

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT
[VOLUME]**

**PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE THIRD PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF GUYANA**

109th Sitting

2 p.m.

Friday, 7th January, 1977

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., Speaker

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (50)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, O.E., S.C.,
Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of
National Development

Senior Ministers (9)

Cde. H. D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Economic Development

*Cde. H. Green,
Minister of Co-operatives and
National Mobilisation

***Non-elected Minister**

*Cde. H. O. Jack,
Minister of Energy and Natural
Minister of Finance

(Absent)

*Cde. S. S. Naraine, A. A.,
Minister of Works and Housing

(Absent – on leave)

*Cde. G. A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection

*Cde. G. B. Kennard, C. C. H.,
Minister of Agriculture

*Cde. C. L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development

*Cde. F. R. Wills, S. C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice

Ministers (5)

Cde. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

Cde. S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture

Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House

*Cde. O. M. R. Harper,
Minister of Health

*Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs

Ministers of State (9)

Cde. M. Kasim, A. A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture

***Non-elected Minister**

Cde. O. E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)

Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

Cde. C. A. Nascimento,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister

Cde. K. B. Bancroft,
Minister of State – Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro)

Cde. J. P. Chowritmootoo,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)

(Absent)

*Cde. W. Haynes,
Minister of State for Consumer Protection

*Cde. A. Salim,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)

(Absent)

*Cde. F. U. A. Carmichael,
Minister of State – Regional (North West)

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

Cde. J. R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Minister of National Development

Cde. M. M. Ackman, C. C. H.,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Office of the Prime Minister,
and Government Chief Whip

Cde. E. L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Agriculture

***Non-elected Minister**

Cde. S. Prashad,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation

Cde. R. H. O. Corbin,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education and Social Development

Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Housing

Other Members (19)

Cde. L. M. Branco
Cde. E. M. Bynoe
Cde. E. H. A. Fowler
Cde. J. Gill
Cde. W. Hussain
Cde. S. Jaiserrisingh
Cde. K. M. E. Jonas
Cde. M. Nissar
Cde. L. E. Ramsahoye
Cde. J. G. Ramson
Cde. P.A. Rayman
Cde. E. M. Stoby, J. P.
Cde. S. H. Sukhu, M.S., J.P.
Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.
Cde. H. A. Taylor
Cde. R. C. Van Sluytman
Cde. L. E. Willems
Cde. C. E. Wrights, J.P.
Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. B. Jagan

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran

Other Members (12)

Cde. J. Jagan
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J. P., Opposition Chief Whip
Cde. Narbada Persaud
Cde. C. Collymore
Cde. S. F. Mohamed
Cde. L. Lalbahadur (Absent)
Cde. B. James (Absent)
Cde. C. C. Belgrave
Cde. R. Ally
Cde. Dalchand, J. P.
Cde. Dindayal
Cde. H. Nokta

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh
Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F. A. Narain

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

PRAYERS**PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS**

The following Papers were laid:

- (a) State Pension (ADELAIDE WALKER) Order 1976 (No. 119), made under section 4 of the State Pensions Act, Chapter 27:04, on the 21st of December, 1976, and published in the Gazette on the 25th of December, 1976.
- (b) State Pension (MATTHEW YOUNG) Order 1976 (No. 120), made under section 4 of the State Pensions Act, Chapter 27:04, on the 21st of December, 1976, and published in the Gazette on the 25th of December, 1976
**[The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House
on behalf of the Minister of Finance]**

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1977**

The Assembly resumed the debate on the Motion moved by the Minister of Finance on 30th December, 1976, for the approval of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1977, totaling \$417,283,736.

The Speaker: Cde. Persaud

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, during the course of this budget debate, members on the Government benches were comparing the period when the People's Progressive Party was in Government with the period when they were in office. In fact, the way

they attempted to make the comparison is not fair for this reason: the People's Progressive Party was in the Government during the days of the colonials. More than that: for a substantial period the financial strings were held by the British Government and every one of us can remember clearly the name of Frank Essex. Indeed, sir, the British Government had a direct say in matters of borrowing and trade.

During those times the Governor still retained the right to withhold his assent to any Bill which the Parliament or the assembly or the legislature in that time passed. There are Bills which the Governor did not assent to so that if we look at these two periods we will recognise the limitations under which the Government of the People's Progressive Party functioned as compared with the period during which the People's National Congress Government has been in office. I will take two years off and just consider from the independence period, May, 1966. It means that the P.N.C. had complete reins of power from 1966 to the present time ten years to operate fully, unhindered, unimpeded, to develop this country and to pursue a path that will bring about a redistribution of the wealth in Guyana. The People's Progressive Party had the courage of its convictions when it introduced the Kaldor budget and we make no apology for it. In fact, those who today criticize Kaldor's budget, if they search their consciences, can come to no other conclusion but that this country would have gone a very far way if that Budget had been allowed and if a new path had been set since then.

Indeed, by their actions – and I do not want to deal with details – they thwarted economic progress, development and growth in Guyana. Whenever the members of the People's Progressive Party therefore stand up to speak, we speak from a position of principle. We are able to look at the political development of this country in its historical perspective. This is the fundamental point that every Member of the Government seems to be missing.

The first goal was independence. Indeed, we wanted independence and though we recognised all the manipulations and the gerrymandering and now the rigging, we did not stand and block independence because that is a position of principle, a position which we are proud

about. Nowhere can the record show that the P.P.P. obstructed independence as the People's National Congress is trying to represent to the nation.

2.10 p.m.

And even on the question of nationalisation of bauxite, we were in the Parliament and we voted. The members of the P.N.C. were asking why the P.P.P. did not do this and that. I think the Cde. Minister Jack spoke of nationalization last night. We voted for the amendment of the Constitution to remove certain words that were impeding that process from being executed. As I said, any person knowing all the facts would not fail to see the contribution of the People's Progressive Party and the consistent policy of the P.P.P. in the years it has been in the Government, outside of the Government, and in the country as a whole

Having made those preliminary points, I want to confine myself to agriculture. The improvement and well being of our people are dependent upon the development of agriculture. The successful advancement of this sector in an orderly and integrated manner will improve and, indeed, ameliorate the economic and social gap between the urban and rural communities. In other countries of the world, in socialist countries, this consideration undoubtedly was given in framing and pursuing their agricultural policies. Modern agricultural approach and making available all technical facilities, machinery, providing adequate land, credit, are some of the prerequisites for agricultural development. Agriculture has to do with water control, land, people, crops, prices and marketing. It is based on these factors that I proceed to suggest that it must be a cohesive, integrated plan, well-framed and worked-out policy. Then and only then there can be substantial agricultural development in the country.

In our country agriculture accounts for the highest percentage of employment of the labour force. This is still so until today and the Government has not denied this fact, at least in the reports it has presented. Unemployment still remains a great problem in this country with thousands of people unemployed and under-employed. If agriculture has been allowed to develop along the paths I suggested, there would have been by now a reduction of

unemployment in this country and there would have been more employment for those who are not at the moment fully employed.

It follows, therefore, that the budgetary proposals must reflect the significance of this segment of our economy. The allocation particularly must be such to allow proper development. And we make the point that even if the pruning knife is used, one would expect that that knife would not be allowed to even touch the vote for agriculture.

I do not want to ask the Cde. Minister of Agriculture to confess his battle in the Cabinet. I do not want to ask him to say in Parliament today that he himself does not agree with the reduction in expenditure in agriculture in this year, austere as it is said to be, though as it is said to be, that he thinks agriculture should have been allocated a higher percentage of the vote. But indeed the knife did not only touch it but, to use a popular phrase, it swiped it substantially. As a result, 1977 will, like the previous year, be a bad year for agriculture.

I sympathise with the poor farmers in advance but all I will attempt to do is to persuade the Government to recognise its consistent error in the development of agriculture over the years in this country. I think it was slashed from \$35 million to \$14 million.

In the Speech of the Minister of Finance on the 7th December, 1971, when he presented the 1972 Budget – ad I do not want to quote it – it was made clear that 1976 would be the year of self-sufficiency in this country, feeding ourselves, clothing ourselves, and housing ourselves. In my opinion, and in the opinion of the majority of Guyanese, 1976 had proven to be the worst year in the history of this country. We have not been able to feed ourselves. Substantial sums of our money are still used for the importation of foodstuff. We have not succeeded in pursuing a proper and well-designed food substitution plane. We have had promises. We have had the Mittleholzers but still we are without the food.

I remember when the hon. Comrade, the Deputy Prime Minister, was Minister of Agriculture he used to bring the plants, the produce, and so on, into this House but the thing has reached such a bad stage that they cannot even do that today. They have to leave the produce so that the people can grab the little bit to survive. They don't have it.

And so 1976 has come and gone and the people in this country are suffering from a shortage of foodstuffs. I do not want to quote. Cde. Narbada Persaud has already referred you to the Meteorologist, Chander Persaud. He said that they have knowledge and they must have knowledge even without him. Every person in this country knows what Guyana's weather is like and again, if you look at the Agricultural Report in the year 1964, you will see the figure given for rainfall. I want to make the point that the People's Progressive Party also experienced difficult weather of both heavy rain and drought and what the figures undoubtedly reveal is that, despite the limitation, agriculture flourished under the People's Progressive Party.

I pay tribute to the hon. Cde. Minister of Agriculture who was then Director of Agriculture with the P.P.P. Government for the contribution he made at that time. Indeed, when he was under proper guidance he functioned, but since he is mis-guided he has become virtually static in a field in which he is capable and experienced. I refrain from using the word 'impotent'.

I put whatever control as the first consideration for agricultural development. The Minister of Works and Housing, Cde. S. S. Naraine, when he was not considered suitable to function in the area in which he is competent was given the assignment of examining land utilisation and he wrote several volumes. I would like to see some of those things he said implemented by the Government.

But one of the things he has said in another written contribution is that land available on the coastal belt is 2,750,000 acres and of that amount 500,000 had good or reasonable water control. It is written in "A Decade of Progress". I am not sure if that is available locally but I have been able to put my hand on it. In fact, I would wish to ask the Government that all

2.20 p.m.

publications for local consumption, if they are available, ought to be circulated to all Members of Parliament so that we will know what members of the Government are saying locally and overseas.

Top priority for every has been the M.M.A. Scheme, even before this Government and the P.P.P. made it abundantly clear that that scheme would be on its priority list. We know what has been happening in this country from 1962 to 1964. But what has happened? That scheme was not given the priority that it should have been given. They allowed it to be treated lightly. In the Abary area that accounts for 294,600 acres of Class I soil, 63 per cent of the available land there. This Government has not moved to implement the scheme at the proper time. In fact, in January 1972 I moved a Motion in the Parliament for the implementation of the M.M.A. Scheme and the Government voted against it. Had the Government moved in then and moved meaningfully – my suggestion is that up to today, 1977, the M.M.A. is a distance away from where it should be. I am sure the hon. Minister will not deny this. I am sure he will ask himself quite honestly whether that scheme will be realized in his life time?

One comrade has already suggested the figure involved in that scheme. I think he said \$32 million to \$19 million U.S. So you can imagine what that delay has cost the nation and what the delay has cost agriculture. From \$32 million to \$19 million U.S. How much have we spent up to 1976? Not more than \$10 million. I am sure that figure is right.

In the 1966/1972 Development Programme of the Government, \$10½ million was provided. So you see my argument for the shortage of food. In the 1966/1972 Development Programme \$10½ million was provided up to 1972 and not a penny was spent on M.M.A. At least the estimates do not reflect that situation. That is from a good source. So that in 1973 - \$500,000 was provided, in 1974 - \$1,599,999; in 1975 - \$4 million; in 1976 - \$4 million and in 1977 – another \$4 million is provided. The Minister has to concede this to himself. I do not want him to breach any Secrets Act that that provision of \$4 million this year is an insult to a \$90 (U.S.) million scheme, what we call in Guyanese terms ‘a drop in the ocean.’ Nobody will see it

and it will go unnoticed. It will mean that farmers who empoldered their land on the premise that that scheme would have been implemented earlier as announced in the 1966-1972 Development Programme, have wasted their money and have wasted their energies, and they are like farmers throughout the country subject today to flooding and drought. How could the figures therefore reveal agricultural development in Guyana?

That is the M.M.A. Scheme and may I add that we are at phase one of that scheme. I make the point that it is only when the area between Abary and Rosignol is completed that any technical consideration can be given to Mahaicony. It means Mahaicony has to wait a longer period. It looks like anything like five years and I am being very literal. Probably the Minister who can get technical advice would be in a position to say today in this House when phase one will be completed. We know what has to be done to link Mahaicony with Abary. That work must be completed before the necessary work starts to link Mahaicony so that the water from the Mahaica River can be diverted to the Abary through the M.M.A. Scheme.

2.30 p.m.

I want also to propose Cde. Chairman that we drop one end of the Mahaicony/Abary Scheme. I am proposing to the Cde. Minister of Agriculture that we drop the other end. I will tell him why and he must admit it as reasonable. Mahaica will not in any way be helped – and I speak without any fear of contradiction – by the M.M.A. Scheme. So to call it Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Scheme is wrong because the farmers will be deceived. In fact, there has been some study as to what should be done in Mahaica and that Report has been shelved. The other Minister of Agriculture puts his hand to his nose. It is true. So that Mahaica will have to wait an even longer period to be relieved from the sufferings they have been experiencing year after year and, I like the then Minister of Agriculture, Cde. Robert Jordan, in 1968. I visited Mahaica/Mahaicony – in fact we were together at Cane Grove to look at the problems and to help in the sufferings of the people but we see that 1968 is far away from 1976. They are in the same position.

Of course, the Cde. Minister of Agriculture will say a pump has been installed. Let me help him. It is probably nearing completion but not completed. I was in the area not very long

ago. Work is still going on at Cane Grove in 1976. I make the point again, without any fear of contradiction, that the pump can only be useful when there is flood. What happens with irrigation? We know what has happened to the farmers at Cane Grove. Cde. Speaker, I am sure, you are not without knowledge what they suffered at the hands of Bookers.

Long ago I called upon the Government to take away control of the water conservancy and the Water Conservancy Board of that area. Now it is a new position and I want to call on behalf of the farmers that they no longer face the situation that when there is drought the water will be conserved for sugar cane and when there is flooding the sluices will be opened and they will be flooded out. That is the position there. I hope, therefore, that in periods of drought water conserved in the East Demerara Water Conservancy will be given to them. I know representation must be given, as a matter of service, and in the interest of agriculture, to the farmers of Cane Grove. I think that is a very depressed area not only in agriculture, but in housing, in living standards, in water supply, in so many things. It is an area that, to my mind, deserves immediate consideration by this House and particularly by the Government. If there are rice farmers in Cane Grove who owe rent, consideration should be given to waive all the rents due because of the hardship they have to experience year after year. I am not without knowledge that this Government has been guilty of summoning the farmers in that area. In fact, I led a delegation to the then Minister of Agriculture, Cde. Robert Jordon. So this is the position with respect to water control in the country.

Installation of pumps: Looking at the development programme the Government named the areas . . .

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I beg that Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud be given an additional 15 minutes to continue his contribution.

Cde. Ram Karran *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, as I was saying, the areas have been indentified for the installation of pumps and if one looks at the Development Programme I think at page 214 it was clearly stated that pumps will be installed in 1973. “The installation of these pumps will commence in 1973 and will speedily continue thereafter.” Those were the words and they are good words, but has that been done? So the Cde. Ministry will be in the position this afternoon to comment on what I am going to quote now. Cde. S. S. Naraine, expert on drainage and irrigation – and I think that is the area that he is best fitted for - wrote “A Decade of Progress” which was issued on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary of the People’s National Congress Government and, as I said, we do not see much of it here. In this article or contribution he said:

“ In order to improve drainage of the coastlands the first phase of a pumped drainage programme estimated to cost about \$15 million has been implemented and the first set of these pumps will be put into operation during 1975”

I don’t want to question the construction of the phrase “has been implemented” and installation will commence in 1975. I am no expert in language but let me interpret it in my own limited way. In one breath he says it has been implemented and in another he says it will be implemented in 1975. It means Cde. S. S. Naraine . . .

The Speaker: Could you please read that again for my benefit?

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: “In order to improve the drainage of the coastlands the first phase of a pumped programme estimated to cost about \$15 million has been implemented and the first set of these pumps will be put into operation during 1975.” Cde. Speaker I am sure you will agree with me. It means that when he said that it has been implemented in 1974 when this book was printed, it was not in fact implemented but will be implemented in 1975. I take that as it is. I don’t want to enter into a dialogue. I accepted that it would have been implemented in 1975 and I proceed to make the point that there again the Government is guilty not of ignoring the 1966-72 Development Programme but is guilty of ignoring the 1972-76 Development Programme, the programme that was supposed to take us to the year of complete self-sufficiency in food, clothing and in housing.

That is a serious indictment and I put it that way. So it looks to me that there are one set of facts for those of us in whose possession the Development Programme will fall and another set of facts for those who will read overseas. That is why I call for all publications, both for local and overseas consumption, be given to Members of Parliament so that we can know what is happening in Guyana. Undoubtedly, people overseas are deceived and they are told to come: “You will get land, you will get this.”

Cde. Salim spoke of the Linden Highway and Moblissa. We know that people are brought from the West Indies and they come here and are given a task. Many of them complained. I remember speaking to a Jamaican. He complained of the Government’s lack of interest and the fact that he could not continue. They did not only allocated land; they had to re-allocated land on the same Linden Highway that he was talking so much about.

2.40 p.m.

In fact, Cde. Speaker, I wonder why this Government has stopped producing Annual Reports for the Ministry of Agriculture. There are other Ministries that are preparing and circulating Reports; we have been seeing them. But for nearly six years, if not six years, not a Report from the Ministry of Agriculture has been published in this country. We would like to see them so that we can deep in touch with all the facts and all the development and it will help in the debate, in the contribution that we make in this Parliament, because if I see an explanation in the report I would not bother to raise it here.

Why is the Government afraid to reveal the true agricultural position? Why is it afraid to reveal the facts and figures that are necessary for Members of Parliament to be aware of. It is because agriculture, like our economy, is in shambles. They themselves cannot deny it. They talk about rice – rain, drought. I do not want to spend a long time on figures but I have figures from 1961 – to 1972 drawn from the official channels, agricultural reports, Statistical Digests and certain other sources. Putting all together it shows that in 1961 124,023 tons; 1962 129,924 tons; 1963 182,884 tons; 1964 165,926 tons; 1966 159,401 tons; 1967 126,902 tons; 1968 136,090 tons; 1969 108,090 tons; 1970 114,000 tons, 1971 123,000 tons; 1972 94,000 tons, 1973

110,000 tons; 1974 143,000 tons; 1975 160,000 tons; 1976 they say 50 per cent increase. That is my own figure.

The point I make is that over the years the Government claims that it has done well for rice. The figures do not show that the Government has put rice in trouble. On the day that Cde. Kendall, who was then Minister of Trade, moved the amendments to the Rice marketing Board – if you would read amendments to the Rice Marketing Board Ordinance – I made the point that they were going to affect and harm the rice industry in this country. We are not without the Rice Producers Association. History has shown that the principal move behind that amendment was to take away control of the rice industry from the farmers. In any socialist country workers and peasants have to be brought closer in any revolution that is to be pursued. That is a basic. Why is the Government attempting to separate the peasants from the workers? We must bring them closer together when the workers and the peasants are united, not only will the imperialist tremble, but there will be substantial development and growth in the country. But the Government continues to place a wedge between the workers and peasants and that was clear in the contribution by the Cde. Minister of Economic Development.

The facts about rice are even worse. This industry placed under Trade at one time, then under Finance and then eventually it came under Agriculture. We had many casualties. Now we have a man who is knowledgeable in agriculture but whether his hands are free is another question. I make the other point that the Government spent substantial sums on rice rehabilitation between 1969 and 1972 – those are the figures I have been able to obtain. It spent \$19,562,584 roughly \$20 million, to rehabilitate the rice industry and it has pushed production from 165,000 tons to 18,000 tons in 1976 when we must feed ourselves.

Indeed, when the Cde. Minister of Economic Development was speaking about yield he was speaking with this tongue between his teeth. I make that point to show you that he does not understand yield per acre, but he has put that contribution in those areas that have got good drainage. So what he was giving as the yield per acre from the rice industry did not represent the total position in the country. It only represented those areas that had good drainage and irrigation. Like Black Bush Polder, I give you some of the areas in which one finds big farmers

7.1.77

National Assembly

2.40 – 2.50 p.m.

– I do not want to call anybody's name – who are able to spend substantial sums and so provide good drainage and irrigation for themselves.

There is evidence that big farmers get priority from this Government quicker than poor ones, even in the use of agricultural machinery, fertilizers and what have you. I have got a specific instance where a big rice farmer on the East Coast – no name no warrant; I do not want to call his name – parked his combine and used the Government's combine which he considered cheaper. I have the evidence; I have the facts. I do want to ask the Government not to continue with this type of behavior in the agricultural sector. And I want to be even more firm by saying that I believe that the Cde. Minister of Agriculture is not aware of this fact, so let me draw it to his attention. **[Interruption]**

We see what is happening. There are other significant points. I want at this stage not to continue further with rice, increase the prices of rice, recognise the Rice Producers' Association, remove a lot of people on the Board. I do not want to call any name to embarrass anybody. Put on the Board people who have got knowledge, people who have experience that they can run the Board, because figures reveal that when the P.P.P. was in Government the Board, in fact, made profits.

I am indeed a little disappointed here with the Cde. Ministry of Agriculture when he said, in a Decade of Progress that the rice industry was in difficulty in 1964 and since this new Government took office in has put the rice industry on a better footing. But the facts and figures do not reveal that position. In fact, when the People's Progressive Party was in Government both the R.D.C. and the R.M.B. made profits.

2.50 p.m.

And one of the things the Government did to show profits in subsequent years – because the figures show that they have lost for several years – was –

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Narbada Persaud: I beg to move that Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud be given a final 15 minutes to conclude his presentation.

Cde. Roshan Ally *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Chairman, P.P.P. 1961/1962 profits - \$211,169; 1962/1963 - \$114,931; 1963/1964 - \$135,081. P.N.C. 1965/1966 - \$1,269,243. The Board lost in that year and in subsequent years it continued to lose; that is, 1966/1967 - \$187,000, 1967/1968 - \$500,000, 1968/1969 - \$465,000. But how did the Board start showing profits subsequently? It was after the price for rice was reduced. It made profits at the expense of the farmers, by robbing the farmers, by denying them what is theirs and up to today, the rice farmers in this country are producing rice at a lose. I know I am not without knowledge that a husband, wife and children, all and sundry, are involved in cultivation and they never get down to the economics to assess the contribution made by each member of the family to deduct wage. They only satisfy themselves by reasoning that they put in so much and they got out so much and they exclude completely an important resource, the labour resource contribution to the development of the rice industry. That is another question. I therefore appeal this afternoon for a better deal for rice farmers in this country.

I know that time will not permit me to say all that I want but let me just touch on a few other points: the dairy industry, the cattle industry. Renee Dumont said in that report that the coastal belt should be developed for dairy farming. In a debate in the Parliament, a former Minister of Agriculture – I do not want to call the poor chap's name – named the areas where the ranches would have been located and said what would be done. That has not been done and therefore we found ourselves in a situation where the milk plant had to close down and farmers had to virtually go on strike before the Government decided to give them an increase in the milk price. Do not tell me that is not true! In fact, they went on strike in Mahaica Creek. They did not come out - - **[Interruption]** Indeed, when the people's Progressive Party was in Government, we saw a substantial increase in milk production. In 1961, 2 million gallons were produced; in 1962, 3 millions; in 1963, 3,850,000, in 1964, 4,042,000. I have the figures for

two years for the Government at the present time – 1971 and 1972. In 1971 2,000, 575 gallons were produced, in 1972, 3,600,000 gallons. In fact, the position is worse now. If the Milk plant is receiving more than 300 gallons of milk a day, that is plenty. There is adulteration at the moment with powder and what have you being added. But, in the milk industry like rice – **[Interruption]** Indeed, we import milk powder when we could have been producing from our milk, not only butter and cheese but also milk powder.

I remember the former Minister of Agriculture talking a long time ago about banning baby foods. In fact, you can only do that if you create the condition for banning in that we must reach a stage where we have substitutes. We are killing the adults, why do we want to kill the children? Some other comrades will deal in greater detail with dairy farmers.

There is the Boerasirie scheme; it has reasonably good drainage and irrigation. A lot of internal work is to be done in that scheme. Large acreages are unoccupied. In fact, what has happened is that canals and intakes have been obliterated; they are overgrown bushes and so the Government will now have to spend money to clear that area. I call upon them to clear the bushes. The road there is inaccessible; people should be able to go and farm there and go home back. I am talking about the area between ... and Bonasika. A large number of farmers can be allocated land in the Boerasirie scheme. But here again, the Government is not doing anything about Boerasirie.

What about Tapacuma? This scheme, according to the Development Programme, should have been in progress moving towards completion but up to today I understand that it has not been started. There is a loan. You expect a loan and you got a loan but when will you spend it? It is no use saying you have a loan. When will you spend it? I omitted to ask the other question: The Government said it will get a loan with respect to that. Has that loan been approved? If so, how much will come from outside and how much we will have to put here? And in what amounts will it come? How much for 1977, 1978 etc.

Further, the Government is not unaware – and I do not want to use the word “squander mania” – of the disappearance of certain things from that scheme already. Indeed, they had to stop all work in that scheme for a few years. I understand that there is an investigation; they do

not say it. If there is none, I want to ask him that settled authority be set up so that there can be effective control of expenditure on the whole work in the interest of the scheme and the farmer so that we do not have another Kibilibiri. That is a nice name for you. Indeed, you have got that; you do not hear anything about it at all but I was going through the Estimates to see where I would find reflected the sums of money that scheme is bringing in. The Minister would probably tell us where it has been spent: \$3 million or more has been already contributed in the past. What has happened to Kibilibiri?

Diversification: The Government has not moved at all in diversification and before time catches up with me let me make a final quotation from this book “A Decade of Progress.” I will tell you what the Cde. Minister of Agriculture said. The Cde. Minister of Agriculture spoke of the type of food and protein the people in this country get. Let me quote the relevant section from page 58, paragraph 2.

“From the data available, it appears that the average Guyanese consumes about 2,400 calories per day. With regard to quality, the Guyanese diet also compares well with other nations. Around 35 per cent of the 1,000 pounds or so of food consumed in 1970 was from pulses, nuts, meats, dairy products, poultry, fish and other high-protein foods. The average Guyanese diet also consisted of comparatively large amounts and varieties of fruits and vegetables – the fortifying foods that are considered essential to good health.”

That was written by the hon. Cde. Minister of Agriculture. Let us look at this morning’s prices: eddoes, 60 cents per pound; cassava, 50 cents per pound; yams, \$1.25 per pound; plantains, 50 cents per pound. This is the point I make because of the fall in production there is a scarcity of these essentials. Indeed, the Minister must be surprised to hear that three oranges were being sold for \$1 this morning at the market. If this is so in 1977, how can the Minister write in his book about the availability of fruits so that people can have some dessert, when they have

3 p.m.

finished eating their eddoes and yams which are sold at 50 cents and \$1.25 per pound? And there was a scarcity of rice at the time.

I say, therefore, this afternoon, that agriculture is in a very bad way. The Government has failed miserably in this field and the Government has ruined the agricultural sector of Guyana. The time has come for the Government to rethink its own position on the question of agriculture and the provisions that the Government has made in the various financial documents including the Development Programme 1973 – 1976 where \$32 million was provided for drainage and irrigation additional to the six projects. The figures show that the Government has not spent half the money.

In conclusion, I want to close with the note that the Government is guilty of discrimination in the agricultural sector. I don't want to make an empty statement. Members of a co-operative were forcibly removed at gun-point from their land at Enterprise. Return the land to the co-operatives. I hope the Minister of Agriculture this afternoon will say that he will override that little boy who did it and return the land to the legitimate co-operative society. In fact that land is now lying idle there. Anybody can pass on the East Coast of Demerara and see it. If these steps are not taken I am afraid our people will suffer even more.

The Government cannot proceed in agricultural development ignoring the fact that the farmers have identified certain organizations and institutions and possibly individuals and political parties, and if you exclude those from being in positions and institutions where they can speak for them and represent them, you will be destroying agriculture in Guyana. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Minister of Agriculture.

The Minister of Agriculture: (Cde. Kennard): Cde. Speaker, the dependence of our nation on agriculture is obvious and as the last speaker said, is almost overwhelming. We know that its contribution to the Gross National Product of our nation in 1975 was almost 43 per cent amounting to \$431.5 million. In that year exports of agricultural products amounted to \$537 million or 64 per cent of our total exports so it is important and it is not surprising that we find

that the subject is occupying so much attention during this debate. I think every member of the Opposition has referred to some aspect of agriculture in his or her presentation. I now find myself confronted not with one shadow Minister of Agriculture but with several. It seems that among the topics rice has occupied prominence as well and perhaps I am being confronted by a rice party. **[Interruption]**

One Member, Cde. Persaud, referred to my service to the Government of Guyana and to the nation as Director of Agriculture. I have had over thirty odd years of service throughout my career. I think therefore that I am in a position this afternoon to give a balanced appraisal of the agricultural picture in Guyana perhaps commencing from 1964 to the present time.

If agriculture, as we see, is concerned with politics, it is also and more importantly it is concerned with life. It is concerned with plant and animal life, with human life for what we are producing is for consumers. As a biological industry, no farmer is sure of reaping what he sows, no livestock rearer is certain that the calf that he rears will become a cow. The environment plays a determining part in all of this and the climatic conditions can frustrate the best plans of the individual farmer or livestock rearer or of the Government.

We have seen that this was exactly what happened in 1976. In fact, some three years ago, there was a world food crisis and the United Nations Organisation mounted a special conference on the world food crisis in Rome to deal with what appeared to be a global food shortage arising because of adverse weather conditions throughout the world. They found at that conference that climatic conditions are overriding in determining the success or failure of an agricultural programme, that the gains of the green revolution can be wiped out overnight if weather proved unfavourable.

It has been recognized increasingly that weather is so important that man is giving attention to the possibility of controlling weather. He has succeeded here and there perhaps on a localised or limited basis, and for that reason man has been able to use the weather as a tool or war, as a means of conducting warfare. In the discussions on disarmament, the manipulation of

weather by man which those around that table would like to see eliminated, that it should be part of disarmament and that man should not use the weather as a means of conducting warfare.

The weather in 1976 was of such unusual proportions that many of our farmers had thoughts as to whether someone was not using the weather as a tool of warfare. But enough has been said about the weather and I shall not continue in this way in dealing with what is now well known to all Guyanese, to all farmers. The farmers and their families have suffered. The people have suffered. The nation has suffered. We are all in the same boat but already the farmers are beginning to come out of the disaster which befell them in 1976 and already we are beginning to see supplies of food coming from the farms to feed our nation. This resilience and buoyancy of our agriculture is a reflection of the progressive agricultural policy of the Government of Guyana.

3. 10 p.m.

What are the objectives of the policy of the Government towards agriculture? The objectives are to use and develop the agricultural resources of Guyana for the good of all the people for the nation. The policy aims, in particular, to improve the economic welfare and quality of life of those who are engaged in agriculture. The objective in quantity terms, in terms of output, is to produce enough to achieve self-sufficiency in food for our people - in short, to feed ourselves in quantity, quality and variety of food. Furthermore, the policy is to so maximise our productions as to earn ever increasing amounts of foreign exchange through export of surpluses. The policy therefore involves very substantial diversification of agriculture. This concisely is the broad agricultural policy of the P.N.C.

But let us proceed rapidly to consider the achievements of this policy. In the colonial and post-colonial period including the early regime of the P.P.P. – and I refer in this context to the period before independence: we got self government at one point of time – agriculture was typified by over-emphasis, over-concentration of production on one or two crops. Originally it was sugar. In the early colonial days it was a mono-cultural economy and later it became sugar

and rice. The P.P.P. Government did, in fact, lay tremendous emphasis on rice. But there were two crops, sugar and rice, as far as they were concerned. Other products were neglected.

Today, the emphasis is not only on expanding the production of sugar and rice but also the production of a greater variety of crops – more livestock and more fisheries. **[Interruption]** emphasis during the P.P.P. regime on sugar and rice. The other things such as coconuts and vegetables, though grown, were not given the same emphasis as rice. In this debate the Opposition, either directly or by inference, had been casting doubts as to whether agriculture has expanded under the P.N.C. The record of achievement is there for all to see and I will give some of the figures. **[Interruption]**

The Speaker: comrades of the Opposition, when the shadow Minister for Agriculture was speaking nobody interrupted him. As a matter of fact, he was trying to invite heckling which was not taken on. Please permit the Minister to continue.

Cde. Kennard: In 1964, our production of sugar was 258,378 tons. In 1976 that production was 334,000 tons, an increase of some 29 per cent. I want to focus attention on the position of small cane farmers. In 1964 the small cane farmers contributed only 4,919 tons of sugar to the total production. In 1976, their contribution increased from 4,800 tons to 28,695 tons, showing the emphasis that has been put on the production by our small farmers rather than on the plantations.

The annual reports of the Guyana Rice Board will show that for the crop year 1964/1965 – as Members on the other side know quite well, the Board gives its figures for crop years, that is, taking the autumn crop of one year and the spring crop of the ensuing year – rice production was 163,000 tons; for the crop year 1974/1975 the production was 183,000 tons. The production of broiler poultry in 1964 was 1.8 million pounds but in 1976 it had risen to 20.1 million pounds an increase of some 900 per cent. Pork production in 1964 was 960,000 pounds. In 1976 it had risen to 4.9 million pounds a 410 per cent increase. Fish in 1964 amounted to 16 million pounds and in 1976 to 40 million pounds; shrimp in 1964 amounted to 6 million pounds, and in 1976, 11.5 million pound an increase of 92 per cent. Corn or maize in 1964 amounted to 2.7 million pounds and in 1975 it had risen to 12.8 million pounds, an increase of 374 per cent.

We know that in 1976 the weather conditions virtually eliminated our maize crop. So I am quoting for the year 1975 when conditions were normal.

Production statistics for vegetable crops and ground provision are difficult to compile but the trend of purchases by the Guyana Marketing Corporation is indicative of what has been happening in that sector. According to the audited report of the Guyana Marketing Corporation, in 1964 they purchased \$1.5 million of plantains and in 1975, that is the normal year, 8.6 million pounds. The quantity of cassava purchased was 3.6 million pounds in 1964 and 5.9 million pounds in 1975. Some of it was converted into 1 million pounds of cassava starch to supply tour alumina complex.

Finally, a major indicator of the growth of our livestock industry is the output of locally manufactured stock feeds. The output of these, that is, for poultry, pig and cattle feed rose from 12,000 tons in 1964 to 65,000 tons in 1967, an increase of some five times. One can link this increase in stockfeed production with the increases for pork and poultry. **[Interruption]** I am glad that you are admitting that we have abundance and not scarcity. This massive increase in agricultural, fisheries and livestock production has served to contribute to our local self-sufficiency in food. Moreover, there is another dimension of our programme, that is the dimension of exports. Our vibrant production has earned substantial foreign exchange. Let us compare export earnings from agriculture in the year 1975 with the earnings in the year 1964. The information is readily available from the Bank of Guyana 1975 Report and also from the Annual account relating to external trade for the year 1964, published by the Statistical Bureau, Ministry of Economic Development. Sugar exports earned \$413.1 million in 1975 compared with \$57.1 million in 1964. Rice exports in 1975 earned \$85 million compared with \$21.8 million in 1964. Shrimp earned \$10.5 million in 1975 compared with \$4.2 million in 1964. Other agricultural products rose from \$1 million in 1964 to \$5.7 million in 1975. In addition, our high production helped us to replace foods which were formerly imported and which the Government decided to ban in 1971. I will read examples of those foods which were banned and you can have reference again to this report, the Annual Account relating to the External Trade. In 1964 this country imported 201,000 pounds of canned sausages; 163,900 pounds of canned ham; other kinds of canned meat – 824,000 pounds; pickled pork in brine – 1,276,000

pounds; dry salted pork. These have all been banned and those products such as pickled pork, sausages and ham are being produced and we are self-sufficient in these items and have surpluses for export.

3.20 p.m.

Fish: In 1964 we imported 2,576,000 pounds of sardines; 3,274,000 pounds of salted, dried and smoked fish. These were banned and the country is replacing imported fish now with locally produced fish. Vegetables and root crops: White potatoes – we imported in 1964, 17,852,000 lbs; other vegetables, 760,000 lbs; sweet potatoes, 20,000 lbs; Apples 999,863 lbs; grapes, 165,000 lbs; tomatoes, 29,000 lbs; legumes 7,732,000 lbs. These and other banned imports represent a saving at current prices of well over \$50 million in foreign exchange. We have saved this, thus putting that money into the pockets of our farmers, into the pockets of our livestock rearers and the pockets of our fisherman. We now eat what we produce and are better fed. **[Applause]** And by so doing we have a healthier population and have provided thousands of jobs for our Guyanese people.

Guyanese today are feeding themselves. We are producing all the basic foods which we need in terms of carbohydrates, in terms of protein, in terms of vitamins and mineral-rich foods. This is our major success in our national defence. We cannot be starved out, we cannot be subjugated by the new imperialism of food by food exporting countries who now hold many food-importing countries of the world to ransom and others in a state of bondage and economic colonialism. We have achieved independence in food and this now confounds and confuses our enemies without and within.

The facts I have given speak aloud for the success of the agricultural policy of the Government and cannot be silenced by noises. **[Applause]** Let us look at the success of our policy in the eyes of our farmers. They have a higher standard of living and a better quality of life. Anyone who drives through our country-side can look at the thousands of homes built by farmers themselves, at the cars in the garages, at the clothes worn by their children and themselves. He will see that no longer there exist thrash houses. No longer there exist bare-footed children. The policies and achievements . . .

The Speaker: Members of the Opposition I do not believe in ‘sorry, sorry’ all the time while no real effort is being made about being sorry. **[Interruption]** I am not concerned about the Prime Minister. I am the Speaker here and I rule in this Chamber. Please proceed, Cde. Minister.

Cde. Kennard: Thank you, Cde. Speaker. Members on the other side have alluded to prices for farmers’ products. I also will allude to prices for farmers’ products. In 1964 the peasant cane farmers were paid the price of \$131.08 per ton of sugar. The price that they were paid in 1975 increased three times to \$362.72 per ton of sugar and I wish here to state that though the world price has declined, the Prime Minister himself made a promise to cane farmers that he will supplement whatever they are entitled to by an input of \$2 million. That sum has now risen to \$2.3 million in order to keep their 1976 prices at the same level of 1975 so that is a promise kept.

In 1964 for extra No. 1 rice, the farmers received \$19.90 and for White A rice \$20.00. Today they get \$38.00 a bag for extra No. 1; \$41.50 for White A and if they are an efficient farmers they can get \$45.00 a bag for extra White A rice. The price has therefore more than doubled.

In the case of beef, the cattle farmer who markets his cattle either privately – many of them market through a group of marketing company, a type of farmers’ co-operative that took over when livestock control was abolished. In 1964 they were paid for carcass weight 34 cents per pound for beef. Today, they are paid \$1.50 per pound carcass weight, an increase of some 5 times to the cattle farmer.

Milk in 1974 was 64 cents per gallon from the Abary and Mahaica Creeks. Today it is \$1.35 per gallon. For pork in 1964, the pig farmer received 63 cents per pound, for the carcasses today he receives an average of \$1.59. Ground provisions: Members in one breath have been complaining of low prices and in another breath say the prices are too high. They wish to deny the farmer a higher price for his ground provision; for his sweet cassava; for his

plantain; for his eddoes and for his peas. And so, though they make those noises in this House, they cannot do so outside among the farming population.

In 1964 the Guyana Marketing Corporation paid 4 cents a pound for plantain. That was the guaranteed price. Today it pays 20 cents per pound for plantains. The guaranteed price in 1964 for cassava was 1½ cents a pound. Today the guaranteed price is 10 cents per pound. For eddoes in 1964, it was a penny a pound. Today the guaranteed price is 15 cents per pound.

The farmers have therefore got an exceedingly fair deal in terms of prices. But this is not all. They received the additional support of the Government in terms of a large number of subsidies. All equipment, fertilisers and inputs are imported into this country free of duty. There was a time in the 60's when these articles were dutiable. Drainage and irrigation rates are subsidised to all farmers.

In the industry in particular, the Rice Board imports fertilisers at one price but sells it below that price to rice farmers, thereby subsidising the rice farmer. This is done also with insecticides, with bags, and with the Board's machinery services of ploughing and reaping for the farmers. It is calculated that these massive subsidies by the Board run into millions of dollars and amount to an extra \$9 per bag for rice. Therefore, with a possible price for White a rice, high grade, of \$41.50 to \$45.00 per bag and when one adds the subsidy equivalent of another \$9 per bag on the rice, we find that the farmer is receiving in the vicinity of \$50.00 true value for his rice. If one compares that price with today's world price for rice, we find that today rice is being exported from Burma and Thailand at a price of \$46.000 (G) per bag f.o.b. In Guyana the rice farmer therefore is being paid higher than the world price for rice as, indeed, is the Guyana small sugar farmer. He is being paid higher than today's world price for his sugar cane.

Can a Government offer more? I took the trouble of giving the rice price statistics to the R.P.A. when I received a delegation a couple of months ago. So that the authentic data is in their hands and cannot be disputed.

3.30 p.m.

The effect of these higher prices for produce and higher subsidies, high production, high productivity has been to increase the income of farmers and, as I said, one can observe this reflected in their life-style and in the quality of their housing and in the amount of their capital accumulation.

Let us look at workers in agriculture because not all are farmers. Agricultural workers have also benefitted during this period. Thus, in the sugar industry the average earning of the sugar workers has risen from \$1,409 in 1964 to \$3,413 per annum in 1975 or expressed another way from \$5.56 per day including all their benefits and bonuses. The minimum wage in 1964 was \$3.45 compared with \$6.61 in 1975, and an increase in being further negotiated. For rice workers in 1964 the minimum wage was \$3.28 at the Rice Board; today it has risen to well over \$7. Rice is a seasonal industry: there are a lot of casual labourers therefore one would expect that the average earnings would be much lower as compared say, with sugar workers. In this regard, the average annual earnings in this seasonal rice industry with a large casual labour force was \$390.79 in 1964; in 1975 it had risen to \$1,046.30, some three times the 1964 position. In the case of sugar workers, I think it would be remiss of me if I did not observe that the earnings would have been higher had it not been for strikes which have cost the nation well over \$100 million since 1964.

Mention has been made of the levy by the Cde. Leader of the Opposition and I wish to observe that every man, woman and child in a socialist Guyana is entitled to the benefits of production. They must benefit from the production whether of goods or services of every worker. We are our brothers' keeper. We are a socialist nation. Certainly the nation has benefited from sugar in the form of revenue from a sugar levy, as it has indeed benefited from the income from bauxite, from income taxes paid by civil servants and workers, by customs duties collected from everyone, by rates and taxes paid by others and the like; we cannot exclude taxation from the sugar industry.

To suggest, therefore, as one speaker of the Opposition has done, that the levy on sugar belongs to the sugar workers only is the quintessence of capitalism and typifies selfish rapacity. The records show that sugar workers have never had it better and in fact their average annual earnings far exceed those of other agricultural workers and even workers in most Guyanese industries.

Rice. Mention was just made about profits earned by the rice Marketing Board and the Rice Development company during the P.P.P. regime. I wish to say that by 1965/1966, the end of the crop year, those two organisations had accrued a deficit of some \$4.2 million but this has been changed. [**Cde. Jagan:** “Why?”] Because since then and up to last year the Board has accrued surpluses amounting to \$74.8 million reflecting the high quality of its management.

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: I beg to move that the Cde. Minister of Agriculture be given a further fifteen minutes to continue his contribution.

Cde. Fowler: *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Kennard: Of course, the Rice Board has re-invested these surpluses in large machinery pools from which all farmers benefit, in bull-dozer, combines, tractors, new mills in new drying storage facilities and in grants and aid of every description to our rice farmers and rice growing communities. But I am not stopping there because farmers have received other forms of assistance from the Government. In the area of credit, the Guyana Agriculture Co-operatives Development Bank from its inception in May 1973 to December issued over \$17 million worth of credit to our agricultural producers, among the beneficiaries were rice farmers. They got \$5.2 million of that \$17 million in loans from the Guyana Agriculture Development Bank. In addition, the rice Board puts out between four and five million dollars each year in rice credits to rice farmers to enable them to purchase inputs such as fertilisers, seeds and the like. Others have benefited, thus loans amounting to well over \$2 million were issued in support of our livestock industry, well over \$3 million in support of the fishing industry and the like.

I would add, of course, that farmers benefit from research which is paid for by the Government. There are varieties of rice which are now being grown, which will grow up the banks of the Rivers in places where formerly rice could not have grown. This enables farmers to increase their yields. We have agricultural advisers throughout Guyana, our Extension officers, who deal with our farmers in giving them necessary advice to reach higher and higher levels of production and productivity.

Some mention was made about land reform in the debate, I think, by Cde. Leader of the Opposition. I wish to say that land reform has been one of the pillars of success of the People's National Congress agricultural programme. The most notable and historic achievement of a daring reform under the P.N.C. has been the freeing of our land from foreign ownership. Some 150,000 acres of sugar cane land held for centuries by expatriates, Jessel and Bookers, under various titles from freehold to leasehold, were nationalised. And what is noteworthy about this nationalisation – it was my honour to lead the negotiating team – is that no compensation was given for state lands which we reclaimed as ours. No compensation was given for any cane being found growing on those lands, no price was paid indeed for any land and a small payment was made for freehold land which was calculated as representing the depreciated value of the improvement works thereon. In essence, Cde. Speaker, the Guyanese reclaimed their land at no cost. **[Applause]**

The second historic achievement of land reform was the vesting of titles in Amerindians of more than 2.2 million acres of land. Other achievements include the taking over of land from the latifundista, the large ranchers and land owners such as Rupununi Development Company, from which we took over 500 square miles of land for distribution to Americans and other ranchers.

3.40 p.m.

With respect to virgin state lands, between 1973 and 1976 alone, we distributed 397,020 acres of land to small farmers and co-operatives. With respect to privately owned freehold land, the procedure has been to acquire some estates and among those that we acquired were some at Somerset and Berks and Plantation Lookout on which we have settled small farmers paying fair

compensation to the Guyanese owners of such property. Last year, we promulgated the Land Acquisition Act which we call properly the “Wills’ Act” in which we have set the basis for the valuation of lands in the event of further acquisition of private properties from Guyanese.

Then our Rice Farmers Security of Tenure Ordinance which regulates and the relationship between landlords and tenants has been strengthened and tightened to ensure that the landlord does not penalise or abuse his tenant. But, we have further to go in our land reform programme and in this coming year we will see other additional and historic steps being taken to grant equity in the occupation of lands in Guyana. **[Applause]**

The Cde. Leader of the Opposition again made a statement – and I noted it down at the time – that we were not involving the people’s organisations in the things that we are doing. In fact, he said the R.P.A. was not put on the Rice Action Committees but now it is being requested to serve on the committee to raise funds for national defence. **[Interruption]**

Cde. C. B. Jagan: Cde. Speaker, on a point of order, I never said that! **[Interruption]**

The Speaker: Would you allow the comrade to speak? Please proceed.

Cde. C. B. Jagan: Cde. Speaker, the Minister said that I said the Rice Producers’ Association was not allowed to be put on the Rice Action Committees. I never said so. What I said was that the Rice Action Committees were given recognition by the Government and not the Rice Producers’ Association but when it came to the defence bonds, when they wanted to get the support from the population, they put the R.P.A. into that committee and not the rice Action Committee.

Cde. Kennard: Cde. Speaker, I wish to say that in 1967 when the Rice Action Committees were being conceived, the R.P.A. was offered representation but the President at the time, Mr. Ramlakhan, who, I understand, now finds it convenient to migrate to Canada, refused. Last year, I myself offered a delegation of the Rice Producers’ Association three seats on each rice Action Committee and they refused. They have been offered participation but they prefer the course of non-co-operation and non-involvement. The policy of the Government is, of course, to involve bona fide organisations in all its institutions: Regional Development

Committees, Community Development Councils, Local Authorities, Agricultural Extension Committees, Rice Action Committees and Agricultural Production Groups.

What of the future? Despite what appears to be a tight budget – and I acknowledge the sympathy that Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud has expressed because Agriculture has been cut – yet I think that many sectors in agriculture have been so developed as to now have what we can call the capacity for self-sustaining growth. In those sectors, therefore, we can expect increases of production and productivity. Already in those sectors the farmers are recovering from the calamity of 1976 and this shows the vitality of those sectors.

In the second place – and I am referring now to some of the statement that Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud has made – in 1977, we shall see further progress with Tapacuma and Supenaam Irrigation Projects which, when completed, will bring water control to the whole of the Essequibo Coast. He said he has not seen a start. A start has been made. He knows that all our engineers and staff are on site. Surveyors' lines have been drawn to the structures, the irrigation ditches, the various canals and that is a start. We have to survey before we begin to dig; you just do not dig wild.

Similarly, work has been done on the M.M.A. Scheme. We admit that due to the shortage of funds – Guyana is not a developed country; it is not an industrialised nation; it is not a rich nation – the M.M.A. Scheme started with our own resources and we are proud that we are self-reliant and are able to use what we generate to initiate development, which initiation attracts external aid, when people help themselves rather than sit down with their hands folded waiting to be helped by some imaginary Godfather. The project has now attracted the attention of the International American Development Bank (I.A.D.B.) to the extent of funding of \$90 million U.S. As the Cde. Minister of Economic Development has said, he expects to see a start being made in this New Year. When that is completed, some half a million acres of fertile land on that Coast will be brought under cultivation

In the year, the Caribbean Development Bank has pledged funds – it is not in the budget yet but the pledge has been made for funds for a 10,000 acre expansion of the African Oil Palm at Wauna, for the 10,000 acre Corn and soya bean CARICOM project at Eborabo Savannahs, for

off-shore fishing – another CARICOM project – for additional financing of our national Agricultural Bank, for the expansion of our dairy industry to replace those large imports of milk and cheese and milk products that still come into Guyana. We have attractions of funds for our Fish Port Complex in Georgetown and for agricultural training including the establishment of the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Guyana.

Mention was made of bananas. I wish it to be known that on that banana project which started some years ago, the Government of Guyana did not spend a single cent. The expenditure was made by Elders and Fyffe and in fact, when the scheme was wound up, Elders and Fyffe compensated the Government to the extent of some \$250,000; no tone penny of Guyanese money was spent on that abortive Elders and Fyffe scheme at the time. It failed because of the presence of bacterial disease, Moco disease, along the banks of those rivers.

The new year will see new areas of cane coming in for peasant cane farming along the East Coast and along the West Coast of Demerara, new areas coming in under the Guyana Agricultural Products Corporation for cassava production to feed our cassava mills, 4,000 acres more of black eye pea, 3,000 acres more of cotton and so the story goes. The construction of almost 50 miles of farm-to-market road, funds for which have recently been provided, will ensure the opening up of new rice areas such as the Port Mourant backlands, new provision areas such as the East Bank of Essequibo involving thousands and thousands of acres and making more rice and food available to the nation and to the world at large.

Cde. Speaker, I now wish to close. In all that I have said, we recognise that we have constraints to our production. These schemes and others cannot yield their targated production without the support and involvement of all our farmers. I believe that we have the support of the large majority of farmers but since 1964 we know of attempts to frustrate or prevent the full involvement of our farmers in the Government's agricultural programme. There has been interference; there has been molestation of our farmers in an attempt perhaps to seize power by the disruption of the economy. There have been countless acts of terrorism and intimidation against sugar workers, rice farmers and other producers who have been told from time to time not to work or not to plant.

3.50 p.m.

People have been advised to practise non co-operation at all levels, not to serve on committees, not to participate in self-help projects, not to produce. Dissident elements have been encouraged to destroy drainage and irrigation structures, cut fences and dams, burn cane fields and crops, and to sabotage equipment in field and factory. Men, women and children, in our farming communities have been constantly harassed and threatened, all this because they participated in programmes designed for their own betterment. Farmers now fear these agents of destruction even more than they fear the worst weather.

It is a tremendous tribute to our farmers and workers that they have achieved the gains which I have described despite all the detractors and outlaws at their backs. A grim and dismal future will face Guyana if these despicable acts and attitudes continue. No budget, no matter how generous, will then save Guyana.

I wish, therefore, to appeal to those who claim to have the interest of farmers at heart, to those who claim a desire to see even greater agricultural progress, to act responsibly, to reform themselves as agents of healing, as agents of co-operation, as agents of motivation, to act as true leaders of their followers, leading them to join the army of loyal producers whose standard bearers are the vanguard socialist party, the People's National Congress, under the wise leadership of the beloved and respected Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham.

The Speaker: Cde. Bancroft

The Minister of State – Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro) (Cde. Bancroft): Cde. Speaker, for as long as one can remember, it has been said that the future of Guyana lies in the development of our hinterland or interior areas. Despite this, however, nothing tangible has ever been done for the development of that large land mass which comprises over two-thirds of the total square miles of Guyana. In fact, one remembers that the impression was conveyed that the interior was not a good place for certain people to go. The impression was conveyed that in the interior areas could only be found our Amerindian brothers, patronisingly called in those days the Children of the Forest, the riff-riff of the society who they termed as porkknockers, and

women who they felt were not part and parcel of our society. It was looked upon as the place of punishment for recalcitrant public servants who were banished into the hinterland areas.

In fact, up to the time when the People's National Congress party came to Government, the position in the hinterland was indeed one of a lack of concern for the people out there. However, I will not speak generally on the hinterland areas as there are other colleagues of mine who will deal with that aspect but I will speak on one part of the hinterland area referred to as Region No. 5, Mazaruni-Potaro-Guyuni.

This region begins from Groete Creek in the lower reaches of the Essequibo and extends south and west along the watershed of the Cuyuni to Wenamu in the Upper Cuyuni and across to the Pakaraimas mountain range, approximately 21,555 square miles. Its topography is unique in the fact that in the lower reaches one has hilly terrain, sand and sand-clay mixture. As one moves into the middle Mazaruni and the Potaro, one encounters heavily forested areas, and as one goes southwards and westwards, one is led into that mountainous area where are to be found some of our most beautiful waterfalls and the famous Mt. Ayangana and Mt. Roraima – really an area of beauty.

I will deal specifically with the development within the middle and upper Mazaruni areas and bring the honourable House and the public up to date with some of the developments that have been taking place there. By now, not only this honourable House knows but the nation knows of the development that is taking place with respect to the 210 miles of road which will take you on to Sand Landing, the dam site of the hydro project in the upper Mazaruni, passing places which will become familiar names in the not too distant future, places like Itaballi, Kwapau, Kurupung Creek Mouth and Kumarau, only to name a few of them.

At the moment it is not generally public knowledge that one can travel from here to Bartica overland in a matter of three hours, using the Linden highway, across to Rockstone then to Shuribana on to the Sherima point then to the Bartica-Potaro road and into Bartica in three hours. Construction work began only in the later part of 1975 and by early 1976 this was possible. In fact, one can travel early in the morning from Issano 122 miles from Bartica, or

Madhia/Potaro 118 miles from Bartica, and be in Georgetown by midday. I have done it repeated times by Land Rover. That is indeed a fantastic development in less than two years.

At the moment, 80 miles of this road, as the Cde. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources explained yesterday, have been constructed out of the 210 miles but it is good to know that the reconnaissance surveys have already been completed and penetration has gone beyond 20 miles of the Puruni River and coming from the Kurupung Creek mouth up t the Puruni then to McTodd from the Kurupung Creek mouth to the Seroune Creek 20 miles and beyond Kumarau going on to Sand Landing.

In this gigantic task it is good to know that this building of the road is one of the greatest feats being undertaken by Guyanese engineers. In fact, the whole committee of management comprises all Guyanese, the engineers are all Guyanese, and for the first time our engineers have been encountering a type of difficult terrain where you have large areas of swamps, thickly wooded forests and some very thigh mountains in which you have to find a pass to get the road up to the mountain peak.

As I was saying, it is a feat and I think we should congratulate our local engineers. This Government, the People's National Congress Government, took a conscious decision that we will not import any foreign construction company to build this road, that it must be built on the self-reliance of Guyanese engineers. They must face and tackle the problems. They must find the answers. We knew in the beginning they would make errors but Cde. Speaker, you would agree with me that they can only learn by going out there and undertaking the job. You can only swim if you are pushed into the water. Therefore, we realized that they would make mistakes, and mistakes they did make, but out of the mistakes they have learnt, they have gained experience for which Guyana is so much the richer. This will enable them to build road. And they have to build roads right through the Rupununi.

4 p.m.

It is good, too, to know that out of this project on the job training has been done. There are people there who, before they were taken on, had no skill. But because of the programme of on-the-job training today people who were once unskilled are now being trained in practical skills. It is pleasing to the sight when one goes out there and sees our young trainee operators using machines that were not designed to do that type of work; using a bulldozer which was not do that type of work; moving boulders weighing over 10 tons out of the way to get the road to pass. It is something which they have learnt on the job, the techniques that they have learnt on the job.

We realize – and we make no apologies for this because of the type of terrain and the work that these machines have to do – that in many cases they will not give the amount of performance as if they had worked under circumstances different from those which prevail in those areas.

The Speaker: Cde. Bancroft, it is 4 o'clock. Perhaps we will now take the suspension. The House is suspended for thirty minutes.

Suspended accordingly at 4.03 p.m.

4.25 p.m.

On resumption - -

The Speaker: When the suspension was taken Cde. Bancroft was speaking. Cde. Bancroft.

Cde. Bancroft: Cde. Speaker, when the suspension was taken I had, for the benefit of this House, brought Members of this honourable House up to date on the Upper Mazaruni road Project, its beginning and where it will end. The major objective of this road is to provide road transportation for the conveyance of machinery and other equipment for the construction of the Upper Mazaruni Hydroelectric Programme. We are all aware of this programme and the benefits of this programme for the industrialisation of this nation.

But let me briefly bring this honourable House up to date on some of the immediate benefits which have accrued from the construction of this road. The road passes through, as I said previously, heavily forested areas and at the moment private timber operators have begun to reap the benefits using the very roads for the extraction of logs. This has resulted in their production increasing by three times, in many cases four times. Also, it has been one of the reasons why the Guyana Timbers Limited will shortly be establishing at Kartabu – and that is at the very near regions of Itaballi – a sawmill so that we can increase our lumber production. In fact, the Guyana Forest Industries Corporation at the moment have six mobile sawmills installed at Wineperu and the new forest programme will cater for species where there was once selective logging. At the moment all species will be used. As a result of the establishment of the six mills the increase of lumber has already taken place in the Wineperu area.

Added to this, too, where formerly miners had to spend two weeks travelling from Georgetown to Bartica to get to places like the Rupununi, now they are using their own land transportation leaving Georgetown and reaching Rupununi by afternoon, which makes it much more lucrative to them now to use the new Rupununi area for small mining purposes.

These are some of the immediate benefits. Cde. Ramdeen of the Ministry of Agriculture has done soil tests there and he told me that within the Rupununi/Itaballi area there are thousands of acres of fertile land good for agricultural farming and also cattle rearing.

There are other areas of development which I would like, with the limited time available, to bring to the attention of this House and that is in the field of quarrying. At the moment, the Guyana National Service has reactivated the quarry at Itabu which is adjacent to Tiperu and that is shortly to come into operation. This will increase the tonnage of stone annually in order to meet some of our infrastructure work and other needs.

4.30 p.m.

Also too in the field of health one goes to Bartica and one sees that last year the Ministry of Health spent over \$300,000 in the renovation of the Bartica Hospital which now among other things provides adequate waiting room for out-patients; a child welfare clinic, a new dispensary and waiting room, the Matron's office, the Public Health Inspector's office, room for the staff and porters, their common lunch room, and other facilities.

We also see, in the field of education, the upgrading of the Bartica Government Secondary School where, among other things, not only is the class room to be taught the usual academic subjects but very shortly some able plans are afoot for thirty acres of land to be developed adjacent to the Bartica government School. Plans will be made for the raising of poultry, pigs and other livestock. Already, too, work has begun on the fencing of this area and if need be, there is room for more improvement because of the fact that large areas of land are available.

We also have at Madhia a gas project that shortly will come into stream. We hope it will do so by the end of the month. It will be able to provide domestic gas and it is good to note that this project will be utilising – or has utilised – what one would term “waste”. Nothing in that factory at the moment has been imported. There is no new equipment. All has been rehabilitated by local workmen using their own skill and expertise. Hopefully, by the end of the month a trial operation should be made on the production of domestic gas.

Also in the field of agriculture, Amerindian village in the upper Potaro, for the first time the residents have under cultivation 25 acres of land for the planting of legumes, such as black-eye peas, red beans, peanuts. By self-help they have begun the clearing of the airstrip which will facilitate easy communication.

It is good to note, too, that at the moment rehabilitation work is being done for the lengthening of certain airstrips within that region namely Imbaimadai and Kamarang to accommodate the larger type of aircraft which will soon be added to the fleet of the Guyana Airways Corporation. A new airstrip will be built at Wild Cow. In the Upper Mazaruni the

Kamarang airstrip will also accommodate the new type of Hawker Siddeley (_____ 748) aircraft soon to be added to the fleet of the Guyana Airways Corporation.

In the field of housing, on the 16th May last year, 25 self-help houses were handed over to their proud owners and on that very day work began on the building of 25 more self-help houses which are now in the final stages of completion and will soon be handed over.

Also we go on to education where Government took over the denominational schools. There are 27 in Region No. 5. I need not bring this House up to date because of those 27 only five are Government Schools. One knows the history of denominational schools, how they are rundown, dilapidated, the type of teachers' houses. It is a lot of teachers to serve in those far flung areas. At the moment we are doing our best to rehabilitate those schools to ensure that the children are taught under very good conditions. Until then there were only six nursery schools with a fluctuating population of 130 downwards and, with the Government take-over of free education from nursery to University, those have been increased within the last two terms from 6 to 14. The school population has increased from 130, which was the maximum, to something like 682.

There are other fields like the establishment of the Guyana Marketing Corporation outlet at Bartica in order to assist in keeping the cost-of-living down for our consumers. Also a successful consumers' co-operative has been established at Bartica. Together these have been responsible for providing many of the basic necessities for the consumer at reasonable prices.

If we look at the overall picture of Region No. 5, the Mazaruni/Cuyuni area, and at the field of mining we will see the interest that the People's National Congress Party and the Government take in mining. The People's National Congress, realizing the problems that faced many of our small miners, for the first time instituted a scheme where small miners could receive small loans for the purchasing of small equipment and foodstuff to provide them with gainful employment. In addition to these subsidies, the Guyana Airways Corporation provides cheap freight in order to keep the cost within reasonable limits, 70 cents per pound for fuel and freight

and also to keep down the cost of passages to designated mining areas so that our miners will be able to continue to make a living in those areas.

Also, it is good to note that within the reservoir area of the dam site of the Upper Mazaruni, as the Cde. Minister of Natural Resources pointed out yesterday, our Amerindians for the first time have been given ample opportunity to share and to participate in whatever minerals are extracted from within that area. We were told yesterday that there are twelve dredges to be distributed between the 8 Amerindian villages in the Upper Mazaruni based on the population of the village. And that they will be provided with equipment and dredges. In addition they will be given 8 weeks supplies of food and fuel. So they will not be left literally on their own. A training programme was undertaken last year in order to enable them to be acquainted with the skills which are necessary for the extraction of minerals by divers and for the care and maintenance of the equipment and management of these dredges in order that the economic prospect may be good. This has been one of the main features since we have undertaken this type of development in those areas.

I could go on and on relating many of the achievements which have taken place in Region 5 over a short period. It is good to note that in the short span of time since the People's National Congress assumed the reins of office of Government, in areas where persons were ashamed even to speak on the hinterland. I remember that many years ago if a person in Georgetown spoke to a person who worked in the hinterland and said "Where you work?" and he replied "I work in the bush." If you want a little work let's go in the bush;" the common remark was, "Bush gat to meet them by Big Market: because this was the type of orientation. The bush was a bad place and only bad people were in the bush, the Amerindians, the pork knockers or women folk. It was regarded as a place of banishment, a place where no decent woman would go because of the fact that there was a stigma attached to it. I have heard the term "bush woman" but in all my life I have never seen in the interior bush growing on my woman in the hinterland. And, Cde. Speaker, that is the reason why public officers' wives refused to go to the hinterland in those days because of the stigma attached to life in the hinterland. It was the

7.1.77

National Assembly

4.30 – 4.40 p.m.

People's National Congress Government under the leadership of Cde. L. F. S. Burnham which transformed this idea and oriented the people in the hinterland and developed the hinterland life for the development of this entire nation. [Applause]

4.40 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, I should like to point out that across the River from Bartica is a settlement known as Riversview and from my office I can look over there each day. In the course of my work, travelling through the river visiting settlements there are times when I have to go to a place called Makouria, and I walk behind there and sometimes I see a lot of discarded equipment at a little place. I was told, I am not so sure, that it was a feeble attempt to construct a road from Makouria to a destination of which I am not aware. Maybe you can inform me. I think it is always a very timely reminder so that one can analyse the road that we are building, the destination of this and the end result which is contemplated. The People's National Congress builds roads to somewhere. Somebody at some time in the far distant past built roads to nowhere. This is the difference between the two parties the People's National Congress is determined and knows where it is going. We have chartered a course; we know what our objectives are and we know how we will get there unlike our friends of yesteryear who planned roads and did not know where they were going.

I should like to place on record, as Regional Minister for Region No. 5, appreciation for the work being done by our Guyanese engineers both on the U.M.R.P. and U.M.D.A. and by those workers who have braved the swamps and who live and work under arduous conditions which one must go to see and believe. One sees on their faces the determination to succeed. They have said in no uncertain terms that the People's National Congress Government and the Leader of this nation have placed great faith in them and they have no intention whatsoever of allowing that faith to be misplaced.

There are obstacles; the work is hard, but we shall reach the end of our journey, we shall reach Kamarau where the proposed township will be established, we shall see for the first time in the history of this nation the transformation of our hinterland, resources for development and improvement of all the people of Guyana. Whatever achievements we have achieved in Region

No. 5, credit should be given to the regional system, the involvement and participation of all the people concerned through their respective organisations, community development councils, sub-regional development councils, regional development councils and all those organisations who represent and speak for people and who have sat down on their own level to draft the blue prints. Once they have drawn up a blue print, it has been approved. The Government is always very considerate of the views of the ordinary people. Having participated at the planning stage they are more eager to get on with the execution of the last. I think we should all commend ourselves and the People's National Congress Government for its wisdom and foresight in laying the institution for the involvement of all the people. As Cde. Clarke rightly said yesterday in his presentation, it is the greatest democratization process we have seen for the involvement of all the people at the ordinary level. The People's National Congress Party is the party that can well understand the socialist philosophy, is dedicated to serve and be of service to all people of this nation. We do not believe in sectionalism, we do not believe in animosities and destabilization we believe that once the institutions have been established all of us should come together for the good of Guyana and work for the good and benefit of the nation and all the people of Guyana if we are honest in what we say.

Having said this, let me conclude by saying that the hinterland under the People's National Congress for the first time has seen real and meaningful development. We have seen translated not promises but we have seen the People's National Congress, the Party in Government, demonstrating its ability to transform dreams and aspirations into facts and realities of life. The Development of which I just spoke in Region No. 5 is ample testimony of the good planning and astute leadership of the People's National Congress Party and Government and the leadership of this Party and Government.

I should therefore like to invite all of my friends and those who can find it possible to travel to Region No. 5 and see for themselves some of what I have briefly outlined to them. The development within the past two years has been so swift and we have moved so quickly that it bothers the human mind and imagination to understand how we have achieved so much in so short a space of time. This is ample testimony to a people's faith, commitment and dedication to a Party and Government who have transformed their way of life and for the first time has

brought to them some of the good things of life of which they had no hope in the past. Until the People's National Congress assumed the reins of office the future for the hinterland was indeed a dark and desolate one. Thanks to this Party and Government, there is not only a bright future for the hinterland but for all Guyana. And we sincerely hope that all of us will work towards the achievement of the goals and objectives as outlined by the People's National Congress.

[Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Speaker, as a further expression of support to the Government, I should like to completely support those Ministers and Members on the Government Benches who said that 1977 is going to be a difficult year. We recognise this point and we recognise also that this bleak future that awaits the people of Guyana is of their own making.

It was refreshing yesterday during the debate to hear the hon. Member Cde. Corbin, who made a wonderful contribution which was heavily couched in the language of the Left, but to which we may not necessarily conform completely. I recall distinctly that he said that the victory of the revolution needs a change in psychology. Taken separately we have no quarrel with these words. I understood him to say that before the revolution can be successful in Guyana we must first change the psychology. Taken separately we have no quarrel with these words. I understood him to say that before the revolution can be successful in Guyana we must first change the psychology of the people of Guyana. Victorious revolution, change, complex psychology, by themselves there is no objection, but placed in that context we do not agree. In fact, our Marxist books tell us differently, that it is not social consciousness which determines the social being but it is the other way round, it is the social being that determines social consciousness. I recall further, and I have promised him not to take him up on the point of his very unMarxist quotation from Demas who apparently is a disciple of Malthus who was strongly criticized by Lenin and Marx for his theories about blaming the problems of people on over-population, calling for family planning and better education for people so that they can be able to solve their problems. We do not necessarily agree that people suffer or problems exist as a result of the absence of family planning and no proper education. However, I promised him not to go very much into the point because he said that he was hesitant to quote that point.

4.50 p.m.

I also recall that during the course of the debate, the Minister of Economic Development, Cde. Hoyte, went back to the time of the P.P.P. in Government and very unscientifically equated the early 1960s with the mid-1970s. I am sure the Cde. Minister understood that what in fact he was doing was equating two different situations and two different conditions, equating British Guiana with Guyana.

In the early 60s the international order that existed was different from what exists in this period and I therefore think it was very unfair for him to have equated what happened in that period and I therefore think it was very unfair for him to have equated what happened in that period with the present period. However, in spite of that uneven and unscientific equation, although he was virtually equating two different situations, I would like to point out that he did not tell the full story with respect to education. Last year was Education Year and 9 per cent of the budget was spent on education. Some of the measures taken we fully supported.

This year, following Education Year, we are happy to note that there was even an increase on last year's allocations in this field. From 9.2 per cent, it has risen to 14.1 per cent. We are happy about this; we think it is a step in the right direction; we think the increase was as a result of the take-over of schools and the separation of schools from churches which we supported. But although there has been an increase in this year's Budget at a time when the Government is going to face a crisis, he did not point out that even this year's increase – 14.1 per cent of the Budget – could not be equated with the 1962 percentage of 14.8 per cent of the Budget, 1953 percentage of 15.6 per cent, or 1964 percentage of 16.2 per cent of the Budget.

Not only was education given a bigger share of the Budget, but there was a tendency to increase, to grant yearly increase. **[Interruption]** I agree, probably the Prime Minister was absent when I said that in absolute figures you may have spent more but as a percentage of the budget you are spending less on education if you want to equate what happened in the P.P.P. time with what happens today.

When the Government declared 1976 as Education Year, they also pronounced their objective of free education. We support that objective. We are happy that the comrades of the P.N.C. have finally come around to agree to the call for free education that the P.P.P. has been making all the time although they came around to the point very late. But, it would appear to me as if their concept of free education is limited to the idea of stopping the paying of school fees. We feel that one cannot simply say “stop school fees” and then get free education. There are other concomitants to free education. There are other factors that must be looked into if we are going to ensure free education. You are going to say “free education” but transportation costs for school children to attend schools have been soaring; you are going to talk about free education; we know about the problem, shortage of school places. What is the good of talking about free education when you do not have the facilities so that people can enjoy free education? You do not have enough school places; there is overcrowding. You do not have enough schools to accommodate all these young people who should be given free education? What about proper facilities to help the learning process? Some things have been achieved no doubt but we still feel that for free education to be fully realised in Guyana then much more than talking about the idea, much more than stopping the payment of school fees, will have to be done if it is to become a reality in this country.

Together with the talk of free education, we have heard about free textbooks. Again we support; again we think it is a good idea and a good proposal and a good intention of the Government. Unfortunately, we are witnessing that this intention is a far way off from being realised. I have been informed that, for example, over the past term, some schools have not even received exercise books. Many schools have not received the free basic textbooks that were promised. The former Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Cde. Chowritmootoo, promised nine. Some schools have not even received two. As a result, we find that the promise of free textbooks has not been realised. Children are being hampered and, on top of that, if people want to get books for their children they now find it so difficult to get books because they are none in the shops and when they can possibly get some, their prices are very prohibitive.

I said that the P.P.P. has no objection to those ideas that are being proposed by the Government but it would appear as if the Government is not very serious in implementing some of these proposals and as a result there seems to be quite a lot of chaos in the field of education at the moment.

5 p.m.

As much as we recognise the increase in the expenditure on education, as much as we welcome even the half-hearted attempts at free education and incomplete fulfillment of the promise of free text books, we must not allow ourselves to be fooled. We must not allow these to hide the serious deficiencies that exist in the structure of education in the Government's concept, whatever it is, and policies of education in this country. It would not be wise for the Government to hasten to commend itself; the question of education remains unsettled.

Last year when we supported the Government take-over of the schools which were dominated by the churches, we had idea that the Government would have been unable to chew what it had bitten off. In fact, we felt that that would have been a new approach, it would have been the beginning of a revolutionary approach to education in this country. Although the budget allocation has been increased, unfortunately, those hopes have been dashed to pieces. I want to emphasise the words of the hon. Member Cde. Corbin, that a developing country must place emphasis on education, a developing country must necessarily expanded the education, the knowledge of its people for it to improve, for it to develop, for it to grow.

Particularly so it is important since the Government has claimed that it has set a course towards socialism objectives. If the Government is serious about socialism, then we see, for that objective to be realised, and to succeed in that aim, education in two main broad concepts; one, that it should be relevant to the requirements and needs of our country. Some efforts have been made in this direction but not enough if we are going to reach our objective quickly, and we need to reach that objective quickly if we are serious to help the suffering people of this country.

We still have, although so much emphasis is being placed on education, many young people who are acquiring irrelevant skills and certificates while the world seems to be passing by, developing, leaving us. The Government needs, therefore, to show more interest, place more emphasis on education as it relates to developing the relevant skills so that our country can benefit. If we do not do this, then we will not be able to make inputs substantially, use skills, knowledge and expertise needed for that development and growth.

The second concept we would like to propose is that our education must be so geared as to instil in our young population a lofty spirit, to inspire and imbue our youth with feelings of patriotism, internationalism and anti-imperialism in keeping with the stated objectives of the Government. We must hasten the process of the erosion of elitist and individualistic attitudes. Indeed, the content of education must be fundamentally looked into to destroy some of the old patterns that existed previously under imperialism, colonialism, and subsequently, neo-colonialism.

We feel that our educational institutions must become centres for the diffusion of the proletarian ideology, of the ideas of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, so that we can build a new generation that can grapple with the present-day tasks and eventually be able to construct a socialist society.

We recognise that if the Government wants to do this that these objectives will require the setting up of the necessary mechanisms. We recognise that these objectives will require a lot of resources, tremendous energies, physical, material, and personal, and we are sure that if it goes into this, the P.P.P. will not hesitate to support the idea of making our institutions, our schools, centres where the ideology of Marx, Lenin, and Engels can be diffused to build this generation which is going to build socialism and grapple with our tasks.

Clearly, from the speeches that were given, there seems to be quite a lot of confusion about the ideological position of the Government. When Cde. Chowritmootoo opened a school

in Sparta, Essequibo, he said that there is need for the proliferation of the Marxist Leninist ideology. This was corroborated only yesterday by the hon. Member Cde. Corbin. At the same time, only yesterday we heard the hon. Minister Cde. Green speak about the strong position of the P.N.C. with respect to co-operative socialism. To my mind these are irreconcilable positions on ideological questions which the Cde. Prime minister will bear me out on and these express the trend within the P.N.C. at this particular moment. Our education policy, therefore, we feel must be fashioned to fulfil these two broad concepts that we have outlined if we are to move on into the future within the present circumstances.

Last year, Education Year, we had the opportunity of listening to the hon. Minister of Education read a treatise in this House about the importance of nursery education. Unfortunately, it took a long time to be discovered, twelve years of the P.N.C. in Government. After twelve years, then the importance of nursery education in the formation of a person's personality and his psychological condition was discovered. We have no quarrel with the ideas expressed then by the Minister of Education. We notice that some money was allocated to pursue development in this direction but considering that in the past nursery school education was completely kept out of the education system, we feel that the amount allocated cannot suffice if we are to ensure that every child is given the opportunity of nursery education.

5.10 p.m.

We agree with the Minister of Education when she spoke of how vital this pre-school level of education is. We do not see, therefore, why more money was not allocated for the development of nursery education. We think bolder measures are needed in this direction. Government should take a more serious position on this level of education if we are going to make it a fact, a reality, giving our young people, our children a chance to go to nursery school so that they will be able to grow up in a society with new objectives.

The hon. Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech made much ado about the provision of 2,325 school places over the past year. We welcome also that development. We are happy

to know that 2,325 children born in this country will be given school places, but I do not think that this development by itself must offer reason to commend ourselves. Lack of adequate school places and overcrowded schools remain serious problems still within our education system. In the Education Digest, 1973-1974, it was pointed out that 170,918 pupils were accommodated in schools which only provided 148,455 school places. Therefore, there was an overcrowding of 22,463 places. Last year, the Year of Education, we only had 2,325 places provided. Simple deductions and experience, even reality, would say that that problem remains as large as ever and we have not been able to tackle this problem in such a way so to solve it completely.

Like nursery education, primary education is also important. The 5-14 year age group when they pass that period, will not get a chance to come back to it. They will get older and we know that that period is extremely important if our young people are to be given the necessary foundation for them to move onwards, for them to develop and for them to contribute to the development of our country. Those who attended primary school, in their attempt to go on to secondary school, find serious problems. One of the qualifying examinations to go on to secondary school at the moment is the Common Entrance Examination. Having finished primary school and seeking to go on to secondary school they must take the Common Entrance Examination. However, certain problems exist here. Because of the shortages of school places at the secondary level, we find that although some children may have reached the qualifying marks to go on to secondary school, they will not gain entrance because there are not enough school places. As a result, we find a situation existing at the moment in the structure of education where two children coming from two different points of the country, doing the same entrance examination to get into secondary school, getting the same marks, will find a situation where one will get entrance into the secondary school and the other will not. This is because of the scarcity of school places. There are not enough secondary schools and, therefore, that child will be denied free secondary education because that child is living in a different area of the country. We feel that it is unfair for that child to be refused secondary education, not because of inability, not because he lacks education, but because of absence of secondary school places.

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. R. D. Persaud: I would like to move that the comrade be given an additional fifteen minutes to continue his speech.

Cde. Roshan Ally *seconded.*

Motion put, and agreed to.

Cde. Mohamed: Thank you, Cde. Speaker. Now, I want to refer to the Preliminary Certificate of Education. This also is a qualifying examination to enter secondary schools. A child passing this examination can enter secondary school only if that child is below 13 years 6 months. If a child is 13 years 7 months at the time of taking this examination, and is successful, he will not be accepted into secondary school. Indeed that child having failed to get entrance in a secondary school, can now go on to take the College of Preceptors Examination which can also entitle him to being successful to enter secondary school. But that child will have to pass the C.P. examination below the age of 14 years 6 months before he will be able to attend secondary school.

If a child is 13 years 7 months at the time of the P.C. examination and goes on to take C.P. examination one year later, he or she will still be 14 years 7 months. The fact that that child is one month older is the deciding factor to say that that child will not receive free secondary education in this country. In the first instance, in the Common Entrance Examination, a child suffers because he or she may be living in the wrong part of the country. In the second instance, as related to the P.C.E. or the C.P., the child suffers because he was born at the wrong time or month of the year. I would like the Minister to tell us how she is going to solve this problem. I do not know if she can seek the advice of the Minister of Health so that he will be able to advise parents when to give birth.

Seriously, this is a problem which focuses on the shortages of school places in this country. It places no argument about free education. It shows the unfairness of the present structure and the Ministry of Education should be able to take cognizance of these problems and the structures, rectify them so that equal opportunities could be given to all our young people seeking secondary education in Guyana.

Recently, Government took over secondary schools. We supported that take-over. Even though we face a shortage in this direction, for one reason or another, it has been drawn to our attention that although teachers and students were taken over there are cases where the buildings were not taken over. This, at this moment of dire shortages, is only compounding the problems faced by young people seeking secondary education and help in the overcrowding of these schools.

5.20 p.m.

An example is Central Corentyne. Before the take-over, there were 5 Secondary schools. After the take-over three remained because all the students from the 5 schools were now placed into three schools creating overcrowding in many of these schools. The Comprehensive High School, for example, with a capacity of 500 now houses over 1,000 students. Essequibo with 16 Primary schools has only one Multilateral Secondary School which caters for 920 students. And recently, a community high school which has been set up will cater for 800 students. As against 16 primary schools in the Pomeroon, you have 1 multilateral school, 1 secondary school, one community school and one which has not got off the ground as yet, to take care of all those children.

I said before that we also see the need to emphasise our education but we do not think the Government is placing the amount of emphasis that is required and necessary at the moment to accommodate our young people. In fact, we think that the Government must now let us know its stand free compulsory education at the secondary level for all young people. The must now set the stage to start implementing this objective immediately.

At the University level we think that the main function of the University at the moment is to develop and increase the scientific, technological and intellectual potential of the country. The success of socialism will be unimaginable without the training of qualified people. The University must be able to serve the cultural and scientific needs of the country and if the Government fails to recognise that point then we will not be able to quickly arrive at socialism, which is its objective.

All socialist countries in the world having attained power place great emphasis on education. In fact, they are the foremost countries in the field of education. So important is education towards development, consolidating our gains and victories, that one of the greatest achievements of All ends in Chile was to open the doors wide for working class children and the farmers' children of Chile to get higher and technical education in that country.

Unfortunately, in Guyana there is the indication that the Government is not paying the same respect to higher education and instead of opening the doors we see that many of our young people are being persecuted. This is because of the imposition of National Service at the University of Guyana. It is public knowledge by now, that last year over 28 students were given letters of withdrawals because they refused to attend the National Service. In 1975, 13 students were given letters of withdrawals because they refused to be arbitrarily inducted into the scheme. Many of them voluntarily left, and, as a result of this situation, we find that this year there are still certain carriers imposed upon them particularly the female students and especially in the Faculty of Natural Sciences where there are only four girls admitted to the University.

National Service has prevented many young people from going in the University. In fact we are undermining our whole intention of moving towards the socialist objective by denying the working-class children, the farmers' children, higher education.

We have received reports from some of those of our comrades who attended National Service at Kimbia. What is the report? The report spoke about wastages, atrocious food

conditions, humiliation, abuses and bad relationship between staff and students, punishment at the whims of officers and students that have justified some of the fears of the people of this country. One student, as the hon. Minister would say, was taken to Camp Ayanganna where he was held up for three days. Another one, from a document which came to our attention but it was taken back – and the Minister knows about this – said that one student will have to do National Service again because he did not do his work satisfactorily. Who decides what is satisfactory work and who delegated the power the insist that National Service should dominate the lives, the fate and future of the students of this country. A number of students who have attended National Service were given the status of S.O.S. It is normal for this kind of treatment whenever some officer did not like them.

We do not agree. And we want to make it clear, that National Service as it is presently being implemented at the University of Guyana is ineffective. Our students can be put to better use. We think that the Ministry should explore the possibility of utilising national development activities by getting students to work during their holiday period in the Ministries rather than being in camps where they do not want to go and which has affected the course of educational development in this county.

The other day we heard that the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Guyana went to Cuba to see work Study Programmes and to see how they are implemented. We have not received a report so far. What happened? The only thing I have seen is the Minutes where Cde. Branco spoke about the beauties of Work Study. Why isn't this scheme being implemented? What are the pitfalls? Why does the Government not want to implement a scheme which we can consider and which we can look into as a possible alternative towards National Service as it relates to the University of Guyana?

The Speaker: Time!

7.1.77

National Assembly

5.20 – 5.30 p.m.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Speaker I beg to move that Cde. Mohamed be given another 15 minutes to conclude his contribution.

Cde. Belgrave seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

5.30 p.m.

Cde. Mohamed: Thank I would now like to go to the catering for the education system in Guyana, a system which relates to the training of teachers. Again I want to draw attention to the words of the Minister of Education when she spoke recently about the shortages that exist in the field of teachers. As a result of this shortage we understood that a recruitment drive was made, particularly in the United Kingdom. This was a bit surprising, especially as only a few years ago the Government of Guyana placed a ban on the V.B.O.s, the C.U.S.O.s and the members of the Peace Corps who came into this country. Now we find they are not calling it V.S.O., C.U.S.O. or Peace Corps, but the very people who were once branded as people of the CIA who were coming to sabotage this country are the very people we are now going to ask to come to teach in this country, a very special aspect in the life of Guyana and involving the orientation of people. Had the Government continued the programme when it ensconced itself in power in 1964 and had the teacher training programme continued then in 1976 it would not have carried at this kind of dilemma we have seen. We had three training centres geared to train teachers in this country. When the Government took office it closed down two and kept one. In 1976 we see there is a great shortage and we have to go a road to recruit teachers.

We do not know what has happened with respect to this recruitment. For example, what is the contract signed by a student? What are the conditions? I should like the Minister to make that public and answer questions like this: How much pay is being given to these teachers? What are the conditions of service? What are the allowances? Will the bringing of

these foreign teachers into Guyana have any effect on the foreign reserves of this country? How does the degree of one of these foreign teachers equate with the degree as received by one of our local boys at the University? What is the difference in their salaries? These are some important questions at the moment when our country is facing a crises.

Over the past year we have not done badly in the training of teachers. I have here the figures which indicate the number of teachers who came out of the different institutions geared for training teachers. But this cannot be enough in relation to the number of schools and the number of teachers that are presently employed, and cannot be enough with respect to the number of teachers who are leaving their profession. Because, as Dr. Sukdeo pointed out, occupational mobility results from poor salaries, occupational mobility results from poor working conditions and unprincipled methods of appointment and promotion.

Whilst the Minister is telling the nation that there is a teacher shortage, at the Teacher Training Centre in New Amsterdam, which has a capacity to house thirty teachers to be trained, there are at present only nine at the secondary level being trained and at the primary level only nineteen although the capacity is there for thirty. Whilst we go abroad to imperialist countries to recruit teachers to teach in Guyana we find that many of our young people have six to ten subjects G.C.E. and are cutting cane or cannot get work. This is one of the biggest problems in the field and system of education in this country.

We want the Minister of Education to look into these problems. We are not telling the Government that it has not done anything for education. I am responding to the hon. Minister of co-operatives and National Mobilization yesterday wanted some constructive criticism. I thought that would appreciate this response to his invitation.

We cannot accept at this moment such shortages when we have so many young people roaming the streets, many of our young people who are liming, many of our young people with certificates cutting cane, and we have the Minister going abroad to recruit teachers.

We have reached presently a critical situation with respect to the training of science teachers and technical teachers. What has happened? The Minister is aware of this survey. A survey of part of the secondary schools showed that in 1974, 32.6 per cent of the teachers are trained science teachers but in 1976 only 14.8 per cent are trained science teachers. This is deterioration at this time when there is emphasis on education. The college of Education has only put out three, not more than four, students over the past year in the field of science if my information is correct. I would be happy if the Minister would confirm or deny.

The situation therefore is very serious in the field of education. We must make an effort to stop these aberrations that we find so that in the totality Guyana can move forward to the stated objectives of socialism. We must recognise these pitfalls and try to see that they are removed in the future.

Briefly, I want to say how heartening it is to see that the vote in the Ministry of Information has been drastically out. I recall a little exchange between the Minister of Information and myself on the last occasion. We would like to say that, if nothing else, the crisis has been beneficial in this direction because we have always been critical of the expenditure in this Ministry as unnecessary. Had this been done earlier then we would have had a few more millions to help the economy of the country. I am glad the government has come round to the point of seeing that there is no need for this large expenditure in this Ministry.

Last night we had the opportunity of listening to Cde. Jack reading from Lenin's book "Left-wing Communism, and Infantile Disorder". I would urge the Cde. Minister of Education to borrow this to find out what Lenin said, on compromises of ideological matters. I have taken some time off to look at the **Chronicle**, the 27th, 29th, 30th and 31st and I noticed that of the foreign news that was carried in that paper on the 27th four came from CANA, two from Reuter, two from Reuter-Cana, one from Gemini. On the 29th, one came from CANA, five from Reuter, two from Reuter-CANA, one from Gemini, one from Philippine. On the 30th, one came from

CANA, one frome, one from Reuter-CANA. On the 31st, two were from CANA, six from Reuter-CANA.

5.40 p.m.

Now, if we are going to approach information within this context, if we are not going to see that information is a necessary aspect that will help to promote the objectives of this country and that we must place more emphasis on the news pieces coming out from the agencies like Prensalatina and Tass – I hardly see anything from Tass, from Novosti – then it seems as somebody somewhere is undermining the objective of the Government, that is, the move towards socialism.

The Cde. Minister of Information knows the subtleties, the tricks, that can be employed by some of these news agencies to twist the minds, to subvert the aspirations of people and I cannot find why these things are allowed within national papers, government-owned papers like **The Chronicle**. In fact, I think it is appropriate for us to call for the mass media in this country to be put into the hands of a public corporation and be given some autonomy with the opposition being involved in the decision-making bodies of that corporation.

Look at what is happening in the field of cinemas! The other day much noise was made about films. It was said that the cinemas must be the vehicles to promote ideology. Again, Sunday, December 12th, Strand Cinema; “I DON’T WANT TO BE BORN,” “FRIGHT” and “SONS OF THUNDER, Starlite, “DEATH STALK ON HIGH HEELS.” Sunday November 21st, SHADOW OF THE HAWK, TERROR OF THE TOWN. Astor: COME HOME AND MEET MY WIFE and that sort of thing. I would be good if the Minister of Information could go into these questions at this time to make sure that this type of undermining of her stated objectives does not take place. I think a commission should be set up to find out why these things are happening. Why do we not have more news pieces from the socialist world?

The Speaker: Two minutes more!

Cde. Mohamed: And why we do not have more emphasis placed through over mass media on ideological development. Speaking about the radio, tune the radio and you will hear people like Sir Lionel Luckhoo who is heard over the air with radio time. He is a person of the “subversive literature” fame, a man who banned socialist materials. I am sure he has not given up his anti-communist, anti revolutionary ideas. We find the whole radio station packed with religious programmes and we do not find more and more socialist ideas being propagated on the radio stations. One would even make a concession to have the Minister, Cde. Green, speaking on co-operative socialism; it is better than some of those things that are appearing on the Radio Station, if we are to move on ideologically towards the objective of socialism.

I want to concluded by asking now that there has been such a drastic cut which we welcome very much – of expenditure by this Ministry, it was long needed, what is going to happen t this heavy bureaucracy which was taken on over the years? If the capital is not going to be there, what are you going to do with everyone? Are they going to have the same load of work? Cuts did not take place at that level. We are not saying that the people must be thrown out of work but what will they do? When \$10 million used to be spent, so many people were employed, now that \$5 million is going to be spent, are the same people going to be employed? To do what? Therefore, we would like to know what is going to happen to this bureaucracy which was built up in this particular Ministry over the past years.

I would, therefore, before finally taking seat say that we would like the Ministers to answer some of these questions so that we would be able together to bring back our economy into better times, to move to a better economy. We would all join together to see that Guyana becomes a better Guyana. **[Applause]**

The Minister of Education and Social Development (Cde. Baird): Cde. Speaker, I embrace this opportunity to congratulate our distinguished Minister of finance on his presentation of what I choose to call a realistic but humane budget in this period which is indeed a period of serious political and economic challenge to the people of Guyana.

I also express personal appreciation that in this year of austerity the proverbial pruning knife has not been applied to the provision for Education. In the light of the well-known practices in many parts of the world, of effecting economics by reducing allocation for education, this action must be construed as an act of faith in education, as a major vehicle for transforming Guyana into a socialist state.

The major motivations for the policies and practices of my party rests, unambiguously and with integrity, on the centrality of education in the social, economic and political revolution that has caught the imagination and earned the support not only of all Guyanese but also of the world. In Guyana, education has always been arranged logically, on a priori grounds, into primary and secondary schools. Today education under the P.N.C. Government has been organised through a variety of institutions spanning nursery to university dynamic institutions set amidst the mainstream of our lives.

Education today, and I invite Cde. Mohamed to note, is conducted in schools, on the playing fields, in factories, in hospitals, in camps, in the hinterland and on farms. It is the principle vehicle by which the major reconstruction of society is being conducted; for education, as it is organised today, ensures that our social realities and the school's curriculum are becoming intrinsically connected.

5.50 p.m.

Socialisation towards competence is one of the major functions of these institutions. Education programmes, aimed to transcend age and economic status, have been designed to enable those who are deficient in cognitive and language skills, and in the patterns of motivation which interfere with adequate performance in a wide range of tasks, to acquire higher-level skills and social behaviours supportive of the development of a socialist state.

The new forms of education are flexible, imaginative, and are responsive to the individual's optimal development. The dire threats to our society, external and internal, require that unity and integration be continuously worked out on various planes, at the level of institutions, at the level of fundamental roles, at the level of the everyday dialogue among

members of the community. Further, our economic and social practices must be co-ordinate, through our political thinking and policies, with these integrations; what we believe, what we stand for as Guyanese, must conform as much as possible to certain professed ideals enshrined in a co-operative socialist republic. The development of the processes and techniques by which these integrations are achieved, by which the co-ordinations are exercised, by which conflicts about values are resolved, by which Guyanese acquire consciousness of the nation's being, is the major task of education writ large.

The battle for survival, in times of destabilisation, must be won through education, redefined and re-operationalised. Our Co-operative Socialist Republic stresses methods and techniques which commit every member of the Republic to widest possible participation in the affairs of the Republic. It stresses the co-operative concern of each member for the welfare of all. In short, the Co-operative Socialist Republic should transmit a set of principles, for living full lives as workers, as learners, as parents, as children, as persons, and as Guyanese.

To transmit these principles as workable rules into the lives of all members of the Republic, and to ensure that the creation and well being of these principles are the conscious concerns of all Guyanese individually and collectively, is the primary task of education.

The primacy of education is the watchword of our P.N.C. Government. At this stage, I wish to draw the attention of this House to three major parameters which characterised education in Guyana during 1976:

The first was a commitment to the principle that education in its broadest terms, is central to the economic, social and political development of the Republic, and hence our determination that free education from nursery to university should be available for all and education should take place not only in schools, as we traditionally know them – with new philosophies, now curricula and new buildings – but also in the economic and social institutions of our Republic.

The decision to make education free and available to all from the nursery to the university levels, stems from our belief that every human being should within his 'limits', realise his full potential and that everyone should have a chance to do so. We believe that education is the chief instrument for achieving this objective and also for avoiding one or more of the most

pervasive evils in any society – the waste of human potential. A necessary condition for the widespread release of human potential is equality of opportunity, and equal access to the benefits of the society.

To many, this determination to give every Guyanese child, man, and woman a chance to develop to the limit of his ability, might have seemed every ambitious, even wildly impractical. But when a Government is convinced that education is an indispensable instrument of the revolution in the human social organisation of its country, it does not hesitate to face herculean tasks, and to suffer temporary hardships, in implementing such decisions.

Contrary to the expectations of many, take-over of schools in September, 1976, in pursuance of Government's decision to undertake full responsibility for education in this country, was a remarkably smooth operation. Most persons had, by that time, accepted the sovereign right of a Government to do so.

What are some of the consequences of our attempt to educate all of our citizens? What are the implications of such a decision? It means education in the deepest and widest sense. It means, and will mean for some time to come, crowded schools and inadequate numbers of teachers. It means an expending national university to satisfy some of our vital national needs. It means devising educational programmes for youth in schools, and those out of schools, youths who will grow up to be welders, plumbers, carpenters and farmers as well as for those who will grow up to be economists, doctors, artists, engineers and so on. Above all, it will mean a very different system from one designed for a few. We have set ourselves a task of major dimensions and we have already made giant steps forward. It should be common knowledge that in September, 1976, Government made a commitment in this House to the people of Guyana to provide during the 1976 1977 academic year 19,000 Nursery School places – the first phase in the provision of nursery school education for all. The present enrolment of over 26,000 exceeds that projection by 8,000, the children being accommodated in more than 350 schools under the supervision of 1,500 teachers throughout the country. The principle of co-operation has been exploited in the building of furniture for these schools by university and other students at educational institutions much as the Government Technical Institute. The University of Guyana was actively involved in the contribution to the establishment of nursery schools. Equipment

7.1.77

National Assembly

5.50 – 6 p.m.

specially designed for the age group has been made by the Small Industries Corporation while most of the buildings have been acquired by rental or purchase by my Ministry.

6. p.m.

Current provision for nursery schools for 1977 shows an increase from zero to \$5.3 million, a sound investment for laying a firm foundation for the all round healthy development of our future citizens and nation builders. It should be noted that although primary education in Guyana has been compulsory and available, free to all for 100 years, the Ministry of Education and Social Development has, since September, 1976, taken over responsibility for 38 additional primary schools with an enrolment of 10,000 pupils and 250 teachers. These include those schools which until July 1976 were free paying.

All the children of post-primary age can now enjoy free secondary education and pursue courses of 3, 4, 5 and 7 years' duration according to their aptitudes and abilities. The three-year programme leading to the College of Preceptors Examination – and I have something more to say about that – which is mainly academic in nature and is at present offered in Forms 1 to 3 of the all-age School is being phased out, to be replaced by a four-year programme of the academic/technical/vocational type offered in Community High Schools. This is to say that the Community High School programme will be carried in the secondary departments of all-age schools.

At this point I would like to refer to, and to correct, a few mis-conceptions about the existing situations regarding entry to secondary schools. I think I commented on this before, that the Common Entrance Examination is now used to allocate children, not to select, to the various kinds of secondary schools all over Guyana. Incidentally, I think it is fitting to recall that the College of Preceptors and the Preliminary Certificate examinations were recommended during the regime of the People's Progressive party in Government. These examinations, we thought, were iniquitous in the sense that they forced children to receive an education that was, to say the least, meaningless. The change we have made is to introduce the Community High School programme which will offer children a better opportunity to be qualified for the kinds of jobs that will become available from time to time. Until all Community High Schools are

established, I repeat, the programme will be introduced in the secondary departments of All-age schools.

What does this mean? It means that the Common Entrance Examination, which I think I should make a comment on, as presently used, is different in objective and content and use. As I said, before, it is used to allocate children to different kinds of schools 7-years secondary schools, 5-year secondary schools, 4-year secondary schools and in secondary departments of all-age schools until those schools are phased out. This means that at the end of the third year and all round evaluation will be made not only of academic competence but work attitudes of students, because a large part of the learning experience will be derived from real situations as is done at the moment. I shall refer to this later. The evaluation at the end of the third year will be used to determine which children will remain in the Community High School for the fourth year and go on to acquire deeper insights into one of the vocational activities of the curriculum. The others will be allocated to other secondary or vocational schools. At the end of the fourth year of the Community High School the final evaluation will be made to provide employers, teachers, parents and students themselves with a profile of the students' abilities and competence, their weaknesses and their strengths, not only in mathematics or language but in their attitudes to work, whatever tasks in which they were engaged.

In September, 1976 the number of secondary schools increased from 44 to 68 with a take-over of 24 schools, 13 Government-aided and 11 Private. The enrolment of students in these schools in 31,064 compared with 16,587 before the take-over and the number of secondary school teachers now fully employed by Government is 1,360 as against 783 employed in July 1976. The financial provision for free exercise books and basic text books in our schools during 1976 amounted to \$4 million.

Students in training at the Teacher Education Institutions and other post-secondary institutions now enjoy grants instead of loans, while at the University of Guyana fees have been abolished.

In addition, a considerable amount of money is expended annually on overseas awards to enable students to qualify in fields considered vital to the country's development programme. It

7.1.77

National Assembly

6 – 6.10 p.m.

should be noted that the training and education of Guyanese in overseas institutions is carefully planned and co-ordinated so that students acquire not only technical skills but attitudes and values with the philosophy of our Republic. Once a year Guyanese students consistently return to work in social and economic institutions of Guyana alongside men and women employees.

As I stated earlier, the Government is providing free education from nursery to the university level. In so doing, it has undertaken a task of astonishing dimensions, especially in financial terms. In a developing country like ours with its many and varied needs, and in a time of austerity, the size of our expenditure on education is a significant commentary on the P.N.C. Government's commitment to education, with its potential for making our citizens employable, equipping them with skills to contribute to national development and developing in them the capacity to be culturally literate and to enjoy leisure. In the deepest sense, we are committed to education because it enables each Guyanese to live and to live more fully in the dimensions which are distinctly human.

Even while providing free education for all, we have been deeply concerned about providing an education which is relevant to the individual and for the nation at this period of our history, the type of education that will prepare the individual to live, work and contribute to the well-being and development of Guyana.

6.10 p.m.

One of our first tasks therefore, has been the challenge and attempt to change a time-honoured concept of education being the experience offered to pupils within the walls of the actual school building, a concept which encourages the belief that knowledge which is of most worth comes from books and a formal academic education, a concept which puts a low premium on the teaching of practical subjects and the dignity of labour, and which tends to alienate the lives of young people from the communities which they will serve.

One of the criticisms levelled by President Julius Nyerere of the Republic of Tanzania, against the education of his country a few years ago, might well be an indictment against our own traditional system which fortunately has been put to flight under our P.N.C. Government.

[Applause]

I quote from Ujama “The Social Goals of Living and Working Together, page 58:

“Our young and poor nation is taking out of productive work some of its healthiest and strongest young men and women. Not only do they fail to contribute to that increase in output which is so urgent for a nation; they themselves consume the output of the older and often weaker people...They do not learn as they work, they simply learn.”

The Work Study programme in schools is one such example. It is a curricular approach which integrates into the school programme activities and projects that lead the student to acquire knowledge, skills and desirable work attitudes by performing tasks in real life situations e.g. in our Community High Schools; in fact wherever there is secondary school programme, Work Study is an integral part of the curriculum, and during 1976, students participated in a wide range of activities including welding, cabinet making, shoe-making, nursing care, plumbing, assembling of transistor radios, accounting, catering and teaching. Those activities were carried out at places such as Creco (at Victoria, E.C.D.), GUYWA, the Bel-lu Clay Factory, the Georgetown Hospital, the Bata Shoe Factory, Enmore Sugar Estate, the City Council and St. Rose’s High School to name a few.

It should be emphasised that such an approach in education helps students to bridge the gap between theory and practice. It is anticipated that the experience will prepare them to contribute to the economic and social development of their country. In fact, during 1976, students involved in work study programmes contributed directly and indirectly to the national economy. Money remitted to the Ministry of Education and Social Development in this way amounted to over \$43,000. Included is the amount received from tenders for making and supplying paper weights which were accepted by and delivered to Guyana Gajraj, the General Post Office and the Guyana Mortgage Finance Bank.

It is hoped that work study experiences would lead to the development of young Guyanese with desirable work attitudes, a healthy respect for manual labour, producers of

consumer goods and services, young people, who will leave school ready for self-employment, paid employment and further training.

Cde. Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: May I move that the Cde. Minister of Education and Social Development to be given a further 15 minutes to continue her contribution to this Budget Debate.

Cde. Fowler *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Baird: it is hoped that work study experience would lead to the development of young Guyanese with desirable work attitudes, a healthy respect for manual labour, producers of consumer goods and services, young people who will leave school ready for self-employment paid employment and further training; and who will leave school highly conscious of being Guyanese.

A necessary step in broadening our concept of education is that of seeing activities once regarded as extracurricular, or co-curricular, as an integral part of the curriculum for all students, since this Government is concerned about the total, all-round development of human beings – men, women and children. The Ministry encourages participation by schools in all sorts of activities including physical education activities, activities in creative art, music and drama, art and craft exhibitions, food fairs and so on.

I cite these examples to indicate to Cde. Mohamed, to give him insights into the scope of the educational experiences offered to students that it is not the limited experience that he seems to believe we offer.

We do not share the sentiments of those who regard activities which I have described as unwelcome disruptions of the school's education programme, and we will take steps through our expanding supervisory services to guide schools in organising their work, so that such events form a meaningful part of the curriculum so that young people can benefit from enriched experiences.

Self-help activity is regarded by us as another valuable educational experience for students. Not only do they learn practical skills such as block-making, bricklaying, painting, carpentry, but they have the opportunity to acquire what we describe as appropriate work attitudes. They also have the satisfying experience while at school to contribute to the nation's economy and to community needs. For example, some of the farm buildings of the Beterverwagting Community High School Farm, are the results of self-help activities initiated in school by the Industrial Arts Departments. Needless to say savings in such cases are substantial and the lessons learnt invaluable.

6.20 p.m.

Now I come to National Service. The importance of National Service in the national education system cannot be over-estimated. **[Applause]** The requirement of national Service as a condition for graduating from the University of Guyana is an acknowledgement of this Government's belief that education is more than book learning, a firm belief that our education system must foster:

‘the social goals of living together and working together for the common good. It has to prepare our young people to play a dynamic and constructive part in the development of society ... in which progress is measured in terms of human well-being!’

It must emphasise concepts of equality and a responsibility to give service which goes with any special ability whether it be in carpentry, in animal husbandry or in academic pursuits.

Another parameter which characterised education activities during 1976 has been the emphasis on qualitative as well as quantitative development – refining the principles on which the Republic is established and translating and setting in operation these principles into all aspects of our lives as persons, as workers, as parents and as citizens.

The quantitative expansion has been rapid. Under the First Education Project, a World Bank Loan of \$26½ million helped to provide a new training college at Turkeyen for 660 students (an increase of 360 places) and six well-equipped secondary schools of the ‘Multilateral’ type providing an additional 6,000 secondary school places in different parts of the country. Indeed it is ... To find places in secondary schools in these areas and in other areas and I call the attention of Cde. ... to that fact.

The sum of \$22 million provided under the Second World Bank Project will be used, inter alia, to build a Secondary Teachers’ Training College to accommodate 400 students, to build 7 new Community High Schools and to extend 10 ‘Junior’ Secondary Schools creating an additional 6,000 Secondary School places.

I have already referred to new provisions being made at Nursery and other levels.

One of our major concerns in the Ministry of Education and School Development is to ensure that in our efforts to expand our educational provision we do not lose sight of the need for quality control.

We regard education as a domain where political action is of decisive importance in giving direction to qualitative changes necessary to make Guyana’s education system an effective instrument, facilitating achievement of goals set for the development of our country.

We must remember, Cde. Speaker, that it was by political action that Guyana became a Co-operative Republic, and the co-operative indentified as the instrument by which a socialist

state would be established. In responding to this constitutional change, it should be observed that technical education programmes have been re-organised and designed to imbue our teachers in training with values consistent with national goals.

Our training institutions are being therefore encouraged to re-appraise their programmes continually, to modify, renew and where necessary, to change those aspects of their programme which are no longer suited to the needs of this country.

This is why it is mandatory for trainees of today to be involved in activity which translates national goals into living experiences. One such example comes from the Cyril Potter College of Education at Turkeyen, an institution engaged in small scale agriculture production for feeding the College population and in the not too distant future produce will be marketed through a co-operative. It is evident that this kind of exposure is representative of a programme of teacher training which supports important stated national objectives, viz, the preparation of young people to identify, explore and pursue self-employment activities and to equip others with expertise and social behaviour required for the wide range of occupations relevant to agriculture. By participating in economic and others similar activities teachers as leaders in the revolution, are able to deepen and clarify their own national consciousness.

Present-day students are also involved in actual projects in community development including the physical condition of schools by self-help. They are encouraged to identify community needs and taught to render effective community service at such places as geriatric wards at hospitals, the children's Ward at the Georgetown hospital, the Blind Institute, and several other institution in rural areas. We believe that experiences at the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College and at National Service Centres are vital experiences for the preparation of teachers to become educators rather than specialists in the narrow sense. Only if teachers have experienced the expanding frontier of the nation, where growing prosperity is achieved by physical work, intellectual problem-solving and imaginative planning, will there be any great possibility for effective communication of national objectives to the children they teach.

7.1.77

National Assembly

6.20 – 6.30 p.m.

The qualitative aspect of education is also being focused upon in curriculum development activities which have been expanding significantly and rapidly over the past two years, resulting in the publication and use of basic texts in mathematics and reading in our Primary Schools.

It is instructive for this House to learn that the model of curriculum development, used in these productions, is one based on the social and political conditions of Guyana and is one which was constituted in 1974 by one of our eminent Guyanese educators.

The model is built on the firm belief that curriculum development in Guyana should be a cooperative enterprise. It is not surprising therefore that these texts have been developed co-operatively by curriculum workers, teacher educators, teachers, parents, Education Officers and other resource persons in the community under the guidance of the Consultant who constructed the model. The material for the texts was produced in workshops held throughout the length and breadth of Guyana and involves hundreds of workers teachers.

The Timehri Readers and the Guyana Mathematics Texts are a tribute to the dedication and hard work of those citizens who are involved in an exercise aimed at improving the quality of teaching and learning in and out of classrooms of Guyana, and with the aim of building in pupils who use the materials, self-confidence, self-worth and pride in the nation's destiny.

[Applause]

6.30 p.m.

Another example of attempts to deal with this important question of quality is the introduction of a two-year Master's degree in the programme of the University of Guyana in October, 1976. This is a Master's programme that differs significantly from traditional programmes at this level. The 1976/1978 programme has been carefully planned and organised to meet the needs of certain specialised units crucial to the maintenance and development of an educational system with a potential to promote nation building, some of the units being the Curriculum Unit, the Test Development Unit and the Ministry's newly established Research

7.1.77

National Assembly

8 – 8.10 p.m.

Unit. The programme is intended to equip persons who work in these units and other sectors of the education system with the competence to perform effectively and efficiently.

The Speaker: Time! And it is also half-past six so we will take the suspension until 8 o'clock. The Sitting of the House is suspended until 8. p.m.

Suspended accordingly at 6.30 p.m.

8 p.m.

On resumption –

The Speaker: When the adjournment was taken, the Minister of Education was speaking and the time allotted to her had expired.

Cde. Ramsaroop: With your permission, may I move for a further and final extension of 15 minutes for the Cde. Minister of Education to conclude her contribution.

Cde. Jonas *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Baird: Cde. Speaker, earlier today, the Member of the Opposition Cde. Ferroze Mohamed properly expressed the view that Guyana must place more emphasis on the development of relevant skills in education. I have cited today many examples which I hope will correct his numerous false assumptions and enable him to appreciate the developments taking place in education, particularly those on-going developments designed to make education relevant and meaningful for our circumstances in Guyana. For example, Cde. Speaker, the programme for training educators with administrative functions is task oriented, so that tasks which students perform on the job become assignments and content for course lectures.

As we continue in the quest for strategies which will produce local solutions to local problems, it is pertinent to inform this House that another major advantage of the new Master's degree programme is that students are pursuing advanced training at approximately one-third the cost were they to study at institutions abroad. In fact, the cost of mounting this M.Ed. course at the University of Guyana for 28 students is slightly less than the cost of sending 10 Guyanese students abroad.

At this stage of Guyana's development we make no apology for adopting those strategies which have potential to make education serve national needs. To this end, an important characteristic of educational activities during 1976 was the increasingly pragmatic approach

which will make it possible to develop knowledge, skills and attitudes required for nation building. The country's demand for a variety of technical skills in the fields of agriculture, forestry, hydroelectric power, mining and manufacturing, for example has pointed to an urgent need to diversify the curriculum at the secondary level.

The establishment of Community High Schools to cater for 80 per cent of students of secondary schools is intended to meet manpower and human development requirements. The Hinterland Development Programme is a bold experiment aimed at sensitizing some of our most able youths to the problems and realities of life in the hinterland. An alternative to the traditional Sixth Form Arts and Science courses, the Hinterland Development Programme enables students to study subjects related to community needs in an undeveloped area. The practical problem of clearing virgin land, providing a pure water supply system, setting up lighting facilities, erecting buildings and of learning to live and work together will be part of the experience shared by students and staff. It is anticipated that students exposed to this unique programme will be motivated to become food technologists, doctors, pilots, community workers, agriculturists, surveyors, health engineers, builders etc., who will seek to live and work in undeveloped areas in our country because of their initial experiences on the Hinterland Development Programme.

Cde. Speaker, I now comment briefly on the University of Guyana. Over the past decade, the Government's allocation for the University has increased from \$590,000 in 1965 to \$6.4 million in 1976. This increase has merely been in keeping with the tremendous strides which the University of Guyana has made as a national institution of higher learning in the Caribbean with its well-known reputation for its development perspective. The only reason for this well-earned and justifiable reputation is that, under this Government, the University of Guyana, a fledging institution with a few programmes when this Government took office in 1964, now provides no less than seven faculties with an eight, that is, the Faculty of Agriculture planned to become operational in September, 1977. There are no fewer than 25 programmes leading to degree, diplomas, and certificates in those areas where the need for Guyanese personnel and manpower requirements has been identified.

In the Caribbean, the University of Guyana has pioneered as a development-oriented institution. The programmes in Health Sciences leading to a certificate in Medical Technology and Diplomas in Pharmacy, medical Pathology, Micro-Biology and Radiography illustrate the extent to which the University has been responding to provide Guyana with urgently needed skills. The Faculty of Agriculture which will come into being in September 1977 is now in its final planning stages in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Guyana School of Agriculture.

This Government's 'faith' in education is tangibly substantiated in the fact that this regime has invested in education in 1976 over \$77 million compared with an expenditure of just over \$11 million in 1964. Education spending, nation-wide, has increased significantly. Since 1964, school enrolments have increased by 45 per cent. The percentage of trained teachers at the primary level has increased from 20 per cent in 1964 to 45 per cent in 1976 while the percentage of trained teachers raised from 17.8 per cent in 1964 to 65 per cent in 1976.

I want to assure the hon. Member of the Opposition, Cde. Ferroze Mohamed that further clarification to his comments will be provided at a later date. For us in Guyana, education is

conceived as a major force in producing changes in the consciousness of Guyanese. A comprehensive educational system is emerging and the wide curriculum aims, be they formal, nonformal or informal, include making Guyanese become aware problems and issues, successes and failures and possibilities and alternatives within Guyana, motivation Guyanese to take effective action to improve the conditions of every citizen including one's, self, creating respect for ourselves and for others.

A keystone of education in Guyana today is the promise that no child, no human being, should be denied the opportunity to fulfil his educational potential regardless of its national, ethnic or socio-economic background. In 1977 and onwards, we will maintain that promise by supplementing those strategies which will assure the availability of facilities and resources for education across the geography of this nation. **[Applause]**

The Speaker: Cde. Gill.

8.10 p.m.

Cde. Gill: Cde. Speaker, I must thank the Prime Minister, who is the Leader of the People's National Congress, for giving me this opportunity of speaking in this House today, an opportunity to speak for the small man.

Since the P.N.C. Government took office in 1964, it has made the people in Guyana self-sufficient. Since the Government has banned food items from overseas, it has made the people of Guyana more self-sufficient. We have been hearing a lot of talk around the country. We have been hearing a lot of talk about the Government banning overseas items but we the small people in Guyana, women and men, have gained a lot since these items have been banned. The leader of the P.N.C. Government has made the people in Guyana more self-sufficient in doing what we never did before. We never knew that the fruits that we were throwing away all the time were such good things, as we know now. For instance I have made a note here about many

things that we used to throw away in our school days. No one used to buy things such as five-fingers, carambola, dounce gooseberries, and a lot more that I could quote. We are preserving these today. Even foreigners enjoy the cake that we are making.

We heard a lot of talk about persons representing the small man, but I stand today in Parliament representing the small man. The people who bark do not usually bite. We the P.N.C. comrades over on this side, we bark and bite. The P.N.C. leader gave us the teaching to go out in the field and educate ourselves. Today, adult education is an accepted fact. I say that because in the colonial days we never had to chance to learn as we are able to learn now.

Let us look back to the past. No one would ever have taken me out of the market and put me in Parliament so that I could represent the small man. I speak for the small man because I am at the market place, I meet the housewife. Some of the same stallholders and even shopkeepers had to punish with the things coming into this country. I would like this House to note – I am sorry that the Minister of Trade, Cde. King, is not here tonight so that he could make a note of what I say, but I think my other comrades here will let him know that the price control squad is doing a wonderful job. If we are to place more emphasis on women, I think we should have women price control officers and I think they would soon even better job.

We hear a lot about education. I am a mother of children and we are pleased that this Government has brought the idea of free education to fruition, what with the advantage that was being taken of the small man. **[Interruption]**

The Speaker: If you do not behave, I will adjourn the House.

Cde. Gill: One day I was at the market when I was at the market when I saw a mother in tears. I went up and asked her what was wrong, if there was trouble. As you know, it was my duty to do this as a member of the Government. She told me that her husband had died only two months before the examination and now she has a book list and along with the book list

7.1.77

National Assembly

8.20 – 8.30 p.m.

there were the fees for five children ranging from 8 years up. The first child was 15 years and the ages kept going down. And she was without a husband.

8.20 p.m.

We have to thank the People's National Congress for the free education that it has given to our children. In the days gone by and during the time of our colleagues in office, this opportunity to have free education was never given. We in the People's National Congress put ourselves in the vanguard so that we could do what the party on the other side did not do for the people of Guyana. We will bring such deeds to light so that they would see our good works and glorify us who are near heaven.

I have another problem which I would like to bring to the attention of this House. The shopkeepers in the markets where I work are hoarding commodities and not selling them to the people. Before the goods meet in the shop they are marked "Sold to be removed." I urge this House and the Minister of Trade not to fine these people but fail them. Take away their licences because they are trying to bring down this Government, to give this Government a bad name so that people are saying that there is nothing in the country for them to eat. When the overseas Guyanese come home and see that we are so big and fat they want to know why people say there is no food in Guyana. I would like this House to look into that.

I think I am in a good position to talk for the small man because I meet them frequently, we sit and talk around the market. You cannot talk for the small man when you do not visit him. You would not know what to say, you would just say idle things and come in here and make a good noise.

Cde. Speaker, if someone has a lover and he is going away from her, she finds all sorts of lies to tell him so that he would stay. That is the position on the other side of this House, Cde. Speaker. Nothing has been done to show the people of Guyana who they are and what they are

7.1.77

National Assembly

8.20 – 8.30 p.m.

so you find that the members on the other side have to find fault with the P.N.C. because we are the leading Party, we have the support. The people have lost confidence in the P.P.P. They have no support, they are just grasping for something.

Cde. Speaker, you sit and listen to the Bills being debated and there is just one thing they are asking for – power. Power belongs to God, man just adopts. We in the Peoples National have done a lot, through the power and through the instinct of our Leader, the Leader of the People's National Congress. I can go on and on talking tonight but there is not time enough for me to do so. I thank you for this opportunity you have given me here tonight to inform the comrades on the other side and the comrades around here so that they could listen to my contribution.

The Speaker: Cde. Gill, I think your first contribution has been most outstanding. It may be equaled but very difficult to surpass. Cde. Nascimento.

The Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister (Cde. Nascimento:) Cde. Speaker, on September 28, 1976, President Fidel Castro addressed a mass meeting in Cuba and over half a million Cubans were present. The occasion was in celebration of an anniversary of the Committees in defence of the Revolution. At that meeting the President and Prime Minister of Cuba told the Cuban people that the huge fall in the price of sugar had severely set back Cuba's economic development plan. Coffee would be short, imported commodities would have to be further restricted, industries and expansion which had been planned would have to be cut back and curtailed. Greater sacrifices would have to be made by the Cuban people

That was Fidel Castro's message on September 28, 1976 to the Cuban people. If the Opposition denies that external circumstances, the same ones challenging Cuba, have severely affected Guyana's economy, then they deny the truth of Fidel Castro's message to his people.

Cuba was fortunate. In spite of that fact that Guyana and Cuba, for similar reasons, find themselves in this position, Cuba receives the sum of \$5 million a day in grants and aid from the

7.1.77

National Assembly

8.20 – 8.30 p.m.

soviet union in support. Those grants today add up to something like 12½ billion dollars since they began. Guyana has no such benefactor. For that reason it is a privilege, indeed an honour, to speak in support of this Budget because in my view this Budget uniquely and wholly illustrates the ability of the Government to help the small man to compete against and rise above external economic pressures directed against the country. I say this because apart from the vagaries of the weather this Budget ... the people of Guyana to external and economic measures to and what a shame, Cde. Speaker, what a tragedy that the Opposition cannot grasp that simple fact!

8.30 p.m.

The members of the People's Progressive Party have indulged themselves during this debate in the usual penchant for meaningless rhetoric. The Leader of the Opposition is found of quoting publications and writers to describe this Party, this Government, our Leader. He quoted a good writer, Rubert Williams, but I am going to quote a better one. I am going to quote a writer who has an impeccable revolutionary reputation. A writer who was a friend of Che'Guevara; a writer who lived and worked in Cuba for many years. His name is Derpich. I quote from a little booklet called "Guyana, another way to Socialism," which was published in July 1973. It is a review of a book written as a result of one of Derpich's visits. He made an analysis of the political situation in Guyana at that time and expressed some views about the Opposition Leader and his party. I quote:

"His tactics of 'divide and rule', as well as his methods of inflating and grossly exaggerating the strength of the Opposition forces, are typical of the outdated characteristics of traditional communist parties on our continent . . . the important thing in this exercise is to say anything, no matter what, in order to maintain a vigorous attack . . . In an effort to discredit all that has been achieved by the Government, the Opposition justify their anti-national, anti-patriotic attitude with the theory of political cynicism . . . against accusations of corruption,

discrimination, lack of freedom, unemployment, which the Opposition makes, nothing concrete has been offered.”

Cde. Speaker, Derpich went on to describe the Leader of this Party, the Prime Minister of this Government:

“Burnham, he said, “is not a mere idealist and his vision for a better country is not utopia. In spite of the modest way in which Burnham speaks of his vision, one detects a compromise towards that kind of society, which is revolutionary, and a pragmatic vision of national development, trying to provide daily for Guyana and its inhabitants.”

“I am surprised”, Derpich said, “even up to now, how taken I am with a fraternal feeling for this new reality, which is being forged in a corner of our continent, a continent already so much in a state of ferment. To know Forbes Burnham is, in itself, an important and instructive event.”

What a shame that of the other side, this cannot be said. And he continues:

“To know a people who are giving full rein to their enthusiasm and to their obligations is also an important and instructive event. It makes me recall another great leader and another great people. Fidel and the Cuban people, in their first experience in that heroic island during the crisis of October . . . Forbes Burnham is an exceptional leader.” I rather quote a revolutionary socialist and, indeed, a Communist than the man the Leader of the Opposition chose to quote. There is a difference between indulgence in the heady rhetoric of imperialism and a call to action. Action is demanded if political and economic independence is to be a reality.

Now the People's National Congress has always understood the value of rhetoric in its proper place and its proper time and I venture to suggest that not only do we understand its use rather better than those on the opposite side, but we understand that rhetoric is not an end in itself.

The People's National Congress is a Government which does not merely say what it is going to do and then do nothing. We are a Government which says what we are going to do and we do it and the difference between this side and those on the other side is: here on this side you find action there you find more rhetoric.

We say that self-reliance is the foundation stone on which we must build socialist Guyana. This budget illustrates the competence and ability under the Leadership of this Party to make a fact of that philosophy.

We are confident that the people of Guyana recognise that there is no alternative to the position that the People's National Congress takes, unless you consider the return to a status of subservience and chaos an alternative. There are many, sad to say, both inside and outside of this National Assembly, who are opposed to the welfare of the people of Guyana.

There are many who are prepared to pursue what they believe would be sabotage of the economic survival of Guyana. They shall not succeed. The Budget reveals that, in spite of nature's temporary cruelty and in spite of the world economic order deliberately assembled against us, we in this Government have succeeded in utilising to the best advantage, the resources at the disposal of this country to develop Guyana for our own benefit and more particularly in our own fashion. Once again our enemies have been frustrated and our critics confounded.

8.40 p.m.

The facilities for the inexpensive and rapid movement of people, goods and produce from home to work, from factory to consumer, from farm to market place, are essential for the development of any nation, and they are also especially essential in a nation of this kind, because we have a small population and comparatively large area to cover. They are also especially vital in the contest of a country of this kind when we consider that the facilities needed to provide a modern network of air, land and water transportation demand a massive expenditure of foreign exchange, a massive and huge input of technologically advanced, mechanical and electronic equipment.

A very high level of planning, a good deal of foresight, and not a little imagination is required to develop an adequate and efficient public transportation system. In fact, the records show that there is hardly any country in this world, industrialized or developing, which has managed to escape some dramatic setbacks and costly mistakes in the area of public transportation.

Let me say from the very beginning, because we have been criticised for not admitting our mistakes, that this Government has had its fair share of problems in this respect and has made its fair share of mistakes. But, though, in some cases, comparisons can be invidious, in measuring progress and in measuring the success of this Government, comparisons can also be enlightening and instructive.

Between the years 1957 and 1964 our predecessors in Government unfortunately, and I hope this is not unparliamentary, displayed not even a modicum of transportation planning, and they exercised a singular lack of imagination in this respect.

Let us take roads, for example. Between 1957 and 1964 our predecessors surveyed, investigated and built a grand total of 51½ miles of road in seven years for an expenditure of a paltry \$11 million, in the course of which they managed to produce the Del Conte fiasco.

I have with me here a review of the Director of Audits Report between 1960 and 1964. I am quoting from the Report of 1961, page 12, paragraphs 106 to 108. It is instructive, educative and the people of this country need to be reminded about it. It is in reference to a contract signed with Del Conte for what was described as the Parika/Bartica Road, and I quote:

“106 . . . the Government formally entered into a contract in December, 1961, with a foreign construction firm under which the latter undertook to build and largely finance . . . and all-weather road 36.45 miles long referred to as the Parika-Bartica Road, for the sum of \$8,333,333. . . . The Government undertook to pay the Contractor the sum of \$750,000 in cash on the date on which the contract was signed and, as the work progressed, a further sum of \$2,583,333 in cash instalments, and to issue to the Contractor negotiable interest-bearing bonds, . . . to a total nominal value of \$5,000,000, . . .”

107. The course adopted in awarding the abovementioned contract is outside the scope of the current Financial Regulations, while the financial arrangements entered into are, as far as this Department is aware, without precedent in public administration in British Guiana . . .”

108. . . . the state of the abovementioned contract at 12th October, 1962, was not satisfactory: The total value of the work done amounted only to \$756,450.29, representing 21.18 per cent of the value of the work . . . which should have been done by 30th September, 1962,”

that is \$3,571,282.43.”

Then we go on to the next year's report, the Audit Report for the year ending 31st December, 1962, page 8, paragraphs 47 and 48. I quote what the auditor had to say then about the contract.

“47 Work ceased under this contract when the accumulated value of such work was \$793,632,29, at 31st December, 1962, but at that stage the contractor has received a total payment of \$3,503,774.38 The work default is \$2,710,142.09.

48. Government’s security against non-completion of the road by the contractor, that is, the right to seize machinery, equipment and stores, does not appear to have materialised or to have been effectively pursued. . . . An audit inspection has revealed that a complete inventory was never made by Government after the contractor stopped work . . . an official investigation into the apparent serious negligence and indifference indicated in this matter, on the part of responsible public officers, has been suggested by this Department.”

Needless to say, that Government did not order such an investigation and of course the Government was not responsible for its public officers.

We all recall those days when a journey from Georgetown to Corriverton was an experience little short of that of an expedition into the wilderness. The damage suffered by the farmers’ trucks and even the farmers’ tractors was enormous. A taxi driver considered himself fortunate if his car lasted six months.

On the journey to Linden, people were forced to suffer the indignity of being herded like cattle for twelve hours in the “R H Carr” in order to get to Linden.

The lung diseases suffered by the dust-choked residents along those so-called “roads” that the so-called “Government” that those who sit in the Opposition were responsible for must have been legion, yet I remember very vividly speaking at a public meeting in the Corentyne on the subject of road development.

7.1.77

National Assembly

8.40 – 8.50 p.m.

I remember a P.P.P. placard-bearer shouting: “Cheddie say you can’t eat roads!” Whether the Leader of the Opposition was being accurately represented or not by one of his followers I know not. But if he was, what an abysmal lack of imagination that remark displayed:

No wonder that the Opposition, when in Government, had to employ an Englishman with a Bulgarian name to write their Budget Speech for them.

Cde. Speaker, compare those years from 1957 to 1964 with the development which took place in the intervening seven years between 1965 and 1972 under the present Government. Three hundred and sixty miles of new road built, \$71 million spent, and the building of the Linden and Corentyne highways. Let the people compare the years between 1972 and 1976 when this Government built 429 miles of new roads at a cost of \$113 million.

8.50 p.m.

Today, we have a network of good roads which link the major development centres of this country but they would not understand on that side. You have forbidden me, Cde. Speaker, from describing them as ignorant so I say they would not understand. [Laughter].

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: Cde. Speaker, I move that Cde. Nascimento be given an additional 15 minutes to continue his presentation.

Cde. Willems *seconded*.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Nascimento: They would not understand - -

The Speaker: Before you continue, as I have a little time now, may I remark that I see the tendency is for the Opposition to get up and complain about points of order. How, when you make remarks sitting down there and you get them back you cannot take it, so, I am not going to listen to any point of order where that is concerned because I would not be hearing

the Minister or the person who is speaking. If you want to make remarks, then when you get it back you must take it.

Cde. Nascimento: Thank you, Cde. Speaker, for your very pertinent observations. The other side of this House would not understand that the sugar industry, the rice farmer whom they pretend to be so solicitous of, the bauxite industry at Linden, can now transport their produce and their products to the consumer with the maximum of efficiency and the minimum of cost. Without roads, you cannot do that.

And, perhaps, nothing displays more dramatically, the vast improvement made in development of our road networks for the laying of the foundation of the public transportation system, than the huge increase in importation of motor vehicles into this country especially since 1972 – and I am talking about commercial vehicles.

The number of lorries, trucks, vans, imported into Guyana between 1972 July and 1976 has increased by over one thousand per cent. Those figures are evidence of progress; they are evidence of increased production. [**Cde. Ram Karran:** “Highways to Happiness.”] What a pity that the Member on the other side of the House has never had the privilege even to experience happiness but then that is understandable when he had to make do in an infantile party.

The cost of production in both agricultural and industrial areas has been reduced dramatically because of the improvement of the road transportation system in this country under this Government. The amount of productivity has also increased as a result. We may not be able to eat roads but in a country like ours, without roads we would not be able to eat. [**Applause**] My colleague to my right has already adequately described this Government’s commitment and success in building the Upper Mazaruni Road. Already we have spent some \$46.6 million on that road and we have driven 162 miles of penetration through the forests; forests incidentally, which, when they are made exploitable, through the roads, would earn foreign exchange for this country. But they do not understand that kind of thing on the other side of the House. They know only too well that you cannot eat roads on the other side of the house.

It is our intention to spend another \$10 million in the year ahead on that road. And in fact, though this budget has been described as an “austerity budget” we will be probably spending in excess of \$20 million on roads in the next year. But in seven years, they spent a mere \$11 million on 61½ miles of road.

The nature, the terrain, of our hinterland often makes it much more feasible to rely upon air transportation to service the hinterland rather than on water and land. Now, both this Government and the other side are committed to the breaking open of the hinterland. I do not think that my friend Ram would deny that.

But, again, let us compare 1957 with 1964: the grand sum devoted in seven years to Civil Aviation by the Opposition when in Government was \$132,000. No new airstrips, no new aeroplanes, no new facilities and an international airport that we could flatteringly describe as third rate.

But, in the ensuing seven years, under this Government, \$10½ million was invested on air transportation; 12 new hinterland air-stripe were built servicing the pork-knockers, the diamond diggers.

Yes, of course development costs money, but the members of the Opposition do not have, presumably, the mental facility to understand that. Twelve new hinterland airstrips, 5 new passenger freight and aeroplanes put into operation and, since 1972, up to 1976, we have invested another \$7.2 million in the development of Civil Aviation.

We have now arranged to buy two Hawker Siddeley HF 748 aircraft at the cost of \$16 million and I am advised these will go into operation in April. Those aircraft can carry 52 passengers or 13,000 pounds of cargo and they will fly to Lethem in half the time that any aircraft we presently have in operation will achieve. **[Applause]** We have introduced special freight rates so that the people of the hinterland about whom there was a lot of verbosity on the other side of the House – but very little attention and care, can now plant their produce and ship it to Georgetown at an economic rate and they can benefit from that facility provided by this Government.

7.1.77

National Assembly

8.50 – 9 p.m.

The P.P.P. in the year 1964, their best year, transported 740,000 pounds of cargo with their national airline. In 1975, we transported 13 million pounds of cargo. The difference is like chalk to cheese as the Cde. Leader has pointed out.

We have a land with vast waterways and this Government has demonstrated sufficient imagination to utilize those waterways. These waterways also sometimes present a barrier as well as a facility and it is this Government that has brought a long-held dream in this country to fruition because we have begun the building of a \$38 million bridge across the Demerara River. What Government other than the People's National Congress could have achieved that?
[Applause]

9 p.m.

We cannot eat our cake and have it. Development has its costs. True, this year we have had to reduce subsidies on some of the passenger fares across our ferry but, when that bridge is completed, hundreds of thousands of people are going to be able to cross this river without any longer having the need to inconvenience themselves with a ferry crossing. You must be able to pay for development. It does not fall from heaven like manna. We have built and we are building roads essential for the provision of rapid, inexpensive, mass transportation for our people. What we now have to do is to take advantage of that foundation that we have laid.

This Government inherited a dilapidated railway system which had to be scrapped because it was losing huge sums of money. In fact the previous administration, since 1958 made a decision to scrap it but, like so many things it decided upon, nothing happened. Now an effective road public transportation system has to replace that railway and we established the Guyana Transportation Services for that purpose.

The fleet of the Guyana Transport Services began with 11 buses. Today it has 211 buses. We made mistakes. One of the mistakes we made in our anxiety to put the buses on the road to service the people was that we did not establish adequate maintenance facilities and additional termini for those buses. Those mistakes are being rectified. To spend \$12 million on

7.1.77

National Assembly

9 – 9.10 p.m.

buses involves the expenditure of another \$12 million on maintenance facilities and, in the next three or four years, this Government will be spending something like \$60 million in providing for the people of this country and adequate transportation system, a system that the People's Progressive Party would never have dreamt of never mind implemented. Cde. Speaker, it appears that I have run out of time.

The Speaker: No. You have five minutes more.

Cde. Nascimento: It is useful for this House to know that in expanding the bus fleet we provide a significant degree of employment because for every bus that is put into operation you have to employ seven people to maintain its operation, and if by 1980, as we plan, we have something like 700 buses in operation, it means that the bus fleet alone would have provided something like 5,000 persons with jobs.

I dealt with the subject of public transportation at some length not merely because the statistics provide a great deal of embarrassment to the Opposition, but because they demonstrate to this House and indeed to the people of Guyana that this Government has a record of steady and sometimes dramatic progress in the area of developing its public transportation and whatever

If I may wind up, I would like to make reference to the fact that the members of the Opposition are fond of indulging in forms of **ad hominem** arguments. **[Interruption]** It means directed towards people. We will educate you slowly if you continue to follow us. It may be a painful process but we will do our best for you. The Leader of the Opposition in that style, directed a personal attack against me. The Leader of the Opposition singled me out in an effort to discredit me as a nationalist and a socialist. I would not have bothered to answer if the fact that it was repeated in the **Mirror** of yesterday had not come to my attention.

I joined the People's National Congress ten years ago, it was a political decision based on intellectual judgement. It had nothing to do with personal advantage. I joined this party and I decided to support the leader of it because it was the only party in Guyana which could bring order out of the devastation and chaos left behind by the People's Progressive Party. **[Applause]** In making that decision I decided that both the ideology and philosophy embraced by the Leader of this party was the only answer for Guyana. On the other side of the House,

7.1.77

National Assembly

9 – 9.10 p.m.

they are very fond of wearing their socialism on their sleeves. When I joined the People's National Congress, I cut myself off from the greater part of my family. I also cut myself off from an inheritance approaching a quarter of a million dollars. When these members on the other side of the House, in future, attempt to stand up and question my credibility in the service of the people of this country, let them stand up and tell me what sacrifice they have made on behalf of this country. [**Applause**]

The Speaker: Even Cde. Ram Karran was clapping. Cde. Duncan.

The Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi) (Cde. Duncan): A few days ago we had the national Budget being presented in this House against the background of serious political as well as economic challenges to this nation. We are by now, I am sure, convinced that there are in fact hostile forces working against us seeking to destabilise Guyana through many forms of smiles and handshakes, through various organizations with different faces. No doubt we have already experienced some of the deprivation of certain developmental funds that might have come from outside of Guyana, if there were no such hostile forces operating within and outside of Guyana. We are convinced that we have the ability, as a political party and as a sovereign nation, to reject those external, undermining forces which may come in different forms.

9.10 p.m.

Having known the various forms of destabilisation processes, we must continue to be vigilant and ensure that we survive as a sovereign nation. As has already been indicated by the Cde. Minister of Finance, we will continue to treat our social services as our high priorities. I would like, therefore, to refer to some of the developments that have been and are taking place in the Rupununi Region, No. 6, which I represent.

Despite all the difficulties that we have experienced, when the new regional development system was introduced after the national elections of 1973, we were able to maintain and sustain social services such as health services. In fact, we trained the nurses who are now serving in the

Rupununi region and at the moment we have more in training in Georgetown and additional new recruits have been added. Their training will begin during this month. Our health centres in the Rupununi region continue to be manned by the local people and these centres are at Kato, Karasabi, Annal, Massara, Lethem and Aishalton. New Health Centres will be built in the region by self-help. The immediate places that come to mind are Kopinang and Kato in the North Pakaraima Mountains, Aranaputta Valley in the North Savannah, Shea and Awarewaunau Villages in the South Savannahs. These will all be built by self-help.

We continue to supply drugs to these various health centres with the assistance of the People's Army, the Guyana Defence Force, who also help to administer medical treatment in these most difficult and isolated areas of the region. Our travelling rangers in the region have been getting to those isolated communities using horses, motor-cycles, jeeps, as well as their feet in order to get to those isolated communities. I mentioned walking in order to explain to this honourable House and especially to the Members of the Opposition who use their muscles of their mouths in this National Assembly for purposes of talking or for criticism only. I want to invite them to use the muscles of their legs and arms to climb those mountains in the Pakaraimas so that they would understand how difficult development can be; how difficult it is to maintain our social services, and how expensive it can be to get to those isolated regions along the borders especially in the mountainous areas.

We continued conveying sick people to Georgetown for socialist treatment. We built quarters for two medical rangers; one at Kato and one at Annai. We provide water transport for the medical personnel stationed at Massara and Annai, especially during the most difficult period of rainy season. We have completed an extension to the Lethem Public Hospital during 1975. The Nurses' Hostel which had not been provided for a very long time has been completed during 1976 and is already occupied by the nurses of Lethem Hospital. We have provided additional vehicular transport and water transport in order to combat the serious outbreak of malaria in the Rupununi region. We have not idled. We have also used helicopters in order to combat malaria in the region. We have trained local residents in the Rupununi to be the permanent vigilantes against malaria. We have provided better eating facilities at Lethem

7.1.77

National Assembly

9.10 – 9.20 p.m.

Hospital which are already in use. A permanent office and quarters for malaria eradication personnel are in the process of construction at Lethem and we hope to construct more quarters in the region so that we would have places for additional personnel to deal with malaria.

Under education, have maintained 37 primary schools, one secondary school, and three nursery schools have been started in the region. There are six new schools under construction at the moment and, perhaps, I can divert a bit and explain how these new schools are being built. New schools have been built by self-help and co-operation. We are getting away from the old system of building schools ... where you just put a school on a barren ground on top of a hill or perhaps to facilitate somebody and build a school near to a creek without looking at the economic development, self-reliance and self sufficiency of that school. So these new schools are now being built near productive grounds. That is to say, although the barren looking savannahs of the Rupununi can be made fertile with a lot of input at the present time, when we are faced with the economic crisis and the economics of the country cannot take on that type of expensive input, we have to concentrate on building these schools near to the farm lands so that the school children will not be the victims of distances between the place of food and the school as it is now in many of the schools that are in the open savannahs.

9.20 p.m.

The historical background is important. In the colonial days when these schools were set up not in the interest of the people but in the interest of colonial masters who tried to keep the inhabitants of the region under their feet. Those were people who described the inhabitants of the regions as people who should not be taught science or mathematics. The colonial masters used to ask: Why teach mathematics and science subjects in the schools? They said the people had no future. But this Government saw it fit to ensure that people in the far flung areas like the Rupununi get the necessary training like other Guyanese in other developed parts of Guyana.

The new system of building schools will be based upon the need to develop the schools into economic viability. In other words, the schools must be self-sufficient and must not continue to be spoon-fed by some external finance as a total scheme.

We will continue the programme of building proper schools and teachers' quarters. We have already introduced Home Economic sections in many of these primary schools and very soon we will be moving away from this colonial type of secondary education and come down to the establishment of Community High Schools which are relevant to the development of the people in the regions as well as in Guyana as a whole.

Under communication and transport, we have maintained more than 30 (thirty) contracts with the various communities within the region and we keep our roads to all these villages accessible where it is possible for vehicles to get in. This is part of our social service to the people. People in the most difficult areas, like the Pakaraima Mountains, have been doing some self-help work and have built roads from one village to another. The most recent one is between Karasabai and Liperu. This type of programme will continue in order to facilitate the farming community to have better access to the nearest air trips. Airstrips at Kato, Karanambo and Aishalton, as I indicated earlier, are being upgraded in order to accommodate the Hawker Siddeley aircraft which Cde. Kit Nascimento referred to earlier on.

Other small and large airstrips have been maintained in order to assist in emergency cases. Direct distance dialing set is now under construction at Lethem. I must let this House know that the Rupununi region is the most difficult region not only because it is mountainous or the distances but because our colonial masters had left it too long and it takes a lot of work from this Government in order to assist the people in various transportation difficulties.

In the region we do not yet have a taxi or bus services. Sometimes people imagine that there exists a taxi service in the Pakarima, Mountains, the South Savannahs or the North Savannahs. They must know that there are no taxi or buses. Therefore, what the P.N.C. Government did was to assist the public with land rover transportation to all these accessible villages in the region.

Under co-operatives, Cde. Speaker, a number of consumer type of co-operatives have been promoted and established. A number of the marketing type of co-operatives, producers

7.1.77

National Assembly

9.20 – 9.30 p.m.

type of co-operatives, livestock rearing type of co-operatives, school thrift societies and housing co-operatives have been promoted.

Under Community Development we have organised a number of Community Development Councils which assisted in the planning process. I think somebody on this side of the House has already referred to how the communities have a say in the preparation of the National Budget of 1977. These Community Development Councils, as has been properly explained by Cde. Oscar Clarke, are representatives of the people and they are involved at the village level. Therefore, whatever Budget this People's National Congress Government will bring to this National Assembly will not only be a Budget dictated from the top.

That brings something to mind. We on this side of the House hear something spoken of: for example "From top to bottom" or "from bottom to top." That, in our view, is an imperialist type of administration. It is a capitalist type of administration; it is a colonial type of administration; it is neo-colonial type of administration. There is superstructure in imperialism. You have big shots and you have small shots. The society we want to build through socialism, as initiated by the People's National Congress, is not one where you have big shots and small shots. There must be equality among human beings

9.30 p.m.

We still have a lot more to do to differentiate between some of us who are educated and influenced by colonial books and sometimes colonial socialism also and others. We still have a lot more to build into scientific socialism to find out whether we must maintain the superstructures of big boys and small boys. **[Interruption]** I am saying that the community development councils provide the opportunities for our people in the villages, the small communities, to be involved in decision making. At Lethem we are constructing a sports complex which will accelerate nation unity and thus development for that region.

We have started to construct large storage bonds at Kato, Lethem and Aishalton, because these isolated areas suffer from lack of essential consumer items because there are no storage bonds in these centres of various sub-regions. I suppose this is not a problem only found in Rupununi but in the North West and Mazaruni as well. This Government has not idled; this

7.1.77

National Assembly

9.30 – 9.40 p.m.

Government is seeking to ensure that the people get goods in sufficient quantity so that they would not suffer.

There are communities in the Rupununi which are engaged in the planting of rice which was traditionally a coastal type crop. The Rupununi region we hope sooner or later will not have to eat coastally grown rice – **[Interruption]** What I am saying is that we do not believe in coastal people supporting us all the time or the coastal belt spoon-feeding us with rice, flour and sugar. We hope that with the efforts of the people, the consciousness of the people, they would be able to produce their own sugar and rice in the area, so that they would not spend their hard-earned money buying food items that can be grown in the region. Speaking perhaps for the indigenous population of his country, we could do without flour, the imported item and further, we are introducing the growing of rice in the hinterland areas.

The Speaker: Two minutes more!

Cde. Duncan: Cde. Speaker, under community development we have erected Rest Houses at Aishalton, Chung Valley and Annai. I want to invite the members of the Opposition to come and see these places so that they can be wiser than they are at present. We will build a proper terminal building at Lethem very soon. We have already cut materials for that. We are going to proceed with the establishment of an indigenous tannery. For many years this area which is perhaps one of good areas to attract foreign exchange has been neglected, but it takes the P.N.C. Government to get these things done, to get a tannery realised. We have already introduced what I understand are called “dehiding” machines that can skin the animals. This is important. No matter how small it may look it is an important development for all of us.

Also, under community development, we have established a new police station at Aishalton in the South Savannahs. Our indigenous claybrick factories continue to operate at St. Francis, Lethem and Moco Moco to meet the needs of infrastructural works carried out by this Government.

The Speaker: One minute more!

7.1.77

National Assembly

9.30 – 9.40 p.m.

Cde. Duncan: We have introduced portable sawmills in the Kato area as well at Kumu in the central Savannahs. These will help to expedite the infrastructural works that are so necessary in order for us to attend to the people in terms of agricultural development, livestock development or otherwise.

Under agriculture the residents of the region continue to produce peanuts ... blackeye peas. Onions have been introduced in the Pakaraima Mountains. ... have to admit as honest people in the People's National Congress that we ... overproduced some of those items, that we are unable yet to transport ... that we have produced for 1976. We hope that when the introduction of the ... aircraft services are effected it will help to boost the Hawker ... encouragement given to farmers to plant more of these commercial crops.

The Speaker: Time! Cde. Corbin.

Cde. Corbin: Cde. Speaker, I ask your permission to rise on a point of order to correct an inaccuracy which was referred to by Cde. Feroze Mohamed in his remarks to the House earlier today. I refer to his attempt to misinterpret the references which I made to this honourable House in relation to the ideological perspective of education of the People's national Congress. Cde. Feroze Mohamed is reported as having stated that I said that psychological education of the masses is necessary, an attempt to say that it was unnecessary and that the masses need to develop social consciousness and so on. This was a deliberate misrepresentation of what I said in Parliament yesterday. Indeed what I was referring to was the fact that education was a very complex exercised I had completed a complete analysis of what was necessary to build socialism - -

Cde. Ram Karran: On a point of order, I submit that the Cde. Member is not speaking on a point of order.

The Speaker: That is for me to decide. I have not heard him completely through. When he is finished I will decide whether it is a point of order or not.

Cde. Ram Karran: Another point of order, the hon. Member is undoubtedly getting another opportunity to speak on a Motion on which he has already spoken.

7.1.77

National Assembly

9.30 – 9.40 p.m.

The Speaker: When the power is shared and you are here you may decide.

Cde. Ram Karran: I move a point of order. The hon. Member is continuing his speech which he has already closed.

Cde. Corbin: I wish to point out that what I said and the quotation I made had nothing to do with raising social consciousness of the masses. In fact what I did was point out that education was a difficult process and I drew to the attention of the Opposition that even in the Soviet Union this was recognized.

9.40 p.m.

In support of my remarks, I quoted from a book which I deliberately said came from the Novosti Press Agency which I can lend to my honourable friend on the other side. So if you wish, I can read the quotation which is completely different. He attempted to say that this was related to something else. Cde. Speaker, I will read it with your permission.

The Speaker: No, I would not allow that.

Cde. Corbin: Cde. Speaker, I wish the Member to withdraw his misinterpretation of my remarks and I am happy to lend him this book to improve

The Speaker: I do not think that is a point of order. The interpretation of the Member is his own. What you have said remains on record.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved: “That this National Assembly do now adjourn to Monday, 10th January, 1977 at 2 p.m. [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]
