moving "*under suspicious circumstances*." They were two individuals, unarmed, and not in a group and were crossing a public road when they were shot and killed. At Wismar riotous mobs roamed the streets plundering houses, raping women and carrying on assault and murder, and armed policemen and Volunteers stood by unmoved. Is it that the rioters were not moving "*under suspicious circumstances*" like the two unarmed youths who were shot and killed by Police while crossing a public road on the West Coast of Demerara?

Is it possible for anyone to believe that with the widespread violence, arson, rape and murder that there could have been no show of force by armed Police and armed Volunteers? Since this is impossible to accept, one can only come to the conclusion that planned genocide of a village was carried out with the connivance of all involved.

(a) It is revealing to look at the events that preceded the rioting at Wismar. On Thursday, 21st May, a leading P.N.C. activist visited the Wismar district. Two refugees have reported a conversation with this activist who was in a Police jeep along with a Police sergeant and a constable. He told them that they were going to take care of the East Indians at Wismar – that they would pay for the deaths of two persons at Buxton. I have no reason to doubt reports that P.N.C. activists not only threatened persons but organised and incited the terrible acts which took place.

(b) In fact, the Police have known since last year that a gang of ten P.N.C. activists had been organised as saboteurs at Mackenzie/Wismar and trained at Congress Place in the use of explosives and in fighting.

My efforts to bring partisanship to an end have been of no avail. Take as an example the important post of Security Chief. The last holder of the post was known to have a close personal association with a close relative of Mr. P. S. D'Aguiar, and it is alleged protected members of the United Force from police searches. When the grave impropriety of the Security Chief having a liaison with a member of the family of the leader of the United Force attracted attention, the Security Chief resigned only to be succeeded by an expatriate officer of known anti-Government sentiments. I protested against this appointment, on the grounds that the officer had known anti-Government sentiments and that the position of Security Chief should be filled by an officer known for his impartiality. I suggested that appointment of a Guianese to the post. My advice was not heeded nor did the Governor care to intervene although he indicated that reasons for doubting the impartiality of the officer were sound.

(a) Mr. President, during the year I have been Minister of Home Affairs,

I have had to stomach the discriminatory practices of the Police Force. By their partisanship, the Police have been largely responsible for the suffering that has taken place in the country this year and in 1962 and 1963. By their unfair treatment of a large section of the Guianese community, they have helped to spread the disturbances in the country. They have failed to maintain law and order for which they are responsible and they have completely lost the confidence of half of the community.

(b) Let me say, at this stage that I know that a good section of the Police Force of all ranks are conscientious, fair-minded and loyal. But many of these have had to close their eyes to injustices for fear of disfavour. I know Police officers of all races who have been harassed and hounded because they have sought to do their duty as they know in conscience it must be done. And I want to pay tribute to those officers and men who have behaved with fairness and impartiality in the face of pressures of all kinds. The tragedy is that the effectiveness of the loyal section of the Police Force is seriously impaired by the misdeeds of their colleagues.

(c) The blame for the loss of confidence of the community in the Police Force and the loss of respect for the Force, with all the evils to which these give rise, must fall fully on the shoulders of the Commissioner of Police, who has refused to heed my advice and has refused to discipline his officers for their misconduct and has condoned their partisanship and improper behaviour.

(d) For my part, after a year in office, I see that I have no power to curb or prevent discriminatory practices or correct injustices perpetrated by the Police with increasing frequency and complete immunity. And so I have come to the inescapable conclusion that under existing Constitutional arrangements and with the Police Force as presently constituted, my hope of having a balanced and impartial Police Force cannot be achieved.

In view of all that I have related, and in the existing circumstances, I cannot continue to bear responsibility for the maintenance of public safety and public order and the Police Department. I therefore propose to tender to the Premier at the end of this sitting of the Senate, my resignation as Minister of Home Affairs. My only hope and prayer is that immediate steps will be taken to correct the evils that I have described which are aiding in the destruction of all efforts to have a peaceful Guyana.

