

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

/Volume 8/

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1981) OF THE
NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

7th Sitting 2.00 p.m. Friday, 27th February, 1981

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (82)

Speaker (1)

*Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P.

Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government – People’s National Congress (69)

Prime Minister (1)

*Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P.,

Prime Minister

Other Vice- Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., M.P.,

Vice-President, Works and Transport (Absent – on leave)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,

Vice-President Economic Planning and Finance

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,

Vice-President Public Welfare

Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P.,

Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations

Senior Ministers (10)

Cde. Chandisingh, M.P.,

Minister of Higher Education

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.,

Minister of Regional Development

- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
Ministry of National Development
- *Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Absent)
- *Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,
Minister of Energy and Mines
- *Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
Attorney General and Minister of Justice
- *Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs
- *Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture
- *Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs
- *Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Education

*Non-elected Member

Ministers (13)

- Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.,
Minister, Environment and Water Supply, in the
Ministry of Public Welfare
- Cde. U.E. Johnson, M.P.,
Minister of Co-operatives
- Cde. J.N. Maitland-Singh
Minister, consumer Protection, in the
Ministry of Trade and consumer Protection
- Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,
Minister, Crops and Livestock, in the
Ministry of Agriculture (Absent)
- Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of
Economic Planning and Finance Cde.
- Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P.,
Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry
of Agriculture
- *Cde. C.A. Nascimento, M.P.,
Minister, Mechanical Equipment, in the

Ministry of Works and Transport

- *Cde. F.U.A. Campbell, M.P.,
Minister of Information
- *Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael, M.P.,
Minister, Forestry, in the Ministry of Agriculture
- *Cde. Y.V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Public Service (Absent)
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister Office of the President
- *Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, M.P.,
Minister, Drainage and Irrigation, in the
Ministry of Agriculture
- *Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,
Minister Health, in the Ministry of
Public Welfare

Ministers of State (3)

- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State for Culture in the
Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of State for Youth and Sport, in the
Ministry of National Development
- *Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P.,
Minister of State for Construction, in the
Ministry of Works and Transport

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary Women's Affairs and Housing (Absent)
- Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
- *Cde. E.M. Bynoe, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.
Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
Cde. M. Armoghan, M.P.
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.
Cde. J.B. Calderia, M.P.
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.
Cde. E.B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.
Cde. C. Vandeburg, M.P.
Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P., M.P.,
Government Chief Whip

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P. (Absent)
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P., (Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P., (Region No. 2 – Pomeroon/Supenaam)
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P., (Region No. 3 – Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
Cde. W. Bipat, M.P., (Region No. 4 – Demerara/Mahaica)
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P., (Region No. 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P., (Region No. 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P., (Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P., (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P., (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P., (Region No. 10 – Upper Damerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P.,
Minority Leader

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P.,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P.
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.,
Minority Chief Whip.

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.
Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, J.P., M.P.
Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

(Absent – on leave)

(Absent)

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. F.A. Narain, A.A.
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

2 p.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Naraine from the 22nd February to 15th March and to Mr. Fielden Singh for today's Sitting.

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THE SITTING OF THE ASSEMBLY

AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

Suspension of Standing Order No. 12

The Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations (Cde. Ramsaroop):

Cde. Speaker, I am seeking your leave under Standing Order No. 83 to enable me to move the suspension of Standing Order No. 12 so that the order of business could be varied to permit a Ministerial Statement to be made during the course of today's sitting.

The Speaker: Leave is granted.

Cde. Ramroop: I now formally move the suspension of Standing Order No. 12 for the purpose stated.

The Speaker: Cde. Jagan, I did not know that this was a boudoir.

Cde. J. Jagan: I am sorry, Cde. Speaker.

Question put, and carried to.

Standing Order No. 12 suspended.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1981

Assembly resumed the debate on the Motion moved by the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1981.

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, the Budget Speech delivered by the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, indeed presents a picture which can be aptly described as one of gloom and doom for the Guyanese people. The year-end review has drawn attention once again to the serious economic problems of the country. The silver lining promised to appear behind the dark, heavy clouds is still kept stuck there and it seems as if it will remain there for a long, long time to come.

In spite of the imposition of heavy excise duties and consumption tax on imported and locally manufactured goods, a deficit of \$200 million was still anticipated in 1980. This deficit, however, has now reached the high figure of \$278 million. Shortfalls in production, enormous budget deficit, substantial hikes in prices, despite fat talk of reducing same, lack of proper distribution etc., have not only let to a widespread increase in the cost of living but have also encouraged speculation, hoarding and black marketing.

The severe socio-economic problems have a cumulative bearing on the Guyana economy today. The stability of the economy therefore does not depend exclusively on price falls or price stability on the international markets, nor is it the working people who are responsible for the price rise. On the contrary, they have been its victims and as such have been struggling for amelioration of their deteriorating economic conditions. In view of the severe economic crisis and other related complex problems, there is little scope for economic manoeuvres and management. Sooner than later serious repercussions will unfold themselves as the Guyanese working class resolutely take their destiny indeed in their own hands.

2.05 p.m.

While oil is and has been a big problem not only in Guyana but in the world, particularly in the western world, oil has not been the only cause for all the failures we have experienced during the past five years. There could have been better performance of the economy if the Government had made some effort, more so some serious effort to resolve some of the obstacles which stand in the way for better performance.

The PNC regime from its inception pursued pro-imperialist, anti-working class economic policies which undermined the economy. Lack of democracy and violation of human right aggravated the crisis generating increased inflation, unemployment, stagnation in production, high taxation and high retail prices and sharp cuts in social services and working-class earnings. The base of the Guyana economy is now, therefore, more fragile than ever and is contracting in real terms. There has actually been no growth in five years. This has resulted in heavy borrowing. It goes without saying, Cde. Speaker, that heavy borrowing on a bankrupt economy, plagued with zero growth is and will continue to load the taxpayers with heavier and heavier burdens.

The Budget Speech refers to a two per cent economic growth in real terms for the year 1980 but, Cde. Speaker, what is a mere two per cent when for the preceding four years 1976 to 1979 the economy experienced negative growth rates amounting to 10.6 per cent. This means when the positive two per cent is considered against the negative 10.6 per cent, the economy has indeed suffered an 8.6 per cent negative growth in 1980 as compared with 1975.

Cde. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to the figures in this Budget Estimate which are in great contradiction with the figures given as far as the financial position of the country is concerned in the 1980 Budget Estimates. What is the financial position of the country today? At the 31st December, 1980, the Treasury of this country was \$1,291 million in depth with an anticipated digging this year of a further hole in that very large hole of \$167 million dollars. At the end of 1981 that hole, which is the Treasury of this country will be in a deficit, or in other words, would have had the four hundred account overdrawn by no less than \$1,458 million dollars. That is the financial position of Guyana today.

Year after year we are told of the failures of the PNC regime. Trade deficit, budget deficit, shortfall in production and other targets, excessive borrowing from the banking system, zero growth, non fulfillment of capital programmes, etc, as the country sinks deeper and yet deeper into economic crisis. In other parts of the world, Cde. Speaker, Governments resign for such failures and negative performances and I now call on the Government, in the interest of the nation, in the interest of the people, in the interest of development, growth and progress to resign forthwith.

Most of the economic problems facing the nation today are due to directives from the International Monetary Fund. The regime has dutifully carried out these orders caring little for the adverse impact on the masses. While heaping burden after burden on the backs of the people, the regime ensures that the massive repressive apparatus is well oiled with scarce funds and is geared to go into action at very short notice.

What is the position as far as expenditure is concerned for the military and security services? In 1980, \$103 million representing 10 per cent of total expenditure of the Guyana Government. In 1981, \$143 million equal to 12 per cent of Current and Capital Expenditures. When one compares this figure with \$9 million or a mere .85 per cent for housing and \$66 million or 5.5 per cent allocated for health, it goes without saying that the emphasis in this country, rather than placing that on housing, rather than placing it on health, is being placed on guns.

Cde. Speaker, according to the Chronicle of July 27, 1979 – and this came incidentally after the Government, having caused the economy to become bankrupt, ran to the IMF for financial help –

“The IMF extended agreement for \$206 million would have expanded the economic base, enabling the completion of investment involving \$750 million.”

It would have put the country in the position where some of the investments would by now have started to yield results while continuing to stabilize the Guyana economy. What is the position? The fact of the matter, however, is that, that agreement had to be suspended as a result of the failure of the economy to grow by 5 per cent in 1979, a growth rate which was set by the IMF. In the meantime, the IMF medicine has made the disease worse and is now wreaking havoc on the lives of the Guyanese people.

The PNC Government is now coming around to accept the fact that the IMF cannot solve the problems here as reported in the Chronicle of September 26, 1980 when it is alleged that the ex-Minister of Finance, Cde. Frank Hope, had launched a stinging attack on the policies of the IMF complaining that the Washington based financial institution had not changed with the times and it should be pragmatic in imposing conditions on loans.

What is the present position with the \$300 million loan agreement with the imperialist outfit? Is this agreement going to be suspended again, the Government having failed to reach the target set by it? Is it true that the IMF is demanding devaluation of the Guyana dollar? The nation ought to know these facts. Why wasn't the \$300 million agreement brought to the Assembly for debate? Why no mention is made about the IMF in the Vice-President's Address to the Assembly? Cde. Speaker, we demand that any further dealing with the IMF must first be brought to this Assembly for debate before agreement is entered into, since all such agreements in the past have had telling effects on the working class.

After 16 years in office, the PNC regime is still to put up a tangible development plan by which it can scientifically be guided towards real development of the country. The 1966/1971 Development Plan, patterned after the Puerto Rican model, collapsed prematurely. The 1972/1976 Feed, Clothe and House the Nation plan failed in every respect despite the fact that it was rolled over to 1977. The first was premature; the second was overgrown. However, both failed.

The 1978 Budget was framed on the basis that reasonable economic recovery would be achieved over a period of three years, 1978 to 1980. According to page 18 of that Budget Speech it is stated:

“This Budget represents the first year of a financial plan that is consistent with the third development plan of the regime for the period 1978/1981.”

What is the position with that plan? That plan is now in shambles. As we can clearly see, the economy was projected according to that plan to grow by 17 per cent in the four years 1978 to 1981. At the end of the three years, 1978 to 1980, we have seen that there has been absolutely no growth instead of the growth of 17 per cent that had been projected.

2.15 p.m.

The State Planning Commission and Secretariat have been engaging most of their time in the preparation of Budget Estimates rather than getting down to one of the fundamental problems of this country, that is, the formulation of a realistic and scientific development plan.

Let us examine now some of the failures of this Government during 1980:

- (1) Public Sector surplus, projected at \$181 million, netted only \$40 million – a shortfall of \$141 million;
- (2) Net Capital inflow projected at \$152 million amounted to only \$85 million, a shortfall of \$67 million;
- (3) Banking system financing projected at \$155 million reached the high level of \$353 million, an excess of \$198 million;
- (4) Current Deficits, projected at \$200 million, increased to \$278 million or \$78 million more than was projected;
- (5) Exports projected at \$1,115 million earned only \$983 million, a shortfall of \$132 million;
- (6) Net payment for services projected at \$180 million jumped to \$225 million;
- (7) Deficit on current account of balance of payments projected at \$155 million reached the high of \$311 million, \$156 million more than the projection;

- (8) Trade surplus projected at \$25 million turned out to a trade deficit of \$101 million;
- (9) Corporation surpluses, projected at \$200 million, fell to \$100 million, a shortfall of \$100 million;
- (10) Gross Domestic Product, projected at \$1,400 million, fell short by \$30 million;
- (11) Public Sector taxes and dividends projected at \$108 million fell short by \$35 million;
- (12) Debt charges projected at \$236 million reached \$299.5 million, an increase of \$63.5 million.

Let me say a word here about the debt burden. The huge debt burden entailed by the numerous loans, has reached enormous proportions. The \$502 million to be borrowed again this year will further accelerate the bankruptcy and further ruin the national economy.

The external debt service ratio has been increasing rapidly in recent years and now presents a serious debt management problem. Despite a refinancing operation in 1980, Guyana will be faced with sharply increased amortization payments on the external debt in the years ahead.

Debt charges for 1981 will amount to \$311.9 million, about 62.3 per cent of current revenue and about 23.7 per cent of exports during this year. What a shame! When the Government was expecting to collect \$500 million it is going to spend \$194.4 million, or 26 per cent of the whole current expenditure, on Personal Emoluments. Forty-

two per cent, \$311.9 million on debt charges will leave a short amount of only \$241.7 million of total expenditure for social services.

As far as the current revenue is concerned, Personal Emoluments, fixed at \$194.4 million, and debt charges, fixed at \$311.9 million – amounting to \$506.3 million – represent \$6.3 million more than current revenue which is anticipated to be collected in this country this year. It is clearly an indication that with the Government's expenditure on Personal Emoluments and the Government's expenditure on debt services, the regime will have to continue to dig holes, either locally or abroad, to continue to keep this huge bureaucratic apparatus which it has now established in this new year under the so-called "new Constitution" in this new Parliament to bleed an oil it, in order to corrupt and to continue to corrupt and thwart the Guyanese people.

Temporary Recession. In 1977, 1978 and 1979, we were told that Guyana was in temporary recession, that Guyana's problems cannot be anything else but temporary and that what we were experiencing was a temporary economic setback. The worsening economic situation again in 1980 has now clearly confirmed that the economic difficulties have now become permanent rather than temporary.

On the 8th April, 1980, the now Vice-President of Economic Planning and Finance said that there was no reason why we could not achieve 335,000 tons of sugar, two million tons of bauxite and 200,000 tons of rice. He further said that the 8 per cent real growth projected for 1980 was in fact reasonable. Why is it then that only 2 per cent growth in real terms has been achieved and reasons are now advanced for not achieving those production targets?

What was the production shortfall for 1980? Sugar production fell short of 1980 target by 65,500 tons and by 28,500 tons less than 1979 productions. Bauxite production fell short of target by 209,000 tons and by 17,000 tons less than the 1979 production by 5,442 carats. Gas stoves fell short of target by 10,000 units. Refrigerators fell short by 10,000 units.

Cde. Speaker, some failure in the Capital Programme. According to the 1980 Budget Speech, the glass factory, the vegetable oil mill, the leather tannery, the hospital at Aishalton and the mechanical workshop at MARDS should all have been completed during the year 1980. The Government has hopelessly failed to carry out that completion programme. Now we are being told that this programme will be completed this year.

On page 43 of the 1979 Budget Speech it is stated:

“Production from the Glass Factory and the Textile Mill, should also come on stream during this year (1979) though their significant contribution to domestic product would really be seen from 1980 onwards.”

What is the present position? How much have they contributed to the domestic product in 1980 as was anticipated in the 1979 Budget Speech? How much cotton was imported to produce the 640,000 metres of textiles and how much would be imported this year to produce the projected 1.5 million metres? I have here a sample of cotton which this Government has been bringing into this country by the thousands of bales from America. It was loudly stated here in this Parliament and reported in the Press and newspapers that Kimbia, under the National Service, was going to produce adequate quantities of cotton for the mill and now thousands of big bales are being brought into this country from America to keep the factory going.

We hear about the glass factory. The glass factory, we were told, was supposed to produce sheet glass in 1979 and now we are hearing the ridiculous story that the GEC cannot, after two years, supply electricity to the glass factory. A white elephant with much hard-earned foreign currency is lying there on that highway.

Some little talk now about corporations. Much emphasis is being placed on the corporations. The Minister in the 1980 Budget outlined the targets of the corporations. The corporations have made negative responses during 1980; they made losses and big losses during the year 1980. I want to name the corporations: 1 – Guyana Rice Board, 2 – Guyana Electricity Corporation, 3 – Livestock Development Company, 4 – Guyana

Airways Corporation, 5 – Transport and Harbours Department, 6 – Guyana Transport Services, 7 – Guyana Stockfeeds Limited, 8 – Guyana Marketing Corporation, 9 – Guyana Fisheries Limited, 10 – Guyana Timbers Limited, 11 – Guyana Broadcasting Corporation and 12 – Post Office Corporation. Losses amounted to \$50.86 million. Some of these Corporations, according to this programme, would have been making a profit, a surplus in the year 1980.

Cde. Speaker, mention is made on page 12 of the Budget Speech about the hydro-power cum-smelter project. A World Bank team which came to Guyana in May, 1980 said that the development of hydro-power resources with a capacity of 750 megawatts is contingent upon a number of factors. One important requirement is the Government's ability to raise and service substantial levels of external financing to execute the project. The Upper Mazaruni Development is presently estimated to cost \$1 billion and an aluminum smelter will cost an equal amount.

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Narbada Persaud.

Cde. N. Persaud: To mobilize these levels of resources will be difficult and it will require the Government to greatly improve economic and financial management during the next few years. Finally, the report says that a project of this scale will impose a considerable burden on the economy. A team of experts from the World Bank said so, yet we are being told that the World Bank has now given the green light for this very project.

Cde. Speaker, financial discipline and accountability. A lot has been said on page 13 in the Budget Speech about this matter. But, Cde. Speaker, this is an old tune and is only part of the problem as far as the accounts of this country are concerned. You are aware that when the Assembly was dissolved in October, 1980 the Public Accounts Committee was examining the report of the Auditor-General for the year 1970, which is the last report that was available. The minutes on the examination for the years 1968 and 1969 cannot be obtained due to a shortage of personnel although the examination has been completed over two years ago. The presentation of the report of the Public Accounts Committee for the year 1967 cannot yet be placed on the Order Paper although it was put on the Notice Paper about five months ago. The Ministry of Finance failed to submit comments on the reports of the Public Accounts Committee for the years 1958 and 1966. Surely, these delays, which one may consider deliberate, defeat the purpose of the Public Accounts Committee and proper accountability of public funds.

Cde. Speaker, all of us recognize the fact that only increased production and productivity can take this country out of the economic crisis. But with a virtual wage freeze, with inflation and unemployment over 20 per cent and 30 per cent respectively, with political discrimination, police harassment and general victimization, with atrocious water, electricity, transportation, health and other services; with continued shortages and unequal distribution of essential food and other items; with the further erosion of basic human rights and freedoms and with the denial of the rights of the people to freely and fairly choose a Government of their choice, there can be no increased production and productivity.

The grave national crisis which our country is presently facing cannot be resolved under the PNC Government. It is only with the removal of this undemocratic minority regime and the return to democracy under a national patriotic front that this country will be able to eradicate poverty and unemployment. With a democratic people's revolutionary Government Guyana will move in the direction towards real freedom, development and social progress. Let us all remember that nothing can increase production and productivity overnight. Human development at best can only do part of the job. Without the right policy, without human rights and without democracy, production and productivity will continue to decline.

But Cde. Speaker, even other policies will not help. The most valuable resource any country has is its people, the means and the end of economic advance. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Green.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I wish to move that the –

The Speaker: I'm not listening to you.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: He sat down. I want to respectfully move that under Standing Order 32(9)(b) the Comrade be given an extension of 15 minutes to conclude his speech.

Cde. Ramkarran seconded.

Question put, and negatived.

The Speaker: Cde. Green.

The Vice-President, Public Welfare (Cde. Green): Cde. Speaker, may I first take the opportunity to congratulate my colleague, Vice-President Cde. Hoyte for presenting this Budget at this time to this Assembly.

The Speaker: Comrades, what are we having, a separate Parliament?

Cde. Ramkarran: Are we in school?

The Speaker: Don't make noise in the place.

Cde. Green: May I also take this opportunity to congratulate the officials who I know worked extremely hard and had, I consider, an unenviable task of preparing a Budget in the circumstances of Guyana and the world as it is, preparing a Budget against the felt needs of our people exposed to the mass media of the rich West and the slants and the mores of developed societies, preparing a programme articulated by the leadership of the People's National Congress in this country and dealing with what, in any event, are difficult circumstances.

Cde. Speaker, we see this Budget as a total people's challenge, a challenge not only to the members of the Government but to all the people of this country. And indeed, if I may paraphrase the words of the President to this Assembly on the 9th February, in our hands lies the destiny of the Co-operative Republic, let these hands be safe hands.

The Speaker: Comrades, if I do not have proper behaviour, I will know what discipline to apply.

Cde. Green: The Budget, indeed, requests every Guyanese – and again I recall the words of the President: every Guyanese. There is no time for cheap politicking; this is not time for reading figures that make no sense, dealing with matters that are inaccurate to this Assembly and bringing up pieces of old cotton wool, I am not sure where it came from, Cde. Speaker. It is a time for us to strain every muscle, to turn the economy around and to make this country a better place for all of us.

The Budget, Cde. Speaker, has to be viewed against the background of the reality of the world as it is, and against the background of our own legacy of inherited poverty. The world, without attempting to spend too much time on the issue, is in a state of confusion and anyone who avails himself of the opportunity to travel and to understand that there are some people who lack the capacity to understand, would recognize that as we proceed to the last part of this twentieth century the economic situation in every region of the world is a source of concern to its peoples and their neighbours.

I was looking through some clippings a few days ago and without attempting to identify any particular region, the news seems to follow a particular pattern. Financial Times, 24th January, “Soviet targets not reached”:

“The Soviet Union has failed by a wide margin to reach most of the targets originally set out in the 1976/80 five-year plan. This has been confirmed by an announcement yesterday of official results for last year which indicate that while the economy recovered from the effects of the harsh 1979 winter, the disastrous harvest output failed once again to meet even scaled down targets.”

2.35 p.m.

We must not isolate Guyana, we cannot isolate Guyana. In the United Kingdom, the people who exploited us for years, who brought us here as slaves and indentured labourers, who got rich on the blood and sweat of our forefathers, they are now talking about closing refineries which will cause, in another few days, 1,500 people to lose their jobs. They have introduced serious austerity measures which I doubt that those of us in the Third World could be allowed to impose. In the United States, regarded as the richest society in the world, there are complaints. The Administration is buckling down to

imposing what will be considered as tight fiscal measures. They talk about cutting the Federal Budget. In an area referred to by the previous speaker, housing, there is a problem of a record high mortgage rate and the national average in the United States is now about 15 per cent and they say this is taking a very heavy toll on the housing industry. In Britain there is now the reality of a very serious housing crisis with an estimated one million homes passed as unfit for human habitation and a similar number lacking standard amenities. There is a real danger that the proportion of substandard homes will rise further in the face of spending curbs.

I make these points not to besmirch the character of any other society, but to show that we need, as we look at this Budget, to see ourselves as part of the world as it is. We need also to see the Budget in terms of our own experiences, our legacy of poverty, where we inherited, in 1966, very limited infrastructure, where a Commission before Independence asked that things like the sea defences, in the colonial days, should be seen as a serious imperial obligation.

Some of the expenditure we had after Independence has to do with that legacy, a legacy that we inherited a market for imported goods, a source of cheap labour and an educational and cultural programme designed to serve the masters. In fact, had it not been for the active leadership of Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham we would have witnessed a society where our people would have been completely robbed of their self-confidence, where had it not been for the leadership of the People's National Congress, the divisions and dissension sown by the imperial masters would have created chaos. Instead, we witness a Budget that is in fact a challenge to all the people and even though we still have within our society a small minority group that seems hell bent on creating confusion and distorting the truth, we feel confident that this Budget - -

The Speaker: Cde. Belgrave, if I have to speak to you on another occasion – /Cde. Belgrave: I did not put it on./

The Speaker: When you are speaking to me, please stand.

Cde. Belgrave: What I was saying, I did not put it on.

The Speaker: If you had not been speaking I would not have heard your voice.

Cde. Belgrave: I did not put it on.

The Speaker: I am not having any argument with you.

Cde. Green: The Budget, therefore, is a challenge to all the people of this country. We have grown accustomed in this society to being told that we have potential. Indeed, a memo prepared in December, 1938 addressed to the Royal West Indian Commission by the Chamber of Commerce of the City of Georgetown read as follows – I am going to paraphrase, with your permission, Cde. Speaker. Referring to the colony.

It is probably true to say that of all the British tropical possessions there is not one richer in possibilities of so varied a character as British Guiana and it is somewhat difficult to provide an explanation why the colony has remained undeveloped during the 120 years that it has been under the British Crown.

The foregoing words were penned by S. Lupton, OBE in 1924 and it is a said commentary that 14 years later sufficient evidence can be gathered to put before a Royal Commission pointing to the fact that this period is approaching a century and a half of economic inertia, if not of actual stagnation. Viewed from an imperial standpoint it is not easy to understand the reason which underlies such a deplorable state of affairs.

Cde. Speaker, these people took into account, even in those days, the problems we face and dealt with commerce as they saw it. There is no reference in those documents to important people's needs like the social services and housing and this is why this Government, over the past few years, has attempted to direct its efforts towards improving the lot of our people.

The gap we found at Independence was so great that indeed it is a Herculean task, in the face of very severe economic pressures, to provide the services we have. In spite of what was said by the previous speaker those who have eyes to see can see. There was an unfortunate comparison about figures used in relation to housing and health. We regard the business of housing our people as important and unlike the Chamber of Commerce in the twenties, thirties and early forties, we do not regard it as an imposition. We see it as an area that can provide comfort for our people, an area that will permit them to enjoy better health so that they can be productive and happy citizens. It is also an area where people can develop their skills and in fact by a spin-off effect create substantial activities in the economy as a whole.

Because of those factors, because of our belief in trying to improve the lot of our people, the agency charged, the Central Housing and Planning Authority, which is the executing arm of the Government, is now organized to give the type of institutional support necessary to develop, monitor and co-ordinate an effective housing programme. Personnel, finance and general administrative sectors are being streamlined to ensure that the organization can respond effectively and efficiently to the needs of the people. We have, towards that objective, had discussions with the representatives of the State Planning Secretariat.

2.45 p.m.

I have already, in my opening remarks, said that the officials had an unenviable task and I would like to take this opportunity to publicly commend the officials of the State Planning Secretariat and Economic Planning who worked hard with us and the rest of the agencies to put together this Budget. [Applause.] Perhaps I can be accused of being invidious but I can hardly avoid mention of people like Clarence Ellis and young Carl Greenidge. Comrades, we have worked with those people, with the Guyana Association of Professional Engineers, the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund Committee, Guymine, the Ministry of Trade, the private mortgage companies and the Guyana Mortgage Finance Bank and all the credit unions that represent the workers in

this society. We are working with them to put together a programme to make sure that housing moves at a faster rate than it did in the past.

One page 20 of the Budget Speech the Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance noted that every effort will be made this year to put in place the mechanism to assist this area of our activity. His actual words are:

“To encourage private citizens to rehabilitate and extend their residences, consideration will be given to the possibility of making the interest payments on mortgages obtained for such purposes – tax deductible.”

This is but one area. We propose in the next few weeks, after discussions with the insurance companies, to come up with factors and proposals which are intended to remove as many of the factors that inhibit the programme for housing the nation.

We have, within the Central Housing and Planning Authority, for this year, planned to complete the infrastructural and construction works at Vryman’s Erven, Burma, Clonbrook, Melanie Damishana, Grove, Postal and Best Foreshore. We plan, as an on-going programme, to repair and replace the twelve apartments burnt and destroyed in Laing Avenue. We have also started and will be completing within the next few months fifty new apartments in West Ruimveldt and the development of seven acres of land in South Ruimveldt. Provision of infrastructural works at Wismar/Rockstone is also programmed and the rehabilitation of the well-known Wortmanville apartments, which were built many years ago and which I understand were built as a result of agitation of a group known as the WPEO, is planned for this year at a cost of \$1 million.

Further, with the development of the East La Penitence site and with the garnering of the financial institutions, we hope to make funds available to provide 28 acres of land that will be available for further housing. We are not unaware of the fact that there is a problem in the main urban centre but consistent with our policy to get outside of the city there are plans for the Kuru Kuru site at Yarowkabra and funds will be made available for infrastructure work to be done to provide a minimum of fifty units in this area to serve the residents who will be working at the Glass Factory.

We also have an on-going programme to look at places like Yarrow Dam and a number of other areas that have been the result of squatting and other human problems.

Cde. Speaker, I noted earlier that we plan to remove all factors that inhibit effective building of homes for our people. In the Press over the past few weeks we witnessed distortions and an attempt to create confusion in relation to Government's recent decision to remove the rent freeze. I wish therefore to restate Government's position on this question so that we can remove the opportunity for malice and for persons who will use every opportunity to misinform the people of this country.

The rent freeze, which refers to the restriction imposed upon landlords to increase the rentals on the grounds of increase in rates and taxes and improvements made to their premises will no longer be in force from this year 1981. This restriction as you may recall Cde. Speaker, was imposed in 1974 because Government then saw the need to assist the lower income group, the tenants, to meet and to cope with the rising cost of living. The restriction indeed assisted several tenants throughout the country. This restriction was intended at the time to last for one year. However, since circumstances did not change, the restriction continued into and towards the end of 1980. Landlords, in the meantime, were faced with increases in rates and taxes and astronomical rises in the prices of building materials. The majority of landlords refused to carry out repairs and improvements to their premises knowing that they will not be bale to increase their rents for rises in taxes and improvements. What was intended to help the tenants began to be counter productive. Many buildings became substandard in their substandard in their amenities. Premises that were vacated have not been rented again and in fact, many places were shut down. Owners with properties, who, in normal circumstances, would have let their premises, refused to do.

In the final analysis the tenants suffered from poor housing conditions and the quantum of premises for rental from private landlords has been reduced when the demand has increased. This is a reality which the Government has to face. We cannot allow a situation which, in the end, would reduce our housing stock and impose hardships on

workers forced to live in a poor environment. We cannot allow this to continue. With the removal of the rent freeze, a landlord is not entitled automatically to increase the rent. May I repeat, the landlord is not allowed automatically to increase the rent. If the premises were already assessed, he has to apply to the Magistrate for such increases. Where new premises are being left, then the law imposes an obligation on the landlord to apply to the Magistrate to have his premises assessed. If he does not do so, the tenant can apply. Tenants are expected to pay such increases as assessed by the Magistrate but not retrospectively. Any increase for rates and taxes will be the differences between that which was paid in 1980 and that which is chargeable this year and each succeeding year. Increases on the ground of improvements will only relate to improvements made this year and onwards.

2.55 p.m.

In allowing the increases to take effect as mentioned, Cde. Speaker, we have again taken into consideration the hardships which the tenant might have to face if these payments were made to have retrospective effects. As the law now stands, a Magistrate can, after he makes assessment and certifies that the standard rent exceeds \$250 a month, order that the premises be decontrolled. In fact, it is automatically decontrolled the rental assessed is beyond \$250. This enables a landlord to make his own bargain in fixing a rental for these premises. We found that the effect of this has been that the landlord neglects those premises which fell below \$250 and at the same time where landlords can, they make improvements, by way of extension and reconstruction to move those premises beyond the limit of \$250 so that they can charge any amount.

This factor has resulted in many premises being taken out of the reach of the lower income group. Sales and transfer of property together with the development of property are all designed these days to remove them from this limitation and so fewer houses become available for the lower income groups.

On the other hand, from the point of view of maintenance of the property, it

would be better if all properties are treated equally irrespective of the rent charged. Government has therefore decided to remove this limitation in order to enable a magistrate to have jurisdiction in assessing a reasonable rent for all premises which are rented. I hope that these measures will not only assist the tenant but will encourage landlords to share in the greater responsibility of providing more and better accommodation for people in every groupings.

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Green.

Cde. Green: We have had in this area to cope with many problems. We have done a sample survey and found that the cost of every item that one can think of that goes into housing has increased, increase which are part of the world phenomena today. We feel that through careful management of our resources, a proper effective institutional framework, with the present growth in the economy, the industry of housing, the construction industry, will move on an with the combined effort of both the public and the private sectors we in 1981 will see a further breakthrough in housing for the people of this country.

Reference was made to production and productivity. The fact of life is that nothing can come to people, at least nothing good, unless it is earned. Without some labour we cannot be born into this world. Indeed, without labour there can be neither pleasure nor prosperity. With that in mind, the Ministry of Public Welfare will continue this year a programme started last year of improving the industrial climate to provide the base for the take-off production and productivity. We have started what we call a “Fire Prevention Programme” in the field of industrial relations. It has paid substantial dividends. The intention is to increase scheduled and unscheduled visits to the various sites, particularly in the three major industries – sugar, bauxite and rice. Also to continue with the official of the Ministry of Labour a close monitoring of the public corporations and companies, Ministries and private undertakings.

The purpose of this activity is to establish and to increase contact with the workers, both management and non-management. By these contacts we are confident that we, as we have done in the past, can remove the areas of conflict and potential problems. These interventions by the Officials of the Ministry also serve to resolve very quickly problems which the workers have and which, without that sort of intimate contact, can tend to be explosive.

We have now this year, in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education, been expanding the whole programme for workers' education and my colleagues will deal with that when his turn comes to speak in terms of seeing workers' education as part of higher education because without that understanding by workers mere exhortation would be a waste of time.

The Speaker: Time, Cde. Green.

Cde. Ramsaroop: I beg to move for an additional 15 minutes for the Vice-President to continue his presentation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Green: As a direct consequence of these endeavours, during last year we have had a 46 per cent increase in the number of disputes referred to the Labour Division for conciliation as against that handled by the Division in 1979. The effectiveness of these measures is also reflected in the fact that wages lost moved from \$6 million in 1979 to just over \$1 million as a result of strikes in 1980 and I believe that the Division should feel justifiably proud of this drastic reduction from \$6 million to \$1 million in wages lost by workers. Man-days lost in 1979 totaled over 324,000. Last year we reduced that figure to 67,620. Our anticipation this year is to further reduce man-days lost by workers who are interested in working.

We have heard a lot – in fact we have had 3 ½ unions send petitions to the ILO. The ILO, after very careful examination of the Guyana situation, is satisfied that there was malice by this group of 3 ½ unions who reported inaccuracies and lies. In fact, the industrial situation in Guyana remains good.

The ILO has said that there has been a global deterioration of trade union rights with labour leaders being arrested, tortured, disappearing and, in some cases, being killed. The November Report last year of ILO referred to these matters but when Guyana is reviewed no such things happens in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. [Applause.] So, when these people write abroad about a few minor incidents in Guyana they are doing so against the background where in many countries trade unions leaders simply disappear. I think the democracy which we have in this country will be maintained so long as the People's National Congress maintains control of this country. [Applause.]

(Cde. Green continues)

Cde. Speaker, we will continue in this area to ensure that even those unions, which for some reason seem committed to create confusion, understand – and I believe that the workers already understand it is only a few people who are trying to create trouble – that their production is for the country as a whole.

3.05 p.m.

We continue work at the Labour Code Commission and after seven long years it seems that this year, finally, we will see the end of the work of that Commission, I hope to bring to this Assembly before the end of the year the results of the deliberations of the Labour Code Commission.

In an attempt to make the industrial scene easier to understand, early last year the Central Recruitment Manpower Agency was established. This agency will be staffed by eight professional persons with a mix of experience in industry, commerce, and the traditional Public Service. With the help of the agency this year we will expand its influence and its work so that there is a complete co-ordination in the area of recruitment, placement and manpower administration generally. And there are five areas that we will be looking at this year. One area is the review of the recruitment practices in the Public Service. At the moment there still exist different standards in several Government Agencies and departments and the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency is almost to the point where we can deal with this question so that there is a uniform pattern of recruitment and placement in the Public Service. This will bring to an end what we call poaching in the Public Sector because the agency will shortly assume responsibility for ensuring that the present spate of unco-ordinated moves by key personnel from one public entity to another is brought to an end. Public Corporations seeking to attract professional and other skilled personnel, for example, people moving from the teaching profession to Corporations and vice versa, will not have to seek the approval of the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency before such moves can take place.

We have identified one particular area that is of concern to all of us, that is, the mobile equipment operators. A register has been established so that people who operate vehicles and mobile equipment will come under closer scrutiny and each operator will have a record in a central place so that we can, where necessary, help that person if he needs to be retrained. We found in some circumstances operators who have physical problems like poor eye sight and defective hearing.

In collaboration with the Health Ministry we will be working towards a programme where such defects can be identified. Where persons are not fit to drive and who have a record of destroying Government equipment, they will be offered alternative employment.

Late last year we also initiated an in-plant trainee programme, in addition to the work being done by the Technical Institute and other agencies. It is an attempt to recruit a number of young people; to give them an exposure to on-the-job training. A number of them are already occupied at Government agencies and a number of private places where they go and learn the practical aspect of work so that at the end of a given period, they can, with the use of their hands perform the tasks that are necessary. We have found that many people if given that kind of opportunity can, in fact, help to deal with the problem we have of shortage of skilled manpower.

In the Budget Speech reference was made to the need to help our senior citizens and our less fortunate brothers and sisters. The Social Security Department this year will continue its efforts to go out to the regions and to hand over many of its responsibilities to the regions and the various districts. Already we have removed the difficulty many of our pensioners experience in having to line up in what we consider very unsatisfactory conditions to receive their pensions. Arrangements have already been made where they can now go to any Post Office in their districts to collect their pensions at their own time and at their pleasure.

Cde. Speaker, the Government of the People's National Congress has recognized how difficult the cost of living must be to its senior citizens and has seen fit to increase

these benefits, therefore, if I may just repeat what was said in the Budget, “as from 1st January this years old age pension will be increased by 50 per cent.” A pensioner will not receive \$45 dollars per month.

In terms of the other aspect of the Social Security Department we are examining this year some of the old laws and regulations which affect assistance to people. Much more emphasis will be placed on rehabilitation and making people effective and giving them the ability to earn instead of having them being beggars and turning in every case to the State for assistance.

Consistent with our policy for people’s needs in the area of health, we continue to battle against tremendous odds. The Ministry of Health is now headed by a young man who has a brought his experience to bear in the Ministry and this year revolutionary changes have already started to take place. It is our intention to continue to provide effective health care delivery services for the inhabitants of this country, and, as noted last year, the emphasis will continue on people’s involvement. Already, a number of persons have been trained to function as community health workers in villages and communities, and these persons, because of our geography and the economic situation, the fact that there is a world shortage of physicians, will function as the first line of defence for people’s health in those areas. Regional Councils will have additional responsibilities and authority exercised in the area of health care.

3:15 p.m.

We also plan to consolidate the programme of surveillance for infectious diseases throughout the country. An area that was neglected for some time will take on a new look this year, that is, to implement a programme for preventative dental care for the inhabitants of our country with particular emphasis being placed on our school-going population.

The Speaker: Two minutes more, Cde. Green

Cde. Green: We consider health an important area for the people of this country and the health education programme is not intended to remain couched in academic language and to be the responsibility only of professionals. The idea this year is to take another step and to bring health closer to people so that people will see health as not being the responsibility of the doctor or only a matter to deal with when they arrive at the health station or a hospital. Apart from the physical programme of expanding the services and building new institutions throughout the country, the educational programme with the assistance of the Ministry of Education, the local democratic councils and, indeed, all other organizations, will set as a target people at all levels and every part of the country. we believe we have the basis structure in our society. We have the basic things to ensure that our people are healthy. In fact, whenever visitors come to this country after listening to the malicious talk, and after being exposed to the propaganda of the Press, they are amazed and excited by the obvious good health of the people of this country. There are very few countries you can go to and see everyone at a gathering looking active and fit. If you look around this room, even on the other side, there is evidence that we have a healthy nation. [Applause.]

In the Budget Speech, my colleague Vice-President referred to the establishment of a Women's Bureau.

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: I beg to move that the Vice-President be given 15 minutes to conclude his contribution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Green: I wish to thank the Opposition for permitting me to conclude my discourse here this afternoon.

Since I am concluding, it is not by accident that I have left mention of that areas of my responsibility, this particular area, for the last. It has to do with women. As you are aware, women's affairs fall under me. With the approval of Cabinet last year we will see this year the establishment of a Women's Bureau and this, indeed, is intended to provide a framework for the mechanism to ensure that Government's policy on women, as reflected in the People's New Constitution, is, in fact, carried out. [Applause.] In many societies there is talk about the equality of women but we feel that unless you have an organisation, an organism to convert rhetoric into reality you are really fooling the people of this country.

The Women's Bureau will have as its direct political head the Parliamentary Secretary who is a woman, so there will be no fear of Government's policy not being effectively executed. Initially the Bureau will be staffed by a Director and a number of other senior people who will be dealing with economic activities, education and training, local and social services, and particularly looking at the implementation of the law as reflected and as intended in the Constitution.

The training necessary to equip the Bureau personnel with the objective of enabling this arm of the Ministry to cope with the many problems of women in Guyana is programmed by this Government as a high priority. Although much has been achieved since International Women's Year, it is felt that there is the need to ensure that the mechanism exists to ensure that the needs of women are taken into account at all levels of our society.

In dealing with some aspects of this question one will have to take into account the thousands of our women who single-handedly carry out responsibilities for entire families. I believe, Cde. Speaker, that perhaps you as a member of the Honours Committee at some time should give a special award to women who are in fact family heads. There is need to ensure that the law and its requirement are supportive of the role that women perform, that children do not remain the sole responsibility of women but that our men in Guyana respond to their obligation for support particularly, but by no means only, of the children they have fathered.

When I was asked to open the Cairo Conference in April of last year, I made the point to the women of the Caribbean that perhaps we should not only direct our attention on this question to women about women but to men, because I believe if the Women's Bureau is to mean anything, all of us must take some time to re-educate our men and I believe that part of the programme will be to sensitise and to stimulate men to their civic responsibilities particularly in so far as the family unit is concerned. The Women's Bureau, with the help of the Ministry of Public Welfare, will help to seek out men so that they take their proper place in the domestic affairs of the home.

To be quite serious, one of the problems facing our society is that many of our men have tended to opt out of this very important area of responsibility and if we are to afford our women the opportunity for upward mobility and to provide optimum service to this society, I believe we are all convinced that our women can play an effective role in building our society. We men must be stripped of the notion that certain things are to be done by women and certain things are to be done by men. [Interruption] Certain things will continue to be done by men and certain things will continue to be done by women.

The need has been felt for the agency to focus on certain weaknesses within our social structure, our Court system, to examine whether there is need for a family Court as part of a well thought-out family code. These are some of the things that a Bureau will attempt to deal with.

Perhaps, however, its most important function will be to act as catalyst to ensure that all agencies, private and governmental, plan and that they do things with a sensitivity to the needs of women and that their entire structure and work ensure that our women are seen as partners in development.

3:25 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, women throughout modern history and in our society in particular have always played a much more important role than we men are generally willing to admit. We feel that it is about time that our institutions and attitudes reflect this important role of our women.

Cde. Speaker, I commend this Budget to all the people of this country, to the men, women and our children. It is only if we strain every muscle, if we work in total harmony can we make Guyana a place to dream of. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Rayman.

Cde. Rayman: Cde. Speaker, the Government and people of Guyana have recognized that agriculture is pivotal to our economic well-being and prosperity. Guyana is divinely blessed with large tracts of arable land, plenty of water, enough sunshine, few people, and free from natural disasters such as earthquakes, hurricanes, landslides, devastating floods and so on. We Guyanese have the will and aptitude for developing our agricultural field, and my Party in Government will spare no pain in supplying the necessary tools and inputs so that our energies when released for this vital aspect of our economy can be rewarding.

It could hardly be over emphasized that the world is very short of food. The study of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation has revealed that the production of food has not kept pace with the increase in world population and this unless something happens quickly to reverse this trend, the world would be more short of food by 1985 than it is presently. As a result the 500 million people who are undernourished and nearing starvation could very well increase astronomically by the end of this decade. It is not sloganeering when you hear of the hungry eighties. We are fortunate in this incumbent disaster that we are already self sufficient in food and would be in a very good position to help ease the effects of this calamity on our brothers and sisters in other parts of the world.

Due to intelligent forecasts by my Party and Government when we started since the early seventies to prepare for it we do not find ourselves now recognizing this fact like so many other countries and despite of the increasing oil prices and the consequential effects, we have been able to make strides in the agricultural field.

Cde. Speaker, with these and many other plans for improving drainage and irrigation in other areas of the country, the increased supply of spare parts, new machines and other necessary inputs, the proposals adumbrated by the Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance are not unrealistic. It is heartening to note that in the industrial relations climate there was a significant drop in the number of man-hours lost due to strikes. It was 79 per cent. As we know many of these hours are lost in the sugar industry.

One should never resort to using the strike weapon as the only means to settle a dispute. My Party and Government are always concerned with the welfare of our workers and will leave no stone unturned to make them happy and comfortable. We have targets to meet and it would be senseless to cause the workers to be dissatisfied resulting in inefficiency and unproductive behaviour.

Cde. Speaker, my Party and Government, consider that farmers and peasants are also workers, and therefore, justly deserves to be treated in like manner, for, after all, they are basic producers. There are cases when due to strikes the farmers were able to supply canes to keep some sugar factories going. It is beyond doubt that my Party and Government have encouraged peasant cane farming.

In 1965, the National Cane Farming Committee Act was enacted. In 1968, subsidiary legislation gave the conditions of contract between the cane farmer and the sugar companies thereby protecting the interests of both the cane farmers and manufacturers. However, due to the overpowering influence of the transnational sugar company known as Bookers Sugar Estates Limited, the conditions were heavily weighted in favour of the sugar companies. Due to continuous agitation and representation, certain conditions were modified and many more will have to be changed in our socialist thrust.

The ever-present control of the sugar industry by foreigners is no longer with us, and so the National Cane Farming Committee Act, Chapter 69:04, will shortly go through a complete metamorphosis to bring it in line with our aims and objects. Already we find farmers, instead of receiving a paltry sum of \$10.00 per ton of cane as an advance when the cane reaches the factory, they are now paid 75 per cent of the projected value of sugar amounting in some cases to as much as between \$25 to \$30 per ton depending on the TC/TS, ton cane/ton sugar. At the end of the crop in which the canes are supplied, the farmers receive an additional 15 per cent and at the 31st December in the year in which the canes are supplied, and they receive a further 8 per cent and the balance paid on the 31st March in the succeeding year.

The farmers also are now in full control of the committee having more members than hitherto, even the chairman of the committee is a cane farmer. In 1974, the cane farming rehabilitation fund was set up. The monies which were formerly paid into the rehabilitation fund to be used by the sugar factories to maintain and improve their equipment are now being used for the benefit of the cane farmers. In 1980, \$500,000 from this fund was used to improve infrastructural works including dams, kokers, trenches, etc., where farmers cultivate their canes, and in 1981, a further \$500,000 will be spent in a similar exercise.

Cde. Speaker, as a result of these efforts by the Government, the production of sugar by cane farmers rose from 8,000 tons in 1965 to 27,000 tons in 1980. The prices are right on the market and the farmers will take advantage of this favourable situation to improve their farms thus increasing both production and productivity. Farmers numbering 5,800, cultivating 26,704 acres are benefiting from the Government's endeavours.

Cde. Speaker, my Party and Government are continuing to provide services in other areas involved in the production of food. The Guyana Marketing Corporation has been very active in respect of marketing the produce of our farmers. In previous years the farmers were subjected to the vagaries of market conditions and had to bargain with consumers for good prices. Invariably their produce was left on hand and had to be disposed of by selling at unremunerative prices resulting in insecurity for the farmer and his family. Now the GMC guarantees the farmers sound and reasonable prices taking into consideration both the welfare of the producer and the consumer. Already there are many branches set up all over Guyana to do just this. At Parika, one can find the GMC very active in purchasing produce from farmers from areas up the right bank and islands of the Essequibo River.

Outlets are also set up in various parts of Georgetown and country areas where consumers can obtain three-quarter supplies at reasonable prices. Presently a diagnostic report on Food Production and Marketing Programme has been submitted by a team called Agricultural Co-operative Development International. In this report recommendations

have been made for setting up of Farms Service centres which would include many of the important inputs a farmer needs. These centres would house the GAIBANK, Guyana Marketing Corporation and Extension Service, providing the farmers with a one-stop service instead of having them running all over the place for their services, wasting both time and money which they can ill afford.

3:35 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, farmers and peasants are among our greatest assets in the agricultural field and we continue to look into areas which are considered to be inefficient causing undue hardship resulting in frustration and demoralization.

The Vice-President of Economic Planning and Finance, Cde. Hugh Desmond Hoyte, has indeed presented in clear terms our present economic position. He has given fully our past performance which for many reasons did not measure up to expectations. It is, however, noteworthy that we have had a 2 per cent gain in gross domestic product, which he considered in his own words to be “very modest”. But when compared with other developing and developed countries, I would think that we have done well. His expectations of a 7.9 per cent growth rate in 1981 are not unfounded.

In conclusion, we have the right attitude, we have the will, we have the means, we have the right leadership, and I, therefore, see no reason why this cannot be accomplished. Can we do it? Yes, we can. [Applause.]

STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS

Termination of Visitor's Permit to Mr. Robin Jackman

The Speaker: Comrades, a short while ago we agreed that a Statement will be made by a Minister at a subsequent stage other than as appeared on the Agenda. I believe the Minister is now prepared to make that Statement. Cde. Corbin.

The Minister of National Development (Cde. Corbin): Cde. Speaker, I wish to refer briefly to a tragic collision between sports and apartheid on which this Government has once again been obliged to stand up and be counted in accordance with its long-standing, well-known and honorable record. That record has been one of consistent and relentless opposition to apartheid deemed as a crime against humanity, one of the most obscene policies ever espoused in modern times by a self-styled Government against races other than the small group of tribalists who control the lever of power in the exploitative interests of their own clan.

The abhorrence with which that practice is viewed has been the subject of repeated condemnation the world over, by all peoples and by all forums – save only by the benighted regime in Pretoria. It was the subject of deep concern by the 1977 Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference held in London. As was mentioned last night in an official statement by this Government, in what came to be known as the Gleneagles Accord, the 1977 conference condemned apartheid in sports and clearly frowned upon sporting contacts with South Africa by Commonwealth countries.

The conference acknowledged that the full realization of its objectives would involve the understanding, support and active participation of the nationals of their country and of their national sports organizations and authorities. The Heads of Governments meeting at that conference also specifically welcomed the belief, expressed at their

meeting, that in the light of their consultations and accord there were unlikely to be future sporting contracts of any significance between Commonwealth countries or their nationals and South Africa while that country continued to pursue the detestable policy of apartheid.

A government of a country with a society as variously and peacefully composed as ours, and pursuing the goals which we do, cannot afford to rest its support for the Gleneagles Accord at the level of convenient rhetoric or on mere posturing. We have applied that policy on other occasions to players from within our own region, including Guyana. And we shall continue to apply it for as long as the soulless and inhuman system of apartheid persists in South Africa. Our position is one of principle. Our policy and our stand have been well publicized and are, or should be, known to all concerned.

From all enquires made, the Government is satisfied that Robin Jackman, a member of the English touring cricket team, has in fact played recently in South Africa. That circumstance was not known to the Government of Guyana when he arrived. Wishing to avoid more drastic action, the Government has had this fact and its implications drawn to the attention of those responsible for the management of the English cricket team or otherwise having some relationship of responsibility to wit, the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Guyana, Mr. Phillip Mallet. Regrettably, the Government's representations have been cast aside, leaving to it as its only recourse the termination of a visitor's permit which had been given to Mr. Jackman on his arrival in this country on 23rd of this month.

To say, as has been suggested in some quarters, that the stand taken by this Government amounts to any kind of attempt to interfere with the right of the English authorities to settle the composition of their team is unworthy of serious reply except to remark that it manifests a lamentable lack of will to give teeth to the fine words solemnly assented to at Gleneagles. The English authorities are free to select whom they wish for inclusion in their team. That is their right. The Government is equally free and, indeed, is morally bound to continue to stand up against racial arrogance from wherever it may come, but more particularly against the kind of institutionalized racial bigotry being propagated in

South Africa. We leave quibbles and sophistry to those who are more expert than we are in these things.

Cde. Speaker, I think I have said enough to persuade Members that this matter affects principles of sufficient moment to warrant my bringing it to the notice of this House.

Thank you very much, Cde. Speaker. [Applause.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Expression of Sympathy

The Speaker: Comrades, since we last met here, one of our colleagues, Cde. Shahabuddeen, has had the death of his father. I am sure you would wish me to extend to him and to his sorrowing relatives our deepest sympathy.

RESUMPTION OF BUDGET DEBATE

The Speaker: Cde. Bhaggan

Cde. Bhaggan: Cde. Speaker, I am exceedingly delighted to be afforded this glorious opportunity and privilege under the aegis of the People's National Congress Government to make my maiden speech in this Parliament and more so under the People's New Constitution. [Applause.]

(Cde. Bhaggin continues)

3:45 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, I join with the other speakers this afternoon in congratulating the Vice-President on presenting his Budget for they year 1981 to which I would also give credibility. Agriculture is the backbone of any economic system and of any country in the world. The study of British economic history would tell us of the agrarian revolution in England and the benefits it brought to the British people. History has proven that men worked and tilled the soil for life, living, survival and for economic growth.

Guyana is a country fortunately endowed with an abundance of rich unexploited agricultural land and the PNC Government in cognizance of this fact sensibly and systematically made expansion of the agricultural sectors by geographically dividing the entire country into ten large regions in order for each one to be the main plank in its developmental strategy.

Cde. Speaker, beyond the shadow of a doubt the People's National Congress Government's perception in the implementation of the regional system brought direct dialogue and representation to the farming community where action and decision-making and assistance are in the main given to farmers. This is further augmented by the other sectors of the NCLDO, RDC, and Local Democratic Organs of which the people's new Constitution gives meaning, content and substance and I quote from Chapter II, Article 15(1):

“In order to achieve economic independence as the imperative concomitant of its political independence , the State will revolutionise the national economy.”

Guyana is undergoing a green revolution. Agricultural climb especially in the East Berbice/Corentyne region cannot and will not be reversed even though political elements attempt agricultural detours aimed at stagnating the cultivation of rice and sugar. They failed and continue to fail because the PNC Government has always been a friend to the farmers and has always been able to look into their interest and welfare. In fact,

whenever political elements call for a boycott in agricultural production their own followers become the “capital” farmers by renting lands from other farmers for planting.

Black Bush Polder is regarded as the “Bread-Basket” of the Caribbean and this has been made possible by the PNC Government. It is this Government, the PNC Government which as humanized the Black Bush Polder by making the canals accessible for drainage and irrigation purposes. It is this Government which has been responsible for the clearing and cleaning of interlocking drains and waterways to avoid flooding of farmers crops. It is this Government that appointed the Land Selection Committee in the Black Bush Polder to avoid the allocation of lands to speculators and to offer them for beneficial production and occupation.

Cde. Speaker, the PNC Government gives land to the tiller and not tiller to the land by organized graft as in the days of the former regime. The PNC Government gives relevance and worth to the tiller by making provision for him in the People’s New Constitution. I quote from Chapter II Article 18:

“Land is for social use and must go to the tiller.”

It is Government’s intention and work is currently on the way to expand the Black Bush Polder Scheme by 50,000 acres thus bringing more land to the tiller and under cultivation. Rice cultivation in the East Berbice Corentyne region has reached a high level of satisfaction and as a consequence, the Senior Regional Manager has recently been awarded the AA medal for long and dedicated service of a consistently high standard in the rice industry.

The East Berbice/Corentyne farming community has gained substantial increases on the prices for rice and paddy. Rates have been kept at the minimum for land preparation, \$15 and \$12 for first and second cuts respectively per acre as against \$100 per acre by private tractor owners, by a machinery pool at Corriverton and Black Bush Polder and subsidies for fertilizers and chemicals.

It is heartening to inform this Assembly that the East Berbice/Corentyne Region has projected for its spring crop 35,000 acres. Already 43,000 acres have been ploughed and the 37,000 acres broadcasted. The rice industry is moving at a fast rate in the region and additional lands from Block III to No. 74 on the Corentyne, at East and West Canje, and new lands at East Bank Berbice are new dimensions of the enterprise. The industry in this region has plans for the construction of more drying floors, silos, modern mills, and the purchase of tractors and combines, and to provide a better variety of seeds to farmers.

Cde. Speaker, the East Berbice/Corentyne Region by the art of good planning and imagination has been able to export its rice directly from Corriverton to Caricom and other European countries, a dream yet to be fulfilled by other political parties. Thanks to the PNC Government.

Throughout the Corentyne Coast lands which were previously under-utilised have now become productive in rice cultivation. Drainage and irrigation have been given effective programming thereby avoiding floods of any sort and being a direct assistance to farmers. Cde. Speaker, the community of Crabwood Creek in particular, from which I come and which was an isolated community under the former regime, has now become, under the active leadership of the PNC Government, a vibrant agricultural belt on the Corentyne by a monetary grant of \$75,000 to cultivate more than 4,000 acres of land for drainage and irrigation purposes.

Sugar production in the East Berbice/Corentyne Region has taken new dimensions in production. Financial and moral incentives are given to workers based on work performance and production. Special monthly production and annual production incentives based on annual production are two revolutionary advances in the sugar industry. Albion and Skeldon sugar estates have been recipients of the former. Today, the industry is a vibrant entity and it has come into its own.

The East Berbice/Corentyne Region of GUYSUCO has made tremendous strides by the implementation of its diversification programme in agriculture. Today, the industry is no longer a mono-cultural one by virtue of its Other Crops Division. Cde. Speaker, approximately 29 items of an agricultural nature are undertaken by this enterprise and the East Berbice/Corentyne Region is in the front line in the production of corn, mung, black-eye peas, legumes, etc. Significantly, Skeldon Estate Manarabisis State Farm reaped a record crop of pumpkin of the California species recently and Rose Hall Estate, like the Canje, is successfully experimenting in its cattle rearing venture.

The East Berbice/Corentyne Region does not only strive on major Regional and State agricultural based industries but on co-operative endeavours as well, of which the People's New Constitution speaks. Chapter II Article 16 states:

“Co-operativism is practice shall be the dynamic principle of socialist transformation and shall pervade and inform all interrelationships in the society. Co-operativism is rooted in the historical experience of the people, is based on self-reliance, is capable of releasing the productive energies of the people, and is a unifying principle in the total development of the nation.”

3:55 p.m.

A few active co-operative endeavours of the region are – Skeldon Agricultural Land Co-op Society Ltd., Sunflower Agricultural Land Co-op Society Ltd., Central Corentyne Agricultural Land Co-op Society Ltd, United Farmers Agricultural Land Co-op Society Ltd., Epsum Agricultural Land Co-op Society Ltd., Upper Corentyne Producers Co-op Society Ltd., Skeldon Cane Farmers Marketing Co-op Society Ltd. – the best operated and organized cane farmers society in the Caribbean, the Chairman of which was recently awarded the Medal of Service for long service with exceptional dedication as a co-operator and community worker. [Applause.] We salute the recognition of human worth made by the PNC Government.

In the East Berbice/Corentyne Region, if one should trek the Black Bush Polder, the meandering Corentyne highway and in the Canje, immediately one comes to notice the green revolution of eschallot and boulangier plants and evergreen kitchen gardens. In addition, the growing of legumes, onion, tomatoes, corn, ground provisions, etc. fruits – melon, cucumbers, belimbi, five fingers which we now call carambola, guava, cherry, jamoon etc. Some of these which previously had no economic value have now come to have such a value. It is the PNC Government which made this possible. [Applause.]

Finally, in the stream of livestock development, the East Berbice/Corentyne Region has evidenced, under the PNC Government, countries numbers of established cattle ranches in areas such as the backlands of Crabwood creek, at Jackson – Moleson creek, Corentyne River, backlands of No. 52 – 74, Black Bush Polder, at Manarabisis, Tobianna Cattle Ranch in particular, Canje, and at No. 19 village on the Corentyne.

Cde. Speaker, today's world in agriculture is highly scientific and for this reason emphasis is placed on agriculture education and training. The East Berbice/Corentyne Region, through the building of multilateral and community high schools, has been able to achieve immense success in this stream. All schools in the Region are involved in the cultivation of crops while some are involved in the rearing of livestock. These are Yakasari Primary School, Black Bush Polder, No. 68 Primary School, Corentyne, and New Amsterdam Multilateral School, which are deeply involved in the rearing of chickens.

Agricultural experts have said that the most fertile soil lies between Crabwood Creek and the Abary but from what has been expressed in this presentation the East Berbice/Corentyne Region can be regarded as a self-sufficient region, a geographic area which is in the vanguard of agricultural pursuits. In my humble opinion it is a super agricultural region. In this region the agricultural revolution would permit a rapidly growing population to be fed without exhausting foreign exchange resources in food imports. Agricultural revolution has, in fact, played a positive and essential role by saving foreign exchange for general capital-formation purposes.

In this region, agriculture is ideal for rural mobilization or what is technically known as “the green uprising”, not for political combat but for agricultural development and progress. Let progress nationwide continue. I thank you, Cde. Speaker. [Applause.]

Sitting suspended at 4.00 p.m.

4:41 p.m.

On resumption –

The Minister, Office of the President (Cde. Rashid): Once again the People's National Congress Government has demonstrated its commitment to improving the welfare of the working people of Guyana. In his 1981 Budget Speech the Vice-President responsible for Economic Planning and Finance coupled impeccable economic logic with the Party's firm position on social justice to present what has been described by one commentator as a realistic prescription for our economic troubles.

The 1981 Budget analyses quite accurately the internal and external factors which when combined act a break on economic development and consequently retard economic growth. The Budget presented last week by Cde. Hoyte was not presented on demagogic grounds. Rather it was made after a careful and skillful analysis of the concrete economic realities. It will go a far way, I am confident, Cde. Speaker, in augmenting the economic power of the masses. It is not based on Thatcherian principles which are creating havoc in the United Kingdom with the closure of scores of industries, the closure of hundreds of firms with the resulting effect of million of unemployed and with other social hardships for the British working class. Neither is it based on the Chicago School of Economics, in particular Milton Freidman's economics. It is rather based on a revolutionary principle, a principle that is based on the assumption that the Guyanese working people, once imbued with a revolutionary consciousness, are capable of responding positively to the challenges of the day.

The main theme of the 1981 Budget Speech is not industries, is not targets, is not deficits and surpluses. Rather it is the Guyanese working man and woman, he and she. It is the Guyanese working people who, working collectively, are able to transform this backward economy and ensure that the turn-around in the economy, which we witnessed last year, will continue to an accelerated pace.

I contend that is the centre of the Vice-President's presentation of his Budget in 1981. It is generally accepted by knowledgeable observers and the wise men of the world

that in today's world, or more particularly in those less developed countries of the world, the foreign exchange constraint poses a severe economic limitation on the rate of economic development. A major contributory factor to this state of affairs is undoubtedly a deliberate manipulation of the prices of our primary products on the international market, by the multinationals, for reasons that are well known.

4:45 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, we are fully aware of the activities of the multi-national Corporations in effecting the prices of primary products. But whatever may be their reasons, whether they are purely speculative or whether they have political over-tones, the fact is that the effects are detrimental to the economies of the Third World and for the people of the L.D.C.s. Wild fluctuations in prices make it almost impossible for economies to be planned, and produce situations where wide gaps appear between planned and realized targets. We in Guyana have got a wealth of experience on how painful the erratic behaviour of prices on the world market can be.

Not so long ago we saw that in one period the prices of one of our main exports, sugar climbed to record heights for a few months then only to slump below the cost of production for many years. On the import side of the foreign trade equation, the escalating prices for our vital imports serve to aggravate the foreign exchange situation. The capitalist-controlled media have directed their propaganda machinery and would want us to believe that the OPEC group of countries is the villain. Characteristically, however, they remain silent on the inflationary prices of goods and services produced by the industrialised countries of the world. We learn regularly of the oil crisis but never are we told of the capital goods crisis; never are we told of the difficulty in obtaining supplies of vital imports from the industrialized countries of the world. But I suppose, Cde. Speaker, that is the way the world is organised and it is our duty not merely to interpret but also to change the world. And this is what we in Guyana have been trying to do with our other brothers and sisters at important forum in the international arena. This is why we in the Third World are calling and pressing for a new International Economic Order so that we can get just prices for our exports. It is also pertinent at this point to observe the super profits that accrue to the multi-national corporations that are responsible for marketing the hydro carbons.

Cde. Speaker, with every decision by the OPEC group of countries to increase the prices of oil in order to recover from the losses experienced by the increasing prices of produce from the industrialized countries, we see an even greater increase in the price of

capital goods.

The net effect of these opposing trends, Cde. Speaker, that is, less revenue as a result of falling prices of our exports and greater expansion to meet the import bill, is to move the terms of trade against primary producers and as a result to produce a deficit in the balance of trade.

When countries are faced with such chronic foreign exchange problems positive measures have got to be adopted aimed not only at making an optimal allocation of our foreign exchange but, of greater significance, attempting to increase foreign receipts by expanding exports. However, we should not view import substitution as an alternative, that is, we should not view import substitution and export promotion as alternatives. To a large extent, they are complementary measures.

For some time now the People's National Congress Government, that is, the People's Government, has taken steps that could be accurately described as a policy of import substitution. We note in passing that when these measures were first adopted, were first introduced, the Government became the victim of vulgar criticisms made by the uniformed. However, in recent times we note that a number of countries right here within our region have found it fit to adopt this very measure and a similar course of action. Moreover, while the dominant consideration might have been to conserve our foreign exchange position, let us not forget the benefits derived from our comrade's right here in Guyana as a result of this progressive policy of import substitution. Let us not forget the employment created for the unemployed. Let us not fail to remember the thousands of people who were underemployed that have gained full employment as a result of the measures undertaken by the People's National Congress Government.

To put it another way, our farmers are now assured of secure and decent living standards as a result of our decision to prohibit the importation of certain food items and, for the first time in our history, non-traditional agriculture is being given a fillip. This

means that when linkage both backward and forward are taken into consideration, the employment of large numbers of our people is guaranteed.

4:55 p.m.

Furthermore, our policy, our protection to our farmers will assist in stemming the drift of the population from the rural to urban centres and aid us in achieving an important constitutional objective, that is, an end to discrimination between town and country. This constitutional objective is clearly set out in the Constitution of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Article 34. If I may quote that Article:

“It is the duty of the State to enhance the cohesiveness of the society by eliminating discriminatory distinctions between classes, between town and country and between mental and physical labour.”

Our policy of import substitution will therefore be regarded as an important measure in achieving this objective. If we, as a people, are to remove the foreign exchange constraint on goods and development in our society it is necessary that we increase our exports. Not only must we seek to increase the exports of traditional items like rice, sugar, but we must make a determined effort also to increase production and our export of things like timber and gold.

In addition, we must make an energetic effort designed to promote a policy of export diversification, to promote many of the industries that could successfully survive in our country. Working to secure export markets for these small industries is one way of encouraging investment in these areas.

Towards this end, the Government of the People's National Congress has taken positive steps aimed at stimulating export-oriented industries. To emphasize our seriousness, we have set up a Ministry responsible for manufacturing industries. For some time now our economy has been suffering from an over-dependency on the three main exports. This over-dependency has placed our economy in a vulnerable position. It has become vulnerable to the so-called "invisible hand" that regulates prices on the world market. But we hope with this new effort in establishing this Ministry for manufacturing industries we will be able to expand our exports.

The Ministry of Manufacturing Industry will be responsible for creating an environment that will make the successful operation of the manufacturing sector guaranteed. It will take initiatives on new investment opportunities and provide incentives to entrepreneurs who are willing and who are committed to the development of Guyana.

At this point I wish to say a few words on the role of the private sector. We in the People's National Congress Government believe in a tri-sectoral economy, that is, in our economy there is room not only for the State and the co-operative sector but also for the private sector to make a contribution to the development of our economy and this position is stated in our Constitution. On page 23, Article 17, the role of private enterprise is stated quite clearly:

"The existence of privately owned economic enterprises is recognized. Such enterprises must satisfy social needs and operate within the regulatory framework of national policy and the law."

The Government has given teeth to this constitutional clause by making it quite clear what the private sector can do in independent Guyana. In the Guyana Investment Code, Chapter 3 states – and I quote:

“In the first instance the Government reiterates and re-emphasises that we recognize and promote a tri-sectoral economy.”

That is, the State recognizes (a) the public sector, (b) the co-operative sector and (c) the private sector.

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Rashid.

Cde. Rashid: With regard to private investment, the State recognizes and welcomes (a) local private investment and (b) private investment. Page 25 of that Investment Code goes on to spell out in detail the areas in which the private investment will be encouraged. We know that the manufacturing sector in Guyana is small and has been suffering from, or has been plagued by, many difficulties in securing foreign exchange to purchase raw material. Consequently there has been a tendency for firms in all three sectors, the state sector, co-operative and private sectors, to react by hoarding scarce raw material and indenting for more than they require.

5:05 p.m.

To deal with this bottle-neck the Government has successfully negotiated with the Export Development Fund for a loan of \$8 million (US) that will be utilized by the manufacturing sector to purchase raw materials from abroad.

(Cde. Rashid continues)

This will be a revolving fund with repayments being made from receipts earned from the export of goods and services. We are attempting to attract other developmental and lending agencies to this export promotion fund. Moreover, the Government is in the process of concluding an agreement with the IDB on what is to be known as an industrial line of credit to the value of \$5 million (US). This line of credit will be administered by GAIBANK and will be available to all three sectors of our economy for the purchase of equipment, not only by existing industries but also by new industries. The public sector's use of this fund will be limited to 50 per cent. On the other hand there will be no limits for the co-operative and private sectors.

Apart from these initiatives, the People's National Congress Government, in order to increase and diversify our exports, has placed the export developmental unit with the Ministry of Trade. This unit is presently receiving assistance from the E.E.C. in the form of training of local skills.

The Minister of Regional Development (Cde. Clarke): Cde. Speaker, I move that the Cde. Minister in the Office of the President be given another 15 minutes to conclude his presentation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Rashid: This unit is presently receiving assistance in the form of training from the E.E.C. to provide skills to its Guyanese counterpart in exploiting opportunities for expanding the export of goods produced in Guyana to the International market. It will also benefit from an information system and equipment to carry out its responsibilities more efficiently.

Our efforts to promote the manufacturing sector will undoubtedly come under criticism from some armchair socialists. They will childishly argue that a country as small as Guyana cannot sustain efficient firms. This, however, is to miss the point for apart

from being export oriented these industries will be able to enjoy a sizable market right here in Guyana, for the policies the Government has pursued over the last decade or so have been designed to transfer wealth from that small group of people, whose propensity to consume has been noted for being low, to the masses of the Guyanese, who have a high propensity to consume. Those policies in themselves will guarantee a large domestic market for the manufacturing sector.

Again, Cde. Speaker, let us not forget our efforts and our successes in securing new markets throughout the world. In Eastern Europe, for instance, we now have very good economic relations with the GDR and we have agreements which ensure that we have access to the German market. Not only do we export rice and bauxite to the GDR but other items, the non traditional items like carambola and shirts are now being purchased by our friends in the GDR. There are also agreements and new openings in the Middle East, in places like Iraq and Iran, just to name a few.

Perhaps our most successful effort at integration in order to derive marketing economies is right here in the Caribbean. Caricom will continue to have a predominant place in the planning and economies of our country. We propose in the ensuing years to intensify our trade links with our brother Caricom countries. As you are aware a substantial percentage of our rice production goes into the Caricom region and we also supply a sizable proportion of our sugar production to the Caricom market at a special price. But Caricom is not merely a market for our products it is also an important source of supply. Ninety-eight per cent of our petroleum products and fertilizers comes from the Caricom region. For these and other reasons this Government, the Government of the people's National Congress, remains loyal and committed to the ideals of Caribbean integration.

At the domestic level this Government is confident that the policies being pursued are for the benefit of the consumers. We are sure that the strategies we adopt in buying essential goods on the international market will ensure that we get the best benefit from the deal. Not only do we invite tenders but we combine that strategy with the policy of

negotiation and also a policy of long term and medium term purchasing. By these means, Cde. Speaker, we are able to secure the best possible prices in the circumstances. And let us not fool ourselves. We live in a world of continuously rising prices, an economic situation that is described by economists as stagflation, continuously rising prices, at the same time, growing unemployment.

5:15 p.m.

And these are the realities we have to face, Cde. Speaker. Nevertheless, we have now resigned ourselves to these difficulties but we are pursuing active policies to protect the interests of our domestic consumers and we are confident that our efforts will be successful.

Those are the measures being taken by this Government in the area of foreign and local trade to ensure that we achieve our targets and the targets set out in the 1981 Budget. I have no doubt that the working people of this country will respond positively by ensuring that we achieve our targets. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Mohamed.

Cde. Mohamed: Mr. Speaker, the 1981 Budget Speech, to my mind, was as uninspiring as it was in some way vacuous. I say “vacuous” because apart from a couple of matter-of-fact references to education hardly anything was said.

This is rather surprising, especially in view of the boastful and bombastic propaganda which we have heard within recent years from this regime pertaining to education and, indeed, I can well imagine the dilemma and very much appreciate the Minister’s problems when he had to deal or had to make references to education for in fact and in reality, I actuality today the educational edifice is shaking at its foundations. Many problems today face and plague the educational system. They include structural problems, they include problems pertaining to examinations; they include problems with respect to curricula; problems pertaining to teacher shortages and relationship between people working in the system. Indeed, at every level and at every aspect there can be found severe problems.

The quantitative expansion of education over the years was all at the expense of quality. We think the solutions to these problems lie not in the increase of the numbers of Ministers. The answers lie somewhere else but let us see. Perhaps more Ministers will do better work.

The situation was inevitable. The tinkering about, the lack of a clearly well defined education policy, the what I may call jumping around kangaroo-like approach to education would have had to inevitably lead to the situation we are witnessing today. Things are literally falling apart. I think those charged with the responsibility of education

in our society ought to change the approach where one can probably describe it as shooting first and asking questions later. There is no careful objective study of the different questions and initiatives that have been taken within recent times. As a result, there are bottle-necks, confusion and chaos, surrounding many of these recent initiatives. I would dare say that we are going to make that mistake again with respect to what is happening at the Technical Institute level where we have taken the decision to change the City and Guilds examination to one, laudable as it is, the local examination, but it was after the decision that the machinery was put into gear to examine what to do.

The same problems surround the work study programme, the guidance...programme, and we are witnessing that problem with respect to the CXC examination.

Whilst the Budget Speech made little mention of education, I must say that the Presidential Address did refer to education in a more substantial way. In the Presidential Address the President admitted quite a lot in a mouthful and what was striking was the negative, some may say objective presentation in that speech. I wish to quote in the beginning what the President had to say in terms of education:

“Many of the buildings and classrooms are inadequate for the growing school population and the new curricula, programmes and emphases, and in several cases their age, and neglect before they were government owned, are reflected in the general state of dilapidation. More, in the field of Nursery Education, there is needed to build so that our children at that tender age may be removed from ill-suited temporary buildings.”

It could not have been better put by anyone. Indeed, the President comes out as a genuine 20th century Columbus. I have been saying that umpteen times. In the Education Debate here---

The Speaker: I think the rules provide that no reference should be made to the President in a derogatory manner. Kindly withdraw that remark which you made.

Cde. Mohamed: It was not intended as that. I wish to withdraw that remark. The situation is indeed a tragic one pertaining to the physical conditions in which our young people are asked to study. What is equally tragic was that those atrocious conditions were long recognized by the Ministry of Education. Way back in 1979, on the 12th November, it was mentioned in a circular sent around to schools where that circular referred to the alarming proportions of the situation and it would get completely out of hand if something was not done. We are right in 1981 and the problems persist.

Apart from environment the deterioration in our school system, particularly at the physical level is reflected – and I want to spell out: leaking buildings, some threatened with imminent collapse if nothing is urgently done; inadequate furniture, no electricity in many schools, no water supply, poor sanitary conditions and absence of toilet facilities or poor toilet facilities; general shortage of equipment, problems pertaining to playgrounds. These are what in some ways I am sure the President alluded to.

But enough has been said before in this Assembly about the effects, relations and relations and consequence to the educational learning process when these things exist. It is not my duty to go into them. My duty this afternoon is to call on the Ministry of Education for action to solve these problems in the name of our young people. Urgent attention is required now with respect to the problem of overcrowding.

We have made references and emphasized this problem and this question before but over-crowding is reaching alarming proportions and I wish to look at it from another perspective this year and this is if it is not going to be resolved urgently that the entire education structure will eventually collapse.

What is happening now is that deserving students, having completed Part 1 of the SSPE examination can no longer find places in the secondary institutions as was envisaged by those who introduced the idea of the SSPE. Now, because of over-crowding, literally hundreds of young people will be denied the right to secondary education and this talk of free education is coming to mean the denial of education

at the secondary level. The whole linking-up process which is part of the structure and system, is breaking down. New anxieties, stresses and strains are appearing in the education system. We are calling upon the Ministry to pay attention to this problem and, furthermore, to stop what appears to be a studied exercise to frustrate students and parents alike when they seek places for successful students who seek to enter secondary schools.

5:25 – 5:35 p.m.

What is happening? Now, parents trying to get places for their children to enter secondary schools, having been successful at the SSPE level find that when they go to the Ministry they are told that the Ministry cannot direct them to or allocate particular schools unless individual headmasters say that there is space. When they go to the individual secondary schools, the one near to them and the one far apart they are then told by the headmasters that is not the principle and the rule, that they will have to get a paper from the Ministry of Education. A frustrating exercise ensues all because at the bottom of it we do not have enough places for these hundreds of people.

Now that exam results are out again we would like to know whether the relevant Minister can say that there are enough places to accommodate all those who will be successful or whether they will be condemned to ...go through exercises of frustration and disgust behind all this talk about free education to which we have been listening.

Education is not a privilege as this Government seems to make out; it is a right and that right today, apart from being enshrined in the New Constitution is in jeopardy.

I was about to say the PNC's Constitution itself is in jeopardy and we ask the members to realize their own Constitution, to take the necessary measures to correct a damning experience. The whole situation brings to mind the whole concept of egalitarianism. Much talk again surrounded the question of egalitarianism with respect to education but the truth of the matter is that although a number of years have elapsed egalitarianism has not been realized in our society and remains an ideal.

Our education system is reflective of the class divisions and the social inequalities that permeate our entire system. The better quality schools are attended by the fattening and bulging elite. Any observation would show this. And is it any wonder that in spite of a better curricula at multilateral and Community High Schools that these institutions cater mainly for the children of the workers and farmers of this country. We made this point before. When it was said, we thought an effort would make to solve it but we do not think that effort is there. Now we say the situation has worsened, the children of the elite somehow never seem to be channeled or placed in these lesser quality schools. If we do not pay attention then our people will get school places today if they have the necessary lines, if they have the necessary contacts and if they belong to the correct party and they have PNC affiliation. Shameful. But it is important to note and underline that these problems make a mockery of the concept of egalitarianism.

New Nation, February 15, 1981, Article from the General Secretary's Desk, now Prime Minister, refers to the absconding scholarship students. I wish just to make a few quick points here. We on this side of the Assembly are not satisfied that scholarships are distributed fairly to those who really merit and it is one of the reasons underlying the absconding of students; those having had the scholarships are now not coming back, thus pushing the General Secretary to make that comment. We want to underline the fact that many who are studying in the capitalist countries are so absconding. I do not think that those studying in the Socialist countries are giving that type of problem.

I wish to call on the Government to re-examine its policy with respect to the funding of students who take up scholarships abroad. I cannot imagine how one particular

student or so will the approach and policy and I think the Government should reconsider the measure of bringing back yearly these students to Guyana because I do not think it serves a purpose. In fact this mention by the General Secretary of absconding students, to my mind, is an indictment against the role, the function and the success of the National Service because a number of them, if not all of them, who have been given scholarship awards have had to go through the National Service training. Now, it seems that National Service has failed to achieve one of its most important objectives.

The General Secretary continued and I wish to quote:

“The experience with these absconding students has also made us aware of the pressing need in the elementary and secondary schools to inculcate in pupils a sense of deep love for Guyana which would, in later years, make them capable of resisting some of the superficial attractions of the rich countries.”

It is a pious statement. Whenever I read such pious statements I remember “Do as I tell you to do but don’t do as I do”. Show patriotism, love of country and commitment and noble notions but those things are only realized when there is example and we ask this afternoon where is the example, and if this Assembly is a reflection of the example, then one can well understand what is behind or what motivates students to seek avenues of running from Guyana.

Cde. Speaker, feelings of patriotism cannot be imposed. What happens in our class rooms to a large extent would reflect what happens in the society at large. Our young people’s social consciousness must be determined and must be made up of the social realities within society. And if we live in a society of political crimes, coercion, threats, lack of rights, absence of democracy even within the education system where there are persecutions, transfers of teachers willy-nilly, then these things would naturally affect the social consciousness of our youth. They will work against moral education, discipline; shaping of their personality, moulding of their character are all affected. And that is why we say that if we are to cultivate, inculcate and instill those lofty notions and concepts, feelings and principles mentioned by the General Secretary of the PNC, then

fundamental changes will have to emanate from within our society and begin with the Leaders of the Government.

I want to further say that if we were to look deeper into this question, we would see that people are seeking to run away from Guyana not because they may not love the country but because they are running from a Government and its policies. And if you want to take the challenge and call, if you think it is a bluff, resign today and we will grove to you that contradiction in this country.

I wish to also refer briefly to the question of ideology an ideological education in terms of the formal education system. Ever since this Government has been speaking about socialism. You may perhaps recall, Cde. Speaker, that very often here I have called for corresponding changes in the ideological educational superstructure to be in accordance and to co-ordinate with the objective of socialism, difficult as that may be. After many years and several Ministers, hardly anything has been done apart from a few spattering of lectures and talks here and there.

5:35 p.m.

Many of these talks, of course, are wrapped up in confusion and distortion and we are sure that if the Government was sincere then we would have seen by now some consistent, purposeful effort to cleanse our society form the contamination of bourgeois ideology. But what has happened instead? From time to time there has been some ideological deodorant sprayed on the political, economic and social mess. Deep reference to transition period, dictatorship of proletariat, socialism, Marxism, Leninism, have been made from time to time depending on who speaks. What is noticeable is that certain theory, certain forms, are manipulated and brought out as a cover to justify outright anti-working class measures and actions in this country.

When I hear these things I remember, and I want to say in passing that in the debates in the Italian Parliament, just prior to World War II, before Fascism cast its dark

shadows in that country, Mussolini as head of the reactionary petty bourgeois forces of Italy used to say exactly the same thing: “What are you quarrelling about? Look at Lenin in Russia. What are you quarrelling about? Look, it happened in the Soviet Union.” One gets the feeling sometimes that it is happening here too. After that it was Fascism.

The Speaker: Five minutes more.

Cde. Mohamed: We have today a Ministry of Higher Education. The Minister is an old colleague of mine. We hoped that we would not have been ideologically compromised and we would look forward that he will be instrumental in carrying out some more consistent work in promoting scientific working-class ideology free from distortions and deviations and that he could probably begin within the higher education institutions.

We have heard within recent times the concept of ideological independence. I want to suspect that this is a clever ploy, or a tactical move, but if I am wrong let me say clearly immediately that, for want of a better word, is pure hog-wash. I want the exponents to know that, but I want to believe that it is probably a clever ploy but time will decided that. Furthermore, I wish to point out certain differences and contradictions between the goal of socialism and what is practice is being portrayed by our mass media, Government-owned, by

some of the films some of the films imported, which smack of racism, and an anti-communist, anti-revolutionary approach to our national liberation movement, films like “The Wild Geese”, like “Black September”, like the “Deer Hunter”. Bourgeois ideology is pervading throughout our cinemas and see there are differences in one Government by different Ministers, one talking socialism, the other one, somehow, seems to be helping to promote capitalist philosophy, capitalist ideas. No doubt today many problems exist within our educational system.

I wish at this stage, in view of these problems, to call upon the Government within the items we have, for a system genuine serving the people and country:

- (1) to provide with urgency accommodation for the hundreds of children not now in any school and to cater for the many seeking places which they deserve and which is their right to receive;
- (2) to expand and improve the present facilities to make our schools habitable and efficiently run;
- (3) to clothe and feed the thousands who need such assistance;
- (4) to increase the teaching force and upgrade their scientific and technical skills at all levels; to fill all vacancies and consider sympathetically teachers’ problems with a mind to resolve these to their benefit, in the interest of education, the pupils and students and our society;
- (5) to make the curricula of all schools more relevant to the country’s needs;
- (6) to expand the facilities for university education, to aim at an early opening of the Health Science Faculty; to set in motion the machinery for the construction of a hostel at the University, a long overdue project;

- (7) to place greater emphasis on vocational education; to set sights on the early construction of a technical institute in Essequibo;
- (8) to take immediate and concrete measures to erase and resolve the transportation problems that beset so many students and those connected to education today;
- (9) to end discrimination wherever this is practiced – beginning with the Cyril Potter College of Education and in the awarding of scholarships;
- (10) to give the working people a substantial and respectful role in the running of all educational institutions in the country;
- (11) to begin extensive workers' education programme with an aim to raise their cultural, educational, ideological understanding and provide for their many-sided development;
- (12) to pay special attention to the general education neglect prevalent in Amerindian communities and interior areas. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Clarke.

The Minister of Regional Development (Cde. Clarke): Cde. Speaker, the least my friend Cde. Feroze Mohamed could have said is that the People's National Congress saw to it that this country was rid of that nefarious system of dual control of education and it was the People's National Congress which made education free for all. [Applause.] The least he could have said was that, but he did not, and therefore all else that he has said must be taken as mere ploy and not a serious commitment to the people of this country on whose behalf he claims to be speaking.

The 1981 Budget and Estimates of Expenditure herald a new departure in the science of Government in the quest of major efforts to further democratise the governmental process in our country.

In his introduction to the Budget, the first Budget to be presented to the first Parliament elected under the provisions of the People's New Constitution, Cde. Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance said and I quote:

“The Constitution we have fashioned for ourselves enlarges illimitably the bounds of opportunity for the people to manage and control their own affairs and, through self-reliant co-operative action, pursue and achieve their “common purpose” and their “common destiny”. Thus, it asserts the paramountcy of people and their welfare, and to this end establishes the ideological basis of the society. The basic human rights of our citizens are not defined as the dry legal abstractions beloved of jurisconsults brought up in the western European legal tradition, rather, they are conceived in concrete terms that reflect the people's social needs, command their easy understanding and make sense to them in the conditions of a poor developing country.”

Indeed, Cde. Speaker, in Chapter VII of the People's New Constitution clear guidelines are set out in considerable detail for the establishment of our new Local Government system now referred to as Local Democratic Organs.

5:45 p.m.

Our Cde. Executive President in his Address to this National Assembly on February 9, made the following observation on this question of Local Government among others:

“In the past, Local Government was a subordinate and inferior system to that of Central Government. Now, under the provisions of the People's New Constitution the two systems are part of a whole, the object of which is to bring democracy to the remotest corners of Guyana and to establish real power to the people. The structure and institutions which are at the moment enabling, are intended to ensure, from the People's Co-operatives to the National Assembly, the fullest participation of all our citizens in decision-making and planning in the social, political and economic fields. The whole framework is aimed at unifying Guyanese by ensuring their maximum involvement at all levels, directly and indirectly, in community, regional, and national development.”

To understand the system of Local Democratic Organs and the rationale for its implementation, some thought would have to be given to the old system and its inherent limitations, and deficiencies. In the first place, the whole system did not evolve within a national policy framework which catered for the eventual countrywide extension of local democracy. Indeed, it was part of the Colonial arrangement which relegated to the periphery, to the fringes, there to pursue a mendicant and dependent existence in keeping with the Colonial framework. It did not cover the entire country nor did it offer the people an opportunity to become directly involved in the management and development of their communities.

Indeed, the role of Local Government in the past was too passive and inhibitory and failed to come to terms with the ideal of being an institution and a mechanism mobilising the rural population and the resources and liberating the productive forces for development.

Local Authorities were, by and large not viable. They were not conceived as economic units and their boundaries were not drawn with an eye to economic resources. In short, they did not have the geographical expanse and the resource base to make them economically viable. The old system, therefore, of necessity had to be got rid of because of its basic inadequacies and consequent failure to enable people to get on with the task of development both of themselves as human beings and of the physical areas in which they lived. In organizing and structuring the new system every square inch of our country will now fall within some unit of the new Local Democratic system whether it be the region, the sub-region, the district, community, neighbourhood or the people's co-operative unit. In terms of membership the new system will involve over 16,000 councillors in the management and development of their affairs. The Local Democratic Organs are principally and primarily the agents of development and upon them will fall squarely the task of organizing people in the regions and sub-regions right down to the People's Co-operative Units to be involved and to participate fully in speeding up the task of development of their economic, social, and cultural welfare and creating in the process self-reliant productive centres of community life in each and every region.

For the purpose of mobilizing people to be actively engaged in the management of the resources within each region in order to speed up the rate of development, each Regional Democratic Council would be saddled with the responsibility for planning. Local people will be engaged not only in management development but for planning purposes also so that every region is not only a Local Democratic Region but also a development and planning unit. The system in which local democracy is organized is demarcated in such a manner that the areas will have the required geographic expanse. As you know, Cde. Speaker, the country has already been divided into ten regions as follows: Region No. 1, Barima/Waini; Region No. 2, Pomeroon/Supanaam; Region No. 3, Essequibo Islands/West Demerara; Region No. 4, Demerara/Mahaica; Region No. 5, Mahaica/Berbice; Region No. 6, East Berbice/Corentyne; Region No. 7, Cuyuni/Mazaruni; Region No. 8, Potaro/Siparuni; Region No. 9, Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo; Region No. 10, Upper Demerara/Berbice.

I recite these so that Members of this Assembly will, in their contributions to the debate and outside of this Assembly in their contributions in the wider society seek to popularize the names of these regions among the people so that they will become acquainted and officially informed of the new names of the regions and recognize the changes for good which have been ushered in under the People's New Constitution and under the leadership of the People's National Congress.

The boundaries are as required by the Constitution and are drawn so that every region has the potential for becoming economically viable, so that each region on its own can become very prosperous; each region has sufficient agricultural land, mineral, forest and other resources to enable that region to become economically prosperous so that the people who live there can improve their lives materially and culturally.

The ten regions, Cde. Speaker, have been further sub-divided into sectors. Each region into sub-regions, each sub-region into districts, each districts into communities, each community into neighbourhoods, and each neighbourhood into people's co-operatives. These could now be drawn down into very small geographical units where the people know one another and in the neighbourhoods take advantage of vital areas which need attention such as sanitation and drainage and irrigation within the village communities and so on. It should be noted, Cde. Speaker, that while the Municipalities of Georgetown, New Amsterdam, Linden, Rose Hall and Corriverton will retain their legal status, they will assume the larger and more dynamic role with which the Constitution has invested the Local Democratic Organs. Indeed, as integral parts of the region, they will be required to work in close liaison and co-ordinate their activities with the Regional Democratic Council and other Local Democratic Organs within the boundaries within which they fall. These municipalities will be sub-divided into sectors on principles, similar to those applicable to other Local Government areas to enable their citizens to assume responsibilities for managing and developing the sub-divisions in which they live and to participate directly in the work of Local Government.

5.55 p.m.

Similarly, the status of Councils established under the Amerindian Act, Chapter 29:01, will be preserved and their activities will, like the municipalities, be linked with the work of other Local Democratic Organs.

Cde. Speaker, as has been remarked by Cde. Hoyte in the Budget Speech, the recently concluded National Elections and the Elections to the ten Regional Democratic Councils have ushered in the first phase of the new Local Government System. Elections for Councillors of the other organs, that is, sub-regions to People's Co-operative Units will be held shortly and all parties in this Assembly will have an opportunity to participate. The procedures for such elections have already been clearly spelt out in the State Paper on the re-organisation of the Local Government System which was presented to the National Assembly on August 5, 1980, and therefore I need not repeat them here.

As we look around this Assembly we cannot but be impressed with the practical demonstration effect of the objective of our political system as outlined in Article 13 of the People's New Constitution. Each Regional Democratic Council has elected one of its members to sit in this National Assembly. The Constitution provides for a National Congress of Local Democratic Organs from which also two members have been elected to sit in this National Assembly.

Twelve members of this National Assembly now represent Local Government interests. They will put forward in the Assembly proposals for correcting what is wrong and for improving the lives of the people in the regions and areas from which they come. Moreover, they will ensure that their councils use the vast powers which they now have to implement any decisions made.

Persons elected to serve at various levels in the Local Democratic System have some special duties to perform in the interest of development as provided for in Article 74 of the People's New Constitution.

Some of these are.

To give leadership by example;

To Manage efficiently and to develop their areas;

To organize popular co-operation in respect of the political, economic, cultural and social life of their areas;

To co-operate with the social organizations of the working people among others.

Local Democratic Organs cannot work in isolation because the whole thrust of the Constitution is for members to work together, for example, co-operating with all the social organizations of the working people. If there is a sports organization, members should work along with it for development. Likewise, if there is a religious organization, members will work along with it for purposes of development.

Whenever the people come together in an organization, members of the Local Democratic Organs should identify those organizations and devise means of harnessing the people's power to promote the task of development. All this sums up two of the objects of the People's National Congress. They are: to work for and share in the economic well-being of the country, and to secure the interest and well-being of all the people of this country. Therefore, the Local Democratic System is not only to look after the People's National Congress members but it is to look after the welfare of every Guyanese. [Applause.]

Perhaps it is useful for me to give some idea as to how the Local Democratic Organs in a region would function and relate to one another. To begin with, the Regional Democratic Council will be the Supreme Local Government Organ in each Region with responsibility for overall management and administration of the region and for the co-ordination of the activities of all local Democratic Organs within its boundaries.

Each sector within the Local Democratic System will be given clear and specific responsibilities which are so assigned that the possibility of jurisdictional conflict is minimized or eliminated. With respect to those matters which by their very nature cannot be confined within the areas, the arrangements will require the various organs to co-operate with one another rather than one or other of them to dominate the rest. To this end, appropriate mechanisms will be legally instituted to facilitate the desired co-operation.

Within each sector the functions to be discharged may be roughly classified in the following way:

Maintenance functions – representing things like repairing of roads and buildings and other physical structures and ensuring that on-going maintenance works to vital social facilities are carried out;

Regulatory – supervising and controlling certain activities relating to building, sanitation, shopping and so on;

Services – management and protection of schools.

My friend Feroze Mohamed spoke a while ago about the serious problems confronting the educational authorities with respect to the provision of school places and the maintenance of schools in a good state of repair. Certainly, with the advent of the new Local Democratic system such a problem will be tackled by the Regional and other Democratic Councils and certainly we can see that by the effort of the people themselves there will be substantial changes to the situation referred to by my friend in so far as that situation is accurate.

There will be services which will be performed by these Regional Councils and there will be developmental activities to be pursued also by these Councils; for example activities including the setting up of cottage industries, particularly those industries which utilize indigenous raw material within the regions of our country.

It would therefore be necessary in each sector to identify the infrastructure and other facilities which the particular local democratic organ would be responsible for maintaining; those areas over which it would have regulatory powers; the services which it would be competent to provide; and the developmental works for which it would be responsible.

On the question of taxation, it is proposed that the power to tax be restricted for the time being to two organs, namely, the Regional Democratic Council and the District Democratic Council. There would be no duplication of taxation. The Regional Democratic Councils would tax only those entities designated regional tax entities; whereas, the District Democratic Councils would tax district entities. The Regional Democratic Councils would split their revenues with the sub-regions on an agreed basis and the District Democratic Councils would split their revenues with the other organs on an agreed basis.

This does not mean that the other organs cannot obtain income by grants, by supplying services of one sort or another or by engaging in economic ventures on their own, Funds may, of course, be transferred to them by the Central Government, by another Democratic organ within the system or any other entity, to enable them to perform some agreed services or execute some project.

(Cde. Clarke continues)

Since the Regional Democratic Councils have already been elected, it is important to focus on how they will function. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be full-time Managers of their regions. They will be expected to devote all of their time and energies to the task of managing and developing their regions. Each Region will be required to create the following posts and as soon as practicable to appoint suitably qualified persons to fill them: The Chief Executive Officer, Finance Officer, Works Officer, Public Health Officer, Agricultural Officer, an Educational and Cultural Officer and a Planning and Development Officer.

It is intended that the Regional Democratic Councils will work very closely with citizens in the regions to involve them in the Council's work through a system of Committees. Regional Democratic Council will therefore be required to establish the Committees and to ensure that the people of the region are represented on these Committees, thereby involving many more people in the work of Local Government in our country. Of course, the Chairman of each of these Committees will be a Councillor and, at the same time, will be Convener of the particular Committee. It is anticipated that the work of these Committees will contribute significantly towards the achievement of the objectives of the new system.

Cde. Speaker, Councillors within the Local Democratic system will have the duty imposed upon them to co-operate with the Council and other persons in order to enable the Council to discharge the responsibilities and achieve the objectives set out in the Constitution Order governing the functions of that particular Council. It would be misconduct for any Councillor to do any act calculated to frustrate or hinder the work of the Council or efficient management and development of the area. Where Councillors, be they from the People's National Congress or from other Parties, find themselves as members of Local Democratic Organs those Councillors will have as a duty to contribute positively towards the management and development of the Council area to which they have been elected. Therefore, Cde. Speaker, where it is found that Councillors carry out

their misdeeds to the detriment of the development of the particular Council area, such Councillors will come under the microscope of not only their fellow Councillors but of the Community in which they serve. It is confidently anticipated that the people of those communities will reject them if they find that they are working against their best interests.

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Clarke.

Cde. Clarke: The Councils will have a duty to hold quarterly public accountability meetings to enable citizens to participate by offering criticisms, suggestions and comments. In addition, each Councillor would be liable to recall and should it be found that they are working against the best interest of their Council area then it is possible for the people of that area to recall them as it would be possible for them to be recalled if they are guilty of grave misconduct or if they are suffering from any physical incapacity or mental incapacity.

In addition to the specific responsibilities which will devolve on the various organs within the local democratic system, the Local Democratic Organs Act provides, in addition, certain general responsibilities which will be carried out by the various Councillors and their Councils. Section 6 of the Local Democratic Organs Act provides for those additional responsibilities referred to.

For the purpose of giving expression to the concepts of the new system, it is noted that there is a significant departure from the traditional manner in the presentation of these Estimates before the Assembly. The Estimates are now prepared to reflect expenditure in the various regions. For the first time the Estimates have been regionalized and this process will be strengthened as the new regional democratic system is fully established to permit expenditure of the various regions to be reflective of proposals for development and services presented by the regions themselves through their planning units.

Since the Estimates have been prepared according to the regions, the question of accountability will assume importance. As will be gleaned from the Estimates of the regions, arrangements have been made for a number of officers to be remunerated from regional Heads in the Estimates. In addition, there are other charges relating to a number of specific functions which the regions can carry out. It would be important for expenditure from these subheads to be made according to the very strict regulations which relate to Government expenditure. With this in mind, the Vice-President in his Budget presentation referred to the following which have already been set in motion. Chief Executive Officers of Regional Democratic Councils will be made Accounting Officers and will be responsible in the same way as Permanent Secretaries for the proper application of Central Government funds transferred to the regions and will therefore be responsible to the Public Accounts Committee of this National Assembly.

The Speaker: Time, Cde. Clarke.

Cde. Ramsaroop: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that Cde. Minister be given 15 minutes to conclude his presentation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Speaker, the Auditor General will decentralize his activities and establish external auditing units in each region. I wish to state that as part of the proposals for strengthening accountability and financial rectitude there will be the establishment of an external audit in Regional Democratic Organs and Tender Board procedure as well as an active training programme for both Councillors and staff. Internal audit units will be headed by an internal auditor and will report to audit Committees to be established by the Councils. These audit Committees, again, will include as part of their membership, members of the communities, within the regions.

6.15 p.m.

With respect to training arrangements, already we have set in motion this process

and the first training seminar for councilors and officers will be commencing on Monday next at the Kuru-Kuru Co-operative College which institution has been charged with the responsibility for planning and executing training programmes for the membership of these organs on an on-going basis.

/Cde. Dalchand rose to leave the Chamber./

The Speaker: Cde. Dalchand, before you go, suppose I call on the members of the minority party to speak, what will happen? /Pause./

Cde. Clarke: The Ministry of Finance will decentralize its activities by establishing sub-treasuries in each region during the course of this year. I must mention that already this is a process which is on-going and I have every optimism that in the very near future these sub-Treasuring will become a fact of life.

The Speaker: Cde. Clarke, just a minute. Cde. Persaud, do you think it is courteous to Members of Parliament and myself? Not a single member of the Minority Parties is here.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I am here.

The Speaker: You just walked in because I made a remark. Suppose I call on a member of the Minority Parties to speak. When I spoke, nobody was there.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: When I left, other Members were sitting there.

The Speaker: When I talked nobody was there.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Dalchand just left and I presumed –

The Speaker: Discourtesy breeds discourtesy.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I want to assure you, Cde. Speaker, that no discourtesy was meant by any Member of the Opposition.

The Speaker: Ten Members you have and not one was present. You just walked in. When the debate continues you do not know what the other side said and the whole time is wasted in irrelevancies. Please precede, Cde. Clarke.

Cde. Clarke: The elaboration of the appropriate financial regulations and administrative directions to ensure that appropriate financial systems and procedures are established is a responsibility which is at present being pursued. In this regard an appropriate financial and accounting system, designed by the Auditor General, as well as a manual of financial and accounting procedures for use by the Regional Democratic Organs will be finalized for the guidance of these Councils.

The responsibility for overseeing and implementing the new regional system and its effective operation will devolve upon the Ministry of Regional Development and the urgency and the magnitude of this exercise will ascribe a number of new roles which this Ministry will now be expected to perform.

Inherent in this responsibility will be the function of monitoring the implementation and operation of the new system and ensuring that the initial requirements for the successful functioning of the system are met. The Ministry will function as a “financial clearing house” for the transfer of funds to the Regions with a strong co-ordinating bias.

Implicit in these new arrangements for staffing in the Regions will be the secondment of public officers to the Regional system and the working out of personnel implications such as terms and conditions of employment, transfer, and promotions within the system as a whole. This background indicates a role for the Ministry of Regional Development, which would involve the quantification of personnel requirements to effectively man the new system, co-ordinating the process of transfer of

public officers to the Regional System and this would necessitate a high-powered Personnel Section to sort out the complexities implicit in a Regional Civil Service, which can teach the Local Democratic Councils how to prepare expenditure programmes and how to manage money, and which can impart concepts of management to these Councils and Regional Civil Servants.

Initially it is proposed to start in 1981 with the Ministries of Works, Regional Development, Agriculture, and Co-operatives by regionalizing them, by placing their personnel, resources and programmes directly under the control and supervision of the Regional Democratic Councils.

The support and monitoring functions to be provided by the Ministry of Regional Development would indeed be crucial to the successful implementation of the new system. I find most apt the words of Comrade Leader and President when he addressed the Ceremonial Opening of the First Session of the Fourth Parliament of Guyana. In referring to the duties inherence in the task of nation-building he said the following:

“...the Local Democratic Organs are pivotal and their members and leaders carry a heavy burden. Their power and positions spring from the people whose immediate representatives they are. They are equal partners with the people’s representatives at the centre. We all stand or fall together, we all fail or succeed together.”

The Comrade Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, in his Budget Speech, giving cognizance to these remarks of our Cde. Leader and President had this to say:

“The People’s New Constitution has opened up new horizons for the creative use of freedom; and the system of local democracy, which the Constitution has established on the foundation of the political organization of our State, has set the stage for dynamic interaction of the people and their resources.

The Conditions, in these circumstances, are favourable for the people to liberate the productive forces and assert their mastery over the development process in their various communities and regions.”

And on page 11:

“The local democratic organs will have the task of identifying the resources in the Regions, organizing these resources and mobilizing the people for production.

It is important that all persons, particularly those in the public sector, understand these far-reaching changes that take place and co-operate with the efforts to bring about a smooth and orderly transition. It would be futile for any one to think in terms of personal empires; such thinking is alien to the spirit and the letter of our new Constitution and is productive of stagnation and inefficiency rather than development and progress. We are now in the era of the people. We have to recognize their intelligence, ability and expertise; we have to trust them to manage their affairs and we have to demonstrate in more than words our confidence in their ability and capability to do just that.”

Cde. Speaker, we have the tolerance and the capacity to do just that; and I express the optimism that our attitudes and performance now and in the immediate future, both here at the Centre and in the various Regions, will be reflective of the tenets expressed above, and that good sense and goodwill, together with an abiding belief in the latent talents and potential of our people, will prevail as we set about the task of implementing the institutions and mechanics that will unleash real people’s power. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Maybe this is a convenient point to suspend the Sing until 8 o’clock.

Sitting suspended at 6.25 p.m.

On resumption –

The Speaker: Cde. Van Sluytman.

The Minister, Drainage and Irrigation, in the Ministry of Agriculture (Cde. Van Sluytman): Cde. Speaker, the field of agricultural production from time immemorial has been one of a battle. Modern man has been able to put his brother man into orbit. He has been able to land his brother man on the moon successfully but man has not been able to conquer the elements of nature successfully where agricultural production is concerned. Indeed, agriculture is a battle and conventional battles are fought on the battle field on the ground. Notwithstanding a nation's air force or its naval force to defend itself or to venture further a field to conquer other nations, it depends on the strength of its army on the battle field.

The world today is faced with an economic battle between the developed and the developing, the rich and the poor nations. All sorts of problems. High cost of fuel, inflation, balance of payment deficits. Some nations have reached that low ebb of virtual starvation; malnutrition is ever present and spreading. Some nations' economies have even collapsed.

The People's National Congress as a Government has realized that the pull of this nation out of this world's economic dilemma is in the field of agriculture, therefore, large drainage and irrigation projects are under construction: the Tapakuma Irrigation Project Phases 1 and 2; Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Agricultural Development Authority Project phases 1 and 2; the Black Bush Front Land Project, and the Onverwagt Drainage and Irrigation Project. They are, indeed, a testament of Government's intention to enlarge the battle field for farmers to do battle, for them to improve their standard of living, to help in the development of the nation's economy and to find work for the ever-increasing population of this nation.

Cde. Speaker, if Guyana is to develop, nay, to survive, it must embark on large agricultural schemes to feed itself. These schemes that I have mentioned, these schemes that are on ground, when completed, will provide this nation additionally with over half million acres of land completely drained and irrigated, stretching from Charity on the Pomeroon to Crabwood Creek on the Corentyne, a distance of 250 miles, one of the greatest achievements this Government can ever hope to have. [Applause]

Notwithstanding the constraints, economic, climatic and otherwise, the Government's agricultural programme through its drainage and irrigation projects stands out as a beacon for all to see. Over the last years, emphasis has been placed on the agricultural sector so that adequate food of desirable nutritional quality could be made available for the existing and projected increase in the population for raw material input in the food processing industry and for export. Here are the details of those projects and the scope of work involved: Tapakuma Irrigation Project Phase I stretches from Pomeroon to Zorg-en-Vlygt on the Essequibo Coast and when completed would embrace 45,000 acres of land. The scope of works is as follows: 89,900 ft. of main canals; 280,900 ft. of drains; 133,000 ft. of road building and surfacing; 7 pump stations with 9 pumps; rehabilitating and building 5 sluices; 27 major structures and 126 minor structures. Of these, Phase I in the Tapakuma Irrigation and Drainage Scheme is scheduled to be completed in May this year. The consultants are Sir William Halcrow and Partners and the contractors, Reed and Malik. The contractors' work will cost this nation \$40 million (Guyana).

8:10 p.m.

Phase 2: This project stretches from Annandale to Supanaam and will embrace some 12,000 acres of land when completed.

Scope of work. In the Ituribisi Conservancy Dam and Structures, there will be 2.5 miles of conservancy dam, one flood relief structure and two regulators.

Main Canal and Structures: 2.3 miles of lower conservancy dam, 12.2 miles of main canal, two check structures, one flood relief structure and 33 head regulators.

Façade Drain and Structures: 2.1 miles of new façade drain; 1.1 miles of enlarged façade drain, .7 miles of façade drain to be cleared and cleaned, one façade drain siphon.

Secondary Drains and Canals: 2.4 miles of secondary canals, 4.2 miles of secondary drains; 3.5 secondary drains to be cleaned out and 2 miles of Ituribisi flood embankment.

There are other minor structures. Several bridges to be built – A type, B type, C type and D type, one road box culvert, nine road pipe culverts, 16 flap boxes; rehabilitation of existing sluices, rehabilitation of the existing structures in the Johanna Cecelia Conservancy. This Phase is scheduled to be completed in September, 1982, and the consultants are, as a Phase 1, Sir William Halcrow and Partners and the contractors are Taylor Woodrow (International). This scheme, when completed, is estimated to cost \$33 million (Guyana).

There is another aspect of the Tapakuma Irrigation project, non-contractual, which is called “On-Farm Development”. The task assigned to this organization, the “On-Farm Development aspect of Tapakuma Irrigation project, is land clearing

and leveling and reconditioning of internal drainage and irrigation systems. During the last year “On-Farm Development” has cleared and leveled 188 acres of land three miles of internal trenches costing \$.203 million (G). It is proposed in 1981 to spend \$.8 million (G) on On-Farm Development, Phase 1 and 2, of the Tapakuma Irrigation Project.

Notwithstanding that these projects are not completed, the farmers in residence are already enjoying the benefits, particularly the rice farmers. Figures have revealed that in 1977, the same year that the contract work started on the Essequibo Coast in Phase 1, the average yield of paddy per acre was 15 bags. I am happy to report to this Assembly, and hence to the nation, because of better drainage and irrigation systems, better seed paddy, the average yield for 1980 on the Essequibo Coast has been 23.5 bags per acre. [Applause.] and more heartening is the fact that in Phase 1, because of the drainage and irrigation works are more advanced, the average yield of Phase 1 has been 26 bags per acre. [Applause.] In fact, the rice farmers on the Essequibo Coast no longer talk of one crop and two crops. They are talking about three crops per year.

Mahaica Mahaicony Abary Agriculture Development Authority. The object of this project is to provide water control for the coastland up to a depth of 30 miles inland between the Berbice and the Mahaica Rivers. This will be attained by storing the flood waters of the Mahaicony, Mahaica and Abary Rivers in two reservoirs. The Mahaicony-Abary Conservancy and the Mahaica Conservancy formed in the upper reaches of these rivers and using the impounded water for gravitational irrigation during dry weather.

The total area eventually to be commanded by this comprehensive project will be 423,000 acres but, in order to use available financial and technical resources efficiently, the project is being implemented in three phrases each relating to the control of one of the rivers. The Abary River, of itself, is relatively small in the context of Guyana rivers but its catchment area is very large which contributes to the overflowing of the bank, killing and destroying animals and crops in its way on both banks whenever the rainy season comes around.

The West Coast Berbice area has been prone to floods as soon as the rain falls and it becomes parched in prolonged dry weather. The farmers on the West Coast of Berbice have been the most depressed of all farmers on the coastlands of Guyana because of lack of adequate drainage and irrigation.

Therefore, Phase 1 of the MMA, the Abary/Berbice, is no accident but by design. This will give immediate effect to greater production and productivity in the area, giving the residents the long awaited opportunity to perform. The construction of the conservancy dam, the seven-door sluice and damming of the Abary River are the first steps taken to ease the conditions I have mentioned. The project was commenced by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1974 and was taken over in 1978 by the MMA when it was formed. The work of the MMA has been divided into two parts, by force accounts, that is work being done and supervised by the Ministry or the Authority, and the other part by contract. Force accounts are undertaking three major tasks.

The Conservancy Dam. That dam is 35 miles long and 12 feet high. It is already functioning but will be completed in full by November of this year so that the irrigation water can be impounded to its height of 64 Georgetown Datum. Damming the Abary River which forms part of the Conservancy Dam to a maximum height of 35 feet above River/sea bed level. It has been provided with a sheet piling cut-off wall to prevent seepage of water under the dam and, thirdly, the spill-weir foundation and sheet piling cut-off wall of 5,000 feet. The purpose of the spill-weir is, in the advent of excessive rainfall on the conservancy and the water is not needed on the land, the water will rise over the weir and find itself in the Berbice River. It is there to prevent any excess pressure on the dams and the structures.

8:20 p.m.

The three aspects of construction by the MMA are indeed commendable. But most commendable, Cde. Speaker, is the Abary River sluice, a seven-door sluice, the largest in this part of the world. It has a capacity where 3,000 cubic feet of water can

pass through in one second. It is a wonderful achievement. It was constructed by local engineers, Torrington and Torrington, supervised by local consulting engineers, Consulting Engineering Associates, and the Chief Hydraulics Officer was the Engineer in charge of this project. It was completed, and further, it was financed by people like the Treasury, Guyanese people. It was completed in February, 1980 and it was in February, 1980 that the Ministry of Agriculture took over the sluice from the contractors and handed it over to the MMA ABA.

Main Contract Work: 45 miles of irrigation canals; 63 miles of drainage canals; 124 other hydraulic structures; 1 pumping station at Trafalgar/Union; 11 miles of all-weather roads and 5 bridges and the construction of the structural work on the spill-weir; building of offices, stores, workshop, houses, etc., for contractors and engineering staff.

The control of the Abary River is the first of these phases. Completion of the dam across the Abary and the diversion of the river through the Abary River sluice represent a major milestone in this project. From now on, and, Cde. Speaker, I mean from now on, there will be no more flooding in the Abary River. That twice-yearly flooding that occurred in the Abary will no longer occur.

Flood control is only the first of the major benefits to the farmers which will be obtained by the project. The further benefits of main irrigation and main drainage will be provided on completion of the contract works, commenced by the International Consortium of Ballast Nedam-Lareco and scheduled to be completed in June, 1983 at a cost of \$187 million (G).

Cde. Speaker, the MMA ADA is a clear demonstration of the People's National Congress as a Government interested in people's well being. I assure the residents and farmers of West Coast, Berbice, of a better way of life when this project is completed.

Black Bush Frontlands Project. This project is at the stage of mere consultancy –

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Van Sluytman.

Cde. Van Sluytman: --- but is anticipated to include installation of pumps, up-grading and enlarging of drainage and irrigation systems, construction of roads, sluices and erection of buildings among other things.

Scope of work: Installation of three pumps with a total capacity of 1,800 cu. secs; 15 miles of access road; 5 sluices; 55.5 miles of main and branch canals; 15 Regulators; Headquarters facilities and machinery stores shelter. The total acreage to benefit is 46,600 acres and the Consultants are P.R.C.E.C.I. This project is anticipated to cost \$130 million.

Onverwagt Irrigation Scheme. The project area is located on the right bank of the Abary River and is a portion of what is known as the Onverwagt Land Development Scheme, and falls within the boundaries of the MMA ADA. The gross area of this project is 500 hectares or approximately 1,200 acres and was surveyed, designed and executed by a team of technicians and engineers from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea for the Government of Guyana.

Scope of Works: The installation of one dual-purpose pump for drainage and irrigation, the capacity is 50 cu. secs; 4.56 miles of drains; 3.51 miles of irrigation supply canals; 12.66 miles of farm roads and 113 concrete structures. This scheme is virtually completed and will officially be handed over to the Government of Guyana on the 11th March, 1981, at a cost of \$3.5 million (G).

Cde. Speaker, I opened my contribution by saying agriculture is a battle but the battle goes on further. If you want to protect agriculture, in fact if we want to protect our own livelihood then the first condition to be met is the protection of sea defences. For some time now, because of the geographic location of Guyana the coastlands are below the sea level and our coastlands have been subjected to the battering of the Atlantic moving away mudflats, breaking down old walls and causing some measure of anxiety. The worst affected at this point in time is the Essequibo Coast where massive works were carried out last year and are continuing this year. Essequibo sea defences project last year built 1,000 ft. of permanent walls, concrete and boulder slope, 10,700 ft. of temporal works, that is, placing of rock boulders at a cost of \$8.5 million (G). The area under severe attack on the Essequibo Coast is from La Belle Alliance to Westbury, a distance of some six miles.

The Speaker: One minute more.

Cde. Van Sluytman: Other areas of concern to the Ministry, where work was done last year and is continuing this year, are the Island of Leguan where 275ft. of boulder wall and 1,120ft. of earth dam were completed; West Demerara, a total of

8,095ft. of defence was done in the form of boulder walls, coping and earth dams; East Coast Demerara, a total of 3,454ft. of defence was done similar to that at West Demerara, and on the Corentyne Coast 3,102 feet.

In 1971, Cde. Speaker, sea defences continued with no less figure than in 1980. During last year the river defences at Craig East Bank Demerara collapsed and gabion baskets and concrete cubs had to be placed there.

The Speaker: I'm afraid, Cde. Van Sluytman, you will now collapse because the time is up. Unless you get an extension - -

8:30 p.m.

Cde. Ramsaroop: I rise to move that the speaker be given 15 minutes to conclude his presentation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Van Sluytman: Cde. Speaker, parallel to drainage and irrigation projects, the sea defence project, is the food crop production and marketing programme. This programme is to give emphasis to the agricultural drive, agricultural backing. This programme will provide credit to the farmers, establish marketing and production centres and a factory, procure boats, engines and vehicles, all for the progress and upliftment of agriculture.

Credit to farmers. Loans are made available to farmers to improve their holdings and to purchase small tractors, fertilizers and tools etc.

Marketing Centres. It is envisaged in this programme that six marketing centres will be established in the following areas – Kumaka, Hosororo, in the North West District Region 1; Charity/Pomeroon Region 2; Supanaam/Essequibo Coast, Region 2; Parika, Region 3; Kuru Kuru, Region 4; and Black Bush Polder, Region 6. The purpose of these Marketing Centres is to give the farmers an opportunity for the first time to carry their products to a centre to have an opportunity to grade their produce, that when they carry it to the place of sale they will rest assured that they are selling graded produce, that consumers will rest assured that they are buying graded provisions and fruits. For too long have farmers, because of inadequacy of facilities, been shipping mud instead of produce. This will give them an opportunity to grade their produce.

Extension Centre. Five Extension Centres are to be built in the following areas: Kumaka/Hosororo in the North West District, Region 1; Kumaka/Acquero, Region 1; Charity, Pomeroon, Region 2; Parika, Region 3; and Kuru Kuru, Region 4. The purpose of the Extension Centres is to bring to the farmers for the first time all their needed inputs. All that the farmers need to plant would be stored, would be kept in these Extension Centres. Their inputs, their fertilizers, their weedicides and their pesticides. No longer will the farmers have to remove from their location, remove from their region, remove from their districts, looking outside for inputs for agriculture. This will give an opportunity to the farmers within reasonable distance to acquire whatever is needed.

Crate Factory. A crate factory is to be established at Charity, Pomeroon, and this is again very much in the interest of agriculture. For too long have we suffered from post-harvesting loss. It has been customary that farmers in the North West District ship oranges in bags. The farmers from Pomeroon do the same thing and farmers in the Berbice River. When these bags arrive in Georgetown all that is there is a wet bag with pulp in it. The economy has been losing because of the absence of better shipping facilities. This crate factory is intended and hopefully it is going to do what it is intended to do; to put at the

farmers' disposal collapsible crates that after grading at the marketing centres they can pack their produce in these crates and ship them where they want to.

Boats and Engines: Apart from the normal speed boat that is used by the Ministry of Agriculture's Extension Division and GAIBANK for servicing the farmers two sloops are to be built to convey, in the first place, produce from outlying areas, the North West District, Pomeroun, Berbice and, secondly, to explore and exploit our Caribbean Market. We will use these boats when we explore the market to convey produce to the Caribbean Islands. This would improve our export trade to our Caribbean neighbours. They are to be used to bring produce from far-flung areas to Georgetown.

Cde. Speaker, when these projects and programmes are completed agricultural production will increase, lifted the economy of the farmers and the nation as a whole.
[Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Vice-President of Parliamentary Affairs, the dignity of this Assembly is for me to enforce under the Rules and you as Vice-President are to assist me in maintaining those Rules and to see that the dignity of this Assembly is kept. We as leaders of society must set examples, not to go and give guidance, and we do not keep those examples. The commencement of this Assembly this evening was at 8 o'clock. I find members coming in after eight, at 5 minutes after eight, and these are not senior Ministers or Vice-Presidents who have other business, not to mention the members of the Minority Party who were not here at all.

I had cause earlier on today to remark that the Minority Party was absent, every man absent, and if they wish respect to be shown to them they must also show respect to the Assembly and to me, to the Chair.

I propose if this state of affairs continues that when I recognize Members I will do so and if the occasion arises – because all the members who have spoken for the Minority

are not here, having spoken they have left, every single one of them – when their turn comes I will ask you to leave the Assembly so that there will not be a quorum and I will then adjourn it and they will not get an opportunity to speak. Discipline must be maintained. You cannot want courtesy and not give it.

Cde. Ram Karran: I want to speak on a point of order.

The Speaker: There is no point of order. Cde. McRae.

Cde. McRae: Cde. Speaker, I rise to contribute to the Motion moved by the Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance, Cde. Hoyte, for the approval of the Estimates of the 1981 Budget. I do so fully aware that this opportunity has been made possible through the party that leads the revolution, the People's National Congress, the party of deeds, not of mere rhetoric. [Applause.] It is the People's National Congress that declared that the small man will be a real man. Indeed, here today I, a small man, have been brought forth into the world of real men where they of course, fortitude and strong moral fibre have done battle for political independence and are now engaged in the all-embracing war for economic freedom.

Emboldened by the examples of the leadership of the People's National Congress, I now sally forth to join with them in the struggle for a just Guyanese society. It has been stated time and time again that the resources of Guyana are for the benefit and use of the Guyanese people. One such resource is bauxite which is mined and processed by the Guyana Mining Enterprise Ltd., a nationally-owned company operated and managed by Guyanese for Guyanese. Enlightened and guided by the principles of the Party and Government, this new Company has moved off the beaten track on to the New Road where it has established new relationship between worker and worker, between the worker and the means of production, and between the operating units and the communities in which they are sited.

Cde. Speaker, it is due to this new understanding and humanized relationship that the bauxite industry sees its role not merely as being a foreign-exchange earner, but that it has a mission which includes:

- (1) to provide a suitable and expanding base for the Guyanese Economy.
- (2) To impact on the shortage of managerial and technical skill ability in the whole economy.
- (3) To re-orient workers' attitude to Guymine, the bauxite communities and to Guyana.
- (4) To help lead the way causing a change in the industrial relationship so that co-operation will prevail rather than confrontation.
- (5) To develop workers' control to move to higher levels of production and productivity and to lay a national base for improving the quality of life for all workers.

With this set of objectives that define the Guymine mission influencing relationships and production activities there has been a turnabout of this 1979 trend of decline to one of upward movement of production towards the end of 1980. This is evidenced by the production figures which I quote for 1979 and 1980 given in metric tons: Dried and metal grade bauxite 1979, 697,000 tons; 1980 – 979,000 tons; calcined

bauxite 570,000 tons 1979; 601,000 tons 1980. Alumina for 1979, 139,000 tons. For 1980, 211,000 tons. Earnings for 1979 amounted to \$350 million; 1980 \$484 million.

What has been Guymine's contribution to development? How is this influenced? Guymine is a high technology organization that is people oriented. Recognizing that its own development and success are closely bound up with those of the communities in which its several works are sited, the Company guided by socialist principles has set up bauxite community councils in each of the communities where its operations exist so that there is opportunity for people in the particular locality to participate in the decision-making processes that affect the welfare of their respective communities. A wide community representation exists which includes trade unions in the industry, L.D.O's, educational institutions in the respective areas and a senior management member. These councils allow for maximum participation and involvement in the affairs of the industry so that alienation is arrested and indifference removed. They promote dialogue for co-operativism and construction for the benefit of both industry and community.

The B.C.C's as they are called are linked to the Guymine management Board through membership of its senior management member and to the Board of Directors through election of some of its members to this Board.

Development in the Communities. Housing. From its very beginning the Company has recognized that a comfortable home is a requisite for a productive worker. It has joined the national effort to house the nation by being involved, on an ongoing basis, in aiding workers to (a) obtain their own homes, (b) improve the homes of those who already have and are in need of such improvement.

Guymine's accomplishments so far are evidenced by the large existing and expanding schemes in the north at Amelia's Ward and in the west at Wisroc. To these must be added the new housing schemes at Ituni, Kwakwani, and at New Amsterdam where workers from Everton reside, and those workers who own their homes and need help for improvement.

Every year 144 non-management workers are aided to improve their homes through a scheme that entitles each one to a grant of \$6,000 and an interest-free loan of \$6,000. Where necessary, additional loans up to \$10,000 with a small interest can be obtained. A similar scheme exists for foremen and general foremen. For senior managers there are other schemes.

Cde. Speaker, all these efforts support the national policy of housing the nation by increasing the quantity and quality of houses for workers in the bauxite industry.

Health. Community health receives substantial assistances from the Company which administers two hospitals at Linden, one small one at Ituni and a medial clinic at New Amsterdam. At Linden there is also the Charles Roza's school of nursing that takes in 40 trainees per year, the majority of whom are from the bauxite communities. In 1979 a sum of over \$5 million was spent on medical facilities. During the same year a total of 64,994 out-patients received attention at all the institutions. On Public Health and Sanitation GUYMINE gives substantial assistance to the Linden Town Council.

Transport. The Linden Transport Co-operative Society Ltd. Operates an internal bus service within the township. GUYMINE's support is in purchasing buses for this society. In 1979 four new buses were purchased for the sum of \$300,000. They have transported an average of 90,000 people per month. Needless to say, this includes the workers going to work and to their homes from work. Linden is an expanding town. It is recognized that the L.T.C.S. will have to expand commensurably.

Water supply. The company is responsible for pure water supply throughout Linden. It operates plants on both banks of the river. On the eastern bank there is a water treatment plant that has a total output of 30 million imperial gallons per month. Within one of its works there is another plant that supplies 12 million gallons per month for domestic use, to users on the eastern bank only. On the West Bank there is a water treatment plant and an additional pumping facility at Wismar. These two together supply potable water at a flow rate of 50 million gallons per month. A pure water expansion programme is in progress. This is expected to cost some \$11 million. Presently GUYCONSTRUCT, a subsidiary of GUYMINE, is constructing a new surface water treatment plant on the west bank. When it is completed its output will be 1.5 million imperial gallons per day.

The Wismar facility will be improved and upgraded by having attached to it a water treatment plant. When this is done the supply of potable water will improve to the rate of one million imperial gallons per day.

The existing west bank water treatment plant will undergo improvement. The laying of new pipelines for this improvements is scheduled to be completed in September, 1981.

Education. To achieve the objectives of its mission and in support of the national education policy GUYMINE has been making continuous substantial financial, material and technical inputs to give opportunity to workers and non-workers to acquire higher

and technical training by sponsorship. This sponsorship could be obtained through three points: the 'A' Level; the 'O' Level in five subjects – English and Math are compulsory – and by workers qualifying at approved technical institutes such as the G.I.T.C., Guyana Technical Institute, and by home study courses. This last one emphasizes the understanding, the feeling, that GUYMINE has for people for it allows the worker to attend classes at GTI on evenings at the GTI at Linden, to take home study courses. When they reach the qualifying point they can then become eligible for sponsorship to a higher technical training at a local institution or overseas. These sponsorships have built-in safeguards to obtain and keep these skilled graduates.

GUYMINE is also sensitive to the community education needs. It operates the Watooka Day School which is a nursery cum primary. It operates the Guymine Technical Training Complex. Its very name indicates its functions and it takes care of young school leavers.

The company also makes significant financial contributions to the Mackenzie High School and has a repair and maintenance Fund from which schools in the region can make withdrawals for repairs, modifications and to acquire equipment. This fund stands presently at \$200,000.

In addition to the above, there are yearly educational grants to employees to purchase educational equipment for themselves for their children or relatives. Over the past five years a sum of \$2 ³/₄ million has been expended on these grants. Added to all of that, GUYMINE offers to its workers the facility to take through that organization, correspondence courses and these workers at the successful conclusion of these courses have a refund of their installments.

Sport. The company sees sport as a means of building team spirit and morale and these I know to be necessities in co-operative activities. The activity known as GUYMINE Games attracts 1,000 competitors from all over its works. It is spread over two months.

The company allows competitors time off with pay, travel assistance coaching facilities and assistance to obtain gears.

Culture. In the area of creative arts, the company has established a cultural development unit. This unit offers classes in drama, dance, music, fabric art such as batik, tie-dye, dress-making and also food and nutrition classes.

There is also opportunity for help and so far a collection of short stories and two anthologies of poetry have been published under the patronage of the company.

I have been with the bauxite industry for 31 years. I have seen it through all its times, its good times and its bad times. This includes the time of the pre-nationalisation. There have always been constraints; there have always been bits of shortages; there have always been ups and down; there have always been disagreements but one thing that was not there at all the time that GUYMINE is now putting in is people's involvement. [Applause.]

9:00 p.m.

A company that requires high technology and as complex as Guymine, needs a sufficiency of skills at all levels. Guymine has a good programme to train its

workers to develop themselves to acquire the skills to satisfy these needs. However, retention has proven difficult. The workers have made their sacrifice. Things like emoluments and others have been held down, some since 1974 and they are trying. What is necessary, Cde. Speaker, to my mind from my years of experience is for a new effort to find new solutions to review and correct these difficulties. The tax relief as indicated in the Budget will support this review.

The gains we seek will come out of increased production and productivity which will be realized on having this new co-operative relationship determinedly spread with urgency throughout Guymine. Education and persuasion are the tools to be used. There is need to re-organise so as to implement and provide a climate for the healthy growth of this socialist relationship.

Cde. Speaker, socialist development can only come through increased production and productivity. There is no other way. And all who claim to be socialists, all who are entrusted with the development of this country it behoves them to do everything in their power to encourage workers to apply themselves in useful productive work and not in useless destructive work.

You cannot be my friend and you come today and knock down one of my house posts and go away and come back and call me friend. And tomorrow you “bruck up my window” and you call me friend. Cde. Speaker, “you ain’t got no other chance after then; you can’t be no more friend to me.”

Cde. Speaker, ours is a war, a war against ignorance, against hunger, against exploitation of man by man whoever he may be. The Budget as put in this Assembly provides the means of successfully pursuing this world. It provides the strength to be put in the hands of those who will mould the destiny of this new Guyana. Thank you. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Chowritmootoo.

The Minister, Environment and Water Supply, in the Ministry of Public Welfare (Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo): Cde. Speaker, that this honourable Assembly is meeting to debate the 1981 Estimates of Expenditure again affords the opportunity to nail the untruth so often peddled by those whose business is now relegated to the contortions of the truth. And so, the traditional and constitutional practice of budgetary allocations and their public scrutiny continue as a matter of character of this Government, a Government that is speaking confidently for the vast majority of the Guyanese people.

Cde. Speaker, allow me to congratulate the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Financing, who has made the fulfillment of the Constitutional requirements possible and for the able manner in which the Budget has been presented. Sagacity and the financial prudence are practices of principled direction governing the consideration of the Budget throughout. It is this intelligence endemic in the thought and actions of the Government of the people's National Congress that has brought about the establishment of the Ministry of Environment and Water Supply.

In our daily lives no experience leaves us untouched and so, too, it is with nature and her endowed resources. If we were to optimize the gains and benefits of this natural endowment and Guyana is lavishly endowed by nature – we must seek to protect and carefully manage our environment, the habitat of our resources. Towards this end, and in keeping with a global trend organized by the United Nations after the upsurge of emotion in the sixties and early seventies for environmental protection, the wise leadership of the Guyanese nation initiated and provided in the People's New Constitution, Chapter II, Article 36, that –

“In the interests of the present and future generations, the State will protect and make rational use of its land, mineral and water resources, as well as its fauna and flora, and will take all appropriate measures to conserve and improve the environment.”

Niceties of constitutional provision, in wanting to implement, they should be the exemplification of truth. The establishment of the Ministry of Environment and Water Supply is a manifestation of the truth. The People's Government, the Government of the People's National Congress has given matter to words as she is always want to do and the reality is with us. Fired wit the urgency with which the concern for the environment must be tackled, His Excellency the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, in his presentation to this august body on the occasion of the ceremonial opening of the First Session of the Fourth Parliament of Guyana incapsulated the totality of our task, our policy direction, when he said and I quote:

“The task of this Ministry is to ensure that long before the international Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade is ended every Guyanese should have access to pure water for all relevant purposes and that our physical environment be such as will make us all proud. It is not a matter of mere aesthetics. It is as much a matter of health, human happiness and one of the important prerequisites of productivity and development.”

The world has come to the point of view that increased competition for scarce resources produced harmful stress on the ecology and sharpens conflicts. Yet a new ethical awareness of man's relationship with the environment must prevail in the interest of the future no matter how urgent the needs of development may be.

It is with this in mind that the coming into being of a new Ministry seeks its moral foundations as it now seeks to co-ordinate environmental matters for our present and future rational and intelligent development.

What has been the lesson of the past from which we draw and must learn? When the United Nations Conference of the Human Environment met in Stockholm in June, 1972 there were fewer than 25 participating countries drawn primarily from the developed industrialized countries. The result therefrom was the establishment of the United Nations Environmental Programme UNEP with headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, in fulfillment of a General Assembly decision of December, 1972. Today, nearly every member of the United Nations Organisation subscribes to an environmental policy and the pursuance of that policy is determined by the political will. That will is exercised by the people of this country, It is little wonder that every developing state pursuing an industrialization programme has vigorously pursued an environmental policy. Venezuela's Ministry of Environment has spent over \$200 million (US) as its budgetary allocation. India, Nigeria, the Philippines, Brazil, Cuba, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and China are among others with strong national institutions governing environmental policies.

In the establishment of any institution, certain factors must be considered. In the establishment of the Ministry of Environment and Water Supply three factors will certainly contribute to the success of an environmental policy programme:

- (1) our ability and willingness to find ways of keeping costs, inequities, and inefficiencies to a minimum and of encouraging constructive re-conciliation of environmental, social and economic goals;
- (2) the effective re-direction of the environmental effort to ensure co-ordination and to avoid duplication as in the case of producing preservatives,
- (3) the strength of the public commitment to environmental protection.

It is in the context of constructive reconciliation that I bring to bear the remark of a noted environmentalist, Dr. Physical anthropologist and Director of Environmental Planning and Protection in Nigeria as he defined the role of the Division: “to learn from the mistakes of industrialized countries and not allow the activities of the individual production unit within the economic system to impose an unduly heavy indirect cost on society through the contribution to environmental deterioration.”

What then, Cde. Speaker, is our main concern in the Ministry? These can be tabulated:

- (1) Inadequate supplies of clean water
- (2) Poor sanitation
- (3) The lack of waste disposal facilities
- (4) Deforestation and erosion
- (5) Inadequate housing
- (6) Degradation of agricultural lands
- (7) Contamination of rivers and untreated industrial effluent
- (8) Work-place hazards
- (9) Beach pollution
- (10) Land area degraded by mining
- (11) Land use
- (12) Management and recycling of solid waste
- (13) Non co-ordination of the use and preservation of wild life.

The foregoing gives an impressive and all-pervading picture of the Ministry’s concern. The success of our operation therefore hinges on our ability to co-ordinate and invoke concern by all and sundry for our national environment. This is a positive change and like all changes it must attract to it the hazards of traditionalism and modern red tape. Towards the task of implementation, we are committed to ensure:

- (1) That an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment study is presented for major developmental projects.

- (2) That the National Parks Commission, an action-oriented organization, will not function within the Ministry's areas of responsibility.
- (3) That the necessary legislative processes will be followed to bring about the intelligent rationalization which has given rise to the establishment of the Ministry.
- (4) That environmental officials in the regions, districts and communities will be guided by directions emanating from the Ministry of Environment and Water Supply. For the time being this division will continue to be administered and to function within the Ministry of Health.
- (5) That a national environmental council will be established by law to advise, formulate, co-ordinate and to seek to have implemented matters relating to the management and protection of the environment.

9:20 p.m.

Of course, Cde. Speaker, regional and other local bodies will be established in keeping with the Constitutional arrangements for our people's intimate involvement in their communities.

Cde. Speaker, in the words of Russel B. first administrator of the United States environmental protection agency, I remember and I wish to quote:

“If we are to succeed in maintaining environments that both sustain and enrich human life, we will lead above and beyond all regulatory systems technologies, ideologies institutions and mechanism a new ethnical awareness of our relationship with our environment and other forms of life.”

Such is the task of the Ministry of Environment and Water Supply as it relates to the environment.

In this the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation decade, the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, under the wise leadership, the leadership that has people as its first and last concern, the Government of the People's National Congress, we can proudly say that we are not merely committed to the high ideals and aspirations as set out by the United Nations, but long before the declaration had striven to urge nations to provide potable water to all people, we were, still are and will continue to give meaning to ideals by ensuring the tangibles of having this service available to the greatest number.

Our success is far from limited as our systems can be favourably compared with every other system of the developing world and our aggregate coverage of population is well over 80 per cent. Indeed, an achievement which we must be justly proud of.

I wish, Cde. Speaker, to place on record on behalf of the Board and workers of the Guyana Water Authority my unqualified acknowledgement for the quality of leadership given to the Guyana Water Authority by its former Chairman, Cde. Seeram Persaud. Guyana offers the cheapest water for drinking in this hemisphere. This is a deliberate policy. Not that the provision of drinking water costs little but that this Government, by astute and careful management of the nation's wealth, can divert large sums running into millions of dollars to make this service available to its people. Of course, in the final analysis it is the taxpayers and workers who pay for the facilities and, therefore, it is an important consideration for this Assembly, as our obligation to this nation does not end with prudent expenditure, to allow the nation to be informed of the areas in which its wealth is distributed. Moves are afoot to re-organise the role of the Guyana Water Authority under the auspices of the Ministry of Environment and Water Supply and in order to ensure the goals set out by His Excellency the President, Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham in his presentation "In Our Hands..." and more generally the goals set out by the United Nations International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation decade, the Authority has embarked upon a programme co-ordinating the activities of all agencies involved in the supply of drinking water. This is the beginning of the integration process

which will eventually bring all of the systems under one control and authority. It is hoped that this initiative will bear the positive result of rationalizing programmes of expansion equipment and plant utilization; technological and managerial personnel input.

Cde. Speaker, it is a little known fact that the supply of water in the Land of Many Waters is an expensive social service and therefore we must undertake the efficient use of man and material and material resources in order to maximize benefits to our people. Of course, Cde. Speaker, water users must of necessity exert more care and greater attention in the use of water. They must contribute something for the provision of – this facility. Indeed reports from surveys have concluded that nearly 25 percent of the water that is drawn from the facilities go to no use at all.

The year 1981 will be the year of maintenance of all our equipment, plants or vehicles; 1981-1982 will see the beginning of work on our central workshop at La Bonne Intention. This is a long-felt need and one which was recognized many years ago. It was this recognition which led the Government of the United States of America, through its Agency for International Development to provide materials for the framework of this workshop. It is hoped too, that negotiations will commence shortly for the financing of Phase II of the Buxton/Soesdyke improvement scheme.

During 1981 we hope to complete installation works and to put into operation treatment plants at Bartica and Port Kaituma. Our improvement scheme at Linden will continue as the Central Government continues to spend millions to provide adequate and clean water for drinking to the people of Linden.

In the hinterland, Rupununi Savannahs, four windmills will be erected to boost the supply from 9 new wells which are to be dug this year. Much of the financing will be met by the Royal Netherlands Government.

The urgency with which the Ministry of Environment and Water Supply has been charged to ensure that its developmental works are proceeded with is met by a commitment by our people. Their contribution in the form of self-help reflects on the close relationship and confidence which people have in the Government of the People's National Congress.

On the coast, new wells will be dug and pumps and engines installed at Riverstown, Essequibo Coast ---

The Speaker: Five minutes more.

Cde. Chowritmootoo: --- at Kwapau, on the East Bank Essequibo, West Coast Demerara, and Letter Kenny, Corentyne Coast. In 1981 the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund will spend \$.60 million on capital works. This agency provides potable water, free of cost, to sugar workers in nuclear areas on the coast. The New Amsterdam Town Council which operates and maintains water supply for the expanding

township area will seek to expand this year to meet her growing needs. Moves are afoot to dig a new well to satisfy this growing need.

The Georgetown Sewerage and Water Commissioners will continue to give service to Georgetown and our immediate environment, while work will continue on rehabilitation of the sewerage system. It is evident that the actual expenditure on this section presents a national commitment by the Government of the People's National Congress to ensure that the high level attained is maintained for the benefit of the Guyanese nation and that the environmental patterns of physical cleanliness will continue to give impetus to higher morality and our urgent task of raising production levels and productivity. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Belgrave.

Cde. Belgrave: I am indeed grateful to be given the opportunity to break out of the silence that I have been committed to. It is an honour to join my colleagues on this side of the Assembly in having a look at the 1981 Budget and projecting our thoughts as we see them in terms of what it means to the Guyanese people and workers as a whole.

The Minister in reading his speech –

The Speaker: The Vice-President you mean, Cde. Belgrave.

Cde. Belgrave: The Vice-President, Minister of Economic Planning and Finance, in reading his speech for about 100 minutes attempted to convince the nation that everything in this society that went wrong was not because of the Government's policy but because of some invisible hand which is responsible for the fixing of prices, because of the oil crisis and because of the lack of workers' ability to produce. But he enjoined on the nation to accept the fact that the new Guyana Constitution may have some magic potion for his adventures not less than 16 times in his speech, which lasted for about one hour and forty minutes, on the new Guyana Constitution – and to my mind he feels that

the new Guyana Constitution has a potion, a magic potion, that will raise Guyana out of this dilemma.

I would like to point to some important features in this society which seem to have been completely forgotten. All the talk that I have heard here this afternoon, and even tonight – irrespective of how good your machinery is – whether it be agriculture, whether it be education, whether it be environmental, financial, or otherwise – one of the important ingredient is the worker. That seems to have been forgotten, completely forgotten, because nobody would be able to bring this country out of the economic chaos, this cancerous position this economy is in, other than the workers.

The Vice-President in his contribution, an empty speech, has indicated that the changing of the composition of the tax structure is good enough a programme to push the workers, to give them the drive, the initiative, to bring this country out of this economic chaos. In his speech he said that in 1978 and 1979 there have been a lot of strikes and man hours lost – 324,000 odd in 1979 – and happily indicated its has been reduced by about 76 per cent in 1980, having only 67,000 man hours lost. But he failed to recognize that it is not the reduction in the number of strikes that caused a reduction in the man hours lost, but because a new attitude has developed in this society in the past two years, when workers air their dissatisfaction in the way they have been taught for a number of years and in all my lifetime as a trade unionist, they have been deemed to be enemies of the State.

In some cases striking workers historically over the past two years not only have been subjected to ridicule, they have been also subject to dismissal. But the workers have taken on a new attitude which does not seem to be recognized. The new attitude of the workers is not to go on strike but to resist, fighting back at their work place, by not giving the necessary production so as to get this Government out of the chaos it is in. That is responsible for the reduction in the lost man-hours, not an understanding between the T.U.C. and the Government, because the T.U.C. seems to be in a dilemma itself.

I can remember discussing at another forum lots of problems that the T.U.C. claims have cropped up over a number of years in which it is dissatisfied, which it feels are not in the best interest of the workers or the trade union movement as a whole, but unfortunately it would appear to me that the trade union movement is unable to fight back, to make pronouncements, to make challenges, to make demand in the interest of those whom it has saddled to represent.

9.40 p.m.

It is clear that you have got to give the workers more. We can talk in this Assembly for the next year about all the rivers that will be running into land, and the pure water that will be sent to the homes of the workers, and who is in a haste to make revolution, and who is not in a haste to go ahead with the revolution; who has got time and who does not have time. we can talk all the time about it. But when you would have finished that, you have got to come to grips with reality. Those utterances do not take milk into the homes for babies. They do not. They will not fill the shelves in the various supermarkets with that scarce commodity that fathers and mothers who are workers themselves are running the length

and breadth of this country, in the country and in the town to find milk for their homes. It will not change the attitude of the manufacturers of some basic commodities as soap and butter to make available on the market these important commodities that make the lifestyle or assist the working man to be a bit more comfortable and relaxed. You have got to come to grips with that realistic part of life.

Our workers, over a number of years, have been resisting this regime. In some cases they have shown it by sick-outs and strikes. But Comrades, I make this point for you to understand that when your attitude of not treating the worker as he ought to be treated is carried, it does not only cause suffering to those who are unfortunate, who are in jobs and do not get what they ought to get, it also causes suffering to the young who are looking forward to receive that benefit that society ought to give him or her.

Is it known that prostitution in this country is on the increased? Has anybody who sits on the Government benches taken time to understand why our young mothers-to-be are caught in this dilemma, are caught in this position in our society where they will in future be mothers of babies with a stigma? Has any one of those who are supposed to be responsible for women's affairs ever taken time off to make an assessment to understand that, that industry is going at a pace. Our young women, as young as 17, 18 and 19 years have become street-walkers over a number of years. You check their feet and you will find that a car speedometer cannot move as fast as they have been moving in the streets. Nobody seems to be accepting these fact of life.

What about our young sons? We talk all the time about the Government's policy and the new Constitution and what the President says and what the Prime Minister says. Has anyone of you taken the opportunity to look at our young men who pass through the Courts every day involved in crime. It is not a People's Progressive Party in Government. It is the People's National Congress. It does not worry you so what! So the young men who have got in their hands the future of this country are caught in that dilemma, in that crossroad where there nothing to do. The opportunity do not exist.

It is clear that the magic in the new Constitution cannot clear these issues. These issues will need the ability, the strength of individuals who have got the working class consciousness, that ideological ability to transform the society to something of which the people of this country can speak.

As a trade unionist I recognize that workers have got a certain ability to understand problems as they develop. I myself am a bit surprised to note that some workers attempt to put together the ends that never existed in order to survive. This Government thinks that in spite of the increased cost of living \$11.50 a day is adequate to satisfy the needs of the working-class people who are called upon to produce, to increase production and productivity.

We have been passing legislation, of Orders, and we are going to pass the Estimates, I am positive, taking into account the composition of this Assembly through which some people directly and indirectly will enjoy an increase. That tax relief you speak of, they will also enjoy. It is not that the tax relief as alleged will go down to the worker and will not affect those in the higher income bracket. It will affect a system, about which I spoke in this Assembly on several occasions, which ought to have been implemented. Since I entered this Assembly in 1976 I have been hitting at that particular nail, that the computation in the tax structure hits very hard at the working man in terms of his take-home pay. This idea that comes up is nothing new to this Assembly. It may be new to those who have got the ability to now think in terms of this system in the structure.

I mentioned a little while ago about husbands and wives in various work places leaving their work, nipping off, getting away to see if they can grab some of the scarce commodities. Would that not too affect production? What about the problem of distribution in this society? Quite recently, there was a shipment of milk coming to this country, a commodity that mothers seem to be tumbling over one another to collect at the end of the week at the various supermarkets, and it was noted that in the distribution, milk was handed to restaurants, eating houses, this is a fact. Mothers were in various

supermarkets searching for milk while Demico House and Brown Betty were getting an adequate supply of milk. Our sons, our daughters, are in the line with the hope that they will be in possession of a tin or maybe two tins of milk. And they are working. You are so right. They are to produce and add to productivity.

9.50 p.m.

In terms of various work-places this Government has been consistent in interfering with the various managerial controls in work places. I can remember discussing with a particular individual who has the ability to manage, I know, and he told me that if he had his way to run the business as it ought to be run – and he is alleged to be a good manager – he is certain that the workers would be able to produce more and get some greater benefits, “but them political boys,” he says, “when I make one suggestion they send down another instruction.” He wants to contribute but he cannot because of political interference at all levels.

How can you expect to have production in industry when you are interfering with the very machinery that is responsible for production.

This Government has been undoubtedly consistent in its attitude towards the workers and the workers' organizations. It is noted that on many occasions when the push comes to shove, consultation, they say, has gone on with the Trades Union Congress. The Trades Union Congress at another time is saying, "We want more details before we agree" despite the fact that it is unable to justify the situation but it wants more details.

It is only too clear that the workers' movement has been sabotaged by this regime and only when there is democratization of the systems and organizations in this country can these organizations give the workers the push, assist the workers with that general push to make a contribution towards this society. All that is offered is not enough. I am positive that if the Vice-President was listening to his own contribution he would have come to the analysis that this regime has failed and has failed miserably and if he was listening to all the contributions made by the other members today and tonight he would come to the assessment that hope for the future is very dim.

I heard one of the members who spoke before me make the same contribution he made in 1977 in this Assembly. He spoke about the sluice doors, the lands and the waterways. He is back in this Assembly nearly four years later to tell us the same thing the past four years and the hope for the next two years that you will be in office – if so long – will be very very dim.

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde. Belgrave.

Cde. Belgrave: It is most unfortunate that some of the members who contributed to this debate had no opportunity really, to my mind, to understand some of the things they read, because it is a system under which they are unable to make, as I see it, a contribution in the sense that they do not have the value to assess the situation thoroughly and to make a contribution which they ought to make. Given an opportunity I am positive the long paper

which they would have read would have gone the other way to condemn this regime for its inability to satisfy the needs of the Guyanese people. The PNC has for 16 years wasted the time of this nation. What it has done, I do know, is this. It has enlarged the bureaucracy, the cost factor, and put it on the backs of the working class. I know as a natural fact that this over-bloated, this big-sized Assembly, will have to be borne by the taxpayers and I am positive that within the next few months, within less than a year, this Assembly will dissolve itself.

The Government is actually broke; it is penniless; it is begging all over the place. The borrowing has increased. The Budget says it. The Estimates indicate that the borrowing will have to be increased during 1981 at a tremendous pace for the life style of this Assembly. I cannot remember reading that elsewhere in the world there are so many Vice-Presidents in a small economy, a bicycle economy living Cadillac style. We cannot pay our debts. We cannot satisfy the needs of the workers, we cannot satisfy the needs of the people and before we find where are the constraints, to cut back, to ensure that more gets down to the worker, we are finding ways and means to over-burden the taxpayers, to over-burden the ship which I am positive will topple over in the final analysis.

I feel, in ending, that a more sane and sober approach must be taken and must be taken very fast. The workers in this country are yelling, they are crying. You may not have the opportunity to hear them, some of you, because you may be miles off, far from them, but take it from me, a worker, who is involved everyday with the working class, who deals with them everyday, it is that they are crying for more. Give them more. If you do not attempt to give them more I am satisfied that whatever has been built in the past – not by you, by us, by the People's Progressive Party, in which you found a road of sweetness, and Ranji can say that only too well. You found a good road. If it is that you do not attempt to satisfy those need, the wall will be torn to shadows by the workers in this country who, I am satisfied, are doing a very good job to keep their noses above water.

The Speaker: Cde. Vice-President for Parliamentary Affairs.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 2nd March, 1981, at 2.00 p.m. /The Vice-President, for Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations.]

Adjourned accordingly at 10.00 p.m.