

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES**

OFFICIAL REPORT

[VOLUME 5]

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

4th Sitting

2.00 p.m.

Friday, 21st May, 1971

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

His Honour the Speaker, Mr. SaseNarain, J.P.

Members of the Government

People's National Congress
Elected Ministers

The Hon. L.F.S. Burnham, S.C.,
Prime Minister

Dr. Hon. P.A. Reid,
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture

The Hon. M. Kasim, A.A.,
Minister of Communications

The Hon. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,
Minister of Finance

The Hon. W.G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour and Social Security

The Hon. Miss S.M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Health

The Hon. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Housing and Reconstruction (Leader of the House)

The Hon. D.A. Singh,
Minister of Trade

The Hon. O.E. Clarke,
Minister of Home Affairs

The Hon. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Local Government

Appointed Ministers

The Hon. S.S. Ramphal, S.C.,
Attorney-General and Minister of State

The Hon. H. Green,
Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

The Hon. H.O. Jack,
Minister of Mines and Forests

Dr.the Hon. Sylvia Talbot,
Minister of Health

Parliamentary Secretaries

Mr. J.G. Joaquin, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Finance

Mr. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. W. Haynes,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

Mr. A. Salim,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

Mr. J.R. Thomas,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister

Mr. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works, Hydraulics and Supply

Other Members

Mr. J.N. Aaron
Miss M.M. Ackman, Government Whip (Absent)
Mr. K. Bancroft (Absent)
Mr. N.J. Bissember (Absent – on leave)
Mr. J. Budhoo, J.P.
Mr. L.I. Chan-A-Sue
Mr. E.F. Correia
Mr. M. Corrica
Mr. E.H.A. Fowler
Mr. R.J. Jordan
Mr. S.M. Saffee
Mr. R.C. Van Sluytman
Mr. M. Zaheeruddeen, J.P.
Mrs. L.E. Willems

Members of the Opposition

People's Progressive Party

Dr. C.B. Jagan
Leader of the Opposition
Mr. Ram Karran
Mr. R. Chandisingh
Dr. F.H.W. Ramsahoye, S.C.
Mr. D. C. Jagan, J.P., Deputy Speaker
Mr. E.M.G. Wilson
Mr. A.M. Hamid, J.P., Opposition Whip
Mr. G.H. Lall, J.P.,
Mr. M.Y. Ally
Mr. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P.,
Mr. E.M. Stoby, J.P. (Absent)
Mr. R. Ally
Mr. E.L. Ambrose
Mrs. L.M. Branco
Mr. Balchand Persaud
Mr. Bhol Persaud

Mr. I.R. Remington, J.P.
Mrs. R. P. Sahoye
Mr. V. Teekah

(Absent – on leave)

United Force

Mrs. E. DaSilva
Mr. M.F. Singh
Mr. J.A. Sutton

(Absent – on leave)

Independent

Mr. R.E. Cheeks

(Absent)

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. F. A. Narain

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Mr. M.B. Henry

The National Assembly met at 2 p.m.

[**Mr. Speaker** *in the Chair.*]

Prayers

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER**LEAVE TO MEMBER**

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. Sutton from today's sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS**MOTION****DEBATE ON PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS**

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly approves of the Government's policy adumbrated in the President's Address for the present Session of Parliament made to the National Assembly at its Sitting on Friday, the 14th of May, 1971.” [Mrs. Willems.]

Mr. Speaker: The Assembly will resume the debate on the President's Address to the present Session of Parliament made to the National Assembly at the Sitting on Friday, 14th May, 1971. The hon. Minister of Labour and Social Security, Mr. Carrington.

The Minister of Labour and Social Security (Mr. Carrington): When the Adjournment was taken yesterday, I was at the point of explaining to hon. Members certain developments that were taking place in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security. I was developing points on the Manpower Research section of the Ministry in order to let members know the importance of this division of the Ministry and its relation to the national development plans. We will be collecting data and information and doing research for the Ministry of Labour in the interest of trade unions and in the interest of any national development plan. We have just appointed an officer to this division. Further, it is the intention of the Ministry of Labour to do these things from time to time with the hope of improving our industrial relations system.

I should like to take this opportunity to bring to the notice of my colleagues a new approach in the Ministry of Labour and Social Security with the establishment of a bureau of women's affairs. We hope to organize and encourage a council of women's institutions and organizations to work in a consultative capacity to the Ministry of Labour for the development of a women's bureau.

Government realizes that the time has come when female workers should be better protected, that there should be an end to exploitation of female workers in Guyana, that there should be a separate institution to look into their affairs and to see that justice is done in this respect. Too often we hear reports of women being under-paid, women being mis-used and abused through their employment, and unsatisfactory conditions of work for women. We feel at this time that the Ministry of Labour should take an interest in the affairs of women in respect of their conditions of employment and wages.

I am just outlining some of these developments in the Ministry though I know the appropriate time is when we are discussing our Budget. However, hon. Members who have spoken, discussed the Ministry of Labour and they wanted to know about the Trade Disputes Bill. As I said earlier, our legislative programme is heavy and the Attorney-General's Chambers is over-taxed but I want to show my colleagues Government's approach to the problems of workers, and industrial relations as a whole. What we set out to do was to improve the industrial relations system in Guyana by the introduction of legislation when requested by the workers' and employers' organizations.

I can list the names of the persons who approached the Prime Minister for such legislation. This had been the subject of discussion between the TUC and CAGI. The TUC led by their President, Mr. Ishmael, Mr. Pollydore, Mr. Cambridge, and others, approached the Prime Minister for legislation to be framed to make industrial relations better, to curb strikes. That was the statement they used, the intention of such legislation was to curb strikes, but they requested it, and if at this point they feel there is no need for it, I am saying that the very leaders

will return to this Government at some future date and say, "We want the Bill", because they approached the Government at a time when GAWU was on the back of the MPCA and the TUC wanted to take GAWU off the back of the MPCA.

They suggested that there was need for a Trade Disputes Bill. Perhaps that situation may come again but, as I said before, the Government is willing at all times to listen to employers' and workers' organizations. When they make requests, we are here to assist them with any of their problems in their industrial affairs. We can see that there is a definite need for improvement in the industrial relations system.

We are operating in a socialist society. When the Government declared Guyana a Co-operative Republic and stated that the vehicle for development would be the co-operative and socialism, it then became necessary for all institutions, including the trade unions, to organize themselves to fit into this development for we can see clearly that the co-operative and socialism are in the interest of the workers. It is in the interest of the trade unions for I am yet to see a trade union organization, be it the national body or otherwise, declare itself as not being a socialist organization. If it declares that this is not so, then it is fooling the workers. It is absolutely necessary that we look at our industrial relations system to see how it can fit into these developments, because these developments are in the interest of the workers.

The nationalization of DEMBA is in the interest of the workers, for what the workers wanted before nationalization they can have now, that is, participation at the decision-making level of the industry. This is what they want and this is what they will have. These are socialist developments. The point is, whether we must have an industrial relations system that is in keeping with the colonial era or an industrial relations system to fit into these new developments. These are the objectives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

As I said earlier, we are with, and are prepared to remain with, the workers, their decision, their interest. If they mean to go the blind way, then they will end up where the blind

people go, but the People's National Congress Government intends to lead in the right direction, all sensible people, all intelligent people – and do not tell me that Guyanese are not intelligent people, we have a very high percentage of literacy – will follow the People's National Congress.
[Applause.]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member Mrs. Branco.

Mrs. Branco: Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech made by the President on the 14th May, 1971. The health of our nation, once a most treasured asset, is again being neglected. I have observed that in the field of health there will be increased activity in malaria and yellow fever control, maternal and child health service and in food and drug control.

During the P.P.P. regime, yellow fever, malaria and filarial programme made effective strides and the sanitation programme went into top gear. The P.P.P. Government built 24 health centres throughout Guyana and had them staffed by nurse-midwives to educate and serve the rural communities and to form the basis of a free national health service.

In the New Amsterdam hospital there has been some improvement by the Government.
[Applause.] There is a new ward for the treatment of eyes and an operating theatre for eye diseases. Throughout last year there was a shortage of essential drugs, appliances, intravenous fluids, anaesthetic drugs, cotton wool and plaster of Paris, but the supply of these has been looked into this year for the time being.

There are outstanding problems in the New Amsterdam hospital. The patients are complaining about the food that is served to them in the institution. What about the foodstuff that is being issued to the institution? Surely those who are in authority should look into this. Perhaps the reason for this is that the hon. Minister of Health cannot go up there weekly or monthly. The wards and windows in the New Amsterdam hospital are kept very dirty. I think that it is the duty of the matron to look after these.

At the Mental Hospital there are some improvements because there is an extra doctor and at present there are three trained nurses. I should like to know what are the duties of the medical superintendent in the Georgetown Hospital and when will the new theatres at the hospital be ready. Will it mean that more operations will be done? Will there be four operating theatres with the completion of these two? What about the nursing personnel and equipment?

I should like to know what steps are being taken to alleviate the drug shortage in the Georgetown Hospital. What steps, if any, are being taken to establish a proper nursing school in Guyana as a possible central training school for nurses in the Caribbean? What steps are being taken to improve the quality of nurses entering training? What about introducing an aptitude test for nurses in order to evaluate the person's suitability for training?

With the continuing shortage of doctors I should like to know what steps will be taken for the training of our own doctors in Guyana. What concrete steps are being taken to reduce the long period during which patients have to wait for operations at the Georgetown Hospital? Are emergency lights available in both operating theatres? Have the authorities catered for emergency lighting in the new theatres which are under construction in case a black-out occurs at the Georgetown Hospital?

Is the present senior Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist due for long leave shortly? Has any provision been made for his replacement? Is he on contract or is he on the pensionable establishment? How many ward sisters are on the establishment, and how many of the posts have been filled?

The Minister of Finance: (*Mr. Hoyte*): Mr. Speaker, no intelligent assessment of Government's record over the past year or of the projections made in the President's Address can be made except against the background of Government's policy. Indeed, no criticism is valid unless it takes into account those policy objectives, and seeks to judge Government's performance within the context of those objectives. Government economic policy is well

known. It has been defined, articulated and debated in this honourable house time and again, and outside this honourable House it has been discussed, and, I believe, has gained widespread understanding and acceptance.

I do not propose, therefore, to traverse ground over which we have gone so many times; but by way of preface to an examination of Government's performance, I would wish to emphasise a few of the salient aspects of that policy. Government's economic policy is aimed at achieving economic independence for Guyana. In other words, it is aimed at ensuring that the Guyanese economy is controlled by the Guyanese people themselves. In pursuance of this overall objective, Government has made a number of policy statements with respect to economic activity.

2.40 p.m.

For example, sir, it is known publicly that Government has adopted a policy which requires and demands that the natural resources of the country be owned by the Guyanese people themselves. The policy has a number of concomitants, but all of these things really come down to this: that there must be an increasing dependence by the Guyanese people on their own efforts, their own initiative and their own resources and a corresponding decreasing reliance upon foreign capital resources.

The policy, therefore, requires a clear and unambiguous programme of local capital mobilization, indeed, a mobilization of internal resources, financial, material and human. To this end, there has been the promotion of that economic vehicle which is most suited to our democratic system, the vehicle of the co-operative, which has been recently described by the Prime Minister of India as being the most powerful influence in a democratic society and a vehicle full of social purpose.

Along with this has been the identification of the philosophy of self-help to harness the spirit of the people, to harness their labour and their goodwill and their national instinct to the great objective of economic development.

It is interesting to note that this policy of economic self-reliance which was defined in Guyana by the People's National Congress has now come to be accepted as economically valid throughout the world.

Indeed, we see the economic policy which has been adopted by the Andean group of countries following directly along the policies which had been adopted by the People's National Congress, a policy of exercising more and more control over the national economy so as to achieve economic independence and self-reliance based upon the mobilization of internal resources. And not only, Mr. Speaker, in the the Andean group but we find in almost every developing country of the world, also, that there has come about the realization that foreign capital cannot be the catalyst for relevant economic development. It is not a question of political complexion. This has become a matter of simple economic common sense and so we find that on a question like this the Marxist, Allende, in Chile is on the same economic platform as the pro-western Caldera in Venezuela.

And it was interesting for me to note recently, in reading the 1971 budget address of Mr. Andreas Patsalides, the Finance Minister of Cyprus, that he makes the same point that the motive force for national development must come from your internal resources and that the foreign resources, for a multiplicity of reasons, cannot perform the job.

May I read, sir, a portion of his budget address which I think is apposite to the point I am making. This is at page 5 of the printed address. He had just completed a review of the growth of the Cyprus economy and he went on to say this:

“It is worth noticing that the sectors of ... and secondary production grew at the same rapid rate as those of tertiary production. This indicates that the existing exogenous ... sources of income and for ... “

We in Guyana have arrived at this economic policy out of our own experience. We have not adopted a policy based upon any doctrinaire philosophy; but it is heartening to know that that policy is right and is accepted as being right in so many diverse countries of the world.

Against that general policy, let us examine the performance of the economy to see whether that performance justifies the policies which the Government has pursued over the past year.

In 1970, the economy continued to be buoyant and continued to grow with vitality as it has been growing since the People's National Congress took office in December 1964. The gross domestic product rose from \$447 million in 1969 to approximately \$476 million in 1970 achieving a growth rate of 6.5 per cent over the past year.

2.50 p.m.

Mr. Speaker, I concede that merely to recite the performance of the G.D.P. may be meaningless and that the increase in wealth in the country might not really be the type of growth which filters down to the masses of the people; but because the PNC has been pursuing a policy of relevant development, a policy which aims at utilizing our resources which are most plentiful, namely labour, that increase in the G.D.P reflects a real and palpable improvement in the quality of life of the people.

One has only to listen to the performance in the various sectors of Government activity, which performance has been explained in this honourable House by my colleagues who have spoken before. One has only to observe the wave of optimism throughout the country, the enthusiasm with which people have buckled themselves to the task of economic development, the way in which thousands of people have responded to Government's self-help policy, contributing by their efforts over \$20 million to the economy. When one examines those facts, there can be no question in the minds of reasonable men as to how the economy is growing and how the quality of life of people is being affected in such a wonderful way.

In the field of exports, despite the shortfall in sugar brought about by political strikes engineered by the People's Progressive Party and GAWU, of which union the hon. Leader of the Opposition has the distinction of being life President, despite the disruption which was aimed at crippling the economy and bringing down the Government, exports have shown remarkable resilience and improvement. And let me say in passing, that those anti-national strikes in the sugar belt achieved nothing because GAWU and not and still is not, recognized. The workers got nothing GAWU will not be recognized by virtue of any political strikes. Of course, the economy has suffered. Most of all, the very workers who were so misled by P.P.P. political activists, lost millions of dollars in wages and have achieved, I say again, absolutely nothing. *[Interruption.]* I say this because I wish to make this point, that this Government will not yield to the type of political pressure which arises from using the industrial strike weapon to achieve political ends. But let me continue.

Merchandise exports increased from \$225 million to \$268 million. The increase from 1969 to 1970 shows an increased percentage of 5 per cent; and when one takes into account the export of services, that figure of \$268 million rises to \$300 million. It is in the figures relating to private

and public consumption and investment that the effect and impact of Government's policy is seen most clearly, because we have set out, unambiguously and without apology, to change the pattern of consumption and investment in this country, and we have used fiscal, economic and budgetary measures to achieve this end.

Let me examine the figures and let us all who are able to do so, draw from those figures the real lesson and the relevant information. Between 1964 and 1970, the pattern of consumption and investment has undergone a radical change, a change which will show that the infrastructure for the relevant development of this country is being well and truly laid. In 1964, private consumption was \$223 million; that figure rose to \$335 million in 1970. Public consumption rose from \$47 million in 1964 to \$94 million in 1970, making a total increase over that period of \$270 million, total consumption rising to \$429 million in 1970.

Let us see the other aspect of these figures in relation to investment. Private investment in 1964 was \$44 million rising throughout the period of People's National Congress Government to \$68 million in 1970. Public investment rose from \$10 million in 1964 to \$48 million in 1970; so that investment rose from \$54 million in 1964 to \$116 million in 1970.

Let us see the other side of the picture. In the field of expenditure, the increasing role of Government in the economy manifests itself in a clear and unmistakable way. In 1964, private expenditure rose from \$267 million to \$403 million. Public expenditure rose from \$57 million to \$142 million, making a total gross domestic expenditure of \$324 million in 1964, rising to \$545 million in 1970. What do these figures reveal? What is the story to be drawn from them?

It is palpable that Government is playing an increasingly vital role in the economy, that Government action is becoming more and more important in the direction of the national economy; and that in pursuance of Government's stated objectives, there has been a relative and absolute increase in investment as against consumption,

for while private expenditure rose at an annual rate of 7 per cent, public expenditure over the period rose at an annual rate of 16 per cent or over twice as fast. In the field of private consumption, Government, by its policies, and the people, by an understanding of the importance of those policies, restricted private investment to 7 per cent, which is lower than the growth rate of the national income over the same period, which is 1 per cent. This indicates, without a doubt, that there have been greater domestic savings over the period and a relative decline in consumption. This fact has reflected itself in an increase in investment, but public consumption rose at the rate of 12 per cent which is extremely modest when one considers the dramatic increase in public investment over the period, which increase is in the figure of 30 per cent.

3 p.m.

There has been substantial change between consumption and expenditure and between public and private investment. All of these things show the relative change which has been Government's policy objective, a change between private ends and public ends.

It is important to note, sir, that in 1970 imports increased by some \$28 million over the 1969 figure. This increase has been not an increase in goods for consumption but almost wholly an increase in goods for investment. This represents, as I said, a stabilization of in the consumption patterns within the economy, and a strengthening of the infrastructure for growth by increasing domestic investment for relevant development.

Mr. Speaker, we get unintelligent mutterings from hon. Members who obviously do not understand the nature of the figures which have been disclosed. In the field of savings – in private savings – the figure of \$21 million in 1964 rose to the figure of \$27 million in 1969; but, more dramatically in the field of public savings, public savings of \$1 million in 1964 were increased by the massive, intelligent, relevant fiscal measures of the People's National Congress Government to \$15 million.

Those, I repeat, are public savings which, of course, have gone to finance the Government's Development Programmes. And let me remind those who are forgetful ... who did not read or listen carefully to the ... by my predecessor. In the Budget Speech of 1971, at page 17, there is this sentence which seems to have escaped the minds of certain hon. Members of the Opposition or, perhaps, the impact of it was too great for limited understandings. There the hon. Minister of Finance at the time dealt with the Development Programme and the financing of the Development Programme. He ended with these dramatic words:

"Thus, it is evident that Guyana from her own local financial resources financed nearly 50 per cent of our development works."

Mr. Speaker, we talked of controlling our resources, we talked of controlling our economy. The Government is committed to all of these things and the Government has taken the necessary resolute action which will enable us to achieve this objective, that is, action aimed at capital mobilization within the community.

Hon. Members will recall that Government introduced far-reaching fiscal measures in 1970, aimed at making the tax burden more equitable, aimed at bringing into the tax net, so to speak, certain persons who were evading their legitimate tax obligations, aimed at ensuring greater capital mobilization within the country. These fiscal measures arose out of the report of the Fiscal Review Committee which did such a wonderful job and to which committee I would like today to pay public tribute. The fiscal performance has shown how right the Committee was in its recommendations, and that performance has shown how efficiently Government has managed the new fiscal system which was designed to increase revenue and improve our tax performance.

May I also, sir, before dealing with the performance, also pay tribute to a Committee which was established by the Government – the Committee for the Efficient Collection of Revenue, which committee has been chaired by the parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Finance. That committee was

appointed to keep under constant review the revenue-earning departments of Government, to ensure that efficient systems were in operation, to identify areas of weakness and generally to help those departments to get about their business of collecting revenues which are due to Government. That Committee has done a remarkable job and is continuing, under the chairmanship of the Parliamentary Secretary, to do a good job in making the system efficient.

But, Mr. Speaker, let the figures speak for themselves. Total revenue in 1969 was \$116.9 million and that figure rose to \$135.9 million in 1970 an absolute increase of some \$19 million representing an increase of 16 per cent over Budget expectations and 19 per cent over 1969 performance.

Now, let me deal with some specifics. Let me select certain heads of revenue look at the heads of revenue, and consider the performance. I deal specifically with income tax because hon. Members will remember the Income Tax (Amendment) Act which was introduced into his honourable House last year and which was the subject of so much ill-informed controversy and discussion. But the proof of the pudding is in the eating – if I may use a homely phrase – and one has to see how the legislation has performed and what has been the increment to Government from the passage of that legislation.

3.10 p.m.

In 1969, income tax reached a level of \$34.4 million. In 1970, it reached a level of \$50 million, an increment of approximately \$16 million, and \$7.4 million over Budget expectations.

Let me look at particular aspect of income tax – company income tax. Again, hon. Members will recall the noise and the confusion, particularly from our friends in the United

Force, because I am persuaded that the hon. Members of the People's Progressive Party Opposition went along with the spirit of that legislation. Company income tax in 1969 yielded the measly sum of \$18.9 million. The legislation which was introduced in December, 1970, was able to make a dramatic impact upon that level of company income tax. In 1970, company income tax increased from \$18.9 million to \$31.7 million, an increment of \$12.8 million or 68 per cent higher than the 1969 level. There can be no doubt, in the light of these figures, of the rightness of Government's fiscal policy. There can be no doubt that all the talk about inefficiency, all the talk about blundering on the part of the Government, has no validity because, as I have said when I began my intervention in this Debate, there can be no intelligent criticism of Government's policy.

Mr. Speaker: Time!

The Minister of Trade (Leader of the House) (Mr. Ramsaroop): I move that the hon. Member be given a further 15 minutes to continue his speech.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Hoyte: There can be no intelligent criticism of the projection of Government's policy in the President's Address unless we look at Government's record and the actual performance as seen against these figures, and these figures tell a story. They tell a story of Government's efficiency and of increased and improved management of fiscal and budgetary matters.

But this whole question of capital mobilization has had within the space of that one year remarkable success. Consider the performance of the Guyana National Co-operative Bank which has been established as a popular institution, an alliance of the trade unions, co-operative societies, the friendly societies, and the Government, to set up a financial institution which has its roots in the people. That was a test of public confidence. Did the people believe in themselves? Did the people believe in the Government? Were they prepared to deal with a

national institution which promised to follow a national policy as against the foreign commercial banks?

The increment in the banking system in 1970 was \$11.8 million, and of that increment, the Guyana National Co-operative Bank garnered to itself 60 per cent in less than one year. Let us remember that that Bank opened its doors to the public on the 24th February, 1970. These are signs of change. These are signs of growing maturity, these are signs that the people of Guyana are prepared to stand up and be counted among those who have faith in our country and faith in the People's National Congress Government. *[Applause]*

The insurance legislation has, now that the shouting is over, brought about a substantial increment in local investment. Prior to the legislation, the insurance companies invested large sums abroad. They garnered the savings of ordinary people by way of insurance premiums and those premiums were invested. Where? In Canada, in C.P.R. shares, in Rhodesia, in South Africa, in the United States, in the United Kingdom, and in places with strange-sounding names. The Government does not apologise for passing legislation which says that local premiums must be invested in Guyana and that a portion of that investment must be investment available to the Government. And so, the \$15 million which they collected on average every year, \$6 million of which was used for investment, now remain in this country to spark the national development programme and to ensure that the people's wealth, generated by the people's labour, remains here to create conditions which are conducive to their economic improvement and benefit.

And so I can continue in this strain. I can continue showing how on every front of fiscal, economic, and budgetary policy, the Government has achieved success after success. I can show how this Government, by an inspiration of confidence, by the setting-up of a system of efficiency, by placing confidence in local people, has been able to generate that enthusiasm, has

been able to generate those resources in terms of money, of material, and the human spirit, which are the prerequisites for the development of this country.

I said that there has been a shift in the pattern of consumption and investment. That shift has been a shift agreeable with Government's economic thrust, and I pointed out that the increments in the imports in this country have been increments of capital goods. Let us see one area in which Government agencies are embarking upon capital expenditure important to the development of this country. The Guyana Electricity Corporation has embarked upon an expansion programme aimed at electrifying the entire coast of Guyana, taking in the islands of Leguan and Wakenaam, a programme costing some \$77 million over the period 1971 to 1976. Work has already begun to upgrade existing systems and to provide systems where none exists. I would draw this particularly to the attention of hon. Members of the Opposition who keep asking how is the money being spent.

3.20 p.m.

It is important to bring about a large increment in domestic savings for a number of reasons, not only because the Government is embarked upon a policy of economic self-reliance which requires us to finance more and more our development programme but also because foreign capitalists and investors have become wiser and are observing the winds of change. They are no longer investing in developing countries alone. They are calling for local counterpart funds to induce them to come in. This is a policy of wisdom and even financial intuition. For example, the International Finance Corporation has laid down its policy that it will not grant any loan to private enterprise for investment in foreign countries unless the foreign investor is prepared to go into partnership with local people. So that you cannot even today induce your foreign investor unless you are prepared to put up counterpart funds to go along with his. This is the pattern of economic investment today Government responds to that pattern in an intelligent and forceful way.

The hon. Member Mr. Balchand Persaud, in his youthful exuberance, says that this is not a socialist society. Is Poland a capitalist society or is it one where your socialist friends reside? And why is it, Mr. Speaker, that Poland is making desperate efforts to obtain American development loans, which action brings it now into conflict with its Russian masters? Why is it that Russia, the great example of the communist system, has entered into agreement with the hated capitalist in Italy to provide Fiat factories in Russia? Why is it that the Russian Government tried to enter into an agreement with one of the most hated capitalists in the world, Henry Ford, to supply trucks and to apply the American expertise in truck building in the Soviet Union, which agreement was blocked by the U.S. Government? The young hon. Member does not know that the Russians have been trying to encourage and interest Japanese capitalists. Is Japan a socialist country or is it one of the greatest capitalist countries in the world in company with the United States and West Germany? Why is it that the Russians have been making tremendous efforts to interest Japanese industrialists and capitalists to join them in a consortium to develop Siberia? If the hon. Member has the answer let him get up and say.

It is not a question of self preservation and not of ideology. Economics is not political ideology and communists are coming to understand that the crude Marxian theory of the structure of the society is wrong and that ideology is the infrastructure out of which comes relevant economic development.

I remember the Biblical admonition not to cast pearls before swine. It is difficult to deal with people who do not know. I am prepared, out of an abundance of charity, to enter into any explanations – which my young friends over there do not understand or which they may require – in the lobby after I have left this Chamber. But let us not enter into fields which require reading and understanding, and let us bring ourselves back to Guyana and stop wasting our time about the Soviet Union, Poland and the United States.

We in this country have embarked upon a policy of economic self-reliance. We have embarked upon a policy of equitable tax distribution, and I have shown how the long delayed legislation which was introduced last year had such a dramatic impact upon the revenues of this country.

May I say that there is much more to be done? We do not say that we have reached the end of the road. We do not take any particular pride in what has been achieved because this is a beginning and we are moving towards a stated objective.

In the field of taxation, there are far too many people who dodge and evade taxes. We have a population estimated at the last census to be something like 714,000. Let us make a conservative estimate and say that of that number 200,000 people are gainfully employed. Yet today we find on our income tax books something in the vicinity of 80,000 people. The thing is incredible and it is obvious that there are many evading income tax.

There are large numbers of people who manage by one means or another to evade their just obligations to this country and so, not only has the Committee on the Efficient Collection of Revenue been functioning, but there have been efforts to improve the Inland Revenue Department both in techniques and in administration.

Training has been going on continuously. On Monday, the Department will be starting a new training course designed to up-grade the quality of tax officials, and accompanying this will be, of course, the new system designed to put tax officers in the various areas of the country where they can acquire their own knowledge of the financial potential of people in those areas.

Mr. Speaker, there is a tremendous amount of work to be done. There are, for example, our good friends the merchants.

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Ramsaroop: May I respectfully move that the hon. Minister be given a further 15 minutes to wind up his address.

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Minister may continue.

Mr. Hoyte: I was saying that our good friends, the merchants of the Chamber of Commerce, keep wasting their time writing me telling me to withdraw the defence levy and misstating the purpose for which the defence levy was introduced, instead of bestirring themselves and looking at some of those rascally members of their organization who defraud the revenue all the time by false invoices, by false tax returns, by returning losses when they have made profits, by bringing goods from the Sino-Soviet bloc and then palming them off in this country as goods which have originated in the western countries, or bringing goods from the Sino-Soviet bloc and re-exporting them to Carifta countries under the pretext that those goods were manufactured in Guyana. Those are some of the things they should be looking at.

And again, they write me and threaten that if the Minister of Trade, my hon. Colleague, does not invite them to an interview, they are going to publish some memorandum to attack the E.T.B. I say like Robert Benchley, I think, "Publish and be damned!" I give them my answer that the Chamber of Commerce is allowing itself to become an anti-national body. I do not say "anti-Government." It is entitled to be anti-Government, but it is not entitled to be anti-national and to form a conspiracy with people outside of this country to thwart and frustrate the wishes of the people of Guyana.

Mr. Speaker, the people of this country have marched in 1962, 1963, and 1964 in quest of their political rights. Let those people who believe that they are so many King Canutes and they can stand on the shore and tell the waves of progress to recede, let them beware; because, unless they understand and accept that change is inevitable, when the people march in quest of their economic rights the Government will not lift a finger to save those selfish men.

There is a place for them in the economy and they must find their place and function effectively and in the national interest. But if they adopt anti-national attitudes, anti-national postures, and believe that they are a Government in a Government, the hurricane of change will sweep them away.

There can be only one Government in a country and that is the political Government. In Guyana there is only one Government and that is the People's National Congress Government. That Government has set its course irrevocably towards the social and economic transformation of this country and in that course it will not fail, falter or be deterred. *[Applause]*

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Member Mrs. Sahoye.

Mrs. Sahoye: Mr. Speaker, reading through the Presidential Address, one thinks of a bad dream, a sleep from which one awakens and realizes that it is all false and nothing else. Dealing with consumer co-operatives, this Government is indeed not very alert to the problems that affect consumers, or it is not prepared to tackle the problems that confront consumers. I can remember well that the Women's Progressive Organisation, after reviewing the situation for a number of years, submitted proposals to the Prime Minister because we realized what was happening and what eventually would happen.

The Women's Progressive Organisation took time off to sit down to prepare proposals which we felt could help to ease the problems that confront the consumers. We called on the Government to set up not a consumers' association, but a consumers' council, where not only the Government's friends would be but also all sections of our community. All our people would be invited to discuss ways and means of alleviating these problems. We sought a way whereby consumers would be able to secure commodities. And not only that! We are interested in quantity as well as in quality and that is why we proposed a bureau of standards. Considerable quantities of things dumped by European countries find themselves here and it is just not fair.

Setting up consumers' co-operatives is not answering the problems that confront us. The problems will not be solved until this Government is prepared to tackle them from the grass roots. It is wasting time building bureaucracies and looking at things at the top. Repeatedly we try to belabour the point that Government must tackle the problems at the grass roots level because, lo and behold, if a house is not properly constructed at the bottom, it is useless to put up the walls and the roof. Since our time is limited today, and I observe the Government side is taking up much of our time, I will go over to the most burning question, education.

The children of Guyana, irrespective of race, colour, or creed, social, political, or economic standing, must be taken care of. This Government, although it is receiving advice, is not taking that advice. The situation at the public schools throughout this country is chaotic. Not only do we have a limited number of public schools but we find that at these public schools there are so many problems that one must sit back and ask oneself if this Government is prepared to look after the children of this country.

Reviewing the Common Entrance Examination, what do we find? We find that approximately 85 per cent of those who pass the examination come from the city of Georgetown. Since this is a fact, why is it that this Government cannot make a survey to find out the reasons?

There are two things that go hand in hand: Cause and effect. If you do not remove the causes you are bound to have the effects.

3.40 p.m.

The majority of children in our country come from the rural areas. The privileged classes in the city can afford to send their children to kindergartens. You can, therefore, expect that their children will top the lists at the Common Entrance Examination and take 85 per cent of the places. Why is it that this Government cannot make an investigation into what is going on in rural Guyana? Why is it that the city of Georgetown is taking away 85 per cent of the places?

The People's Progressive Party belaboured the point that there might be kindergartens in the rural areas for, as the hon. Minister knows, the children there are not up to standard. It means it is impossible for them to be admitted into schools at the age of 5 years 9 months. They are admitted at 6½ years. When children are admitted to the primary schools at the age of 6 or 6½ years it is impossible for all of them to take the Common Entrance Examination at 10 plus. We were told that the Guyana Teachers' Association, which is interested in the education and welfare of children, made the point that the admission age should be around 4 years 9 months so that children from the rural areas, in particular, would be able to take the Common Entrance Examination. If this is not done we are going to have only children from the privileged classes holding certificates.

Because of the Ministry's attitude when complaints are made, we are encountering a difficult situation. One wonders what will happen to more than 40 students at the Covent Garden Government Secondary School who are expecting to take the General Certificate Examination. The attention of the Minister was directed to what is happening at this school. I know that many of these teachers are afraid that if they speak out their heads will be rolled, and there are only certain teachers whose heads will be rolled.

I think it is important that we relate the points and bring to the attention of members what is happening at the Convent Garden Government Secondary School. There is total mismanagement at this School. Either the Headmaster needs treatment or he is incapable of dealing with children. A person may hold a certificate, he may have qualifications, but that does not necessarily mean that he can teach. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: Order!

Mrs. Sahoye: The Situation was allowed to deteriorate at this Government Secondary School.

Some time last year it was claimed that the school was over-staffed and three teachers were removed. A few months later eight teachers were sent to the school, sir. The parents who send their children to the Covent Garden Government Secondary School can see clearly what the Ministry is doing and the way in which it is doing it. It is time for this Government to understand that parents have an interest in their children and cannot be coerced into accepting any kind of treatment from the headmasters or teachers. One teacher was attached to the school and for one term her name did not appear on the time-table. In disgust and disillusionment she had to ask for a transfer.

In the G.C.E. class the teacher of History was lecturing to students who are to take their examinations in June. This teacher was doing a good job when, lo and behold, he was notified that he would be transferred on the 1st May, 1971. The examination is to be held in June and on 1st May he was to be transferred. The attitude of this Headmaster is that the children cannot even discuss matters with him. Think of it! A school master expels children even for playing cricket. Three children so far have been expelled from the Covent Garden Government Secondary School. One was Frankie Francois, who was the head prefect. On very many occasions this man was so arrogant that he claimed, "I am the boss". Even the teachers he had in tears returning to their classes.

In Guyana we try to teach our children to wash their fingers before eating; they must clip their finger nails; they must wear clean clothing; they must brush their shoes. The school is not swept until classes are in session because the schoolmaster arrives just when school is to be called, so the children have to wallow in the dust. When he comes late and the rain is falling, the children are locked out in the rain. This is how our children in this country are being treated. Is this the price we have to pay for poverty? *[Interruption by the Prime Minister.]* Because the sting of poverty still burns inside and I remember it. When these children get wet on their way to school, this arrogant schoolmaster turns them away and if their parents, because of their limited finances send them to school in attire other than the school's uniform, he turns them away. We want to know if this Government is really interested in giving education to our children. We go a little further.

They tell us of co-ops in the schools. Co-operative Republic, self-help, you must try to do everything to help the Government. I have a receipt in my hand. The children, realizing this school belongs to them, knowing they are part of it and wanting to help, accepted that each parent must pay one dollar per month for the fencing and preparation of the school compound. To date, the parents or the students have not been told what has happened to the funds collected. This receipt is dated July 1970 and the sum is \$5. There were some parents who gave a dollar a month and some doubled up and gave \$3.

These children, because they have a love for their school, a love for the environment, a love for the area, a love for advancement, engaged in dances, banquets, and fashion shows. This money also cannot be accounted for by the school master. Each child was called upon to give 50 cents to be provided with snacks during the day. The schoolmaster is a big man. He should be the one to show the example and guide the students. If I should not give account for money I collect, what do you think the students will do? *[Interruption by the Prime Minister.]*

We go a little further. Certificates for the June 1970 examination which were supposed to have been given to the schoolmaster have not yet been distributed to many of the students who returned asking him for their certificates. This alone shows his arrogance.

The Ministry of Education took it upon itself to close the doors of the school. When the decision was taken, the children were at school. They were at school on Thursday and on Friday, and on the following Monday, they heard it on the radio that the school would be closed on the following Monday. There were things missing from the school. Here there is a watch and advice was given by the Parent-Teachers' Association whereby losses from the school could be prevented, but this arrogant gentleman is not prepared to listen and he treats the people badly.

This same gentleman had to be transferred from the Ruimveldt Government School because of his behavior. What he is doing and getting away with at Covent Garden, it was impossible for him to do at Ruimveldt. All the students and parents have asked for, is that this gentleman be removed for the time being, investigation made, and the doors of the school be opened so that our children will be able to attend.

About two years ago at Devonshire Castle, there was overcrowding at the school, and it was decided at that time that a school would be built by self-help at Lima. The school is half-way constructed and Devonshire Castle school continues to be overcrowded under these conditions. How do we expect our children to learn? How can the teacher say, "Come to school with clean clothing when many of the children have to attend a bottom-house school? Not only on the Essequibo Coast but at Sans Souci, Wakenaam. Again the Government says, self-help. The Ministry of Education is not prepared to help the schools.

Now, sir, the Government has a drive for self-help in the building of schools. Another situation is arising in that many of the parents realize that if they build schools by self-help it would be in the interest of their children. But what has been happening is that instead of Government supplying the material and letting the people do the physical work, persons are going around to homes telling parents that they must subscribe \$5.00 a month to help build these schools. This is injustice to the hilt, and I feel the time has come when the Government must change its policy and reorganize the whole educational system with more emphasis on primary education.

We say we do not wish collar and tie jobs. Many persons have G.C.E. certificates but do not have jobs. We want them as agriculturalists. The grant at some schools is \$10.50 per quarter per child. We want schools to be so equipped that the children will learn. What the Government does not understand is that if those who study agriculture do not have the basic knowledge, if they are illiterate, when the agriculture officers go around to speak to them they will not understand and they will not be able to help themselves. Basic education is necessary and this is where the Government has fallen down.

As far as medical examination in schools is concerned, there are many school nurses who visit the various schools, but children have to be examined in the open. These nurses are ashamed at the conditions that exist. Many times they ask teachers, "Is there not a room where we can set up a screen to examine these students?" There are many school masters who are ashamed of the situation and complain about it. They know of the shortage of space. It means that many students cannot be examined when the school nurses visit.

I am asking the Minister of Education to look into this matter of the health of the students and to provide better conditions for the school nurses. Teachers and nurses have to work together and, therefore, sir, let the teachers feel that they are playing a part, let the nurses feel that they are playing a part by having conditions which will allow them to do their work properly and efficiently.

Mr. Speaker: Hon Members the House is suspended for half an hour.

Sitting suspended accordingly at 4.10 p.m.

4.35 p.m.

On resumption - -

The Minister of Education (Miss Field-Ridley): Just before we broke for tea, we had a rather hysterical interjection, but I think we understand the predicament of the hon. Member (Mrs. Sahoye) who is known to speak on health and allied subjects and was a little out of her depth in talking about education. But you will remember the intervention just before that of my colleague the hon. Minister of Finance (Mr. Hoyte) where he sought to outline the philosophy on which we base our developmental objectives and he outlined some of the things we had achieved and some of the things we were on our way to achieving. It is in this context that we must see the educational policy and philosophy of this country for it is now a truism that education must be planned in the context of the particular development of the individual country for which it is geared, for out of the educational system must come people, citizens with the philosophy and the technical expertise that will carry out the objectives of the country and will understand the mood and the thinking and the spirit of the country. It is within this framework that we in the Ministry of Education operate.

I am sure by now members have heard, perhaps *ad nauseam*, the cries from all sectors of the community that our educational philosophy needs changing, that the content of our school curriculum needs to be changed. While they have been talking, however, changes have been taking place. In developed countries over the past five or ten years, the tradition has been to emphasise secondary education and we went along with this in so far as it has suited us. This is why this Government doubled the number of secondary schools it inherited when it took over the reins of Government in 1964 and we have sought over the past few years to increase the quality of these secondary schools.

The Ministry of Education does not propose in the near future to increase significantly the number of secondary schools in the school system. What we have been planning and slowly achieving, is an improvement in the quality of the school content and the quality of the staff. It is perhaps interesting to note how far we have been successful in the achievement in terms of improving the quality of our secondary schools. We have reached the stage where, in the secondary schools around the urban area and in areas within twenty miles of Georgetown, we have an average of only three untrained members of staff in the secondary schools who are not in the process of being trained *[Interruption]*

The hon. Member mentions Covent Garden. Let us have a look at the kind of staff that they have. In a school of 374, they have 20 teachers on the staff, a ratio which even developed countries do not boast of. This gives a ratio of one teacher to nineteen students. This is the school where they complained, you will remember, that there are unqualified teachers teaching classes. In this school, there are seven graduates. In addition to seven graduates, there are six fully-trained teachers for secondary schools. There are four teachers who are now at the University of Guyana pursuing courses. This means there are three untrained members of staff and let us look at the qualifications of these three untrained members of staff. Two of them possess both “A” levels and “O” levels. There is one member on that staff who has seven “O” levels and that is the most badly qualified member of the Covent Garden staff.

Since the hon. Member has mentioned Covent Garden, let me pause to look at the Covent Garden situation because we have heard lots of allegations of what is going on in this school and the neglect of the Ministry and things like that, and since we are talking about the staff, let us look at the staff. I do not know what you call them-strikers, but I do not think they are unemployed workers – their claim was that the Ministry put people to teach subjects which they are not qualified to teach. Under the protection of three hon. Members on the opposite side, I saw the students this morning and had a very interesting discussion. The thing that I regret most about the Covent Garden incident is that the People’s Progressive Party is seeking to misguide school children. *[Interruption]*

Mr. Speaker: May I have order in the House, please!

Miss Field-Ridley: Unfortunate, I say, to inject political considerations into a situation which should not have entered this realm at all. Let us look at the allegations that were tabled in a list of complaints allegedly drawn up by the students, and remember this is a fifth form school; no student could have drawn up that list of grievances. They claimed we have put teachers to teach subjects for which they are not qualified. I saw them this morning with their three protectors, and when I asked them to give me details about this, eventually they alleged that one particularly teacher, a female teacher, had been put to teach history and she was not qualified to teach history. In their presence, I checked the qualifications of this particular mistress and discovered that she is an honours graduate in history from the University of London. After that, the students, in all fairness to them, withdrew that allegation. Instead, they confessed that they might have been misinformed about that.

They continued to relate an incident to me where the headmaster had objected to some noise being made by some boys. He had threatened to cane them and the boys had refused to accept caning. In those circumstances the headmaster sent them home. I asked the boy who made the allegation what would he have done in that situation. He said he would have done exactly the same thing. This is what happened when I spoke to the students about the allegations that have been put up under their name. I have promised to meet them tomorrow to continue this examination.

They made one other point which they said was important. They alleged that the headmaster had prevented the Parent-Teachers' Association from meeting. I questioned them about this. It turned out that apart from the headmaster, they had ten other members on the committee. The headmaster himself is not secretary and, therefore, not charged with responsibility for calling meetings, but they said that what he had not done was to ensure that the secretary had summoned meetings. They therefore accused him of preventing meetings whereas this morning all they said was that he had not pushed the secretary to send out notices.

What I wanted to bring out is that these allegations which have been put out under the name of the students, on close examination the students themselves withdrew them. For some reason I have found it very interesting over the last two days to notice the kind of machinations which are surrounding a situation which should be resolved in the interest of the education of those children. There has been attached to the group of children a foster father who claims he is a parent but on closer questioning confesses he is not really a parent, he is a guardian. Not a legal guardian. Accompanied by members of the Opposition, I heard the children. Mr. Speaker, you will have noticed at the end of the last intervention, the children were hurried out lest they hear what the Minister of Education had to say because they might understand the truth.

Yesterday morning, I had spoken in this corridor to those student representatives and they agreed to meet me at 8.30 this morning. I was in my office at 8.30; at about 9.25, the secretary of the Leader of the Opposition phoned the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Persaud who was in my office and as a result of that phone call, Mr. Persaud told me that the children were at the office of the hon. Leader of the Opposition and they could not have seen me at 8.30. I do not know if the Opposition has been telling them they will open the school. They are afraid to allow the children to meet me face to face without their protectors, the hon. Member Mr. Wilson, the hon. Member Mr. Reepu Persaud, and the hon. Member Mrs. Sahoye, who, when she does turn up for an interview as she did this morning, turns up 35 minutes late.

4.45 p.m.

These are children who are not Sixth Formers. They are secondary school children who go no further than Fifth Form. We are talking about children of an average of 15. There are many parents around and we all have experience with 15-year old children. One will find that the behaviour of these children at the Covent Garden School does not conform to the normal behaviour unless somebody is directing them. They told me that morning that there is some organization called M.A.O. which is keeping evening classes for them. We have done all we can to ensure that those who remain in school are transferred to other Government Schools.

Let me tell hon. Members a little bit of the history of this school because the Opposition is now behaving as though this school has come to the Ministry's attention for the first time. The present Headmaster went to that school in 1968. After he had been there for some time it became clear that a group of teachers resented his being there. They formed a tight group which opposed him. On several occasions officers of the Ministry had to go in and speak to these teachers, especially a teacher called Mr. Roopan, who has been described as the "games Master". We have spoken to the members of that staff on several occasions because of their attitude to the Headmaster. They have flouted the authority of the Headmaster; they have refused to carry out orders and have encouraged people to write up all sorts of horrible things in the school. On one occasion an Education Officer went into the school and saw Mr. Roopan reading a novel, in the presence of his class which was in an uproar.

That is the kind of situation that has existed. It became clear that what we had to do was to break up that tight clique of teachers. We started to do this and as the hon. Member has said, we had a new intake of teachers in the first term of this academic year. This was possible because graduates came out in that term. We sent in five new teachers. Consequently we transferred one of those teachers and we gave notice of transfer to Mr. Roopan.

It is interesting to note that the members on the other side, when they came to me, were insisting that the Headmaster should go and Mr. Roopan stay. Mr. Roopan himself has not expressed, at this stage, a desire to stay: He has merely asked that we do not transfer him to the school we have suggested but to another school. When we sent the notices of transfer the trouble started. The children – it is history now – ran out of school at the time of the singing of the National Anthem, went to a nearby house and came back with prepared posters. After that the situation deteriorated.

The Ministry had to close that school because a situation had arisen where one teacher was slapped by a student bearing a picket, the Headmaster was raced down the corridor by students and had to be rescued by two members of staff; the female teachers were made to run a

gauntlet between the picketing students; the female teachers were threatened, things were said that I cannot, in keeping with the practice of the House, repeat in this House. Three members of the staff received letters threatening that they would be put to death if they turned up at that school.

In that kind of situation we were forced to close the school. But the Ministry of Education has said, and continues to say, that as soon as the children are prepared to go back in the school we are willing to open that school. All they have to do is to come in and say to me that they are willing. I am sure that this is what the students would do if they were left to themselves, but they are not given a chance by their would-be protectors on the other side.

That is only one secondary school. The quality of staff in this school is indicative of the quality of the staff that now exists in secondary schools, even in a school as remote as Bartica. If you look at that staff at that school, you will find that there is only one untrained teacher on that staff and this is a school that has traditionally been regarded as outside of the normal urban area.

Within the Ministry of Education we have felt for some time that there needs to be more fundamental changes in the educational system and so we have been having meetings and planning sessions in our Ministry. We have a large planning group on which representatives of the G.T.A. sit. I notice that they are being courted at the moment by the Opposition. In that committee we are planning a different kind of emphasis in the total educational structure. I am sure that I cannot be faulted if I say that there is not one school in this country now where children are not exposed to some form of practical training that can be used as a basis of earning their livelihood when they leave the primary schools.

In some cases it is done through co-operatives; they have been starting agricultural schemes; they have been starting credit unions; they have been starting handicraft classes; they

have been doing brick-making and modelling; they have been doing straw work. This is the kind of emphasis that we are already putting in our schools.

Meanwhile, our planning committee sees that what we need in education now is an input into the primary schools. Every year, 20,000 new children come into the school at age 5 years 9 months. This is because of the success of my colleague the Minister of Health as a result of whose activity we no longer have the high mortality rate among babies and young children that we had in the past. This is why the school situation has to cope with about 20,000 every year. This is why the school Ministry has decided that it will, as a result, increase the primary school places rather than the secondary school. We shall have a kind of education for self-reliance, an educational system that puts much more emphasis on practical studies in primary school and when I say primary school I am thinking here of a school age from 6 to 14.

We are hoping to achieve a situation where the youngest children who use our primary school system will from the start be introduced to the philosophy of the Co-operative Republic and will be oriented towards acquiring relevant skills. That kind of emphasis will mark the training in a country like this. The self-help philosophy is something we have been pushing in our schools since the inception of the Co-operative Republic and, indeed, for some months before that.

4.55 p.m.

We still see that some children will leave those primary schools to go into the traditional secondary school system and let me say a word about that.

Our misinformed colleague Mrs. Sahoye alleged that the successful students at the Common Entrance Examination came primarily from the urban area. It demonstrates that she does not even understand how we select students on the basis of that secondary school entrance examination. There are about three hundred places which are countrywide. These are

competed for all over the country but to ensure that children from the rural areas have an opportunity for secondary education in traditional schools we have established area secondary schools. Of our 31 secondary schools, 27 are area secondary schools. To those schools go only the students who come from the particular area in which the school is situated and we have schools covering every area. In the Rupununi, we have secondary schools, in the North West, along the coast, along the riverain areas.

In any given area, we choose a school which the child must attend because obviously the child cannot go into secondary school unless he had a certain background. There is a minimum score set which takes into account academic standards and of school places availability. So long as the child gets that score, the child is admitted into the secondary school for the area and because we recognize that there are differences from area to area, the score is varied from area to area. A child in Georgetown might get 307 marks but does not automatically get a free place in a Government school while a child who has 294 marks on the Corentyne Coast will get a free place in a Government secondary school. I think the hon. Member before she talks about education should learn a little more about how this system functions. When we talk about this Common Entrance Examination, we talk about thousands of children every year. These 27 schools on average take 100 children each and this is a quantum of people we are talking about in addition to those who enter the four Government secondary schools.

All these changes have come about because we have sought within the Ministry of Education to formalize the institutions which will be charged with this planning. For curriculum development, we have identified a co-ordinator who works full time on curriculum development, with a staff of people who are involved in different subject areas. Working closely with this group of curriculum developers is a group of material writers, teachers who have been seconded into the Ministry, who work full time, who work on material for production in the school system. So far, they have been doing an excellent job in co-operation with the audio visual section of the Ministry and the broadcasts to schools. They have been producing work that will give us the kind of Guyanese content we need in our school system. We hope this unit will grow so that we

will be able in as short a time as possible, to provide for our school children throughout the system a cheap form of material so that they will not any longer be burdened with expensive textbooks which come from overseas.

These two units work very closely with the third unit which we have recently set up, the Testing Unit within the Ministry of Education. A few weeks ago we had the first training course for a group of teachers in test construction. Again, we have chosen a person well qualified to head it. The result is that some of the changes we have been talking about for a long time, such as those in the Common Entrance Examination, are already in train, for this group of teachers, having been trained in test construction, are working out models, some of which have already been tried in schools so that Guyanese teachers will construct tests for Guyanese children, validate them upon Guyanese children and obviate the need for having a system of overseas examinations.

Hand in hand with this must be seen the reforms in the area of secondary schools examinations. Two weeks ago, there was a meeting of Caribbean officials to formalize the plans which each territory had to make to bring a little closer the Caribbean Examinations Council. These are some of the things we are doing.

Meanwhile, our emphasis on technical education continues in a very relevant way. The new Technical Institute at New Amsterdam when it opens will have a special course constructed in the use of clay bricks for construction purposes and in the making of clay bricks.

As I said when I started my intervention, as I see it, education has to go always hand in hand with the philosophy of the country and the developmental plans and projections for the country as a whole. We have been seeking to do this with a great deal of success as the President said in his Address. We have made a reality of many of the things we outlined last year and we will continue. This year, as you know, like other Ministries, we are involved in drafting our new Ten-Year Development Plan. This will give us our projections for the next

five and then ten years and these will all be in keeping with the philosophy of the Government and the projections that we have for the developmental thrust of the country. *[Applause]*

Mr. R.D. Persaud: Mr. Speaker, I want to say publicly in this House that the People's Progressive Party is interested and will do everything possible to see that the Covent Garden School opens as quickly as possible. We have absolutely no intention of doing anything to hinder the Ministry or those concerned in the opening of this school. It appears very clear to me from my investigation that the relationship in respect of the headmaster, the teachers, the students, and parents, has broken down. We can forget for the moment all the technical implications and the complaints at the school – who is qualified to teach and who is not qualified to teach. I am trying to narrow down the area so the children will not be deprived of their education. All I am seeking to do is to ask the Minister to take into account, not extraneous matters, but matters that directly affect the education of the children of Covent Garden.

I will not deal with all that has happened, although I know of some of the transfers that were not justified, certain people being removed; I do not want to name a man who is a graduate, who has been removed from the school and who should have been deputy head of that school and who is still senior master and now acting deputy head at another school. I do not want to go into all these things because we will never end, but it is clear that the Covent Garden School has a history lasting for several months and some thing underneath has blown up finally and it came from the teachers and the students and the parents combined. Not trouble-makers. Ninety per cent or more of the students are out of the school and if the instigators were responsible, do you mean the instigators have so much influence that they are going to keep such large numbers of children out of the school? Not all of one race but of all races. *[Interruption.]*

That very third former to whom the hon. Minister referred said of her own volition “I cannot go there with Mr. Taitt as headmaster.” What are their complaints? I am not going to take this opportunity to cast any aspersions on the headmaster but I say this: the headmaster has not been tactful. It appears from all the evidence we have heard that he is a hasty man. When a parent goes with a child and complains to him he normally chases the parent out of the place saying “I don’t want to see you”. He also flogs children.

Under Chapter 92 of our Education Ordinance when a teacher flogs a child he has to make an entry in a book and say why he beat the child. All these things are not being complied with. What I want to say is that it is wrong for any headmaster in this era to feel that he can just call boys of 17 and 18 and flog them without telling them the reasons why they are being flogged. But, as I said, that is by the way; what we have proposed to the Minister is a simple measure to solve the problem. *[Interruption.]*

It appears that relationship between the headmaster and students, parents and teachers has broken down. Remove him for one week from the school pending an investigation and if the investigation proves that there is no evidence to justify the complaints of the students, parents and teachers then let the headmaster go back to school. In my view this is a reasonable proposal and this is all we request the Minister of Education to do. The children will then go back to school there.

If the Government wants to adopt an arrogant attitude and wants to feel because it has power, it is going to close the school or if it thinks that the majority of the children who are involved are children of supporters of the People’s Progressive Party ... *[Interruption.]* Had those children been supporters of the People’s National Congress greater interest and consideration would have been shown by this Government but this Government is vindictive, arrogant and racist.

I am trying my best to be as dispassionate as I can. I do not want to be led away by emotion so I urge the Minister of Education to do her best to solve the problem of the Covent Garden Secondary School. There is an easy solution, remove the headmaster for a few days, and investigate the matter immediately. *[Interruption.]*

During the contribution by the hon. Minister of Finance he did say that the Members of the mercantile community, meaning the Chamber of Commerce, are anti-national. Let us accept what the Minister says. But what is the position? This Government, or the Minister of Trade and Industry, has appointed a committee of these anti-national to advise him on what? An anti-national programme for Guyana? The Minister of Finance is either illogical or he is not *aufait* with the policy of the Government of which he is a Cabinet Minister. The Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Ramsaroop, has appointed an anti-national committee to advise him so far as trade is concerned so the advice he gets will be anti-national. There is lack of coordination between this Minister and the Minister of Finance.

It has been admitted by all in this country including the Government spokesmen, that agriculture is the backbone of Guyana's economy, and agriculture, in fact, is the key to economic development of this country. But I want to state this afternoon that the Government's agricultural programme has not been channelled in such a way as to exploit this vital sector in our country. It is for this reason that in a country with such a tremendous agricultural potential we have to import from Trinidad and Surinam not only orange juice and grapefruit juice but fresh oranges while our country has the best agricultural capacity. Up to last year we imported cabbages. I have been reliable informed that this year we have more than an adequate supply of cabbages for local consumption, but the Government has not, in its lack of vision, done anything to establish a market for the export of cabbages to other countries within the Caribbean. We spent \$95,000,000 on food consumption. One-third of this amount - \$30,000,000 of foodstuff - is being imported from abroad until now, the year 1971, and it would appear that this figure will increase by year end. It is because the Government has not settled down so far as its

agricultural policy is concerned. This is evident in the fact that there was one Minister of Agriculture then another Minister and now there is a third Minister. One can probably say that the present Minister has some association with the agricultural sector. So far as we on this side of the House are concerned, what we are endeavouring to do is to point out those areas where the Government has been failing and is still failing. So far as the Guyana Marketing Corporation is concerned, it has limited facilities for storage of meat, but worse and scandalous, the G.M.C. is without any facility whatsoever for the storage of fresh fruits and vegetables. What is the result?

5.15 p.m.

The result is when these products are in large quantities, one gets them cheaply in the markets because there is no provision to keep them so that there can be a regular flow of oranges, vegetables, etc. The Government has to look at the Guyana Marketing Corporation with a view to establishing immediately, storage for our fruits and vegetables. I feel this is good advice I am giving the Government so that the Government will not face the position where housewives will go to the market and will have to pay 25 cents for three mangoes or three oranges at certain periods of the year, and at the other periods of the year, they get ten and twelve for the same price. This can be done with a planned agricultural programme. Trinidad has great facilities for the storage of vegetables and oranges but we are without although many of these items I have referred to are seasonal.

Agriculture in our view can be the means for capital formation. We can save \$30 million every year if the programme were properly planned and organized and indeed implemented. We must be able to grow enough for our local consumption and enough for exportation. I do not want on this occasion to point to the large number of items appearing in the agricultural section of the Report of the Ministry of Agriculture because these figures support very strongly what I am saying.

We are still importing tomato paste when we can produce large quantities of tomatoes in this country. We are still importing onions when I was told we have good soil for the production of onions. In fact, onions are being produced at the moment on a very small scale but because the technical men, those who are directly involved in the agricultural sector have not reached the people who can produce these things, importation is going up every year. There can be no doubt that one of the important answers to our economic problem is food substitution. We must produce for our home and for exportation. The President's Address, which is in fact the documented policy of the Government, at page 3 states:

“For this year, the major thrust will continue to be the bringing about of diversification in the agricultural life of the country where we aim to achieve a higher degree of import substitution, create more opportunities for employment through agriculture and lay the basis for industry based on agriculture.”

I want to emphasise this aspect of it, create more industry based on agriculture.

The Government cannot tell us in this House today that during its term of office it has done anything to use our by-products, in fact, that it has taken any steps to establish factories to use so many of our by-products which can help in the building of the economy. For instance, let us talk about things like canning our milk, using our milk for milk powder, producing our own juice, canning mangoes, and I can go on to mention many other things that can be done in this country.

Instead of looking into such matters, the Guyana Development Corporation is putting up at the industrial site another printer, more propaganda media for the Government. The *Chronicle* was actually dead but it has had a rebirth. The G.D.C. would have done better to establish a factory for the canning of our food because this would be productive. That would be a liability to the Government. I am not against the Government establishing communications media. The Government has got G.B.S. and I can take the liberty this afternoon to say that the Government has now got the *Evening Post*. There is no need for the Government to bother

with the *New Nation* because these two media can do enough to put over the Government's point of view. I am not against any employee of the Chronicle being employed. You have good men working there, they should be employed, but I am just looking at the Government's list of priorities. These men can be absorbed in other areas of the Government's communications and news media but to give that priority over factories for the canning of our food, so that our imports can drop and the economy can be developed, is the wrong priority.

Mr. Speaker, the production of coffee fell from 2,874 pounds in 1968 to 1,508 in 1969. We hear a lot of talk about corn. The hon. Minister of Agriculture on the last occasion brought some corn from Global-Agri. I am not going to bother about Global-Agri because I still feel that there is need for a public examination into that. But what is our requirement? Our requirement is 14,974,799 pounds and what we have been producing in fact is 3,897,000 pounds. We are below that figure by 11,000,000 pounds. If one were to examine some of the other items I referred to, like citrus, ground provisions, one would find that the increase in these products has been very small, so much so that we cannot have an adequate supply for our local consumption. It is far below what is required. I made the point and I suggested what the answer is so far as that is concerned.

Talking about agriculture, one cannot omit to talk about the rice industry and I want to cite these figures for the consideration of the Minister to show exactly what has been happening in this country. In 1961, we produced 124,023 tons rice; in 1962, 129,924 tons; in 1963, 102,884; in 1964, 155,926 tons. In 1968, 136,690 tons; in 1969, 113,000 tons of rice.

I cite these figures because one spokesman for the Government, Mr. Hopkinson, who, I think, is a member of the Rice Marketing Board, is reported in the *Guyana Graphic* as saying that, "unless you are prepared to plant Starbonnett, you will not be given loans, you will not be helped with fertilizers, you will not be given advice." I know that the Government has been advised by a man who was praised tremendously in this House during the Budget Debate. As a

matter of fact, a former Minister of Agriculture in this House said that this gentleman saved the rice industry of this country. Having produced nearly 1,500 varieties at Mon Repos, where he had been carrying out experiments to find the right variety for the local market and exportation, the Government is now embarking on a programme quietly, and, according to Mr. Hopkinson publicly, that you plant Starbonnet or there will be no aid and help for you.

I cited some figures and I have all of them to show the drop, but let me give the figures as far as export is concerned. In 1960, we exported to the Caribbean market 99.9 tons of rice; in 1961, 67.2 tons; in 1962, 69.9 tons; in 1963, 62.7 tons; in 1964, 74.1; in 1965, 61.3 tons; in 1966, 58.9 tons; in 1967, 69.4; in 1968, 75.1; and in 1969, 97.8 tons. For Cuba the figures are: 1961, 32.8 tons; 1962, 22.5 tons; 1963, 35.9 tons; 1964, 22.8 tons; and 1965, 3.5 tons.

5.25 p.m.

I can go on and on and give the Members of the Government all the figures dealing with rice so that they can have a comprehensive look at this important industry. It is one of the industries in which 45,000 families are involved.

Why is it that the Government wants all of a sudden to change to Starbonnet and ignore all other varieties? Many of these varieties have been developed over a period of years as a result of experiment. They are named "A", "B", "C", "D", etc. They are without direct names and therefore the Government has an opportunity to name our rice which is locally bred. We have produced our own seeds now, so that we can cater for the rice market locally and abroad.

The reason for this sudden change to Starbonnet is that some businessmen came in recently from Jamaica and said they wanted Starbonnet. Among the members of that delegation was Mr. Peter Bailey who at one time was a popular figure in this country; but it would be significant for us to take into account the figures so far as the Jamaican market is concerned. If we look at those figures we will see that Jamaica up to 1968 was importing from this country

about 14,000 tons of rice, I am giving it without looking at the details. This has been going on for a number of years at a minimum of 13,000 tons.

Suddenly Jamaica tells us that it will take 20,000 tons of rice from us and it is in order to cater for this 10 per cent market that the Government is telling the country to change to Starbonnet and to ignore all other varieties of rice.

America, which supplies rice to nearly 110 countries is not producing even 50 per cent long grain rice, and still this Government wants this country that has been producing varieties that are acceptable to our local market and to our Caribbean markets to change suddenly to one variety named “Starbonnet”. This is merely to cater for 20,000 tons of rice for Jamaica.

But one asks these questions: “Why it is that Jamaica has suddenly decided not to continue to purchase its rice from the source that it was purchasing from all the time?” and “Why is it that that source has suddenly decided not to bother with Jamaica?” Those are the questions we would like to have answered by the Minister.

I have figures showing the length of the rice I was talking about. The hybrid – variety “A” can be named “Reid Variety”, variety “B” can be named “Jordan Variety” and variety “CA” can be named “Vaneluytman Variety”. A is 6.3, B is 6.2 and C is 7.1.

Mr. Speaker: Time!

Mr. Balchand Persaud: I beg to move that the hon. Member be given an extension of 15 minutes to conclude his speech.

Mr. Lall *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed.

Mr. R.D. Persaud: The Government is again embarking on a dangerous policy so far as the rice industry is concerned. Not very long ago the Government had to pay the farmers of this country when it had forced them to plant Blue Belle. “Blue Belle is the answer”, they were told. “Plant Blue Belle; Blue Belle will save the country”. Blue Belle has failed and now the Government has turned to Starbonnet. Just as Blue Belle has failed, so Starbonnet will fail if the Government forces Starbonnet alone. The farmers should be left to decide on one of the varieties that have been tested, have passed through the necessary experiments and have been recommended by the experts. I can proceed to show you that some of our farmers in this country have been receiving tremendous yields from their rice lands.

During the Spring season, farmers like lucky Kadoo at Mahaica and Deon Singh another farmer at Mahaica were able to reap between 43 and 45 bags per acre from one of those varieties I have referred to. Cecil Benall reaped 40 bags per acre. Omerall 38 bags per acre, and I have a host of other names that I can refer to. The farmer, Philadelphia, on the West Coast who cut 26 bags on April 14, 1971 without weed and insect control has, according to the agricultural field assistant, started selling his seeds at 7½ cents per lb. It shows that the farmers have been able, by their own experience, by their own association and attachment to agriculture not only to produce high yields but also to produce seed line that can be used for the development of the rice industry.

Let me talk a little bit about the Starbonnet.

5.35 p.m.

One Mr. Amrit Persaud at Bounty Hall, Essequibo, had cut 3,600 bags from just over 200 acres. That is less than 18 bags per acre. Monplaisir, a big landlord at Aurora, Essequibo,

got only 490 empty bags to fill them with rice from this so-called Starbonnet that the Government is saying is the answer. I urge the hon. Minister to check the facts which I am putting for the consideration of the Parliament. The Government is saying that it hopes to make the small man a real man. Ganeshdath of Springlands, Rampoor, Berbice, got 75 bags from 8 acres of Starbonnet, 9.4 bags per acre. This is what the Government's Action Committee is telling the farmers, that "if you want loans from us, you will have to plant Starbonnet and then and only then we will give you loans and help you."

Earlier, I wanted to refer to the Jamaica figure. I see them clearly before me now; 1963, 14,445 tons; 1964, 15,562 tons; 1965, 11,009; and 1968, 7, 232 tons. They were buying our variety all the time. Why must you suddenly change? This is the question that I pose to the Government. Looking at these figures, one gets the view that the Government is not receiving correct advice. The Minister cannot deny that he was written to and told it must be Starbonnet because that is the only way Connell will sell our rice. I know what I am saying and I have no doubt that I am right.

I know that time is limited but let me say this. Once again I would prevail upon the hon. Minister of Agriculture to heed our advice. So far as agricultural credit is concerned, the Government has not done anything positive in this direction. What right has the Action Committee to spend government funds in the development of rice? I do not want to refer to the Agricultural Loans Bill but what this country needs is an agricultural loans bank, solely for agricultural purposes, and if the Government should establish this bank, it can break up a lot of new superstructures where so much has to be paid to employees. It means there will be no need for the National Cane Farming Committee and the National Cane Farmers' Corporation. One could solve that problem because the job of the Cane Farmers' Corporation is to lend money to cane farmers and the Committee does other things for cane farmers.

Similarly, there will be no need for the Rice Marketing Board, the Rice Development Corporation, and the Rice Action Committee. Who will audit the financial operations of the Rice Action Committee? I call upon the Government to scrap all rice action committees immediately and to move towards an agricultural loans bank. Yesterday, the hon. Member Mr. Bhola Persaud, during the course of his contribution, pointed out figures to show what was happening in the Rice Action Committee. If the farmers are not helped financially, there can be no development of the agricultural sector.

I think it was the *Guyana Graphic* sometime in 1970 which quoted the Chief Agricultural Officer, Mr. Carter, as saying that planning and allocation of funds had been largely limited to the infra-structural part of land development programmes and that similar planning and funds had not been given to the question of agricultural credit. Mr. Speaker, there is nobody in a better position than the Chief Agricultural Officer to know what is really the truth. He himself is saying, so far as agricultural credit is concerned, so far as agricultural loans are concerned, there is no proper planning for this expenditure and the hon. Minister would do well if he needs the advice of some of the people who have been giving him good advice, like from this side of the House, particularly on the rice industry. We want to see this industry prosper.

I have all the figures from 1967 to 1971 to show that instead of rice prices increasing, prices have dropped. For instance, in 1967, for Extra Super, it was \$20.70; Super, \$19.70; Extra No. 1, \$18.55 in 1967, but in 1971 it dropped to \$18.25. We have a strong case for an increase in the prices of rice. The hon. Minister was saying. "Produce 20 bags per acre and the price will be increased. I have shown that people are producing 40 and 45 bags per acre and I humbly suggest that the farmers are now qualified for an increase in rice prices. The hon. Minister must not delay any further. Here, the farmer receives \$6.30 maximum for a bag of padi, and in America, they receive \$11.64, double that amount. The rice farmers have a case, and so far as the Opposition is concerned, we want this afternoon to charge the Government with not really following a proper agricultural programme for the development of the country and that is why the economy cannot make any headway.

The last point and I take my seat. Cuba has been importing rice from Brazil. What has to happen? The rice goes from Brazil to Moscow and then it comes back to Cuba, so it costs more. This Government should now negotiate, since it says it wants to establish diplomatic relations with the USSR and Cuba, to sell our rice to the Cuban market because the figures show how much rice Cuba had been taking from us. The Government cannot depend on America. America is now exporting to 110 countries. The Government will have to talk to countries that indeed can buy our rice and I urge the Government to reconsider seriously, the agricultural position of this country. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture.

5.45 p.m.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture (Dr. Reid): Mr. Speaker, this has been a very interesting afternoon. Yesterday was interesting too, since the people who were threatened with destruction have now become examples in certain areas of activity.

Before I proceed to the meat of the matter, I wish to bring to the attention of the House the ways in which Members on the opposite side presented their case. They attempted in every way to see how much they could deceive people.

Yesterday we heard that Mr. Rahaman took \$40,000 from the Rice Action Committee. We should have been told that this has been distributed to farmers. Much was said about the need for development schemes and a number of people were quoted. One would be surprised to know that my hon. Friend Mr. Bholu Persaud described Mara under several schemes in order to confuse the people in this House. Hon. Members would be surprised to know that he was talking about Mara when he mentioned Germania, Vryburg, Scape Nood, Enterprise, Ma Retraite. All of these are just parts of Mara; they are all in one land development scheme. Then he talked about the co-operatives and what should be done about these co-operatives.

It is interesting to know that between 1963 – 1964, during the P.P.P. regime, the sum of \$100,000 was given to one co-operative society with 52 settlers. Not a cent of that money has been collected and then they tell you that you must pursue that same type of programme, that is, giving money without being able to collect it. The key to this whole matter is that in those days they wanted to pad certain constituencies. Berbice River was a constituency where the P.P.P. was not winning and in an effort to pad it they forced people into that area and gave them large sums of money so that in time the P.P.P. would have won in that area.

Another attempt was made to do the same thing at Pomeroun. Fortunately the P.P.P. Government was removed or that scheme too would have been suffering. The attempt was to take people, all of one racial group, from Leguan, Wakenaam and the West Coast to pad the then constituency. In the then constituency the combined votes of the U.F. and P.N.C. were more than the votes for the P.P.P. and notwithstanding what happened to people the members of the P.P.P. were determined to destroy people with the objective that they win every constituency.

We are not prepared to carry on that type of programme. If people were given a grant of \$100,000.00 and cannot make good, why should any Government continue to pump money into that area? As soon as you do not pump money, they say they are leaving and that the Government is to blame. We are not prepared to carry on such a scheme.

I really wanted to point out to this House how the hon. Members opposite attempted to deceive this House by that type of half-truth. What has been happening in some of these schemes? The members of the P.P.P. set up a good scheme in Black Bush Polder and instead of carefully selecting settlers, anybody was allowed in because of the intention to establish another constituency where 99 per cent of the people would vote for them. This is now telling on the people themselves because when a man has a cow and keeps it even in his kitchen it is stolen. He complains also that the fellows in the scheme will send cows in to destroy the crop just about reaping time. Nothing can prosper in the area.

I wonder sometimes if the members of the Opposition really talk to the people when they go into these schemes or if they check what is being told to them by a few people. People have removed the kokers; they have removed the boxes for drainage. We had to put in several and if I have time to go through this list, hon. Members will hear of all the dams and rivers that were cut. This is the exercise that is going on.

Notwithstanding what the members of the Opposition do, even though they come into this House and talk about how they are co-operating, they are visiting the people from house to house in the night and telling them not to grow rice, to grow just enough to eat. They tell them, "You can live very well on your 2 acres of homestead". Notwithstanding all of that, I am satisfied that people in this country, if given an opportunity to be exposed to good sense will in their own interest follow the direction that is meaningful. They will follow the direction that means something to them.

For years we have been hearing about diversification, but my friend has not mentioned Kibilibiri, which was formerly Global Agri, because he has recognized that large-scale cultivation is going to give meaning to diversification. They are convinced that this is the type of large-scale cultivation that has to be done if we are to have the diversification that we have been hearing about.

The members of the Opposition talked about canning. That has been going on for years. They say we should put up a canning factory and processing factories and that this will save the situation. But these factories will work for one month in the year. They will use up all the produce in one month because enough is not grown. The first exercise is to grow the things before the factory is put up or else the capital will not be utilized. There is a small canning factory now in Georgetown, which was established not so long ago. For many months of the year it cannot operate. We have to get the type that will suit Guyana and before long you will see the type of factory that will be set up here which will be a multi-purpose one that can process not only fruits and vegetables but other products as well.

Agriculture has been planned from the grass roots. We have exposed ourselves to the farmers in every part of the country. We know how they feel and we know what they desire to be done for them. Notwithstanding what the hon. Members opposite do by day and night this exercise will go on. We are not going to put any policemen to stop them from going around and speaking to the people but the battle is on. We will go out and meet those farmers and then we will see what the results will be.

I can go on speaking on general agriculture but by the end of the year the evidence will be there. Much has been said about rice. I thought that my friend Mr. Bhola Persaud covered rice. I heard that he was going to talk on general agriculture. He did not. He confined himself to education for a short while, and then he went on to speak on rice because rice seems to be the sheet anchor. I know that every one must mention rice as this is so important.

I said from my seat when the name of Dr. Pawar was mentioned, that those same members on the other side were trying to crucify him last year. They were running him out of some areas. I always thought that he was a courageous man to stand up to them. But he will still be there for a long time notwithstanding the misinformation that is being given this House, but we will come to that later on. We are not only talking about what we hope to do; things have already been done.

I was happy to see that some of my friends were present at the opening of a packaging plant at the Rice Marketing Board. If they had listened well they would have learnt that we grow rice not only to feed ourselves. We grow rice to sell to our customers and it is most important that we grow rice to sell to them.

5.55 p.m.

Jamaica is a larger rice market. The Jamaica Government has been buying bulk rice from us. We sell to an additional market that requires another 20,000 tons package that it buys

from us and another 14,000 tons bulk. It is an additional market of 20,000 tons. The green revolution is causing other areas to be producing in quantity. Some of the rice has not been accepted by the consumers. If the product has not been accepted by the consumers, then you cannot keep on growing it. You now need a special brand and all the markets will come around to these sophisticated areas, and the Caribbean is no exception. We can sell to places that would probably pay \$ 6 a bag for the milled rice because they will eat anything but they in the Caribbean are refusing to eat anything.

There was a time when we too would have eaten rice processed in a mortar, in a “dinky”, but nowadays we do not use that, not because it is not good food but because man with his whims and caprices does not want that anymore. He wants a polished grain and he is naming the type of grain. He wants a thin long grain. It must not have white belly. It must not segregate and unless you have a variety that is proven and tested, then it is no point handing it out to farmers to produce it. It must be completely proven and the place to prove it is within our own experimental station. If farmers have a variety for trial, they must be told about this. We will come to that later on.

I am glad they have accepted the fact – they did not want to accept it sometime ago – that this research must go on and you must produce more and newer varieties depending on what the markets want. We have not been trying to produce Star-Bonnet since the visit of the Jamaicans. We have been trying to do this sometime ago or we would not have been able to sell any of it to the higher-priced market in Jamaica. If we had listened to you to continue to press for 79, to press for D.110 varieties that were bred many years ago, we would have been in a very bad position today. We are not going to promote a variety when we are not certain of how it will segregate.

I we want a thin long grain, then we must get a uniform grain. There must be no difference in the grain. There must be no difference in colour, no difference in length, no difference in shape. It must be an exact thing and if you make any mistake with that, then you

lose the market. That is why we had to put up a re-milling plant at the Rice Marketing Board costing nearly \$1½ million because in the sophisticated markets, we cannot sell anything with odour, they do not buy that. We cannot sell the discoloured grain. We need that type of thing that will make sure that when we have a package of rice it is a uniform grain, that the weight is correct, and everything is right. This does not mean it is a better food but this is what the customers want, and I am certain that at Gimpex you would not bring anything into this country that the customers do not want and will not buy at all. You look for goods that the customers want and will buy. The same thing goes for marketing in general. We must preserve our market.

There was a time when they said, "Do not bother with the traditional markets." Now we hear them talk of Jamaica. Rice is such a commodity that once people do a few things, then they can produce it in a short time. We do not need to ask Connell about anything now. If we grow the right thing, people will buy. Venezuela is taking in thousands of acres in the Orinoco Delta to put under rice. Are we going to continue to produce something that our customers do not want, that we cannot sell so we will be in the position in which we were way back in 1964? And I will refer to that at the end of this brief observation.

Members who visit these areas should understand to lead people aright. The old varieties were not bred for the machines we have now. They were bred for another method of cultivation and another method of reaping. Today, we have the machines to do that and we need a variety that will stand up notwithstanding the conditions, a variety from which the grains will not fall too quickly, and that is why we turn to these newer varieties, so that we can do better on the farm. *[Interruption]* We want to do this exercise by having our farm school in the farms, and that is why we visit the farms so we can meet the farmers where they are. And not only at reaping time. We meet them at all times, at the time of ploughing the land, we are there; all through the exercise, we are there. When we were there a week or two ago, it was not reaping time, it was cultivation time.

What is the result of this Action Committee that they say we must get rid of? In 1970, the spring crop produced in this country the highest quantity of rice ever produced, and let anybody doubt that. There was a time when they said we would destroy the rice industry. Now they do not talk so much about the destruction. They are quarrelling about the surplus and the profits. This increase will go on because our exercise is not only producing rice but producing it economically, so that bags per acre would increase.

Not very many years ago, the average had fallen to 9.6 bags an acre. What is the average in a place like Black Bush Polder? Five point something bags per acre. This is where we are concentrating so that we can increase that and we have got the indication from the results of the last crop average that we have been able to move that 9.6 bags to 13.5 bags, and this is where we look for results. That is a high percentage of increase and that is what we want. To do this exercise, we know credit is hard, and the Chief Agricultural Officer said the right thing. That is why we decided in the rice industry to plough back the surplus, the profits, so that the rice farmers would benefit. If we had dared to follow the direction of the PPP to increase the price of padi, what would have been the position? If a man is cultivating his land in such a way that he is getting one or two bags per acre – he does not follow the directions properly; he cannot do the ploughing properly – when the average is five, some people get nothing at all – what will it mean to him when you decide you are going to just raise the price of padi? If he is getting zero bags, you can give him \$10 more per bag and he will still be at zero. If we had done that, many of the small farmers would have been completely thrown out of business.

We have done otherwise and we have the evidence of how the farmers can benefit. The farmers are experiencing this benefit. We said we must use the surplus, plough it back into the industry, and that is why we have been able to move the yield from 9.6 bags per acre to 13.5 preventing many a farmer from running out of this industry. They are now doing a good job. There was a time when they said we would destroy. We came at a point when it would have been easy for it to be destroyed but we buckled ourselves together and braced ourselves to save this rice industry. Now we are in a position to show how we have been able not only to plough

some money back into the industry but to pay some of the debts the industry had owed, \$7 million to the Government, \$6.6 million to the commercial banks.

6.05 p.m.

We have been able to pay these debts because the Government is determined to do the work that has to be done in the rice industry. In 1969 we decided to plough this money back in, and we spent \$250,000 on land preparation. We had to purchase more tractors and other implements for farmers to use because many of the people were making sure that they did not help any of their fellow farmers. We had to purchase combines to the tune of \$350,000. We had to do irrigation works because this is important for the production of rice. We spent \$468,000 on that. We had to supply the farmers with seed paddy. That was \$250,000. We had to supply the pesticides and fertilizers to the value of \$200,000. We had to pay for the operation of tractors \$84,000. We even hired privately-owned tractors and combines and used them on the farmers land. The sum of \$100,000 was spent on that. To operate the combine harvester was another \$250,000. A sum, \$1.3 million, was used to help farmers who could not help themselves at all. We have seen the results of this in the upward trend in the production per acre.

This is the way this exercise has to continue and notwithstanding what my friends over there say, notwithstanding their nightly meetings, when farmers begin to see the results, which I will give soon, they will continue to grow rice because they are seeing that in this industry there is a lot of hope.

I can continue to state how other sums of money were spent to help the farmers but there is not much time at my disposal. Other members wish to speak. We have gone into all sorts of areas. The members mentioned Rahaman. They did not talk about Ramotar. Ramotar was in charge of the exercise not so long ago. He did extensive work along the Corentyne all of which was paid for from surplus in the Rice Marketing Board. I mentioned just now about irrigation

boxes. In the Berbice area we put back boxes which cost \$12,000. We had to raise dams, we had to clean kettings. All sorts of exercises were done so that these farmers could benefit and they are now experiencing an advantage from what they have been doing.

And now we go on to the results of this exercise. We went into a depressed area – everybody calls the West Coast Berbice a depressed area – where the yield was six bags per acre. We did a tremendous amount of works. Some farmers who never reaped anything are now back in business. If you go there now you will see evidence of it. You will see them ploughing right now. If you pass there in the night you will see them ploughing because they have seen where the help is coming from. They have seen hope in this exercise. I passed through there last Sunday night and the second shift was going into the back to continue the ploughing. This is how the work is going on. If you go to Anna Regina now you will find them ploughing. Even on Christmas Day you will see men doing this work that has to be done because there are a limited number of machines and they must be utilized fully if we are to do anything that is worthwhile in this country. That depressed area is now back in business. Hopefully the farmers are making preparations to produce.

People have already had remarkable results all over this country. I mentioned that attempts were made in Black Bush Polder but cows intervened and the plots were destroyed. But let us take an area like Cane Grove, which hon. Members mentioned some time ago. They said we were not promoting Blue Belle any more. There are some farmers in this country who would not change from Blue Belle.

Hon. Members can go to Cane Grove and search for them. Some of the farmers who used to reap one crop and year and now reaping three crops. They know what is the cost of production, the total expenses per acre, and one farmer shows that on one acre he is making \$90,81 cents. He has a ten-acre plot. He is doing this three times a year, not once a year. I do not want to give the figures of the Guyana Rice Corporation. I give you those of a farmer. His land rent, his water rates, his land preparation, his seed, his seed treatment, everything he has

listed here and the total is \$104.90. He gets 25 bags per acre. Some farmers used to reap 10 bags, some none. This farmer is reaping 25 bags per acre and he is reaping three times a year. He tells you that he is making a profit and when a farmer admits that he is making a profit, it must be true because even when they make a profit farmers do not like anybody to know. They are like diamond seekers who do not say how many diamonds they have found. They do not expose it. And Star-Bonnet that the hon. Member mentioned is now being grown in Essequibo. This farmer sets out all his expenses. He says he spends \$99 on this exercise. He got 30 bags per acre. He was able to sell it at \$7.30 plus an incentive of a dollar that was given and his gross return was \$249. He made \$150 on one acre of land. He has seven acres. This is a man who was willing to give up that plot of land a few years ago. Now you would have to kill him to get him to give up that plot of land.

We can go through the areas and we can find more and more people turning to Star-Bonnet. There is Arthur at Bounty Hall who, notwithstanding the advice, cultivated over 200 acres of Star-Bonnet. We want farmers to do it right and sometimes if the conditions are not right we tell farmers not to plant Star-Bonnet. We recognize that it cannot be cultivated in some areas. We tell them what the market wants and it is our duty to tell them what the market wants. But this farmer who cultivate over 200 acres of Star-Bonnet was told that one section of his land was suitable. The other section was not quite suitable. But this was a determined man. He said that notwithstanding the conditions were not right he was going to cultivate the entire land. He reaped his crop the other day. He made more profits in the spring crop than he has ever made by planting rice. Go now and you will see him cultivating over 200 acres to get another crop in the coming season.

Once we proceed in this direction, more and more people will understand and more and more people will follow, so that we are not worried with what our friends say in this House. The proof is outside in what the farmers are doing, what we are encouraging them to do, not by force, not by police action, but by talking with them, pointing out to them what the world

situation is, what the market situation is, what should be done if we are to make the picture better. More and more farmers are accepting this programme.

But what was the picture before this? To appreciate the distance we have travelled, it is good to know where we started. When we came into office late in 1964 what was the situation with the rice industry? I am not going to go over the uneconomic price of paddy. I am not going to go over the irregularities in grading. All these things we have had to correct. I am not going to go over the arrangements with regard to bags. We have no time for that. I am not going to talk about the German sales. I am not going to talk about the figures shown in the book inventory and when the stock was checked physically one could not find what should have been there. I am not going to go over that. I am not going to talk about the bad storage conditions and the deterioration. Those are all well known in the story. I am not going to talk about the political arrangements the P.P.P. had with Cuba. The members of the P.P.P. were so interested in the farmers that they made an arrangement so that when they were out of office the farmers could die. I am not going to worry about that. I am not even going to speak in my own words. I am going to let them tell you what was happening to the rice industry in their time.

6.15 p.m.

All this is now changed. The price industry is moving forward. But they have spoken and even though they might doubt me, they cannot doubt themselves. Of course, they are such human beings that they might very well doubt themselves. I hate to repeat certain things in the House but repetition probably is necessary in this House. I am sometimes not too happy when I read this type of thing but it is distressing in this country.

Mr. Speaker: Time.

Mr. Ramsaroop: I would respectfully move that the speaker be allowed 15 minutes to wind up his speech.

Question put, and agreed to.

Dr. Reid: I said I want to let them speak about the rice industry so that we can understand from where we came and how far we have reached. We still have a long way to go. On November 27, 1969, once of their voices spoke out. A man named Lalta Ramgopaul. He spoke out loud and strong but before we say anything about him, we need to know who is this man Lalta Ramgopaul. He had resigned as General Secretary of the Guyana Rice Producers' Association. He was with them for a long time. He was the man who had been trained in the rice industry. He was the man who used to attend the F.A.O. Conference on Rice; visited places like Rome just to talk about rice; he was a member of the Drainage and Irrigation Board, and you know, sir, drainage and irrigation are important to our farming community. He even wrote booklets on the rice industry. In 1964, he wrote a booklet, **Our Rice Industry**. In 1965, we had just got into office, he wrote another booklet "**The Facts behind the Crisis in the Rice Industry**". That was the position of the rice industry in early 1965, a crisis. He was the editor of the *Rice Review* quarterly journal. That was the man, and this was the type of letter he had to send his fellows when he was leaving. And I want to quote:

"Despite all my efforts, the model association for which I had worked has eluded me as forces beyond my control have thwarted my plans. I have exhorted our members".

Remember that this is Lalta Ramgopaul speaking,

"I have exhorted our members that if the Association is to re-assert its position as the champion of the cause of rice producers, they must revise their thinking",

and this is most important,

"and be more honest to themselves and the industry they are supposed to represent."

That is where we took the rice industry from. People who are dishonest to themselves; what about to the farmers? They go around day and night telling them, “don’t grow more than what you want to eat”, and come in here and play Christ in this House, sinless, no guilt at all. But another man connected with the rice industry must speak, and probably by then they must be convinced. They know him better than they know Lalta Ramgopaul. He is Mooneer Khan. He was Chairman of the Board. A big man in the rice business. I am not mentioning anything about the bags. That is by the way. We had got into office late December, 1964. By January, nobody could have done anything to change the situation. This was dated 13th January, 1965. And he was not writing to me. This was a personal secret document to the highest body of the People’s Progressive Party. I am a little ashamed even to mention some of the things, but I have to. Circumstances beyond my control. I must tell you the truth so that when you hear them talk you will know how honest they are to themselves, and to us.

“Financial situation and stocks”.

I do not want to read the whole thing.

“The Board is in serious difficulty.”

This is early January.

“There are large stocks of white and parboiled rice”,

Probably they want us to go back to this kind of story,

“now lying in all the mills throughout the country including the Rice Development Company for which the Board cannot receive any. These stocks of milled rice have been lying there now for about eight weeks.”

Nothing doing.

“The Rice Marketing Board does not have any further storage space and even if it can find additional storage space the Board will not be able to purchase same because of lack of funds.”

This was January, 1965. Not 1971.

“A large quantity of both types are rapidly deteriorating. Farmers’ problems are increasing, rents to pay, bills to honour, hire purchase machine accounts are due and other debtors are now at their throats. The Board has at 31.12.64 approximately 150,000 bags white and 108,000 parboiled. What therefore do we do? I suggest that our only savior is Cuba. Cuba should be asked to lift within two months the commitment it had. It must be clearly understood that the Banks have refused further assistance.”

That was the position. It is most interesting as we come to the end. He continues:

“Our Comrade D. Ramlakhan be replaced as liaison between the party and the members and this responsibility be now taken over by the General Secretary.”

That is all they can see. This is the distressing part.

“That in all vacancies and positions and/or any additional recruiting of workers only pro-PPP members be given a chance, that a gradual but tactful and ruthless policy be carried out to remove other people and non-party members from the Board.”

This was the position of the rice industry. This was the low level to which people in authority had sunk. Then they come here and make noise and shout about bringing Connell. We had to bring Connell to save all that from being spoilt. We had to do that to save the situation so that these days we do not have to go to Connell, so that if we leave now those who take over would not have to search for markets. We have got the markets and we are preserving those markets notwithstanding what Government is in office. This is how a Government should

be. *[Interruption]* You caused Jamaica not to be buying in quantities. They used to buy before.

When Hubbard went, he was so crude and rough that the people would have nothing to do with him. We had to rescue the West Indian traditional market so that now we can sell rice. Once we produce the type of rice that our customers want, they will continue to buy from this country. It is a criminal act, and this is the last sentence I want to say, it is a criminal act for people in this country to attempt to destroy the livelihood of thousands of people for political gains. Thank you. *[Applause]*

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, it is now 6.27 p.m. and perhaps it is a good and convenient time to suspend the sitting for 1½ hours.

Sitting suspended at 6.27 p.m.

On resumption --

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members, the resumption of this sitting at such a late hour has been on account of some difficulty with our reporters. One is sick, one was borrowed from the Supreme Court and she is unable to carry on with the stress of the work of Parliament. The only other one that we have complains that she is unable to carry on. I ask your indulgence to behave very quietly and in keeping with the Standing Orders. Yesterday I did circularize Members asking them to comply with these orders but today I found that the behaviour of hon. Members was worse. It seems as if the circular was not read and I trust, because of the situation tonight, every co-operation will be forthcoming.

The hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh.

The Minister of Trade (Leader of the House) (Mr. Ramsaroop): Hon. Members should know that the proceedings are being tape-recorded and the maximum silence is being requested.

Mr. Feilden Singh: Mr. Speaker, attempting to analyse the Government's programme as presented in the President's Address is like trying to eat a mouthful of damp cotton wool. If you try hard enough you will eventually get it down your throat but you will get absolutely no nourishment out of it.

The speech is a compound of pointless platitudes, vacuous vapourings and meandering misrepresentations. Having said in the first paragraph of this page that the basis for development had been laid – a point upon which there is certainly no unanimity – the second paragraph goes on to tell us that some time this year there will be a draft completed for a 1972/76 Development Programme. Presumably this is the ghost of the 10-year programme which we

should have had perhaps over 2 years ago but which never was forth-coming because, as we understand it, of the internal squabbling in the Government. We know of our famous friend Dr. David who is no longer with us. He was the blue-eyed boy of the Government who was supposed to produce the 10-year programme. Like so many aspects of the Government's mouthings he has disappeared.

What the paragraph really says is that the Government has been muddling along for several years now without any plan at all and this lack of a plan has been plastered over by posters and banners. Slogans have replaced bread and parrot cries have in fact been substituted for jobs, so that while the cost of living sky-rockets the Government tries to hide the inefficiency of the External Trade Bureau in a maze of words.

If the Government had a proper programme, properly presented, then perhaps we could have advanced constructive arguments along parallel lines with the programme so that we could have had something to work on. But what is happening? At the present instance the best one can hope for is to grope for the points in the general verbal turpidity.

Let us deal with the development plan as indicated in this speech. The Government says that there are three main objectives: to have us feed ourselves, to have us house ourselves and to have us clothe ourselves. These are very laudable objectives indeed but, as we will see later, the first two we are very far from fulfilling and, if I may say so, the last objective, clothing ourselves, we have not started to fulfil, yet characteristic of the Government's attitude of misrepresentation, an attitude which in fact hallmarks the affairs of Government, we read in the Address:

“Clothing ourselves – this indeed is the most ambitious objective since not all the raw material are yet produced in Guyana.”

The truth is that none of the raw materials are produced in Guyana. All are being imported and it will certainly be a long time after 1976 before we will be able to do anything about producing our raw materials in respect of clothing and certainly we will have to import unless we are to join the ranks of the shoeless and shirtless who are in a few of the countries in the world.

The President's Speech goes on. Several paragraphs are devoted to a display of rhetorical language. They are bespattered with meaningless clichés which obscure indeed any rationality which may have crept in. Such a major development as the nationalization of DEMBA has been briefly passed over, except accompanied by the habitual call for a display of energy and this is followed by the demand for Guyanese control of all the "decision-making machinery of such resource-based undertakings which are non-Guyanese in their origin."

What does this really mean? What it presumably means is that if a foreigner who has the initiative, the ability to set up an industry in Guyana to provide employment for our people, that industry will be expropriated as DEMBA has been.

As a sort of afterthought the Government calls for a development of enterprises which are purely national in origin. Let us see how far the Government has gone in this. It is also very easy when you have political power to nationalize or to expropriate something that is in existence but it is a different kettle of fish when you have to create something by yourself. What is the Government's record in this area? Is there any record at all? What industries has it created within recent times? The members of the Government have been in office for some time. Are they going to tell us that they created Global Agri? I think if they did tell us that, they should hang their heads in shame. We have asked for an investigation, a report on Global Agri. We have heard nothing so far except the recent big splash about fields ablaze with corn. Let us know the real facts let us have an investigation from the beginning. But we will not hear anything about that.

The Government goes on to say that it will be faced with difficulties, but says it is not afraid of them. Honestly, no country has any right to be afraid of difficulties. Difficulties there will be and difficulties you have to fight to overcome. The Government admits its lack of managerial and technical skills but it says that it will supply these as a matter of priority. Apparently Rome is suddenly going to be built in a day. We will wait and see.

That next section deals with agriculture. I propose to take this, at least in part, with the section covering co-operatives. The keynote of the policy declared in the speech is that the Co-operatives. The keynote of the policy declared in the speech is that the Co-operative Republic should live up to its name and that co-operatives should be the principal means of bringing prosperity to this nation of ours. If this is the objective, it is really astonishing that the Government does not put this principle into practice and denies it to a fair proportion of the population of this country. It denies this to the rice farmers. Is it not staggering that a large section of the population of this country are out of co-operatives by a conscious decision of the Cabinet? Is it not alarming that men who farm the rice fields, who suffer and toil are now being treated as second class citizens? They are being told that they cannot run their own industry, an industry to which they have devoted all their lives. Apparently co-operatives are only for the friends of the Government like Greenland Co-operative. We read only yesterday an editorial opinion in the Evening Post admitting that Greenland Co-operative was a P.N.C. organ.

The speech tells us of all sorts of expensive organizations staffed by highly paid officials with their fancy gleaming cars and their air conditioned offices, men who have never known what it is to work in the rice fields, who are afraid even of getting their hands soiled but these are the men who are supposed to put the rice industry on a sound basis. Money earned from the profits of the rice industry are being ploughed back, as I understand it from this speech, into these corporate sponges to revitalize the rice industry.

What the rice farmer really wants is for the profits of this industry to come into his pockets, into pockets of the rice farmers and not go to friends of the Government, the P.N.C.

boys, the chaps who have been put into the Rice Action Committee to share out the profits of the rice industry which should rightly go into the pockets of the farmers, the men who are toiling, the men and women and the children who are producing the profits for these people to drive around and live in style and enjoy what is not rightly theirs to enjoy.

Why is it that the rice industry cannot be made into a co-operative? You are talking about co-operatives all over the country. Why not a co-operative for the rice industry where you can genuinely have the profits of the industry flowing back to where they rightly belong? Fair enough, it is necessary to have research projects; it is necessary to have organizations to supply advice to the rice industry, but that is a different thing, that should be taken out of taxes, that should not be a liability, a burden on the rice farmers robbing them of the profits of the industry. The rice farmers are demanding equality like other citizens in this country. They are being denied equality. They are being treated to a kind of apartheid in the country at the present moment. Our good friends on that side of the House are the prophets of the co-operatives. Let them practice what they preach! Let them put their co-operative policy into operation even in respect of the rice industry and not confine it to Greenland Co-operative, their other friends and their party supporters!

In respect of other agricultural affairs, such as the proposed development of the cattle industry and, as we are told, the establishment of an off-shore fishing and shrimping industry, we urge the Government to redouble its efforts in these directions. In fact we would urge the Government to give consideration to the establishment of a canning plant because if you establish a fishing industry on a sound basis you must have a surplus of fish and I am sure that a canning industry will be able to usefully take on that surplus of fish. And of course there is the CARIFTA market. There is scope even further afield.

Next the External Trade Bureau. A lot has been said about the E.T.B. and I am going to be brief on this. The Government, which originally claimed that it was setting up the E.T.B. to

trade with the communist countries, is now saying that it has set up the E.T.B. to reduce the cost of living. My advice to the Government is to go back to what it originally said. At least it will be more honest there because the housewife, John Public, the small man, the ordinary man, everyone, will tell you that the E.T.B. has not helped in one single way in reducing the cost of living. It is a fact that since the Minister of Trade, my learned and hon. Friend, stuck his fingers into the juiciest pies, the cost of living has gone up and up and up and employment for the ordinary man, the real man, has gone down and down and down. Everyone of us, if we are going to be fair and impartial, must admit that this is in fact so.

The speech next dealt with housing. The way the speech rambles on about what facilities are available and what the Government will do albeit at some distant time in the future – there is no time stated – to make it possible for the small man to own his house, you would think that these houses were springing up like the Global-Agri corn was supposed to spring up. We are in fact, however, shutting our eyes to the white elephants of Tucville and Tucber which are glaring examples of how housing can be priced out of the reach of the ordinary man. It is also a glaring example of how you can make confusion twice confounded when Government steps in. Indeed, from what the speech says, the Government in its indecent haste to pass off housing to the local authorities seems to be heartily glad to get rid of a problem which it never rally knew how to handle.

The speech went on to infrastructure. It says the task will be continued. Then we are given some details with particular stress on the self-help road. We are told that when it is completed we will be the focus of all the South American trade. All roads lead to Rome but apparently in South America all roads will lead to Georgetown. Let us wait and see. So that, apart from this very interesting geographical excursion, there is absolutely nothing new to be found in this paragraph on infrastructure. A few roads, yes. A little bit of water, yes. But examine them. The money for all the roads mentioned was secured during the term of office of the Coalition Government. And for the water supply also. The water supply should have been dealt with a long time ago. I know how it was programmed; it is still going on.

During the time of the Coalition Government all these monies were secured, but they talk about them now as though it is something new that is being done by this Government. But this is nothing new. It is merely a continuation of what was started during the term of office of the Coalition Government. But there is one conspicuous absence. What about hydro-power? We have not heard a word about it. We would want the Minister in charge to tell us something. We want to make sure that there is some mention of hydro-power so that we may know what is happening in respect of it. Nothing at all is mentioned. But we used to hear it mentioned with monotonous regularity every year.

Now that we are kissing cousins with the Venezuelans and we are so "polly" with the Surinamers, perhaps it is time for us to look at the cost which the G.D.F. is running up in this country. I note that the Force is now being turned into a sort of labour battalion. One would presume that is a saving for the country. It is interesting to note that this labour battalion will be used to open up the hinterland.

Apparently it is not only the hinterland they are opening up. Recently, one of the senior officers of the G.D.F. put into writing his worries, his criticisms of the behavior of the G.D.F. to the general citizenry of this country. So that one must examine the G.D.F. very carefully and see whether it is not about time that we cut down on its enormous cost. Surely we can bring down the cost of living by cutting out that three per cent defence levy. We have signed the Protocol of Port- of - Spain, the Agreement with Surinam. Let us now try to bring down the cost of living and cut out this 3 per cent defence levy. I do not think it is worth 3 per cent, and impost on our daily bread. I am sure also that there can be better and cheaper ways found of cleaning Vlissengen Road rather than by using the G.D.F.

Turning now to community development. Here we join with the Government and praise self-help. But what we must warn against and what we must criticise is the tendency of so many people in and out of the Government to help themselves. The hon. Prime Minister quite recently

talked about castigating offenders against the public weal he promised exemplary punishment in respect of these people who were helping themselves. What has happened? Police officers investigated; houses were searched but apparently these people have become angels overnight. We have heard absolutely nothing more about this great campaign to rid the country of these kinds of people and to make an example of them.

The next section deals with co-operatives. No doubt we will all have noticed that there are a lot of new co-operatives. They are the means of the agriculture development of the interior. There are very good co-ops in cane farming, in bee-keeping, in pottery, in ceramics, in practically every craft and trade, you can think of. But for rice, No. No co-operatives for rice at all. You set up co-operatives for brick-making, but in the very vital rice industry where the co-operative is needed to plough back the profits into the pockets of the farmers, there is no co-operative. The money is put in the pockets of the boys. There are jobs for the boys.

Even the Youth Corps is involved in this from what I read about brick-making and ceramics. Nothing would be wrong with this, if the business had ended there. But no, the Youth Corps with their uniforms and their military training, their drilling, would make it seem what we are really building up is a reserve for the G.D.F. Maybe it is more than that. What we are building up is perhaps the P.N.C. private army. L. One might even go further and ask: How far are we away from Papa Doc's Ton Ton Macoutes?

Educational problems received very scant mention in this speech. It is clear from what we have read that the Government seems more concerned with the indoctrination of the children with their co-operative philosophy than with liberal education for the children. I fear that when we have the unveiling of this new curriculum which the Government is supposed to be working on we will find it is designed less to serve the needs of the children than to serve the wishes of the P.N.C., that is, to have a sort of docile conditioned new robot generation. I would urge those

people who are concerned with education to be more vigilant against the erosion of the true purpose of education in Guyana.

It is good that teacher training is continuing and I hope that it will continue. The speech indicates this. Too long, Mr. Speaker, have our pedagogues had to suffer. Too long, working in the interest of the nation, have they had poor salaries. I am glad to see that some consideration is being given to them at long last but what I want to urge is that in this obsession with changes in the curriculum and the drive for secondary and technical education we do not forget that primary education is important. In a lot of places in the country there is a lack of facilities for primary education, particularly in some of the less favoured areas. I want to remind the hon. Minister of a truism which may have escaped her attention, namely, that it is no point building secondary schools if the children that you are going to put in the secondary schools do not have a primary education.

The speech then moved on to health. I do not think we can say very much on health because apparently we are all to reserve our comments until this national health plan is produced. In the meantime anyone dying for lack of hospital beds, lack of proper medical facilities, lack of proper medical attention, is just plain unlucky. Apparently they should adjust their illnesses to the time when the hon. Minister can hatch out her great health plan. So it is apparently just unfortunate for those who die in the interim.

From the petty matters which the remainder of the speech deals with perhaps finally I can pick out one vital point. I want to quote from page 10 of the Address:

“In a year designed by the United Nations as International Year for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, my Government will continue its resolute and tangible support for movements of liberation engaged in the struggle against racial inequality and injustice and for the cause of human dignity throughout the world.”

When, may I ask, are we going to have some of these principles applied here?

There is a struggle against racial inequality and injustice and for the cause of human dignity throughout the world. When are we going to have some of these principles applied here in Guyana where if you want a job you still have to have a party card and be sent from Congress Place, where the rice farmers are still being treated as second-class citizens, where we still have rigged elections, where we still have partisan government? And in this whole Address – what about the Amerindians, the indigenous inhabitants of this country? What about their lands promised to them for so long? Not one single word is here about Amerindians, the people who have been discriminated against for so long. Promises are made but there is no fulfillment at all. From what I can gather one still has to get a pass to go in and see them. They are treated as second-class citizens. Let them emerge and let them be brought into the main stream and take their rightful places as first-class citizens of this country. I want to urge the Government to start putting into practice what it is preaching, start putting into practice what it has said here and stop this hypocritical behavior.

9 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. The Leader of the Opposition, Dr. Jagan.

Dr. Jagan: Sir, I regret to say that the Government has not done very well for His Excellency the President. They have given him a very generalized statement to read to this House and to the country and when attempting to fill out some details, one finds that nothing has emerged which is new. One would have expected, in view of all the growing pains, all the new problems confronting the country, the Government would have by this time come forward with some new departure. But it is the same old beaten track and, added to this, there is a great deal of confusion.

I see that we now have a theoretician in the person of the Minister of Finance. Unfortunately, he seems to have read a lot but did not have time to digest much of what he has

read or the theory which he wants us to believe as the correct way forward. The hon. Minister of Finance told us that economics is not a political ideology. I was taking notes when he was speaking. Ownership and control, he said, have gone past the question of ideology.

We are told again – I am glad the Minister is taking his seat – that Allende and Caldera are on the same platform so far as ownership and control are concerned. This is where the confusion lies and that is why I say the Minister has not properly digested his reading of economics and political science and even finance and monetary questions. At one stage, sir, he told us that the Government has arrived at its present course, from its personal, practical experience and not from any doctrinaire approach and then at a certain stage he led us off into an excursion of the deals which the Russians are making with Fiat, and attempted to make with Ford, or with Japan.

As with the Minister of Housing, when we had an excursion the other day about how much better the Government was doing than the Soviet Union in housing, we had a lot of half-truths pedaled, we always have a lot of distortion. However, the point is that we have been saying for many years that the model which this Government started out with is bankrupt, and are always told “When you get into the Government, when you come over on the other side, then you can do what you want.” It seems now from what the Minister of Finance said that they have found a new path, but clearly when he says that Allende and Caldera are following the same path, it shows the depth of confusion. They are doing the same thing. *[Interruption.]* It is a paraphrase of their following the same path. They are dealing in the realm of economics. We have been talking of an anti-imperialist economic programme different from the Puerto Rican model. We had Frei in Chile, a counterpart of Caldera, Christian Democracy, pursuing a certain line. Now that the Puerto Rican model has become patently bankrupt I see where Professor, now Sir Arthur Lewis in his latest speech says that the West Indies have been embarking too much on this infra-structure business, and more emphasis should be put into the productive sector. He refers to agriculture and industry which will be associated with its development.

I said there is confusion. At a certain stage, because the Puerto Rican model has become patently bankrupt, the imperialist and even the United Nations, where the imperialists have a lot of say, are propagating some new ideas, the idea of partnership which my hon. Friend the Prime Minister was at one time embracing.

What is the difference between Allende and Frei, or Allende and Caldera? Caldera is the ideological brother of Frei and of Burnham. What they want to tell us, sir, is that they are finding a new path, but in truth and in fact, it is no new path; it is a path which is working within the embrace of imperialism, which imperialism is forced to adopt in this era. It is no use giving us excursions into the Soviet Union. That is another tactic of imperialism to say that the Soviet Union is becoming capitalist and to say, "Look at the capitalist deals they are making."
[Interruption.]

Mr. Speaker: Do hon. Members wish the debate to continue? I have already informed the House of the difficulties we are encountering with Reporters.

Dr. Jagan: Sir, in Allende's programme, the popular front, as in a socialist country like the Soviet Union, the public sector plays the dominant role in the economy, and the private sector will be marginal. But nowhere either in Caldera's or Frei's or the P.N.C.'s programme do we find any such thing. This is a fundamental difference. If the Soviet Union is making deals with Fiat, it is not to set up capitalist enterprises, but for capitalists to help to build socialism. What is wrong with that? What was wrong with Lenin, when he did not have scientists and technicians, hiring them from capitalist countries? It was right. It was so right that today the Soviet Union can produce more scientists and technicians than the United States, the United Kingdom and Germany put together. There is nothing wrong in that.

But this is not what we are talking about here. I am not going to go on any further with this because the Ministers and the Government are trying to confuse the people in Guyana. There is ideological confusion to make them feel that they are really on to something new. In

order to help themselves in their attacks against us who propose an integrated, all-embracing programme, they try to make it appear that the models which we propose are similar to the ones which their imperialist friends are now advocating.

The Minister give us a lot of figures to show growth, but I will remind him of the words of the past economic adviser to the Government that we had growth, but not development. This is a known fact because what you measure is what development means in terms of the ordinary people. This is what you have to measure and by any yardstick, sir, you will see what is happening today, despite all these talks and these glorious figures. Three to four years ago, the Daily Telegraph, in London was saying that Guyana and Pakistan were going to be the model for Africa and Asia respectively. These were the two shining examples. Pakistan is now facing mass starvation. [Mr. Hoyte: "Like Poland"] Poland is not facing mass starvation. That is not true, you have it wrong. At any level, unemployment, cost of living, education, health: Go around and find out.

I was in the Rupununi not too long ago. Everywhere I went, in every school, every village, there were no drugs, no doctors, no dispensers. Drugs used to be there in the P.P.P.'s time. We were told there was no growth during the time of the P.P.P. The Minister compared \$1 million surplus in the last year of the P.P.P. regime and \$15 million this year, yet the people cannot get the basic item like drugs.

At one place in the Rupununi, one village, a medical ranger showed me a letter a man wrote to him, the man said – I am sorry I did not bring it, I would have read it here; it was a brief letter. The man said they used to get drugs once a month. Now, the ranger came to the village, and when the people lined up to get treatment and medicine, he told them that medicine was only for children, and for old people ... is the medicine. Ask the hon. Member (Mr. Duncan). ... is a light alcoholic drink of the Amerindians.

We have not been told very much about the health problems. In the field of education we always get the charming Minister telling the House, the country, all the nice things about education – wonderful talk, but come down to the basics. The Guyana Teachers Association said the other day – *[Interruption.]* I am there to find out. I think somebody referred to the percentages of free places that are won in the city, and the person made the point that there was a difference between rural and urban performance. It is not only rural versus urban, but urban itself versus urban, in that the poor families cannot afford to send their children to the private kindergarden schools or even primary schools where there are not only good teachers but the exhibits and demonstrations. They have the advantage of growing in homes where they have better opportunities for learning. How are we going to build this so-called “egalitarian society”? How are we going to arrive at socialism, when the whole educational system is geared to creating an elite from an elite? Are these the people who are going to build socialism? Find out what happened in the G.D.R., Germany, or in Cuba. The people who run when socialism has to be built, generally come from this group. The Minister knows about this, but what is done about it? Standardisation of school books, what is done about it? There is only talk. Put two or three experts to work on it full time.

I was in the interior recently. Hon. Members should see the conditions under which teachers live, and they should hear what allowances they get. Government has agreed to give them certain incentives but they are not given. Representatives of the Guyana Teachers Association told me the other day that a memorandum regarding subsistence allowance had been approved some two years ago, but they have not yet received the allowances.

If the country was well off financially, as the hon. Minister of Finance is making the country to believe, then surely we would have been able to give drugs, an essential item, to the sick and we should have been able to give education to children beginning at five plus. Primary education is a basic thing. *[Interruption.]*

The Minister of Finance told us about the huge circle. What he did not speak about was the heavy taxation which has been heaped on the people of Guyana. Take the defence levy. Did the previous Minister of Finance not say that this was to be an imposition only for one year? [An hon. Member: "Not the defence levy".] But the point is the seven-year plan had in the introduction a statement which said that only \$10 million dollars will have to be found from taxation to finance that plan. [An hon. Member: "A minimum of \$10 million."] It did not say minimum. You go and read it again. Some things you do not read; I read those things. You understand what you are told to understand. Taxation has gone up by 500 per cent, so much so that they have had to scrap the plan. This is why there are surpluses but, in spite of all the surpluses, you cannot give the basic things to the people. You are going around in vicious circles.

Take the simple question of coconut oil, fryol" the subsidy given in our time has been abolished. If you go to the coconut producers for increased wages they say "We cannot raise wages because the price of copra has not been raised". The Minister of Labour does not want to prescribe minimum wages for the coconut workers: the Government does not want to raise the copra prices because it feels that that will have an effect on the oil price, as the subsidy has been removed. Therefore, there is a vicious circle, and the poor people, the so-called "real men", the small men who will become real men, are becoming smaller men. This is a reality. I am giving facts now which anybody can verify.

Nothing has been said about the vexed question of unemployment, except that we are going to absorb more people in agriculture. I do not want to repeat what has been said already about agriculture by my colleague, but I wish to say that one of the things which has led to the increase in production in practically all countries, is the question of prices. Nothing sweetens the farmer more than to have an adequate price for what he is producing, and despite what the Government may say its intentions are, unless there is a realistic price system, it is not going to increase the agricultural production of this country. We will continue to depend on sugar and bauxite.

So far as rice is concerned the Minister of Agriculture was talking about markets. We recognize that one has to produce what the market wants but at the same time we have to take all the factors into consideration. At one time we were doing our own experimentation here. The man who was doing the rice breeding work was removed. Then we were told big experts were coming from the United Nations. Once they invited us, we went. When Blue Belle was being propagated we saw what was being done. We saw Blue Belle, we saw Star-Bonnet, we saw different things, but from the discussions going on then – this was about a year and a half ago – there was no indication at all that Star-Bonnet was the variety which this man who was highly praised by the Government was going to propose for the future. He showed the disadvantages of this particular variety. Surely the Minister of Agriculture knows this? Why does he not tell us about that too? Why are we doing all this research? Why are we continuing with it? I remember that when I went there, they showed us many varieties. There was some rice as small as this, bearing heavy pods and I said, “Why don’t you put it out right now?” I was told not enough work was done with it and it is not yet right to put it out. But from my personal experience there, I was told that Star-Bonnet was not one of the types selected. In fact they were making hybrids from that. We are justifying this compulsion on the farmers now on the grounds of what has happened in Jamaica.

Let the Minister of Trade, Minister of Agriculture and the Prime Minister tell us about Cuba. The Minister read a letter this afternoon. Someone was talking about Mooner Khan and was referring to what the Board could do, what was the problem facing the Board. What he did not say was that there was a new Government which is in charge of foreign affairs and foreign trade. Why is it that the Government did not then go to Cuba? Why is it that up to today the Government is not exploring the Cuban markets?

I understand – perhaps the Prime Minister in his reply will tell us if this is so or not – that the Russians have to feed the Cubans by buying rice from Brazil, take it all the way to Russia and send it back to Cuba. *[Interruption]* You are helping Uncle Sam to blockade them and to

starve them. During the 1964 elections, sir, when we charged that the P.N.C. party would not sell to Cuba, that it would break off the trade with Cuba, when the P.N.C. Members were telling the people they would get \$10 a bag for paddy and \$30 a bag for rice, the American Ambassador in Guyana came out and said that they have no objections to selling any agricultural product to Cuba. Yet the reality of it is that the Cubans have to buy rice from Brazil. They cannot go directly because the Brazilians will not sell them, nor will boats, even Russian boats I presume, be allowed to go to Brazil if they go to Cuba, because the Brazilians, like the Americans, have decided to black-list all ships which trade with Cuba.

This is the rascality which these people are involved in, and now they are forcing the farmers to grow Star-Bonnet when the Star-Bonnet expert has not recommended this. Let the Prime Minister tell us, because he is going to speak next, whether that was the recommendation. They say I am begging teachers. I go anywhere; I want to know. I remember – and this can be verified – when the controversy was on Blue Belle, Star-Bonnet was not one of the varieties which was advocated. The Government is drifting as usual. To listen to the speeches here, the Government can call an election tomorrow and win three-quarters or 90 per cent of the votes, so wonderful are their policies and so popular they are among the masses.

The Minister of Trade read from my speech a year ago and said that we advocated nationalization of this, that and the other, including trade. Of course we did and then he said we also advocated control of drugs and foods. How long have we been doing that? But like bauxite, it is a question of what kind of nationalization. We talked about workers' control; we talked about integrated all-embracing policies, not just "tokenism". I see Wallace has asked Joe Louis to become his adviser. That is the kind of "tokenism" the Government is going in for.

From what I can see, contrary to what the Government is advocating, the small man is not becoming the real man but the small man is becoming smaller. Take the question of drugs. The Minister said that previously there were two variables, C.I.F. prices plus profit margins and all the other margins.

Now they have controlled one of these variables by fixing prices and margins and therefore the small man will benefit. But, sir, control is one thing, nationalization is one thing, but it is how it is done. This question must be investigated. When the Government is bulk purchasing, whom is it bulk purchasing from? It is the same thing on the question of drugs. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade, who was at one time a junior Minister in the P.P.P., indicated that if goods, drugs and other medical supplies were bought from the socialist countries, the Government would make a saving of half a million dollars a year on that alone.

I ask the Minister what sources has the Government tried? Where is it booking its orders? Where are Government supplies being bought? Is it that the Government has removed one set of sharks and put in another set of sharks in the driver's seat? I hope not! But we hear a lot of funny things happening so much so that some Minister is even saying, "I am so sorry that I have recommended so and so to go in there". Be careful! It is not only a question of control, it is how it is done. If you put a lot of round pegs in square holes they can bind you and you can lose. Secondly the poor man will pay for it.

On the question of drugs, let me cite an example. Small men have come to me. They told me that previously they used to get their supplies from the agent paying a 5 per cent commission. The Minister said that he does not want commission agents any more. The commission agent has now become the wholesaler. What about the problem of competition? Where there is a situation as in Guyana where there are no monopolies in the field of trade, there can be competition which can help to reduce prices. The Government is eliminating that factor of competition today, so that even though the Minister may say that he reduced the overall margin for the commission agent, sub-commission agent and what not, plus the wholesale profit from thirty-five to twenty per cent, still the small man may be paying more.

These are the practical considerations plus the factor of where the goods are imported from. These factors have to be gone into, and I hope the Government will not only put a representative of the Chamber of Commerce on an advisory body; the Opposition should be there

also to see what is going on, to know, to give suggestions, because the whole aim of control was to help the people. Unfortunately it has not done so. I do not feel that this is mainly a question of external factors, as the Minister is making it to appear, or even a question of sabotage. I am not doubting that these may be factors, but these are not the only factors which today are leading to this ever-rising cost of living which is affecting the small man.

Last but not least: The Prime Minister did not speak here, but a few days ago, at an open air meeting, he said – no doubt he is getting very worried – that the people seem to be going to the same party which said “Not a cent more”. It seems, sir, that the Prime Minister is not averse to distorting facts and so for the last time I wish to state exactly what this has turned into – a vicious slogan.

At the time of the Guillebaud Commission Report in 1958, salary scales were divided into two levels, super scales and the ordinary scales for civil servants. For daily paid workers an increase from \$2.52 to \$2.70 was recommended. The P.P.P. Government raised the \$2.70 recommendation to \$2.75, and so far as the big increase was concerned for the super scale salaries, I said at a meeting at Windsor Forest, “Not a cent more”. This has been turned upside-down. As I asked, “How could those at the top who were getting very big salaries get bigger increases when the middle brackets were to get nothing?” Such is the purpose of propaganda that even the Prime Minister, to make some political gain, is not averse to using these distorted slogans.

What is the Government doing? We did not want to pay more, so they say they are the generous people. What about the civil servants? What about teachers? The Prime Minister had a conference yesterday, perhaps he will tell us the outcome. Let us hear what he is doing about this demand. The associations have produced statistics to show that the cost of living went

up by about 26 per cent, but all they have received are two increases which amount to about 10 per cent. What is the Government doing about this? Are we going to wait until we have another strike or until they come to the P.P.P. again, for the P.N.C. Government to give them something? *[Interruption.]* What has happened to the \$10 a day minimum wage which you promised the people? Now you are saying that you are giving them more than they are entitled to.

The teachers want some assurances in writing. Apparently they do not trust the Government any more. But the Ministers refuse to allay the fears and apprehensions of a responsible body. Many of these people are their own supporters. The Government refuses to give them assurance in writing. If the Minister says to the people "You are going to get so and so; that is what is intended", can it not be put in writing? I hope the Minister of Education will take some time out. Just being pretty and being nice is not enough in politics; agreement must be put in writing.

9.45 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Hon Leader of the House.

Suspension of Standing Order

Mr. Ramsaroop: Mr. Speaker, I move the suspension of Standing Order 9(1) to enable the Assembly, if necessary, to sit beyond ten o'clock tonight to conclude the debate on the President's Address.

Question put, and agreed to.

Standing Order 9(1) suspended.

Debate on President's Address

Dr. Jagan: Sir, in all seriousness, I do not think we should just come to this House and merely make speeches. The House will lose the respect it deserves if it is not run properly or if we just come here and make speeches for the sake of making speeches. The Government must be aware that there is a growing feeling of dissatisfaction in this country. A lot of it is due to the fact that the Government seems to be incapable of coming to quick decisions. The purpose of governing is to be able to make decisions.

Why should teachers have to say to the Opposition that things which they agreed to two years ago have not been implemented? What has happened to the Report of the Watchmen's Advisory Committee, and the many other exercises which have been investigated and not acted upon?

The question of the cost of living is really a serious matter today facing Guyanese people as a whole. The Minister of Finance was saying a little while ago. "We have not been able to stabilize things and we do not have a runaway inflation". A lot of this is due to outside factors, outside costs. I do not think I am telling anything out of place in that sense. If the cost of living goes up for the small farmer, the huckster, if his cost of production goes up, naturally the prices of the commodities which he is producing will go up too. It is shameful today to go into the market and find the cost of items there. You can buy bananas in Canada cheaper than you can buy them in Georgetown. We were told that we must buy local things, not grapes and apples; but mangoes are five for fifty cents. What are we doing? Are we creating a situation where the working class cannot eat fruit any more? This is what it is coming to. Even I cannot afford it. *[Interruption.]* The hon. Member thinks that I am joking, I am very serious about this matter.

The prices are high in the markets. I am talking now about local foodstuff. The Government puts on a ten per cent surtax on goods from socialist countries. If the Members of the Government say that it is not discriminatory, as we charge, then in good faith they must remove it to help to reduce the cost of living, so that people can buy, and buy cheaply, not only clothing, but many other things which are available.

I think it was the Minister of Finance who told us yesterday that some of the merchants are engaging in sharp practices, by importing some of these goods, processing them and sending them back to CARIFTA countries as if they were coming from Guyana. Why should the Guyanese people not have the advantage of cheap foods? I am not saying they must have everything from the socialist countries. In our time there were large tins of sardines being sold for twenty five cents. *[Interruption.]* When we had trade with Cuba you said it was blood money.

The Government created a baby called CARIFTA. Now it is sabotaging CARIFTA; it is buying cement from Venezuela. I understand that you will have to waive the duty and the defence levy on cement coming from Venezuela which means you will lose forty-one cents. **[Mr. Clarke:** "He spoke to John Fernandes."] You are not going to convince anybody that we want to make an alliance with John Fernandes. You do not like us to have the nails to nail your coffin. How else are we to know facts like these? We made the appointment. We do not hide; we have nothing to be ashamed about; we are making no alliances. The *Guyana Graphic* says we made a peace plan with you. There is no peace plan. *[Prime Minister:* "I said so already."'] We will support anything that you do.

Here is an example. The Government will have to buy cement at a far higher price from Venezuela. Has the Minister spoken to the Yugoslavs or to the Russians who were here about supplying cement and bartering it for something from Guyana? Has he done that? No, he has not. *[Interruption.]* If you had done it you would not buy from Venezuela. In the process of buying it you are sabotaging the imperialist baby you created called CARIFTA and you are going to lose revenue.

We repeat: the situation in this country is grave and there is going to be more and more dissatisfaction. The use of troops, the use of police, the closing down of schools and this arrogance are not going to solve the problem. Imagine the so-called "enlightened" Minister talking about teachers having the right to flog, in this day and age! The Minister is living in an

isolated world. She must know that all over the world today students want to have a say, not only in what they are taught, but also in the selection of teachers. I am not saying that everything they say is right, but surely, you cannot stick to the antiquated methods. [Miss Field-Ridley: "Stop mis-advising them."] So far the Minister has misinformed the House. The P.P.P. only came into this picture when the people came to the P.P.P. [Interruption.] The Minister is saying something else. The Prime Minister must clear with her right away so that she speaks the right thing in here.

The Government must either embark, especially in trading, on a new policy which can help to reduce the cost of living, or it must subsidise the cost of living. The Government told us that it had \$15 million surplus this year. It is now going to be running the bauxite industry. We were telling you that the bauxite industry had a windfall from devaluation in 1967. You did not want to tax sugar, bauxite, timber, the \$10 million windfall which they were to get. The Government will now have that windfall. Help to subsidise the cost of living! Or is that also against the philosophy of the P.N.C. leadership? As they say, we must not increase the price to farmers, we must not subsidise. This was in their paper. In 1966 the Government produced a White Paper saying that subsidization is costing the Government \$14½ million a year, and the Government cannot afford this. That is how you got your surplus my friend. [Prime Minister: "It has just occurred to you."] Yes, but it is a telling point. Your \$15 million came from that \$14 million.

Sir, I speak very seriously on this question of the cost of living because this is going to create more and more dissatisfaction, more crime and all kinds of other things.

When the people are becoming united, the Members of the Government go and talk to them about race; they go and talk to them about all kinds of things. We want unity; we want co-operation; we want self-reliance; we want self-help. How are you going to get self-help and self-reliance from compulsion? All the local authorities are fraudulently established by bogus selections. How are you going to get self-reliance? Let us have new

elections. The people must be involved not only at the trade union level. That is one level, of course, - but they must be involved at the grass-roots level, and there is no better way than to have representative institutions.

The Government must make up its mind. It cannot have it both ways. Either adopt domestic and foreign policies which will really keep down the cost of living and help the small man, or it is acting, as it is doing now, then take some money and subsidise the cost of living. Have a policy of subsidization. Even in colonial times, after the war, there was subsidization of essential commodities in this country, and this is in keeping with socialist principles to help the man at the bottom. We are to create an egalitarian society, there are new slogans every year but the man's belly is hurting more and more every year. This year's slogan, "We must cloth everybody, we must feed everybody, we must house everybody", is going to come to nought too. We had free milk and free cassava. Now we are going to have free clothes and free milk.

I wish now, sir, to close on this note that the Government must seriously consider this question of subsidizing the cost of living. All Guyanese will applaud the Government, if it embarks on this course which will really make the small man into a real man.

Mr. Speaker: The sitting of the house will be suspended for 15 minutes.

Sitting suspended accordingly at 10 p.m.

10.20 p.m.

On resumption --

Mr. Speaker: The hon. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister: Mr. Speaker, normally the President's Address sets out a catalogue of legislation proposed for the Session. In this Address there are some references to proposed legislation but in view of the fact that basically 1971 was proposed as a year of consolidation, the greater part of the speech deals with the pursuit of certain policies.

I am not disposed, sir, to enter into the field of dialectics as to the differences between Allende and Frei and Caldera or the much-shouted differences between one type of nationalization or another, for I feel that in the final analysis what will matter is what is achieved in practical terms.

I think, sir, that the core of the President's Address can be summarized in one phrase, "National Self-Reliance", and I should like, not so much to attempt to answer the inaccuracies as to develop the self-reliance item. I would not, for instance, spend any time on the inaccuracy about the promise of this Government to withdraw the defence levy; I think that inaccuracy uttered by my good and hon. Friend, the Leader of the Opposition, was a case of the subconscious divulging what has been happening: That party which he leads is so tied up nowadays with the merchants and the John Fernandeses that when the Chamber of Commerce makes a hue and a cry about the Defence Levy the Leader of the Opposition must automatically, as its mouthpiece here, suggest that the Levy should be taken off and, with his flair for the exaggerative he actually imagined that we undertook to do so. We are not taking it off. I understand he has proposed a Motion; we shall debate the Motion, we shall sit on Wednesdays; he can renew the Motion, but I can tell him in advance that the Defence Levy will not be taken off because defence must be seen in terms of not merely the development of the Guyana Defence Force, but in terms of occupying our borders which is an expensive undertaking.

When one looks at this speech, what does one see? There is a reference to the nationalization of the Bauxite Company, DEMBA. The hon. Leader of the United Force, with

his usual penchant for etymological inexactitudes, refers to our having “expropriated”. I am rather surprised that one who did have the advantage or disadvantage of passing through a law course, or having a law course passed through him – [*Laughter*] – should describe the action which we have taken with respect to DEMBA as expropriation. Methinks, Mr. Speaker, I hear some idiotic mumbling about future profits. Expropriation suggests that nothing is paid for the property taken.

There are certain practical circumstances that have to be taken into account, but it is a bit of a shame that supposedly learned persons should come here and talk about expropriation and then set themselves up as defenders of the exploiters. Even if we have to get a brief or a retainer from an exploiter we should not behave like that in this House. This country has decided to exemplify self-reliance in one field, the field of bauxite. We are taking it over; we are going to run it. We are going to pay for the assets out of future profits.

Perhaps it is good to pause for a few moments to make a few observations on this exercise of nationalization. There are difficulties which were anticipated and some which were not anticipated. There is the opposition from the present owners, soon not to be the owners. There are certain fears; some of these fears are conscious, some are subconscious and it is for us in Guyana, having decided upon this course, to develop confidence in the future to overcome these difficulties and to make a success of the undertaking. Our capacity to do that I do not doubt for one moment. The infants who suggest that we cannot do it are to be reminded of what the West said when Nasser nationalized the Suez. They said Egyptians could not run the Suez Canal. The Suez Canal was successfully run – even more efficiently than it was before – until it was closed in the 1967 Arab/Israeli war. We are either going to be men or we are going to be mice. Fortunately, the mice here are few.

When we look at this Address we see formulated quite clearly, though not in intimate detail, three objectives, not as has been suggested to be achieved in the year 1971, but between

the years 1972 – and 1976 – to feed ourselves, to house ourselves, to clothe ourselves. Feeding ourselves, I would submit, requires imagination, determination and energy and is dependent upon our capacity to expand the agricultural sector, diversifying the products there from, and upon our ability to decide to virtually close our markets to foods which we can produce.

I expected to hear more detailed comments on this. I expected to hear perhaps comments on the type of crops which we may produce, the type of substitutes we may have for some of the things that we import. I expected to hear contributions aimed at advising the Government how to achieve the objective of feeding ourselves because I do not think that there is any Guyanese, except some unscrupulous merchants who have not learned to deal in local produce yet, who would be opposed to such a goal. Instead we hear talk about Global-Agri. Now Global -Agri was a failure; there is no doubt about it. Global-Agri did not achieve what it was intended to achieve, but members of this House are invited to visit the large project which is now being carried out at the site which was originally intended for Global-Agri, Kibilibiri. There is a clear attempt, already giving evidence of success, of our diversifying our agriculture and our producing relevant crops.

Take, for instance, the production of sorghum, which is an animal food par excellence; the production of soya bean, which is not only an oil crop, but also the basis of stockfeed; peanuts, not only a source of protein, but also a source of oil; corn, a source of stockfeed. When one remembers the millions of pounds of corn imported annually to go into Guyana Stockfeeds and other stockfeed factories, one must concede that an attempt like this is a serious attempt to feed ourselves, because it is not merely a question of producing food directly for human consumption, it is also a question of producing stockfeed so that in the field of meat and small stock we can be self-sufficient. And, as the Government has consistently argued, if we were to succeed in this diversification, as succeed we must, if we were to succeed in an appreciation of the quantum of product, it will mean we shall then also, apart from feeding ourselves, have a surplus for export.

Mr. Speaker, when we undertake to feed ourselves, there is bound to be opposition, for what is going to happen to those who have spent their lifetime and made fortunes importing food? When we increase our shrimp and fish output what is going to happen to those who have spent their time making fortunes on imported sardines? What is going to happen to those who have made fortunes in selling saltfish? There is bound to be opposition, the opposition of the obscurantists, of the conservatives, of the short-sighted.

Housing ourselves in another objective clearly adumbrated here on which, if my recollection is accurate, there has been no real comment from the Opposition. Now, housing ourselves, from the point of view of the Government, means giving every family in Guyana a proper shelter by the year 1976.

I expected some debate on the tactic which has been adumbrated by Government for some time on this question of housing ourselves. First of all, we have to decide what we are going to house ourselves in. This Government contends that the clay block being 100 per cent local in content is the thing which should be used. We contend that not only is it cheaper, but its mode of manufacture also makes it possible for us to have it produced by small groups. We have decided against attempting to house our people completely in wood because we contend that the wood could better be used for export.

I expected to hear d debate on a matter like this. I expected someone who claimed to have an aesthetic sense to propose that there is something enchantingly attractive about wooden buildings which would be lost if we used clay blocks or that it would have been possible to meet both our export demand and our local demand, still using wood. That would have been something interesting but we have had nothing on that.

Here again we are going to have opposition, because when you are going to use clay blocks, when you are going to use clay tiles, what happens to those who have enjoyed

monopolies and fortunes in cement, in galvanized sheeting and in all these building materials which we have imported in the past? We are going to find opposition because the local demand in wood is going to be reduced and people will then become more selective in the buying of lumber. Lumber will have to be properly cured in so far as the local market is concerned, and things like that. We are bound to find opposition.

Clothing ourselves. What does that mean? I heard some remark about our not having the raw materials here. Even those who do not understand the difference between expropriation and nationalization could recognize that we do not have the raw materials here, but what do we do? Do we say we do not have the raw materials, therefore we can never clothe ourselves? If the nation accepts the Government's position that clothing ourselves is an important objective, the nation will agree that top priority should be given to setting up a textile mill or mills and for once we shall have to integrate our industry backward instead of forward. We shall have in the first place to import the yarn while we proceed to grow things like cotton. An experiment has already been going on in this field.

Some of the infant Columbuses, unaware of our history, might not know that cotton was once grown in Guyana; that Providence Estate was once a cotton estate and that three miles out to sea from the Prime Minister's country residence there was once a cotton estate. They will, of course, in their naiveté, their simplicity and their puerility, be not conversant with the reports that are to be found in our libraries, in our Ministries and in our archives. They would never have heard of the U.N.I.D.O. report which was commissioned by the CARIFTA group which recommended a cotton industry vertically integrated here in Guyana.

They would also be unaware of the fact that while we proceed to the production of cotton there are textile mills into which you can feed both cotton yarn and synthetic yarn. They would also not recognise that since caustic is an important input in the bauxite industry that caustic electrolytically produced gives as a by-product chlorine, which is also the basis of synthetic fibre for clothing ourselves.

I was too generous, Mr. Speaker, to suggest that there was real wisdom in the remark that we do not have the raw materials, for if this lineal descendent of Christopher were to look at his feet he would see that they are clothed in leather. Does he suggest that we do not have leather in this country? Does he suggest that no use could be made of the hides from that place which once was his party's haunt, the Rupununi? Has he cast his eyes over our coastlands to see the grasses which can be turned into hats and even, as is done in some parts of the world, into material for clothes?

To understand the rationale behind this Address requires a certain amount of sophistication combined with decolonization. Did the gentleman live in Japan at the end of the last century he would have said that these Nipponese were crazy. But today, even the Americans forecast that by 1984 the Japanese are going to be as great and productive an industrial nation as the United States of America. But with these infants, the shroud has not fallen. They are worried. Can do it? Criticism this government always accepts, but criticism founded on an inferiority complex at a personal and national level is unworthy of this House.

We do not say that we shall be able to clothe ourselves by the end of the year 1971. Our objective is to do that by 1976. We shall need the imagination, the co-operation, and the genius of our people to help us in achieving this objective and once we premise the laudableness of this objective, I have no doubt that the co-operation and the ability and the genius will be forthcoming.

No mention, so far as I recollect, has been made of the section in the Address which places emphasis on community development and self-help. Criticise, tell us that this movement has not developed as rapidly as it should have, but at least comment on it. *[interruption.]* "We did", I am told by the adulator of dead feminine royalty, but how many of them who say "It is a good thing, but — "have been on the self-helped road? They talk and they talk and they pontificate, but how many of them have been on the self-help road? People come here and they talk about discrimination; they talk about co-operation, they talk about unity.

This road that is being built is not being built for the P.N.C., it is not being built for the Government. Do you or do you not agree that it is a proper objective to want road communications right through to our southern borders? Do you or do you not agree that the people of Guyana should be trained in the school of doing things for themselves? Or do you want roads built for us, my friend, (Mr. M.F. Singh) so that you a layman can get frequent trips to consult with specialists? The present Minister of Works, Hydraulics and Supply had built under his watch more miles of road than his predecessor and he has not yet been to Washington to consult with the consultants.

We return, after that digression, to the point that I was making about the road. If we agree (a) that there should be this road; (b) that Guyanese should be trained in the school of doing things for themselves, why have none of these *soi-disant* leaders gone on it? I can give them a list of their followers who have gone. That is why my most perceptive friend, the Leader of the Opposition, forecasts a 75 per cent majority at the next election. I said 90 per cent, he is a little conservative; because even his party members have gone. I see in this House here, beyond the bar, one of his party members who was working on the road with the Deputy Prime Minister, one who has voted for the P.P.P. consistently and canvassed for it.

Words are wind. Trinidadians say "Wha a mouth na load." The hon. Leader of the Opposition talks about national objectives and national unity and he will not work on the road. No! He spends his time begging associations which he thinks are pure P.N.C. to come and see him, or he sends a butcher to find out about cement.

I should have expected some comment on the Government's attitude towards, and philosophy with respect to, banking, to which reference is made in the second paragraph of page 7. I should have expected us to be regaled either by some old-world decrepit philosophy about the usefulness of foreign banks, or some imaginative discourse on the need to nationalize all banks. We do not by any stretch of imagination or immodesty claim omniscience, but we have clearly set this out.

It is proposed that the Guyana National Co-operative Bank, whose shareholders can be, and are, not only the Government but co-operatives, friendly societies, trade unions, should be eventually the sole mobiliser of Guyanese financial resources in Guyana, so far as banking is concerned.

The foreign banks, as I see it, can play a role, but not in mobilizing our resources. They can be the agencies for foreign credit, but certainly the time must come, and very soon, and in my lifetime – and since I do not come from a family given to longevity, it must come soon – when the foreign banks have got to get out of the mobilizing of our financial resources.
[Applause.]

Undoubtedly, Mr. Speaker, here again we are going to make enemies; we are going to have opposition. Undoubtedly we are going to have banks dropping their little bits of poison into ears saying “what a terrible thing this is”, saying “Credit is restricted”. If you want to get an extra five dollars they will say, “We would willingly give you but the Government ... We will have to close down our Anna Regina bank because of the Government. We will have to retrench because of the Government.” They are still doing business with the Government so far as foreign credit is concerned. In other words, these money lenders and there is nothing pejorative in my description of them as money lenders – are not prepared to play the role which we tell them is going to be theirs, that is, to be responsible for foreign credit, lending foreign money but not mobilizing and deploying local money.

The Leader of the Opposition soi-disant Marxist, defender of the faith, will say, “People are disturbed; and attack on entrenched positions always precipitates and causes opposition and rumours. At Linden ALCAN’S agent was saying “Can Government afford? Can Government get this? Can Government find the expertise? Similarly all of these institutions which are the objects of our new policy of change are going to use their minions – some of whom unfortunately, I suspect, sit around this Table – to spread this smear and then the Leader of the Opposition says, “People are worried; people are disturbed.” Who are the people? The

masses? It would be improper to describe some of these critics in the same term, masses, unless there is an ellipsis of the first consonant.

Let us move now to the External Trade Bureau to see another area in which there is bound to be opposition. The External Trade Bureau is a relatively young organization. Naturally, as has been the case in other countries where the control of external trade has been brought under public supervision and ownership, there are bound to be teething troubles, because the first question that arises is, "How many of those skilled in the operations attendant on external trade can you get to run your new organization?"

I have been speaking to the President of Tanzania. He has recounted his many difficulties in this field. But here again you are going to have opposition because you have Mr. X, who is agent – that is one commission; he is distributor – that is another commission; he is wholesaler – that is another mark-up; he is retailer – that is another mark-up. And to imagine the effrontery of these gentlemen to say that milk to Guyana was being subsidized by the exporters abroad and since we established the External Trade Bureau the exporters have taken off that subsidy and the price has gone up. Are we a set of infants to believe this? Obviously, there is more in the mortar than the pestle. Obviously there are going to be tricks like this. But let them understand. They can get the quick kill now but after that we shall have to ask the auxiliary Bishop to say the requiem mass. It may be convenient to use the old sources now but we are not going to use them at this price when the Bureau is settled.

My good imaginative friend, the Leader of the Opposition says, "Get other sources". You do not get other sources overnight. You have to discuss, you have to arrange shipping, transportation and so on. Softly, softly, we shall, not "catchee monkey", but reach our destination.

Do you imagine in this day and age, when we have had technical analyses of qualities and nutrition values, we should be told that milk "X" is better than milk "Y", when they are all the same? *[Interruption.]* It also calls for our educating the public to stop buying brand names and to buy products, to buy commodities. Bread is bread. No, Mr. Speaker, I am sorry; there can be a variation in bread, for instance, as between Mansell's and Dictator's and between Harlequin's and Dictator's. We have now got to undertake an education of our people for them to buy commodities rather than much-advertised brand names.

Let me give another example. People complain about the price of powdered milk in tins. Do you know that there is no difference in quality or nutritive value between the powdered milk in tins and the bulk powdered milk? This is on the advice, and after chemical analyses, of doctors. But the disparity between the one and the other is in price.

We have not only to educate our public but in the process of time, so long as we have to import milk – and that will not be forever – we have even got to go to the point of banning some of these high cost food – stuffs which have no more value than lower-priced foodstuffs. You are paying for a tin, a picture on a tin, and you are paying for the heavy advertisement. That is the sort of thing in which we need co-operation. We do not need the flippant remark by the Leader of the Opposition, "You have banned apples," as if he was reared on apples. He and I were not reared on apples; we were reared on long mangoes. Do you remember the days when you could get twenty-seven for one cent from the man in the jackass cart? And look how long and well we have lived and striven! Naturally there will be opposition in this field!

We move now, Mr. Speaker, to consider what we propose with respect to co-operatives. I will admit that in terms of our goals and our ideology, co-operatives are in their infancy. I will admit that there are bound, from time to time, to be failures here or failures there; there are bound to be mistakes here or mistakes there. There is no perfection; it is a human institution, but who can deny that the number of co-operatives and the number of successful co-operatives

have increased over the last year? Who can deny that the thrust is the correct one if we are to have involved in our economic planning and in our economy the ordinary people, the small men?

Here again you must find opposition, because this Government has said that it is its proposal to achieve a position where the co-operative is the largest and the dominant sector. Those who now pervade and control the dominant sector are naturally going to be opposed. They are going to tell you, for instance, when giving you 15 per cent dividends on the sale of beer and rum, that a limited liability company is like a co-operative and they are going to say, "Look how well we do it. You get 15 per cent., when we take our property and sell it to the company and continue to live in the property. Look how smartly we do it!" They do not tell us that with 35 per cent of the shares in a limited liability company – I used to be a lawyer of some competence – you can control it. It is an easy case of logistics. If you get a group of 35 per cent of the shareholders you can control the company.

You will find opposition from these people because the co-operative means control of the economy for the small man; it means a spreading out; it means that no longer will there be the elite; no longer will there be these controllers; no longer will there be these people who are born to the purple – or shall I be more accurate in my quotation and say "to the purple born". Naturally you find opposition; naturally you find criticism; naturally you find poison being poured into the people's ears. And it is not for the *soi-disant* socialists or Marxists or regular visitors to Moscow, defenders of Poland and this and that, to say that people are disillusioned.

The exploiters may see their positions threatened but not their lives or their livelihood, because none of them will starve. We are not going to take away the running hot water in the baths of any; we are not going to take away their motor cars or their speed-boats. Their positions of control, that is all we propose to take away. For their skills they can live here and be remunerated comfortably because we always will drink beer, we always will make bread and

we will need these people to make bread and to brew beer and, no matter what the Gandhi Youth Organisation leader says, we will always need rum, and there is a skill in making rum.

These people do not want to stand on an equal footing with the rest of us, being paid for their skills, being used for the contribution they can make. They want to control and, therefore, they use the media, they use their personal relationship with even some of the masses. And then the Opposition, the real Opposition, which prides itself on being socialist comes along and says, "People are disillusioned." Naturally; this is a period of change. I am no defender of Stalin, but Stalin found it necessary to remove the heads of many people because they would not accept the change and he did not have time to waste. We have time, therefore, we do not have to remove heads. We are not like the former Deputy Premier who talked about rolling heads. We are not in such a hurry to want to remove heads, but look at it throughout the world's history. Whenever there is change and the opposition is uncertain, there is fear being purveyed by those who are losing their positions. Those who are supposed to be dialecticians, those who have adopted the Hegelian method of analysis via Marx should understand.

I can understand the superficially read or the neo-literate, or the semi-literate, not understanding these facts of history, but not those who propose to us they are able to analyse in scientific terms the economic and political history of the world.

I want to make a comment on the comments about health and education. There is, at any stage in the development of a country like Guyana, certain limits to what we can do. I just want to attract people's attention to this fact. When any of the developed nations in the world were at our stage of physical and economic development, could they afford to supply all of these services which so many of us in Guyana take for granted? Let us ask ourselves that. Let us look at the great United States of America. Let us look at the great U.S.S.R., whose working hours until last year were longer than ours. Let us ask ourselves how logical we are being when on the one side we cry, "Pay more, do more" and on the other hand it is said "The Government is bankrupt."

There are physical limitations, Mr. Speaker. Why is it that the Soviet Union waited until last year to reduce its working hours to the level which we have had in Guyana for years? Because of the demands of development of the economy in their country. Why is it, Mr. Speaker, that when the United States of America was on our level of development free medical attention was not merely unheard of, but was "unheardable"? Illness represented a visitation of the Lord upon sinners. Some people were born to slave when they were 12 and 13 years.

Let us understand, therefore, that we cannot achieve these things overnight. Let us not go deluding the people like these who promised \$10 a day. How can we do it? Today, for instance, a chemical engineer, if he comes straight out of school, is paid more in Guyana than he is paid in Yugoslavia or in Russia.

Let us now consider the question which has been raised by the Leader of the Opposition, the question of remuneration to those in the public sector. We come here at budget time and we hear the Leader of the Opposition inveigh "The bureaucracy is being expanded: there are jobs for the boys" and then he gets the representatives of "the boys" to go and see him and tells them "Boys, you should get more." What inconsistency! Then there was the late rationalization of the "not a cent more" statement of 1959. That is the first time I have heard this fancy explanation.

Our Government has had discussions with the representatives of those who work in the public sector. The discussions have been very cordial and there was a large area of mutual understanding. Further, I cannot and will not say.

The attempted subversion by the erstwhile enemies of those in the public sector apparently bore no fruit, but one of the things the representatives of the public sector, employees and workers and the Government, were able to agree on is that the time has come for us to

adumbrate, after proper study, an Incomes and Prices Policy in the context of Guyana and our economy.

I am aware of the fact that in some areas the cost of living has risen. There is one area obviously where this has happened and that is where imports are concerned. Twice in 12 months WITASS raised its tariffs and rates and the system in Guyana is that you pay duty on c.i.f. prices and from that your mark-up is obtained. *[Interruption.]*

I was remarking, sir, that I am aware of the fact that the cost of living has risen in certain areas. I have given one example where there has been an upward effect on the cost of living, that is, through shipping where WITASS, the Conference Lines, has raised its tariffs twice in 12 months.

There is another problem which we have and which we are seeking to get rid of when we speak of feeding ourselves by 1976: the problem of importing other people's inflation. If we continue to import Carnation milk – we do not import Portuguese sardines any more – if we continue to import Canadian sardines or what have you, we are importing those various countries' inflation.

Let me give an example. I am informed that when the original orders were placed for certain textiles from the Soviet Union, one price was given. By the time the orders were closed another price was given. And that goes not only for the Soviet Union but for most of the places that export to us. So long as we continue primarily to be an importing country for necessaries we are going to be facing that problem. And that is one of the major reasons for our seeking to expand and diversify the agricultural sector and to feed ourselves.

We would like co-operation from our friends on an adumbration of a relevant Incomes and Princes Policy for Guyana. The answer is not merely, "Give more wages". Unless you

control, unless you erect certain control points, more wages will merely mean more inflation, more money chasing too few services and/or more money chasing prices. This is a problem which is faced not only by Guyana, but by several countries like ourselves in the Caribbean and elsewhere. It seems to me, sir, that it is too facile to say "Give more money." There naturally have to be certain adjustments from time to time. That we accept and my comrades with whom I spoke yesterday know that we accept that and I know that they know that we accept it.

Now, let us note the paucity of comment on the section which deals with public corporations. The trouble is that so many members of the Opposition deal with the periphery rather than the meat. Government proposes to have a re-organisation of public corporations. I was discussing this with my colleague and good friend only yesterday. We have found that many of the public corporations have not been functioning satisfactorily and if the State is going to take part in more of the activity in industry and commerce, regardless of ideology, there must be proper accounting and accountability, and there must be a surplus of earnings over investment for the purpose of further investment.

Government further proposes to look at the structures of these Boards. Has not the time come for the Boards to be structured in such a way that their members are in fact experts and most of them executives? As I told my friend, the P.N.C. inherited something from the P.P.P. which it carried on, and one thing about the P.N.C. is that it admits where it has gone wrong because it knows it is human. The Boards, it seems to us, looking at them now, have had too many laymen, laymen in the sense of people not being particularly interested or competent. And then there needs to be a central rationalizing of all the corporations and making them consistent with the rest of the public sector of which they form a part.

It is interesting to know that we found a situation such as this. We are changing it now and that is why the wage freeze was necessary until the whole thing was considered. Mr. "X" is working in corporation "A" lifting paper weights. He is paid a ball-point pen for that job. He

goes to corporation "B" where his job is again to lift paper weights, but then he is paid two ball-point pens. There is no rationale whatsoever.

The time has come to rationalize these things; the time has come to centralize at least things like personnel, the method of recruitment and accounting and Government proposes to have appointed a holding corporation which will be responsible for the control and management and the co-ordination of public corporations, except bauxite, and any business ventures in which the Government is involved as a majority shareholder.

We hope, therefore, to make sense of the whole structure for ... is no point in appointing public corporation after public ... each one autonomous, a law unto itself doing some of ... under the sun and ... to conform with ... at the moment ... controlling ... there has be ...

I should have expected some sensible comment on this instead of the clap trap about freezing. As I said, the periphery attracts the simple, the meat is avoided by the ignorant.

Mr. Speaker, we have not had any debate on external affairs by agreement between the Opposition and the Government because there is set down a Motion in my name which, it is agreed, will be debated around the 15th June.

I want to refer to a matter which impinges somewhat on the relations the Guyana Government has with foreign nations not in terms of diplomatic relations but in terms of trade. This Government has said that it proposes and is prepared to trade with any country provided the trade is mutually advantageous. We have heard reference to Cuba and rice. It is about time that that tape be put away or that record be destroyed. Over and over again we have said that this

Government was never unwilling to sell rice to Cuba. Over and over again we have shown extracts from the files referring to the fact that even before we took office the Cubans were actively questioning the continuation of the trade.

The ex-Minister of Trade, Mr. Hubbard, formerly a bosom friend of the Leader of the Opposition and now his sworn opponent, had left a draft letter in the file written to the Cuban Minister of Trade in which he was complaining that the agreed amount to be purchased by Cuba was not purchased and that there was a surplus and problem of disposing of that surplus.

After we came into office we sought . . .

We in Guyana have arrived at this economic policy out of ... experience. We not implemented a policy based upon any doctrinaire philosophy; but it is ... know that that policy is right and is accepted as being ... diverse countries of the world.

Against that general policy, let us examine the performance of our economy to see whether that performance justifies the policy that this Government has pursued over the past year.

In 1970, the economy continued to be buoyant and continued to expand with vitality as it has been growing since the People's National Congress took office in December 1964. The gross domestic product rose from \$447 million in 1969 to approximately \$476 million in 1970 at a growth rate of 6.5 cent over the past year ... import from where they want and (b) you also have them using all their skills and propaganda and advertisements saying how wonderful these products which they import from the traditional sources are, failing to say how frequently the prices are wonderfully and unreasonably high.

Government is moving to the position where it should be able to ensure that what we have to import is imported from the most reasonable and cheapest sources, all other things being equal.

In the circumstances of what is known it is again quite dishonest intellectually to suggest that this Government is picking and choosing as between potential or actual trading partners. Until you control and can dictate the importation you are hamstrung by the traditional importers and the traditional sources. [Dr. Jagan: "What about restriction?"] Restrictions are not going to help. You must have full control. Therefore, it does not lie in the mouth of the members of the major Opposition to be criticizing the Government on this question. If they want, let them criticize the Government for not having taken over completely the import trade or brought it under full control.

We have had three days, I understand, of debate or discussion on the merits of the President's Speech, a debate and a discussion which at most time were hilarious and not acrimonious but, Mr. Speaker, I regret to say that with few exceptions there has been little or no attempt deal with the core of Government's policy as expressed in the Address ...

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

NB: PARTS OF THE PRIME MINISTER'S SPEECH ARE MISSING

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed." [The Minister of Trade (Leader of the House) (Mr. Ramsarop).

Adjourned accordingly at 11.42 p.m.
