

**THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORT**

[VOLUME]

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

108th Sitting

2 p.m.

Thursday, 6th January, 1977

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

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

Prime Minister (1)

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

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Ministers (9)

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

(Absent)

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

(Absent – on leave)

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

(Absent)

***Non-elected Minister**

- *Cde. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance (Absent)
- *Cde. S. S. Naraine, A. A.,
Minister of Works and Housing (Absent – on leave)
- *Cde. G. A. King,
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection
- *Cde. G. B. Kennard, C. C. H.,
Minister of Agriculture
- *Cde. C. L. Baird,
Minister of Education and Social Development
- *Cde. F. R. Wills, S. C.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice

Ministers (5)

- Cde. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour (Absent)
- Cde. S. M. Field-Ridley,
Minister of Information and Culture
- Cde. B. Ramsaroop,
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs
and Leader of the House
- *Cde. O. M. R. Harper,
Minister of Health
- *Cde. C.V. Mingo,
Minister of Home Affairs

Ministers of State (9)

- Cde. M. Kasim, A. A.,
Minister of State for Agriculture
- Cde. O. E. Clarke,
Minister of State – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)

***Non-elected Minister**

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

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

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

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

(Absent)

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

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

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

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

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

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

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

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

***Non-elected Minister**

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

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

Other Members (19)

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

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. B. Jagan

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran

Other Members (12)

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

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

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

(Absent – on leave)

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F. A. Narain

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

PRAYERS**ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER****Leave To Members**

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. M. F. Singh for today's sitting.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

The Speaker: Cde. C. Jagan.

Cde. C. Jagan: Cde. Speaker, I rise on a point of personal explanation to refer to an observation made last evening by the Minister of Trade. You will recall that he indicated at one time during the course of his speech that the party, and by that he meant the ruling party – at the time the P.P.P. was in the Government – had negotiated with a private business man, Mr. Rayman in such a way as to let him do some underhand business with respect to drugs.

The Speaker: I did not understand that. Nothing underhand was implied in the statement by the Minister of Trade. I am sure if you had listened carefully you would have realised what he said was that during the P.P.P. regime in Government there was some arrangement with one Rayman to set up a corporation to deal in pharmaceuticals. I think that was the tenor of his speech but he did not imply any underhand dealing as far as I am aware.

Cde. C. Jagan: Well the arrangement he was talking about certainly did not imply that it was to be a public corporation. The mood he was speaking in last evening, the heat with which he spoke, as we remember, all implied that there was some corrupt, underhand deal and on that basis I objected. If he was talking about a corporation, that Government was going to set up an institution in which Mr. Rayman was going to be involved, I would not have risen to object because that is in keeping with ideas that we have and ideas which are now put in practice by the

Government, that is, putting up corporations for trading and otherwise. I would like to bring to you attention that when I was Minister of Trade and Industry –

The Speaker: I am not going to allow that. I am just looking up here under Personal Explanations and it says, that were a member makes a statement, if he is improperly reported, then he may get up on a personal explanation to explain really what was said. That is what it says here but that was not a question of personal explanation. That is what the Minister has said. So, I do not really think you qualify under that ground.

Cde. Harbada Persaud rose.

The Speaker: Do you have a personal explanation?

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: Now, you see, these are the things that cause unnecessary problems. These matters should be brought to my attention before. How do I know what you are going to raise as a question of personal explanation? That is why you have a Whip.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Speaker, I am sure it will be nothing controversial. In my contribution last night, among other things referred to, I mentioned that the Prime Minister, his wife, his daughter, his son-in-law and his granddaughter went to the Non-Aligned Conference which was held in Sri Lanka. After the debate, I was informed that his granddaughter did not in fact go on this trip. It was only the Prime Minister, his wife, his daughter and his son-in-law. I therefore wish to withdraw the part which stated that his granddaughter also went on the trip and to apologise. **[Laughter]**

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1977

BUDGET DEBATE

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

The Speaker: The Budget Debate will now resume. Cde. Dalchan.

Cde. Dalchand: The 1977 Budget presented by the Minister of Finance on behalf of the Government will surely soak the poor working man and create serious hardship for him. After twelve years of empty sloganeering and mismanagement, despite the many good periods, especially the windfall it got from the soaring high sugar prices in 1974 and 1975, the P.N.C. Government has now brought the economy of this country into shambles and it is in no better position than the P.N.C. party itself. The burden will be so great on the small man that he might have to go into physical liquidation. There is notable evidence of this fact. The 9.10 p.m. Radio Demerara programme, Death Announcements, now has such a long list of names that it lasts for an unreasonably long period. The programme is so long that people get tired listening to it. This may be one of the reasons contributing to the fact that the population of this country, with so many resources, still remains under one million.

Now looking at the agricultural shortfall for 1976 and listening to the blame being put on the weather alone, is very disappointing. The Minister in his speech blamed the first part of last year for too much rain and the latter part for a drought. I want to say that even if the best possible weather conditions were made available to this Government, the fact would remain that the Government has failed and cannot succeed even under the best circumstances. Government failed to make the necessary preparations for even the normal conditions and failed to perform because of its own negligence.

There was also total negligence on the part of the other Government agencies to maintain and carry out necessary local drainage and irrigation works. This was admitted by the minister

6.1.77

National Assembly

2.10– 2.15 p.m.

when he said that more than 40 per cent of the rice crop had to be left in the fields because they could not get access into the fields to remove it.

Turning to the sugar industry, as we all know the economy of this country still depends on this commodity for its survival. Here again, as the Minister put it in his Budget Speech, understanding it very well, the P.N.C. Government has plans to further expand the sugar industry. Some time ago it appointed people to investigate the taking over of the Block III cattle pasture to expand the sugar industry. The Minister is saying and I quote from page 3:

“For the next year (1977)” referring to this year.

“no one feels bold enough to predict any significant improvement in the supply/demand position for the commodity.”

Yet the Government has been making plans to extend in this industry. The industry has been trying to improve. What the Government should try to do is to increase the yield per acre and not to take away lands that can be used for other important agricultural developments including the development of the cattle industry. As you know, there is a wholesale shortage of milk and beef in Guyana. A lot of milk is being imported. The Cattle pasture was provided by the P.P.P. Government to improve the industry but this Government is today destroying that most needed industry.

2.25 p.m.

The sugar industry fell, Cde. Speaker, because of the Government's attitude towards the workers and farmers, failure to settle their labour problems, and failure to recognise the unions of the workers choice, and imposition of an outrageous sugar levy. As the Government put it then, the levy was introduced to hold up some of the extra profit the expatriate firm Bookers was

taking out but, as we see today, the levy is here to stay and is one of the sources by which this Government gets revenue to waste and mis-spend.

When the sugar workers went on strike for better wages and working conditions and for recognition of the union of their choice, they were threatened by the Deputy Prime Minister. The Army was used to maliciously burn and cut farmers' cane. This happened in many areas including the Canal Polder, a very large peasant cane-farming area.

Along with the sugar levy, the Government simultaneously passed other legislation doubling the contribution to the Sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund. I would like to give the figures as they were then. They doubled the contribution of the sugar Industry Labour Welfare Fund from \$13.20 to \$26.50. I have it here and it can be presented. The welfare contribution rose from \$4.80 to \$12.00. The rehabilitation fund rose from \$7.20 to \$12. Price stabilization rose from \$1.20 to \$2.50. Most of these moneys, levy and welfare fund, have been collected from the poor sugar workers and the Cane Farmers' Association. Yet, very little benefit has been passed on to them. The maintenance work in many of the extra-nuclear housing areas has been completely neglected. Many of these workers have been put into the irresponsible hands of Local Government bodies. We find that the money was obtained from the Sugar Industry's Labour Welfare Fund previously but now the sugar workers have to find this money and pay it directly to the Local Government. That is another burden on them.

Cde. Speaker, there has been wholesale deterioration in the workers' situation, living under very poor conditions. In many cases there are no health facilities, no doctors visiting the so-called Estate Emergency Hospital, no nurse/midwife to attend to pregnant mothers on the sugar estates, no drugs, poor sanitary conditions, bad roads. There is complete neglect in the maintenance of drains and other social services. There was the seizing of the Community Centres and putting them into the hands of the ... and irresponsible Local Government bodies, neglect to maintain recreational facilities and not least, to put it, as the Minister of Labour said,

correct, at least the fifty wrongs, some of them still existing in the sugar industry. The Minister of Labour said no.

Now I would wish to refer to the sugar levy imposed by the Guyana Government in 1974. The sugar levy is so severe that today cane farmers in Guyana cannot even break even and in most cases are closing down in the sugar cultivation. This will be reflected in last year's production and will show in the 1977 Spring production. Cane farmers throughout the whole country –

The Speaker: Comrades, I will appeal to you all not to heckle backbenchers. Give them an opportunity. I think this is Cde. Balchand's second contribution for the period he has been here. Proceed, Cde. Balchand.

Cde. Balchand: The sugar levy was introduced and passed in the National Assembly on the 28th June, 1974, but it was made retroactive to take effect from 1st January, 1974.

Cde. Speaker, I would now like to tell this House of the extent to which the levy soaked the poor farmers and the workers. The levy was based as follows: When the price of sugar is \$365 and does not exceed \$521, a levy of 55 per cent on every dollar was paid; when the price of sugar exceeds \$521 and does not exceed \$625, 70 per cent levy is imposed; and when the price of sugar exceeds \$625, the strength of the levy is 85 per cent on every dollar. This is why the Government was able to muster much more than it anticipated to collect. In 1974 it anticipated to collect \$30 million but it ended up collecting nearly \$131 million. In 1975 – there is no doubt about it – the sum was much larger. They collected \$227 million and in 1976 they are saying they collected only \$63 million. The levy was so designed that even in the time of good prices the farmers got very little. The price they receive now is about \$. Even the promise by the Prime Minister that the price of the farmers. Sugar and cane would be equivalent to 1975 has not been met. The Prime Minister also on May Day last year went to the National Park and

promised cane farmers a \$2 million retroactive payment. Up to the time of speaking this has not materialised.

The Government wishes to get money to carry on its programme. We have no quarrel but I would just like to draw some comparison to the sugar workers and the farmers in our Caribbean territories. Let us, for example, look at the levy in Trinidad. When the price of sugar is \$480 and does not exceed \$576, the Trinidad levy took 15 per cent. When the price of sugar was \$576 but did not exceed \$720, the levy was 30 per cent. When the price rose from \$720 but did not exceed \$960 the levy was 60 per cent. When the price rose from \$960 to \$1,200 the levy took 70 per cent and when it went over \$1,200 the levy took 80 per cent. Comrades, this is a comparison of the levy imposed by the General Government and the Trinidad Government in places where we both sell our sugar.

This is not the only benefit being allowed by the Trinidad Government to the Trinidad farmers and Jamaica farmers. The money that was collected from this levy was allocated and put to use as follows: (1) the largest share will be paid to the Can Farmers Price Stabilisation Fund which will be used to cushion the price of farmers cane should the export price of sugar decline in the future years.

(2) To keep down the price of the imported sugar should the circumstance arise at any time that the country has to import sugar;

(3) Part will be used to increase food production in sugar areas;

2.35 p.m.

(4) Part to improve land preparation and other related equipment to the industry;

(5) Part to improve the living standard of sugar workers and farmers from time to time.

Cde. Speaker, these have been some of the crude methods adopted by this Government in exploiting the poor workers and farmers of this country. It was this Government who set up the Guya Persaud Commission to investigate and make recommendations so that sugar workers could benefit. The Commission recommended that workers should have a 60 percent profit sharing but by the taking of this levy even the ... can hardly survive. This is the position in the sugar industry.

I would like to move on to the rice industry. The Government has been boasting of the millions of dollars it is spending in helping rice farmers and the rice industry. I want to tell this House through you, Cde. Speaker, that all these millions that we have been talking about to help rice farmers and the industry, have been completely misspent. If these moneys were spent to the benefit of the industry one would have expected today that the production of rice would have soared. Instead, production of rice, as we have heard before now, has actually declined and is about 8 per cent less than what we produced earlier.

The Minister also spoke of the yields per acre in well drained and irrigated areas. He referred to 25 bags per acre in the drainage and irrigation areas and 16 bags per acre in the ordinary areas. It is a fact that if the production per acre has jumped from 6 to 16 and 25 bags per acre then today we should have had at least four times higher production.....

It must also be noted that if the Black Bush Polder scheme and the Tapakuma Scheme were not implemented by the People's Progressive Party Government from the meager resources it had available to it and under the deplorable condition of the Imperialist Government, today we would not have had rice in those areas. This is a fact, Cde. Speaker. Because of the unity and solidarity of the rice farmers through their organisation, the Rice Producers' Association, we were able to force Government to increase the price of rice twice in 1975.

I wish to draw to the attention of this House what Cde. Minister of Economic Development mentioned yesterday that in 1964 the Leader of the then Government, which is

now the Opposition, told civil Servants “Not one cent more”. But the failed to tell this House that the Deputy Prime Minister, then Minister of Agriculture, told the rice farmers “Not one cent more” for paddy and rice and was still barefaced to come and tell this House –

The Speaker: Please withdraw the remark about barefaced. I am not going to allow that.

Cde. Dalchand: And now they tell this country that the farmers are the backbone of this country. I refer to this to bring an incident to the attention of Members. They seem to know what should be done but they don't seem to understand what suits the farmers and what suits the working people of this country.

We wish to notify the Minister of Agriculture and the Government that unless the just demands of the rice farmers are met, recognition of the Rice Producers' Association and the disbanding of the irresponsible Rice Action Committees, which over the past years have wasted millions of dollars of rice farmers' money, unless representation is granted to farmers at all stages to ... Stop wasting money on things like the silos now being built. I don't know what is going to be put in them. It is anticipated that we are going to have paddy again this year as an imaginative production.

This has been going on for years. It was expected that last year the production would have been at the highest. But what have we seen? It has been at the lowest ever and it will continue to lose its strength if the Government does not change its attitude now and listen to interested and dedicated farmers organisations.

We are interested to develop the industry but we must not be used as scapegoats; we must not be used to muster ... Why did the Government not put the Rice Action Committee to mobilize rice farmers? The Rice Action Committee that has done well did not have the slightest

interest in doing it. Only the Rice Producers Association can do it, and has seen the wisdom in applying it.

Cde. Speaker, in order to improve production and to put this country in a better position economically, we are asking the Government to pay heed to some of the requests.

The Parliamentary Secretary of Local Government yesterday spoke of how much money in the form of loans and grants his Ministry was able to give to Local Authorities. He cited where a Local Authority was given loan to buy tractors and trailers. I wish that the Parliamentary Secretary would pay more attention to the field and not to the office. Let him visit the areas where these machines have been given. They have today created more burden and hard ship on the poor ratepayers.

I wish to tell him that the La Grange/Nismes Local Authority got a brand new tractor with all the related implements. That tractor has been lying and is still lying idle under the house of ... With pieces scattered all over the place. A crane and other ancillary equipment are lying at La Grange Police Station compound partly overgrown with grass. Let the minister go and see this.

These are facts. As I said, these have been creating more burdens on the ratepayers. Right now to get the salaries to pay these poor operators, the burden is on the rice farmers. Let the Minister responsible for this activity investigate what are the returns to these equipment to the Local authority and see whether they are really serving the purpose which was intended for them.

The Cde. Parliamentary Secretary also mentioned the lighting up of nearly all the Local Authority areas. I again wish to ask him to remove from his office and go into the field and see how much of this lighting equipment is still functioning. The service in many areas is disconnected because people can hardly afford to pay their bills. The Local Authority can

hardly afford to meet the salaries of its employees because the numbers of employees has increased. During the P.P.P.'s time there were 4 and 5 people functioning. Now they can hardly afford to meet the expenses of wages and staff in their employment. Services continue to deteriorate and the Minister responsible for local government knows this. He has blamed them for their poor performance. We are asking that the Minister responsible should now decide to take corrective measures, introduce free, fair, and democratic local government elections so that people interested in the welfare of the community can be elected and serve with interest.

The Speaker: Two minutes more.

Cde. Balchand: Cde. Speaker, the Parliamentary Secretary also mentioned the millions of dollars being spent on constructing pure water wells. In the middle of a very short period of dry weather – it only lasted thirteen to fourteen weeks – the entire country, including Georgetown, had to run helter-skelter searching for water. This is a fact, even a Reuters commentator had to comment and ask why we had to suffer for water in this land of many waters. This large sum was spent in producing loan water instead of more water.

2.45 p.m.

On the West Bank the situation is deplorable. Since April last year up to now a suitable pump cannot be found to give the people in the area water. Millions of dollars have been spent. Where are the people who advise the Government? The Minister spoke about wells. The machines are at La Grange for the past 3 months and yet no well has been started. The situation is deplorable. It is sad to come here and hear this Government ask the people of this country to continue to tighten belts and to make more sacrifices because, as I said, it is a sure case that the small man, the working man, will have to go into physical liquidation.

The Speaker: Cde. Salim.

The Minister of State – Regional (East Demerara/West Coast Berbice): (Cde. Salim):
Cde. Speaker, after a decade of independence, the people who are listening to the speeches by the Opposition in this debate would be shocked to learn that they are still not yet mature as independent people living in an independent country. They still behave as if they are colonials, and as if they are working for colonial masters. As I was coming out of Parliament last night I was speaking with some spectators and they were telling me that the level of the debate on the part of the Opposition is very low and poor.

We have a responsibility. Our responsibility is to inform the nation. We approach this debate and the introduction of this Budget for 1977 with courage because we are not here to mislead the people, we are here to inform the people. That is our responsibility – inform the nation. But I wonder whether my friends on the other side of the House have a responsibility as well to inform the nation or misinform the nation. I think the people understand that the role of the Opposition is to misinform them. Therefore I am here and I shall attempt to inform the nation.

I am going to restrict my contribution to the development of the Soesdyke/Linden Highway. I heard last night from one of the Members of the Opposition that the Soesdyke/Linden Highway was a waste of time, waste of money, and a lot of other things. We heard that we suffered from the vagaries of weather and external forces, destabilisation at work, and that created difficulties in furthering our economic development or to improve upon production. Production dropped because of the varying weather conditions – extreme rain and so flooding took place, extreme drought. However we still heard from the Budget Speech that we have come out not as bad as many other developing countries in the world. We know, and we also recognize, that there is an economic recession all over the world. Only the other day I saw in a newspaper that Great Britain is discussing or negotiating a loan of \$3 billion. And if the Opposition really had a responsibility to inform the nation they would have included that in their contribution to let the people know that there is a world economic recession and we are doing well here in Guyana.

As I said, I want to restrict my contribution to the development of the Soesdyke/Linden Highway. I am going to start from the Kuru Kuru Newton area, that is one of the Development Projects and we have there a number of farmers or settlers already occupying their holdings and they are engaged on housing construction. They have constructed by self-help and by assistance from the Government a school and a health centre. The school is fully staffed and is full to capacity. It is now requiring an extension and the people are willing to help in the extension. They have built by self-help a health centre which is staffed and which is giving services to the community, not only in the Kuru Kuru area but also in the Soesdyke area.

2.55 p.m.

There is established a pure water supply system where miles of pipe-lines have been laid by self-help; an overhead tank is constructed and the creek is harnessed where people are now getting a pure water supply system to their areas. We have established a consumer co-operative shop there, not only offering services to people at a stable price and permitting them to obtain very easily the commodities they require but also giving canteen service there. The complex provides a canteen and restaurant service where people who are employed, people who are passing along the highway can call and have the services of the canteen and restaurant.

The people there do not suffer any longer from black marketing and lack of facilities. Previously they had to come to Georgetown to buy things and they spent a lot of hours trying to find the basic things they required. We have many of them producing – I will give the statistics a little later – in their farms and people are engaged in minor industrial work. They are making agricultural equipment and other tools thereby making a living as well as supplying a great need to the community in the area not only of the highway or Kuru Kurura project, but also people from the Demerara River and the other riverain areas.

Already 5,842 acres of land have been allocated and farmers and settlers are engaged in production. When we have the Yarowkabra area where 21,110 acres have been allocated for

housing construction and homestead and farming development Apart from the individuals who have been allocated lands and who have been engaged in the construction of houses, there is a housing co-operative which is engaged in construction of 125 houses. Work has already commenced and a number of community buildings and administrative buildings are already established. They are there and they are also engaged in providing their water supply facilities and engaged in cultivation of their farming plots.

Then we have the Long Creek area where lands have been allocated to the extent of 9,440 acres. There we have established a Police Station, a transit centre, a health centre, an administrative centre. A number of farmers are already occupied in the development and cultivation of their farmlands. As I said, I will give the statistics a little later. These are general highlights for the time being. I want to give time for my friends to make their notes. But, as I said, I am offering a tour to any member of the Opposition to see the development on the Highway - especially Cde. Narbada Persaud - because seeing is believing.

Then, we have Clemwood where 11,297 acres of land have been allocated. **[Interruption]** The settlers are engaged in cultivation of crops.

I want to come to a major development project and there I will endeavour to give some answers to my friend, Cde. Dalchand. He is worried about the cattle industry and livestock development. I wonder if he was informed that it was this Government that enacted laws to prevent uncontrolled slaughtering of young animals to build the livestock herds in the country.

3.05 p.m.

It was this Government that enacted the law, not the P.P.P. because the P.P.P. does not have that kind of imagination. The imagination that the P.P.P. has is to misinform the people. Why don't you tell the people it is this Government that passed legislation to protect the herds and to further develop the livestock industry?

At Moblissa we have a livestock development project and there we have allocated 11,500 acres of land. I will give you the statistics on the livestock development a little later. Cde. Ram Karran is my friend. I see he is anxious to get the statistics and I will give him. Let me give him the description, where the project is located, so that he will find it very easily and learn some of the development that is taking place there.

This project is situated five miles off the Linden/Soesdyke highway in the vicinity of the Moblissa and Bamia Rovers. The Moblissa dairy project is the first major step in the Guyana Government's drive to ensure self-sufficiency in milk and dairy products. The project as envisaged caters for the establishment of a nucleus dairy farm comprising 856 milking cows which included "followers" amounting to a total herd of 2,800 animals at full development in the ninth year of operation. Milk production at this time should average 751,500 gallons per year from the nucleus dairy with 556 animals being sold for beef and 118 surplus heifers annually for the development of other dairy projects in the country.

The project actually commenced in 1973 when land clearing operations began. To date some 3,000 acres have already been cleared and planted to pasture, including land for both the central dairy and the settler farmers. During the last two years 700 head of Weiner Holstein heifers were imported from the United States of America for the nucleus dairy and to date there are over 900 of these, including offspring, at the Moblissa dairy unit. Sale of milk to Georgetown should commence during this year, 1977. Arrangements are currently being made for the final handing over of the registered joint stock company with 94 per cent majority shareholding by Government and Government agencies. The company will thereafter act as Government agent for the continued development of the central dairy unit at Moblissa.

To date, Government has identified over 30 dairy farmers – and you can take note of this – from the Greater Georgetown area to be resettled at Moblissa during this year 1977. It is intended that each farmer will occupy an area of 50 acres of land. The farmstead, which has already been surveyed, is about to be allocated. Based on a production coefficient of one acre per animal unit, it is estimated that each farmer will obtain a production target of two gallons per day from each of the 30 milk cows on his holding at full development.

Commencing herds will be a minimum of ten animals per unit. Up to 80 per cent of each farmer's required capital investment will be financed through IBRD credit, the livestock loans for development, with the farmer contributing the remaining 20 per cent. All loans will be arranged by the Guyana Agricultural Co-operative Development Bank. The settlers as a group will be organised into a co-operative which will borrow from the Guyana Agricultural Bank and thereafter lend to each settler at no additional charge.

The marketing of produce, milk and beef, and purchase of needed inputs will be done through the co-operative. Central services such as electricity, water, etc. will be supplied at cost to the co-operators by the nucleus dairy unit. Those facilities and incentives will be given to the settlers and the co-operators in the area. I have informed you where the people have been identified, those who will occupy the lands there and develop the livestock industry.

And then I want to inform the House, because of the large quantities of pineapples being produced there and other kinds of fruit, it is necessary to industrialise the area so that we can /and preserve the surpluses after we have sold the fresh fruit, thereby stabilizing the prices, having a stable supply throughout the year, as well as providing the farmers with a stable price and avoiding spoilage.

The construction of a pineapple factory has already begun in the Kuru Kurura Newtown area and that will the necessary service and facility to preserve and can the food for the people there as well as will provide employment for a number of people directly and indirectly.

And then I want to come to the glass factory that is being constructed in the Yarowkabra area on the Soesdyke/Linden highway. We have heard yesterday from the Cde. Minister of Economic Development how much glass and the kind of glass it is proposed to be produced by that factory. I want to inform you of the number of people who will find gainful employment directly and indirectly. The supply of that kind of produce will be available in the country and perhaps at low cost. Many people have already been engaged in the construction of that glass factory in the Yarowkabra area. It is proposed to construct a number of houses for the full-time employees there, to offer them good living facilities because it is expected that when

the glass factory gets into full swing it will be working more than eight hours a day, perhaps 24 hours a day, as orders are already available.

I want to move a little now because I see my friends over there are very eager to listen to some of the statistics. Production from the Soesdyke/Linden highway, and I am not talking yet about the road itself; I will satisfy my friend Cde. Narbada Persaud a little later about the services of the road. I am only talking about projects alongside the road, and production.

In 1972, poultry production there was 10,000 pounds; pumpkins, 90,000 pounds; pineapples, 250,000 pounds; pork, 14,000 pounds, ground provision, 55,000 pounds; and green vegetables, 2,000 pounds. In 1973, poultry production was 52,000 pounds. It increased by over five times in one year. Pumpkin production was 450,000 pounds; pineapple production was 500,000 pounds, pork, 87,500 pounds; ground provision 40,250 pounds; green vegetables, 37,000 pounds. That was in 1973.

3.15 p.m.

In 1974, poultry doubled to 102,000 pounds; pumpkins – 1½ million pounds; pineapples – 1,250 pounds; pork – 145,000 pounds; ground provision – 122,500 pounds; green vegetables – 57,500 pounds. In 1975, poultry production – 124,000 pounds; pumpkins – 2 million pounds; pineapples – 4,000 pounds; pork – 250,000 pounds; ground provision – 240,000 pounds and green vegetables – 230,000 pounds. In 1976, poultry production was 134,000 pounds; pumpkins – 2,500,000 pounds; pineapples – 4,500 pounds.

The Speaker: Two minutes more.

Cde. Salim: Pork – 260,000 pounds; ground provision – 250,000 pounds; green vegetables – 235,000 pounds.

What is more significant is that while the people are clearing the lands for cultivation they are producing lumber for housing construction. Over that period they have produced 209,614 board measurement feet of lumber and, therefore, production is in abundance there. I would like to invite my friends. If they are happy to cultivate lands there I think the Cde.

Minister of Agriculture will be prepared to allocate lands to them for farming. Since my time is limited let me endeavour to conclude.

The Speaker: I think it is understood that it is not limited, it is up. One minute more.

Cde. Salim: Cde. Speaker, I do not want to make any comparison between the Soesdyke/Linden Highway and the Makouria/Bartica Road. That is a fiasco, that is a matter which we should forget. We should forgive the Opposition for that because they lack the imagination for economic development and to provide real social facilities for the people of Guyana. The Soesdyke/Linden Highway is the gateway to further development of the hinterland in Guyana. It is providing easy and vast communication facilities to tap the untapped resources in Guyana's hinterland. My friends are invited to visit parts of the hinterland by this easy communication facility, the Soesdyke/Linden Highway.

The Speaker: Cde. Minister Green.

The Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation (Cde. Green):

Cde. Speaker, I wish first of all to formally congratulate my colleague, the Cde. Minister, for the presentation of a Budget in very difficult circumstances. I want to deal with matters which concern me particularly. I hope you would forgive me if I perhaps re-state very briefly some factors which deal with the world as it is because the burden of the Leader of the Opposition yesterday was that all of these problems are the result of internal mismanagement. Perhaps if every speaker on this side of the House commences his or her observations by this method we ought to be forgiven.

I shall deal with our objectives, some of the methods we see that ought to be used for national mobilisation, as it sees national objectives and, perhaps, to make it clear to Members of this House to recognise that as we stand here at this crucial period of our country's history, the final quarter of the twentieth century, it is important for us to be serious about our stated

business, that is, politics and leading the people, and it is time for us to get on with the business with determination and good sense.

I want to make just a few observations and deal with some of the things said by Cde. Narbada Persaud yesterday which touched on matters dealing with Local Authorities etc. Cde. Dalchand, in his observations a few moments ago, talked about the seizing of Community Centres and the negligence of Local Authorities. Cde. Seeram Prashad dealt in some detail with some of the efforts of the Local Authorities under very difficult circumstances. I wish to note that in so far as Community Centres are concerned, one of the problems that we face is that notwithstanding the mouthing of the People's Progressive party about critical support, they seem anxious to produce a Government within a Government. As far as the People's National Congress is concerned, as far as the people of this country are concerned, as far as the world is concerned, there can only be one Government at a time in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

[Applause] And if they are serious in offering support, this Party has indicated through its Leader that we are not unwilling, we are not so stupid as to not accept a group of people, whatever is left of it, to help in the development and advancement of the socialist cause. But as Cde. Reid observed when Cde. Balchand was speaking, for the two schemes which the People's Progressive Party initiated, Tapakuma and Black Bush, to be even as viable as they are today took massive rehabilitation done by the People's National Government. Cde. Kennard, no doubt, can deal with the details and statistics a little later.

The other observation I want to respond to is the one about fair and free elections. That is a popular phrase, but I get a little concerned when I hear of fair and free elections coming from people who a High Court Judge, referring to one of their prominent lawyers is the Houston by-election in which I was intimately involved and concerned, said that here was a man, and I remember the words very clearly and accurately "of legal moral fibre." I find it a bit of hypocrisy for that group to talk about fair and free elections. However, as the Cde. Minister responsible for Regional Development explained a few months ago, the whole question of Local Government elections - -

The Speaker: Cde. Minister, I wonder if I may interrupt you to say how refreshing it is to have an allegation made against someone without reference being made to his name. I wonder if Members of this House will in future follow the pattern as set by the Cde. Minister.

Cde. Green: As I was saying, the question of elections within Local Authorities has been considered by the General Council of the Party and the Party Executive. But since the whole question of the regional system is a subject of examination by the Party and later by the public, it is pointless to hold elections in those circumstances where one of the recommendations - [Interruption.] The Constitution you are talking about was a colonial Constitution and I hope that the P.P.P. would agree that the Constitution, if we are to proceed with haste, needs to be amended.

I was saying that the whole question therefore is being reviewed. Let me say publicly, the People's National Congress is not, could not be, afraid to hold elections whether local or central. For whatever reason we are not afraid. The people who are afraid, who tell people not to co-operate, are the ones who need to be concerned.

The other point which I want to talk about has to do with an observation made by the Comrade that the sugar workers are not getting their just deserts. It has to do with the way we see a Government and a country being organised clearly, in spite of the so-called "socialist rhetoric" that comes from the western side of the House – perhaps their geographic location is not an accident. This whole argument being advanced that 'X' worker must get more is really the result of capitalist thought. To compare the wages or salaries of a sugar worker, or any worker for that matter, with those of Trinidad – he mentioned Trinidad – is to fail to recognise and to accept the quest of individualism and is to fail to understand the whole concept of the co-operative socialism and national development upon which we are proceeding. If you put more money into the pockets of individuals for whatever reason and fail to restructure the economy of a country to produce a socialist society, you will not be involved in a serious revolution.

We are attempting both for sugar workers and the rest of the society to provide a certain community service. In Trinidad, for example, education is not free. In fact, if I can take one example, nursery education is provided in Trinidad at a fantastic price, so is secondary education, so is University education. It is free in Guyana. I think it is unfortunate that Members of a Party that claims to support socialism could make these arguments so loosely and with such great frequency.

But perhaps the reason for it is contained in a document I have here which dealt with some questions which the central committee of the People's Progressive Party considered before they entered Parliament. And I should read one the issues which they considered which perhaps will explain to us certain attitudes and behavior patterns.

3.25 p.m.

“The P.P.P. comrades in Parliament will have higher status . . .

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: On a point of order, Cde. Chairman, I would like the Cde. Minister, in conformity with the Standing Order, to say what date, month and year that document was published.

The Speaker: Yes, Cde. Minister, if you are quoting from a document you must make reference to the page, name and state what document it is.

Cde. Green: It was a paper circulated to Party groups, districts and regional committee and report recommended to the General Secretary for discussion on March 15 not unlike several documents emanating from that organization. It was not dated. Comrade Chairman, they said that the P.P.P. comrades in Parliament will have higher status. It will facilitate their work outside Parliament . . .

The Speaker: Cde. Minister, I think you will have to identify it a bit more precisely or use some other method. I think there are lots of other ways in which you can use what you have there.

Cde. Green: Thank you. My gratitude to you for your instructions, Cde. Speaker

The Speaker: Were you reading from your notes originally?

Cde. Green: I have no notes, Cde. Speaker. It is contained in some notes I made while Cde. Dalchand was speaking and though my memory is not as good as it used to be, I think it refers accurately to the content and the meaning of the subject to which I referred.

However, I wish to say that the Budget as presented against the back-ground of the world as it is – and you will forgive me, Cde. Speaker, if perhaps I do what my other colleagues have done very briefly – I wish to quote as a background against some of the observations I wish to make some remarks contained in an article by Guy Arnold writing in the Daily Chronicle of Saturday November 20, 1976. He noted that

“As the trade position of the developing countries worsens – the gold and foreign currency reserves of the non-oil producing Third World countries fell 30 per cent between the end of 194 and April 1976 – western recession continues to be exported to them and there are increasing signs that the rich and poor are coming closer and closer to outright confrontation.

During 1975 the World Bank estimated that in 1976 the Third World would need a 50 per cent increase in aid disbursements just to stand still and that by 1980 it would need US \$0,000 million. There seems little prospect of it getting anything near this figure. Even the new administration in the United States seems to suggest that the economy is not as good as it ought to be and there is a report from Mr. Burt Lang chosen

by the President elect to the office of management and ... In a report dated December 30 when he says that the economy was not rebounding as everybody thought might ...Are not going to be left to start a new etc.

I said this is a world problem. As one leader asked “Why is it all countries seem to be having problems?” It is not a case that one group seems to be prospering and the other group not prospering. Every country, irrespective of its ideological commitment or goals, has been having economic and financial problems. The continental foreign report published by the Economist Newspaper Ltd. date 8th December, 1976 made the following observations:

“Record debt of between \$12,000 million and \$15,000 million by the end of this year are likely to force Russia to sell large quantities of gold over the next few months. Each European financial source is to ... total ...of Russia gold during 1976 will amount to £200-25-.”

It goes on further:

“Other European countries are in even worse state than Russia COMECON’s total debt is likely to meet \$13,000 million by the end of 1976, according to the report in September.” Cde. Speaker, an ex-colony is therefore no different from many of our sister and brother countries throughout the world. Guyana is a country which has been exploited for centuries by our former master, the British, and they seem to be in a lot of trouble anyhow. In 1878 William Pitt noted that from the West Indies alone they got four times the amount of profit that they received from all the other colonies. This country is in a lot of trouble where the I.M.F. is virtually dictating the way the economy has to be run where the British housewife is being asked to pay more for certain items and the cost of things like liquor and cigarettes is going up. They have announced a cut-back in spending.

In this climate we need to recognise and understand what is Guyana. In the United Kingdom alone, food subsidies will be cut from £160 million to £57 million. It used to be said that the sun never sets on the British Empire. We therefore need to see the budget against a background of the world and our objectives. Guyana is a fairly large country, there are only 78 other countries that are bigger than us in geographic and physical size. Guyana is bigger than countries like Czechoslovakia, North Korea, Syria and Cambodia, but all these countries boast populations running into millions and technology which we do not have, and in many cases access to the sort of aid which, because of our nationalistic position, our position of self reliance, we perhaps will never get. With a population less than one million people therefore we on both

3.35 p.m.

sides of this House, all the people, need to be very clear as to our choice of policy. The Leader of the People's National Congress, speaking on behalf of the Party and the people, has made it very clear that our choice of policy is socialist. We believe in a planned economy. Further we have said that we will design our economic and social system consistent with the realities of the worlds and the facts of our own history.

I listened to Comrade Narbada Persaud yesterday. He said that this should not be difficult. He made a mathematical argument, once you identify scientific socialism – I am not using his exact words. – you just need to follow that course. This is typical of the approach of the People's Progressive Party that scientific socialism is something which can be a lavishly followed. They refer to Marx and Lenin because they read some books and they forget, first of all that Marx lived at a different historical period, that the circumstances Guyana are difficult from those with which Lenin had to contend with and that even though predictions were proved accurate the experience of the people he had to contend with are certainly different from those of the people in Guyana. Some of our theoreticians and so-called “academics”, or ideologues or whatever you call them seem to believe – if I can understand what the members on that side are

talking about – that you can lift the experiences of other people and apply them to Guyana without looking at certain factors.

I shall read what the Cde. Leader of the Party said in a response to a question in a radio interview on 10th January 1976. This was in response to a question after Cde. Jack is alleged to have said that the P.N.C. is a Marxist/Leninist party or something like that. **[Interruption]** This is from a radio broadcast on G.B.S. and Radio Demerara on January 10th 1976. What the Cde. Leader said was, “That the P.N.C. is seeking to lay the foundation for the establishment of a socialist society based on Marxism/Leninism and also that the P.N.C. is inspired by the scientific socialist principles of Marxism and Leninism.” This is a vast difference and a far way from those who believe that picking up books and reading them and applying them to the Guyana situation can help.

First of all, who are we? We are the children of ex-slaves. We use the word “slavery” to describe both African slavery or Indian slavery, called indentured labour. We are dealing with us, Guyanese, real Guyanese, true Guyanese. We are the result of that system and we have proposed the co-operative as an agency for change because it is our belief that the people of this country grew out of a system where they used to share and work together to produce things. That they needed. The English poet Pope once said,

“A little learning is a dangerous thing;
Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring:’

I wish, as we discuss this Budget, to plead with the comrades on the other side to understand the sort of society we work and the sort of society we wish to build.

It is not, therefore, sufficient to talk about Utopia and socialism without identifying in clear terms the methods to be used to achieve national mobilisation harnessing the resources of our people and the socialist Utopia you bring about. We have made it very clear that the whole

principle of working together is the thing we believe in. We do not believe in the argument of the traditional economist and some of the arguments we have heard from that side of the House that individual interest and free competition are the only possible conditions of a modern society and for development. That to us is the essence of capitalism and does not ensure the survival of the best but it ensures that those who are suited for competition would try and exploit other people.

Our socialism, our co-operativism is about people. In 1970, the Leader of the nation and Prime Minister said – and I am quoting from Birth of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, page 13, paragraph 3:

“With the establishment of the Republic, it is proposed that a serious and earnest effort be made to establish fairly and irrevocably the Co-operative as the means of

3.45 p.m.

making the small man the real man and changing in a revolutionary fashion the social and economic relationship to which we have been heirs as part of our monarchical legacy.”

Let us therefore discuss this question of co-operativism. The P.P.P., I concede, find themselves in a rather difficult position. The leader of the P.P.P. in his 17-point argument yesterday mentioned rather quickly something about co-operativism. They have not, as far as I can recall, come out with a strong statement saying that they are opposed to co-operatives, that they are opposed to self-reliance and to people working in small groups to manage the economy of their community and finally their country. They have not yet been bold enough to make that statement.

But, what has been the experience of the party in office before and after critical support?

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: May I move that the Cde. Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation be permitted an additional 15 minutes to continue his contribution to the debate.

Cde. Bynoe: *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Cde. Green: Cde. Speaker, what has been our experience? As recent as sometime in November I cannot remember the exact date – Cde. Naraine, the Minister of Housing, and I visited an area at Grove on the East Bank of Demerara where there is a problem of housing accommodation among sugar workers and other workers. The people in the community told us quite frankly that that are fed up with the threats they have been receiving from certain quarters, that they are anxious and most willing to combine their resources human and financial, with the aid of a sympathetic Government to construct their houses either on a community basis or by self-help as we have done in so many other parts of the country. What do we find when we leave the scene? Certain perpetrators of division get to work, identify the leaders of that community, whose homes are stoned and they are told that they must not co-operate with the P.N.C. Government.

I would hope that as we discuss the Budget Speech, as we proceed in a year that will call for the harnessing of our resources and the mobilising of our people that all groups, political labour and others, will recognise that history will judge us. If we are to succeed in this revolution which we all talk about we must be able to separate serious Government programmes and what we may call cheap politics.

Let me say to the People's Progressive Party that if they hope to have a chance at any future election whether it be local, central or what have you, they must persuade the people that

they would like to lead, that they are capable of serious and dedicated leadership and not merely interested in disruptive operations, because the people will soon discover, as they have discovered in that particular areas I mentioned, that if they do not get their house, if they do not get the facilities necessary, it will be because of counter-efforts by certain forces and agencies which exist in our society.

The co-operative, therefore, in 1977, with the Budget as it is, has to play an even more important role because, as we see it we, use it as the vehicle, as the agency for people to get out of the selfish mode which is the result of our past society and our own experiences so that we can get dedicated leaders and people willing to work selflessly in the interest of the society.

We feel that the revolution that we have started can only be authentic if we forget some of the arguments raised by some people as to which dam was built here and which dam was built there, by which political group or groups and concentrate on development and on changing people. I have always argued that every great revolutionary and every great leader not only sets out to change the form of the country, not only sets out to change the institutions, but must set out to change people. This is the task I think that the leader of the People's National Congress, Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, has set about.

I would not like some of my young comrades, talk about Burnhamism at this stage except to note that he has given us a charter, which sets the course that we can follow to develop the country. It is to talk about mass commitment and participation. I do not want to repeat what both Cde. Wills and Hoyte have said namely, that those leaders who are unwilling to recognize the way the tide is going could find themselves in great difficulty. They say sometimes that you cannot help some people and I would hope, as we debate the Budget Speech over the next few days, that a new spirit would enter into this House so that the sort of acrimony, the sort of ill will that we seem to feel is the new style could be removed and we could sit down with clear minds and make serious criticisms. This Government is anxious for criticism but we cannot criticize

from a position of inaccuracy, inaccurate figures, deliberately distorting facts. That is not criticism. **[Interruption]**

3.55 p.m.

We have to develop out of the legacy and current balance of cultural and social forces. It is for Members of this House, because those factors define in very important ways the challenge facing us.

In so far as the co-operative movement is concerned, we have already done certain things. The General Council of the party, for example, last year looked at the law as it is. The General Council observed that the existing procedures impeded swift development and that the existing procedures did not permit the co-operative movement, to be a popular movement and an instrument for change; there was too much red tape and an excess of official involvement.

In the result, a draft Bill was prepared and circulated to several organizations, including the People's Progressive Party, and up to midday today we have not even had the courtesy of an acknowledgment. The people who talk about critical support! I suppose that when that Bill comes to the House the People's Progressive Party, who have not used the opportunity to acknowledge their receipt of the Bill, much less offer comment, will get up in this House and say that they were not consulted and are unable to offer constructive criticism. **[Interruption]** We cannot, as a Government, have the benefit of your thoughts unless you at least give your comments. Have you given your comments as yet?

Cde. Speaker, when I listen to some of the things my friends say, both on their feet and on their seats, I am reminded of the boys who were swapping lies for a puppy. **[Cde. Ram Karran:** "That is in the record already."] Well, I repeat it because it is very apposite. When a certain politician, his name isn't Ram Karran, looked at them and said: "What are you doing? When I was a boy I would never tell a lie", they said: "You have the puppy."

In addition, the draft legislation proposes to exclude categories of persons whose interest conflicts with the whole concept of co-operativism. The draft proposed in many ways to develop a system of co-operation and self-reliance whereby the co-operatives ought not to run automatically to central government for assistance.

Last year we had had occasion to de-register several societies and this has been the object of reporting by the Mirror because it is an effort to break to build. The movement was initiated during the colonial era when there was no clear concept of the purpose and strength intended for the movement and , as the Cde. Leader said at Victoria in 1975, as we took over the large corporations - -

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: May I move the suspension of Standing Order 9(1) –

The Speaker: No. I am not agreeing to that.

Cde. Ramsaroop: Is it a matter for the House to agree to?

The Speaker: We have made a decision already and we must stick to our decisions. We must be guided by principles. **[Pause]** Cde. Leader of the House, am I listening to you while you sit or are you going to address me properly?

Cde. Ramsaroop: Cde. Speaker, I thought you had - -

The Speaker: I am not agreeing to the suspension of any Standing Orders. That was not the agreement. The agreement is that we will adjourn at 4. I called “Time!”

Cde. Ramsaroop: This was to facilitate the Cde. Minister to conclude this speech.

6.1.77

National Assembly

3.55 p.m.

The Speaker: I regret I will not agree to that. Could you move for the extension of 15 minutes; further time. We will then adjourn at 4 o'clock and the Minister may come back and speak.

Cde. Ramsaroop: I move for a further extension of 15 minutes for the Cde. Minister of Co-operatives and National Mobilisation to conclude his contribution.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

The Speaker: It is now 4 o'clock. We will take the suspension until 4.30.

Sitting suspended at 4 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

On resumption –

The Speaker: Cde. Minister Green.

Cde. Green: I was dealing with some of the proposals of the draft Bill which was circulated and the last point I wish to make was that there was a proposal for an apex organisation or confederation which, while reducing the large-scale ownership, will not be sacrificing the advantages of a large organization or groups of people working in unity. These large groups are essential in terms of the application of modern technology and science and we are not like some people talking about a poor man's organisation. We hope, by some of the new proposals, to see the movement viable and serving the community at large.

In general, if one looks at the Budget one will see that efforts will be continued to promote the movement and that our records stand for all to see, which will be part of a report to be made available to the nation very shortly. The fact that we have had to de-register some societies from time to time is noted by the **Mirror**. We have done this because of our belief in the purity of the movement. The great Mahatma Gandhi – Mohandas Karanchand Gandhi – once noted while talking about co-ops, that we do not measure the success of the movement by the number of co-operative societies formed but by the moral condition of the corporations. This is the essence of our position on this matter, to ensure that people are able to work together.

Before I conclude I would just like to make one last response to something said by Cde. Dalchand when he said that production from peasant cane farmers had been decreasing. The figures which I now have to hand show that the small cane farmers and co-operative peasant cane farmers, in 1964 produced 4,819 tons which was 1.9 per cent of the total national output. In 1976 particularly, the co-operative cane farming groups and others produced 34,021 tons, an aggregate of 11 per cent of the total output. This was under the leadership of the People's National Congress. I just mention these figures so that the records would correct the misinformation, as Cde. Salim puts it. *[Interruption]*

The year ahead of us, I feel, is one of tremendous challenge to all the people of Guyana. It is our hope that we can together lay the foundations for our future society by promoting co-operatives, voluntary organisations through which the growth of the people can take place and their vitality involved, in which people can learn in a real way the importance and the true meaning of self-reliance.

It is my view that members in and out of this House can help us in 1977, and indeed in the future, to achieve our objectives in two ways by, as I noted earlier, the People's Progressive Party coming out once and for all, perhaps in a public debate, on this whole question of co-operatives on which it has been very shy. In one document it noted that one reason for the Party's coming to the Assembly would be for it to counterpoise scientific socialism to co-

operative socialism and to help to educate the masses. They say they hope to educate the P.N.C. Parliamentarians.

4.30 p.m.

May the Lord help us if this is the education, the speeches which we have been afforded over the past two days. I hope that we can provide – and we, includes the People’s Progressive Party – the leadership in and out of this House, for without united leadership we cannot survive. Unless all of our people are mobilised, Guyana will not survive.

The whole question of support, critical or otherwise, will be dealt with very effectively by my colleague, the Deputy Prime Minister and General Secretary of the Party. I will conclude by appealing to both sides of the House to work together honestly recognizing our goals, understanding the methods proposed by the Party in office so that together we can build a self-reliant society, so that even with the difficulties posed by the Budget of 1977 we can see this, when the history of the country is written, as a year that was used to strengthen our resolve and move us further to a truly socialist society.

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Speaker, when I was a child at school one of the text books used was called “French Without Tears.” Maybe some Members of the House who were at school around the same time when I was are familiar with that book. The idea behind that book was that it implied that the French was being made easy for the children to learn. Similarly, in this Budget, when the Minister of Finance said in the third paragraph on page 64 of this Budget Speech:

“The Budget that I have presented Cde. Speaker, does not call for increased taxation.”

I repeat sir, “. . . does not call for increased taxation” – this, as I said, compares with my “French Without Tears.” It tries to draw a comparison and have us believe that because there is no actual taxation spelt out we are not going to be taxed in a round-about way, we are not going to suffer and the cost of living is not going to go up. This is very misleading and is a very wrong way of

putting the true position of the situation in our country to the Members of this House and to the citizens of Guyana.

I would like to do this by going straight off into the question of the reduction of the subsidies. I would first of all like to deal with the complete removal of the subsidy on electricity. The Minister goes on to say, and I quote:

“The subsidy on electricity will be removed in 1977. However, the rating system will be completely restructured to provide for a more uniform rate to customers.”

This is said very easily. Over the past few days we have had two specific items in the national daily newspaper, the **Chronicle** which says that there is a new rate of electricity. It is a little confusing because people were not quite sure exactly where the full stop or comma was and what they were going to pay. But I think it is generally understood now that tariff 1-5 will be abolished and in its place we will all pay a rate of 23.48 cents per kilowatt. Translated, that means that our electricity bills are really going to be higher than in the past.

4.35 p.m.

Incidentally, I made quite a few enquiries about this from the Electricity Corporation. I see the hon. Minister here for Guystac and I would like to say that this is one Corporation where find have found courtesy, efficiency and careful and concise explanations. No explanation has been given. Does the average consumer realize that the 96 cent surcharge that we all pay now has been abolished as from the 1st January? In the past those on tariff one paid 25 per cent fuel charge. That has also been abolished. The fuel charge for those on tariffs 2 – 5 who paid 96 per cent as fuel charge has also been abolished. That sounds good. Everybody will say “Fine, fuel charge has been reduced so my light bill must go down.” But if one looks very carefully one will realise that it will not go down. It will go up because it has been absorbed into everybody’s. The small person on tariff No. 1 who paid 25 per cent fuel charge and those on tariff 2 which is the domestic rate for most people who have a refrigerator, burn a couple of lights and use an iron and that kind of thing paid 96 per cent as fuel charge. Tariff 3 was the commercial rate, tariff 4 the manufacturer’s and Tariff 5 the bulk rate. All these will go and

whether you are a small user of electricity with one light, a domestic householder with a couple of lights and a few appliances, whether you are on the commercial rate or you have the manufacturer's or bulk rate you are going to pay 23.48 cents per kilowatt hour. Under the old rating there was a sliding scale. For example, I have here a light bill for someone who only used 14 units month. That is a family - -

The Speaker: Cde. Minister King. To a point of order!

Cde. King: Cde. Speaker, on a point of order, there has been no official release with regard to the new electricity rates whether in tariffs 1,2,3,4 or 5, and I fail to see how the hon. Member could be referring to what may well have been a journalist scoop or a newspaper scoop. To the best of my knowledge, and I am absolutely sure that I am right, there has been no official release on the new electricity rates.

The Speaker: Hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva, please, whatever your contribution may be, don't make a categorical statement that the Government has increased the price. It has been forthcoming from the Minister that no increase has been decided upon as yet. Therefore the premise upon which you were proceeding may not be correct.

Mrs. DaSilva: Yes, sir, I admit that I did quote from the press at 23.48 cents. I accept the hon. Minister's explanation. But, sir, I spoke with the Guyana Electricity Corporation - -

The Speaker: I have ruled. The Minister has said so, so we will have to accept what the Minister said.

Mrs. DaSilva: Very well, sir. How did the tariff work as at the 31st December, 1976? At 31st December we were on a sliding scale. For first 20 kilowatts the consumer paid 15 cents an hour, the next 60 he paid 10 cents an hour, the next 60 he paid 6 cents an hour and after that 3 cents an hour. On tariff No. 1 you paid 25 per cent fuel charge and on tariffs 2 – 5 you paid 96 per cent. If the alleged that the newspapers has is correct, it is going to send up the light bills.

For example, a small person burning 14 units would pay \$2.53 in the old days. If what the newspaper said is true or if the scoop proves to be correct, they will now have to pay 3.28 cents, an increase of 75 cents which to a person who can only afford to burn 14 units a month is a lot of money. I think this particularly will affect the small person, the old age pensioner. I think I have said enough about the electricity for the time being and I would like now to go on to flour.

We come now to the question of the reduction of the subsidy on flour which seems to concern the hon. Minister of Co-operatives across there who says the Government welcomes criticism and welcomes criticism where criticism is warranted. We are being told in the Budget Speech that the subsidy on flour will be reduced from \$16.9 to \$10 million with a consequent increase of 8½ cents per pound bringing the price of flour to 25 cents per pound. This is going to be an additional burden on the members of the East Indian community, our fellow brother and sister Guyanese, who use more flour for roti than any of the rest of the Guyanese. They already have the burden of having had the subsidy removed on stockfeed and not being able to get chickens and eggs. **[Interruption]** It is not a question of courting; it is a question of prices. This must put an added burden on those mainly of the East Indian population who are well known by all Guyanese of whatever ethnic origin as users of flour and who have had an additional burden by the removal of the subsidy on stockfeed.

If the information given in the scoop is correct, there is also the reduction of the subsidy on transport from \$4.8 million to \$1.5 million which we were told represents an increase of 75 per cent. **[Interruption]** Why do we always have the colour of our skins brought into any argument?

The Speaker: Comrades, please let the hon. Member make her contribution. She only has half an hour and fifteen minutes have already gone.

Mrs. DaSilva: This applies specifically only to transportation by steamer. We are not dealing with the bus service; that does not come under this but the transport conditions now are deplorable and have to be dealt with at another time during the Estimates. I deal now with the

steamer transport. I do not know if it is another scoop for the newspapers because they say now that the tickets are going to be 35 cents. I don't know if they are right or they are scooping again. A lot of people cross the river from the West Coast Demerara from the . . .

The Speaker: Cde. Leader of the House, I think the rules provide that when a member is addressing the chair you cannot walk in front of him or her.

4.45 p.m.

Mrs. DaSilva: These people who come across from the West Bank have to wait for the river to be bridged. It will be bridged we are told but till then we have got to use the ferry with an increase of 75 per cent as stated in the budget Speech. This is going to put an added burden on the travelling public, not to mention the poor people who use the ferry to cross the Berbice River from New Amsterdam. People on the Corentyne will not only have to pay an increased charge for transportation – 75 per cent as quoted in the Budget Speech for the use of the Steamer but they will also have to pay toll on the Corentyne roads. They have been hit harder than the others. But don't think that those who live in Georgetown will get off because foodstuffs will have to be brought into town across the two rivers, the Essequibo and Demerara. There is the Berbice River as well. The increased cost of transportation must affect everybody not just the users of the ferry services. So I don't know who calculated that. However, it is said that the cost of living is going to go up by 3 or 3½ per cent. It looks to me as though it will be much higher.

But then we are told there were all sorts of benefits. I suppose that is the so-called “free education” which we will deal with at some other time. Better roads and sea defence and wells and what have you. We will deal with that later on, particularly these-called “free education”.

I wonder what happened to the promise made by the Minister of Labour at the 23rd Annual Delegates Conference of the Trades Union Congress on the 23rd September last year when he said that there would be free travel for old age pensioners on all Government-owned steamers and vehicles. They dealt with the season tickets for the school children but nobody

said anything about the promises of free travel for the old people. I wonder how it was forgotten. I hope that this matter will be rectified as soon as possible.

I dealt with flour, transport, electricity. Those were the main items. Now stock feed. That came up before the Budget Speech was made and we are having to grown accustomed to coping with the rising cost-of-living caused by the reduction of the stock feed subsidy loyal citizen of Guyana is willing to make a sacrifice. We are told to buy defence bonds and stress is laid on the fact that it is voluntary. We were also told that the interest is 3½ per cent tax free. But like many other things in this Budget this favours the man from a higher income group with higher salaries. True he will have a higher rate of income tax to pay but he is better able to absorb the rising cost of living. We all find it hard, no matter what level of salary we have. Everyone will find it hard. The poor man, the small man; he will find it hardest of all. These are the people about whom the Government is always saying it is concerned. This Budget does not show concern for the little man. We know what Guyana gives and the small man would like to make sacrifices. We are all loyal citizens of Guyana. We want to help our country. The small man cannot afford to tie up his savings for 10 years before these bonds are redeemed. He could transfer them if he likes but the money is tied up for 10 years. It is said that it is tax free, but this does not favour the small man but the man who can afford to pay up and wait. The small business man who wants a quick turnover for his money, puts it in an ordinary savings account in a commercial bank at 3½ per cent. He can get that money at any time if things go bad or he wants to buy something for his shop. Should his wife get sick he could get that money immediately to put his hand on it. On the other hand, he can put it on a fixed deposit of 5½ per cent and at the end of one year, he will be able to withdraw that money. We all are interested in Guyana. The people will make sacrifice to the best of their ability to save money because our finances are in a very bad state of affairs. We heard the Minister talking about the weather, the fall in sugar prices and we had mention of the industrial unrest, the strikes. It is time for the Government to turn and look to itself to see where the fault lies, to establish its priorities, to pay attention to its top-heavy bureaucracy, the putting of squares/pegs into round holes, to see that it employs people to do the jobs who are people of honesty and integrity, people who know what

they are about, not just to put them there because they are one of the Party boys. All Guyanese have to pull their weight.

4.55 p.m.

I agree with the hon. Minister of finance, we must realise that we must work hard and produce more, there must be a cut down on waste. That is why there is a investigation into three departments. Great care and attention has to be paid to the wastage that occurs in the government departments.

I read with great interest yesterday another scoop in the **Guyana Chronicle**.

When a report was made of what Mr. Saul had to say about the conditions that exist at the C.M.C. and the proposals he has for tightening up there. I admire the statement; I hope that that example will be followed by others in the 31 member-group of Guystac and they too will see that there is tightening up all the way round. But his has to come from the top, it has to be shown in all the Ministries. They have got to put an end to the attitude of keeping up with the Jones's; they have got to stop the waste, the squander, the endless, misuse and abuse of public property, property that belongs to all of us, the citizens of Guyana.

In conclusion, I should like to say that there is no doubt that 1977 will be a hard year, maybe one of the hardest years we have ever known. The hon. Minister cares to call the state of our economy a temporary recession. Let us hope he is right and that his hopes for the future will be realized, that the so-called "recession" is only temporary. But this depends on so many "ifs and "should". However, as true Guyanese we must be prepared to be more disciplined, to work harder, to waste less and look at the means of production as our personal concern not something for which they alone are responsible.

They, in turn must look to the top-heavy bureaucracy, the squandermania, the fraud, the wastage, the keeping up with the Jones's the square pegs in the round holes, and above all we must establish priorities. They must achieve national unity. We will either all rise together or

we will sink together. The Government has to make an effort to meet with the people, to get close to the people, really close to the people, not just to talk about it, and to see what is the cause, what lies at the base of our industrial unrest because we cannot go on blaming the weather, the falling sugar prices, the exports bringing in less and the imports costing us more. We have really got to get to the root of the problems.

The Prime Minister mentioned that 1978 will be election year. I wish to remind him and his Government that you can push people so far and no further and as I was hearing the other day on the radio one of the famous quotes of Wordsworth McAndrew “When money goes out of the door, love flies out of the window.”

The Speaker: Cde. Corbin

The Parliamentary, Ministry of Education and Social Development (Cde. Corbin):
Cde Speaker, on Thursday 30th December, last year, the Cde. Minister of Finance presented to this honourable House a budget about which the entire nation was very silent and tense. Silent and tense because the entire nation know that the year 1976 was indeed a year in which production fell because of the climatic conditions and a number of other factors which have already been pointed out to this House. It was the year in which the entire nation know that a number of external factors, destabilization not excluded, affected the progress which Guyana could have made. Sad to say, however, there was still some who came before this House suggesting that they did not know that other factors were involved. I say “suggesting that they did not know” because there is evidence from their releases in the past and from their statements at very important forums that these very persons who came before this House claiming not to know about these factors have indentified these factors.

During the course of the debate, the Cde. Minister of Economic Development gave a very brief outline of the Development Plan. Indeed, he highlighted the important areas of successes and important areas of achievement. Significant in his contribution, however, was the recognition that in the entire Development Plan success depended greatly on people’s involvement and people’s participation. It, therefore, means that if one were to review the

progress of the People's National Congress Government in building the socialist society one cannot fall to recognize the importance of people, bearing in mind the findings of the Minister of Economic Development when he outlined the Development Plan. For example, there is the fact that with the Development Programme which is envisaged in the months and years to come there is likely to be a shortage of skills unless there is some re-doubling of our efforts at training. One must recognize, with this background, that over the years, from the beginning of the People's National Congress Government, it has pursued a progressive, dynamic and realistic education policy geared to achieve our socialist objectives.

The evidence is clear for all to see. Indeed, it was heartening to hear the Leader of the Opposition in this House commenting that theory must be matched with practice. Indeed, socialism is the combination of theory and practice and therefore if we are to examine the achievements of the People's National Congress in the field of education we must recognize the theory which was guided the Party in designing its programme and show how it is related in practice to what has been happening around Guyana in the creation of better educational facilities and the promotion of educational programmes geared to suit our specific needs.

Indeed, when we speak of building socialism in Guyana we speak, as an earlier speaker pointed out, of building a society guided by the ideas of Marx and Lenin and, more important, we also bear in mind the objective conditions which operate within our immediate environment.

5.05 p.m.

Indeed, the task of educating people is not a simple one. For socialism to be a reality in this country, education is the foundation and the People's National Congress policy has always been realistic in this regard. For example, socialism speaks about two important fundamental principles, among others of course. But the important one which relates to the economic system speaks of a redistribution of wealth and a new relationship between man and wealth, the ownership of the means of production being in the hands of people, and socialising production so that wealth would be a equitably distributed for the benefit of all in the society.

The second fundamental deals with the social system that deals with the relentless class struggle to remove the old order of a society full of class differentiation e.g. the bourgeois and other classes, and replacing it by a classless society where people have an equal opportunity for development and where people can enjoy a decent livelihood, social justice and human dignity.

But these fundamental principles cannot be a reality if the basic education is not tackled properly and tackled in a realistic manner. When sometimes we hear the utterings of some so-called “theoreticians” in this country, they sometimes give us the impression that in a twinkling of an eye, as in the days of magic or obeh, one can transform a society from one system to the other. In any system the process of education is one which is very complex. Our good friends constantly make references to some of the socialist countries. Even in those societies we find a recognition of this fact. In fact, I have before me a publication of Novosti Press Agency speaking about Ideological Education of the Masses in the Soviet Union. I would like to read a few lines on page 24 for our good friends who like to bring before us constant references o this country;

“The process of changing the psychology of people who have under the demoralising influence of an exploitative system is always very complex. After the victory of the revolution, Soviet Russia had to re-educated vast sections of the population, whose cultural levels differed widely.”

And in Hungary, another socialist country, we find the very recognition in this publication by Gorgy Aczel speaking for the Covina Press in a book called **Culture and Socialist Democracy**. These are the places our friends like to use as yardsticks for judgement regularly. Again they admitted quoting the section on state education, page 211; paragraph 3:

“However, we cannot in general regard the decline in existing differences between social groups and their leveling up as a spontaneous or automatic process. We cannot depend on spontaneity, on social development ‘in general’, for the improvement of the conditions necessary for the further education of children of manual workers who have a talent for intellectual work.”

The point I am making is that despite the fact that the P.N.C. recognize that this problem is complex, it has pursued a positive programme with this recognition aimed at coping with the problems which face us in our society.

What is more important is to devise proper programmes and strategies based on an objective analysis of the society in which we find ourselves. We have to develop the organizational framework based on the conditions which exist in Guyana which are unique not only to Guyana in some cases but in some cases which are also unique in the Caribbean.

And what are some of these “unique” conditions which exist in Guyana and the Caribbean? These are education and social conditions of the people. I have here before me many findings of a well known West Indian son, William Demas, speaking on **Challenges in the New Caribbean**. In this explanation he identifies some of the situations which face countries like those in the Caribbean. I quote from page 21:

“Kinds of Policies that May Reduce Unemployment

Before we mention that the various groups can do, let us try to make a rough synthesis of the kinds of policies which can be adopted to reduce or eliminate unemployment in the Commonwealth Caribbean. The first, which I have just mentioned, is an attempt at which is popularly known as Family Planning. There are others. For instance, quite clearly, there must be profound changes in the education system, both of the formal education system and of out-of-school programmes.”

I repeat, “. . . both of the formal education system and of out-of-school programmes.”

That is a brief analysis by an eminent Caribbean son, recognising some of the approaches which need to be used if we are to tackle education for real development in the Caribbean and for us in Guyana. He has emphasised out-of-school programmes. In analysing our objectives conditions we know too that we had a society where people’s job aspirations were in many cases dissimilar to some of the needs of the economy and in socialist planning it is essential that there

must be some synthesis between the community aspirations and the aspirations of the individual. In other words, the individual must see himself as a part of the society for further development and not as distinct.

Then we need to look at another important aspect of the development of socialism and that is the maximising of production. In any society where there is need for maximising production, there is need for people's involvement and because there is need for maximising production there is need for education for production, for unless people are properly oriented for production then they will not produce as much as is expected.

Even the Cde. Leader of the Opposition in a reference to GUYBAU workers was pointing out that there could not be more production because the people were not committed. Even he recognized this fact. Therefore, for us to be successful in building the society, there is need for education for production. There is also need for ideological education of the masses. This has to be tackled by any party that is serious about building socialism.

Event the leader of the People's Progressive Party giving the report to the Central Committee 31st July to August 2nd 1976 at Tain, Corentyne, as reported in Thunder, July-September, 1976, admitted that what is important is that every child leaving school and university must have a grasp of what socialism is and what it involves. Therefore, one must recognise and judge the People's National Congress' policies in the field of education and development from this perspective. There is a need for vocational training to match the necessary skills which are available in the society and skills which are needed for definite development and reaching our goal of maximum productivity.

Then one cannot again neglect the area of technical education, for technical education is vital to real development. In all of these areas the P.N.C. Government has demonstrated a recognition of not only the theory and realities but has shown a willingness to plan programmes which would enable Guyana to move forward towards our goal.

It is significant to note that since 1964 the P.N.C. took education as one of its priority areas. No longer did it consider the remnant bottom-house schools which existed at the time and which I hope our friends on the other side of the House – they have been reminding us regularly of the past throughout this debate – would remind the nation of. It was this P.N.C. Government which, recognising the need and priority of education, pursued progressive policies to ensure that our students and our young people were properly housed with proper facilities so that they could acquire the skills to help us achieve our goals. Indeed, the self-help programme in the field of promoting schools is known.

The area of teacher training is well known, not the sort of trained teachers of “Barney” fame but teachers who have been properly trained at the institutions provided for such purposes. Then we noted areas in the reconstruction of the schools’ curriculum. I do not propose to deal in depth since the competent Minister of Education can deal in detail with these areas. What I am attempting to do is to show the consistency of the P.N.C.’s theoretical approach and its practical approach to the problems which face it in developing a new society, apart from the restructuring of the schools’ curriculum and the new text books, not the one quoted by our good friend who is not here, something about French without Tears. If new techniques were developed there would be no need for printing such a book. There are many modern techniques to learning these days.

To give an example of the sort of problems we had in the field of education: New text books based on an appreciation of our new values, the need for vocational training as demonstrated by our multilateral schools, the need for matching people’s abilities with that of the interest of the community through the careers guidance unit; the matching of theory with practice by the work-study programme and the hinterland development education programme and not neglecting higher education through the University of Guyana. Indeed, the final stroke in this whole exercise was accomplished when only recently free education at all levels from nursery to university was introduced by the People’s National Congress in Guyana.

But these relate to just the formal aspect of education. These relate to some of the formal institutions which have been created. Indeed, in my initial remarks I pointed out that it was important, if we were to succeed, to orient and prepare people psychologically and emotionally for the task of building socialism, and no one can deny that a number of other supportive educational programmes have been implemented in Guyana out of a recognition of this necessity, like the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College. We hear sometime from the other side of the House that co-operatives are failing.

The P.N.C. Government has never been afraid to admit its failures and to point out to the nation the areas in which there is need for improvement. In fact, despite many of the statistics quoted by those who claim to know, these statistics from the other side, about fall in co-operatives – In fact, the establishment of the Kuru Kuru Co-operative movement is to be successful. And so a recognition of that idea was matched by practice when institutions were created to provide the sort of education to deal with the problem of orienting and re-educating people.

In the field of youth development there is need for us to deal with some of these problems identified by Demas and some of the problems identified by other speakers and, therefore, we have existing, for example, the Caribbean Regional Centre for Advanced Studies in Youth Work, which has been provided facilities by the Government of Guyana, that is interested in the most potential source of the future of Guyana, that is, the youth. Unlike the Members on the opposite side who even attempted to deny them a vote at 18 not too long ago.

But the P.N.C. Government has been consistent. The fact is that we have demonstrated our consistency in recognising problems and dealing effectively with those problems. If we are to cope with the re-orientation, if we are to cope with the need for building this new society, then there is need for this regional centre for advanced studies in youth work.

This was practice match by theory, not to mention the adult education programmes which have been sponsored and are dynamic in all parts of Guyana and about which the Minister can probably give more details and statistics a little later since time does not permit me. The adult

education programme is out of a recognition that all citizens are important if we are to build this new society. Again practice with theory.

5.25 p.m.

Then there were references from the other side of the House about the shirt-jack, side-burns, new elite developing in the society. But yet, when the General Secretary and Minister of national Development organised educational programmes and came before this House and pointed out how important education is, these very people who criticised these shirt-jack, side-burns, new elite, are the very people who came before this House to criticise them and at the same time criticise a practical approach by the P.N.C. Government to deal with education and the orienting of people who serve in vital sectors of this economy. But I will not deal with that since the General Secretary is most competent to deal in his area of activity. I only draw this reference to show the inconsistency which operates on the other side of the House.

The most burning question and the most significant achievement in the field of extension to the education system, the most significant stride that the P.N.C. has made in this area in the field of reorientation, in the field of matching theory with practice, in the field of providing people the opportunity to be in touch with each other and to break down cultural and other differences, was the introduction of the Guyana National Service. Cde. Speaker, when one remembers that this House was told by the Hon. Leader of the Opposition that theory must be matched with practice, one wonders why this Party that talks about matching theory with practice fails to take principled positions on important issues.

The Speaker: Two minutes more.

Cde. Corbin: Speaking on the Guyana National Service, no one can deny that the Guyana National Service provides a most useful opportunity for training in many areas. When the State Paper was presented to this House some time ago, I had the opportunity to point out that the National Service was for all Guyanese and we urged all young people to get themselves involved. Even before the details of this issue could be properly clarified we were told – as evidenced by the frequent headlines in the **Mirror** during that period – that it was national

slavery. They criticised it as forced labour. They failed to inform the people properly saying that it was compulsory National Service, deliberately misguiding the nation, failing to recognise that National Service was divided into many crops.

I would like finally to quote from the Leader of the Opposition, what is their real objection to this National Service. I quote again from the Speech of the Secretary-General of the Party from the Report of the Central Committee, July 31 to August 2. Speaking on National Service, he points out that one of the main objections is race. They are afraid to send Indian girls to the Guyana National Service. I shall now read the section Cde. Speaker. I read from page 34 of **Thunder**, issue of July-September 1976, published by the People's Progressive Party, organ of the P.P.P. from a report of the Central Committee of the People's Party held on July 31 – August 2, 1976 at Tain, Corriverton and delivered by the General Secretary Cde. Jagan. It states:

“As regards compulsory National Service, our party was the first to launch an attack against it in 1974.”

Cde. Speaker, I am sorry for the delay but it is very important that I nail the lie from the very words. I did not want to be interrupted. This is in bold print:

“Our Party opposed to compulsory National Service for women. We understand that this practice is applicable only in two countries in the world, one of them Israel. Women can make their contribution to national development in various ways: it does not have to be in camps in the interior.”

Cde. Speaker, this Party which takes a principled decision on equality for all, equality for everyone in the society, comes to the nation and tells us that they want equality for all but then they want to deprive the women in the society the opportunity to have an equal opportunity to participate. Then, in the very article, the Leader states that all Guyanese must be treated alike. This is the sort of inconsistency that we are constantly bombarded with.

Finally, I would like to say that the successes of the P.N.C.s educational policies, since its inception, have shown a realistic approach to the problems of building socialism in this country. I am certain that the people of this nation, the women of this nation and the entire population of Guyana have benefited and recognise the importance of education for social development. This Budget is a difficult one and I hope they recognise that in the years to come the sacrifices, particularly for the beneficial development of education, will benefit the nation in the future.

5.35 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Clarke.

The Minister of State – Regional (East Berbice) (Cde. Clarke): Cde. Speaker, one of the important strategies which the People's National Congress has implemented in quest of social reconstruction and development in this country is the regional system. This innovation recommended itself because of the many difficulties and the problems experienced by the Party in its efforts to accelerate the progress of development and to create self-reliance, confidence and productive communities throughout this country.

In the past, as you know Cde. Speaker, we depended on the centrally located sub Ministries and subject Ministry officials to direct development in the regions. Moreover the size and physical features of our country tend to isolate and insulate large areas of our country, large pockets of administration as well as people in those areas. It was in these circumstances that after the 1973 General Elections, the regional system was introduced.

At present, as is well known there are six development regions in this country. The North West District; West Demerara Essequibo Coast Islands and Pomeroon Region; East Demerara West Berbice region; East Berbice; Mazaruni/Potaro region and Rupununi region. In order that the regional system can achieve its major objective, that of accelerated development through full involvement of People, the way the system is structured is of importance.

At the very base of the system is the Community Development Council. The community Development Council is representative of all organised groups within communities throughout this country. This wide representation enables the Council not only to collect the views and ideas of a cross-section of the community but it also permits these Councils to adopt measures for the development of those communities. The views and ideas which are expressed and accepted at the level of the community development Council are either acted upon by the Communities themselves, through community self-help or, where appropriate, they are forwarded to the next level which is sub-regional Development level.

At the sub-regional level there is the Sub-regional Development Council which comprises community leaders, representatives of sub-regional organisation be they political, social, industrial, financial, economic, religious or otherwise. These Councils have the task of drawing up plans for the development of the sub-regions and for submitting such plans as they draw up through regional Ministers to the Regional Development Council. Of equal importance, however, is the task of identifying developmental works within the sub-region and of organising, mobilising and educating the people so that they can be motivated to become involved in the execution of developmental works.

The Chairman of the sub-regional Development Councils are full time paid officers whose duty is to promote development within the sub-regions. The last of the three People's Councils which operate within the system is the Regional Development Council. This Council is chaired by the Regional Minister and includes representatives of the sub-regional Councils of Local Authorities, Regional Organisations and community leaders and has the task of co-ordinating and monitoring the work of sub-regional Councils and of giving advice on planning and development generally within the region.

It is clear that this structure of the regional system provides for people's participation in planning, decision-making and implementation and for reviewing the work of development within the regions. The process of participation provides a high level of consultation preparatory to the elaboration and implementation of programmes both at the central as well as Local Government levels. This high degree of participation is evidence that not only does the

regional system provide the basis for greater democratisation of our society through popular involvement in the developmental process, but as I said at the very outset, it is aimed at placing responsibility for the vesting of control of development in the regions where the actual work takes place.

The Regional Minister and his regional staff have the responsibility for:

- (a) Making prompt and intelligent decisions;
- (b) co-ordinating Government policies and effectively implementing Government programmes;
- (c) for the actual deployment and use of Government personnel vehicles, equipment and materials including buildings.

In order to facilitate the fulfillment of these responsibilities, regional and sub-regional administrative Councils have been set up, thus providing a formal basis for consultation and co-ordinated action to be taken over a wide range of matters which are crucial to the swift and orderly development of the region.

The regional and sub-regional administrative Councils are chaired by the Regional Ministers and comprise at the regional level the senior supervisory representatives of all Government agencies including corporations, companies and local authorities, and at the sub-regional level all state and para-statal functionaries who serve people within the sub-region. These Councils so-ordinate and monitor all public sector activities and programmes and advise the Regional Ministers on all relevant matters including the development proposals for the region as drawn up and submitted by the People's Councils already referred to.

I would like to say a word about the importance and significance of these Councils. Not only is there this wide cross-section of representation, but what is most significant is the fact that for the first time on these People's Councils, the little people work alongside the so-called "big people" in this country. They are able, through the working relationships thus established, to ensure that development within the region is facilitated and takes place apace. What more

tangible evidence is there of meaningfully and actively organising for national unity, cohesion and consensus without our society than the regional system itself.

It is apposite to note that various members and supporters of the Opposition are included in these councils to which I have referred. In the new institutions of the People we have provided a system which ensures representation of each organised group in the society. At joint meetings of these councils, the administrative councils and the people's councils, the people are able to air their views, to compliment or to constructively criticise the regional administration, to review and to plan together. These are the essential features of the system which make it so vital to development within the Guyanese context.

Such a new and innovative system of development administration could not be expected to function without initial problems. Moreover, since the system is new, evolving and in many respects experimental, the need for periodic reviews and honest assessment is evident. Thus it was that since the introduction of this system there have been two conferences held to review its workings and to assess the progress or otherwise which it has made. The first was held at Lethem in 1975 and the second at Black Bush Polder last year. These conferences saw major constraints to the future development of the regional system removed, saw the further

5.45 p.m.

strengthening of the system taking place at this very moment through administrative and later though legal action. Some of these problems are still with us but it is evident that solutions are on the way and I have no doubt that the emphasis which the People's National Congress has confidently placed on the regional system will see the removal totally of all inhibitions to its full development.

Cde. Speaker, to say that the regional system has been successful would be an understatement. For the first time in the history of Guyana the Capital Budget for 1977 can be said to have originated in the various communities and the projects to be financed in the various regions have really originated from among the people themselves.

This significant fact will ensure that the implementation of such projects as the farm-to-market roads, for example, through the active participation of the people through the regional system, through the provision by the people of their labour as well as of their other resources. These roads will be provided and savings will be effected which savings, I am sure, will be applied to other necessary works within these communities. It is the first time that people at the grass-root level have been involved in drafting a national budget. The first time they are going to see that their efforts have been fully rewarded in the capital programme of the 1977 Budget.

The real significance of this is that no longer are projects put down on paper that have no relevance to the region and communities, no longer are the people's real wants and needs dictated to them, but they have the opportunity of involving themselves fully in expressing their views and in the fulfillment of their views.

Of greater importance and significance is the fact that the people are educated to understand the realities of the situation and to appreciate that their priorities must be based on the realities of the economy of the country and on their resourcefulness and the capacity of the economy to perform.

Further, one would be surprised to learn that through the efforts of the people of the various communities the actual capital budget as presented by the Cde. Minister of Finance might even be understated because we have evidence in the past to support our contention that through the efforts of the people of this country significant developmental works were executed without the aid of national funds. One only has to refer, Cde. Speaker, to special programmes which, as the Prime Minister has had on occasions to remark, have contributed over \$100 million in development in this country. No doubt even that figure might be an understatement.

But Comrade Speaker, reference was made by the Opposition to the importance of planning. The regional system has provided not only the organisation through which the data could be collected, marshalled and submitted to the planners so that intelligent and realistic planning can take place but we have gone further than that. In the Ministry of Regional

Development we established a Data Bank and data flows into that bank in a structured way on a quarterly basis from the sub-regions.

5.55 p.m.

Therefore, there is at any given time enough data available to the planners of the entire country, so that planning for the development of the country should not be, any longer, a hit-and-miss affairs.

The regional system has also fulfilled the important functions of monitoring and reporting the progress of developmental projects thus contributing to the acceleration of the rate of progress by the early identification and removal of constraints. This in turn facilitates and enables rational and effective deployment of men, materials, equipment etc. and the cutting out of waste and consequent losses. The regional system because it provides now and will provide in the immediate future full opportunity for the party and the state to plan with the people, to live with the people, to work with the people and to be in constant communication with the people through a system of people's councils and through the organised and regionally directed contribution of the public officers in support of the people's efforts, abundantly justifies its creation and, like the People's National Congress which established the system, this Regional System is here to stay. **[Applause]**

The Speaker: Cde. Bynoe.

Cde. Bynoe: Cde. Speaker, permit me to say at this my inaugural speech in this House, how honoured I feel to be given this opportunity to speak on behalf of women in Guyana. The point I would like to speak on is not only of women in Guyana but the status of women in Guyana.

Now, before going into that, I would hope that we would look into the conditions under which women existed before 1975/1976 and how they exist now in 1977. In the home, women were only allowed to do the house chores to look after the children and perhaps to do a little bit of talking here and there. And besides that, they were in the homes specifically to produce but

even though they were producing and they are still producing, they were never given the opportunity to really take their rightful place in society because of the fact that the conditions which operated in those days gave women no opportunity either to adjust themselves or to sit down for one moment and to think of what efforts they could really put in to assist the nation.

Outside of the homes, women in those days took part in activities such as self-help exercises and co-operatives. They were almost the pioneers for self-help activities yet, for all that, they found no place in society. In the political field women played a very vital role and I do not believe that there is anyone in this House who could say that women were not the pivots of all the political organisations which exist in Guyana. **[Applause]** Yet for all that, we found that although women were the pivots for these political organisations, they still were not given an opportunity to perform. We see it just here in the House. We do not have to go far to see it; let us start from here. We have 66 members in the House and we just have 11 women. Thanks to the People's National Congress, from the last general election in 1973 they thought it quite fitting to select eight women to represent the nation on the women's list in the House. **[Applause]** And even though one of the male members of the House died some time ago, they thought it quite fitting to put a female instead of putting another man.

It is good for all of us to speak about socialism but when we speak about socialism we have to think in terms of equality and we must not only speak of equality but we must speak of equality in its true sense. This is where we see the equality of women existing on this side of the House. It is indeed a ratio, if we are to look at it in that sense or from the mathematical point of view, of about one female Member on this side of the House to about five male Members. **[Mrs. DaSilva:** "We have fifty/fifty."]

Cde. Speaker let us think of the employment situation which existed. I am sorry that the hon. Member on the other side thought that I should have mentioned their party but I think she is capable enough to do so at another time.

I would like to compare the employment situation which existed in our country and existed in other countries. Here I quote from an article in the Times Magazine of January 5, 1976. It states that in the USSR they were able to boast that 37.7 per cent of the deputies at all levels were women. In the U.S.A., 5 per cent of the elected members were women. In the Soviet Union, 72 per cent of the physicians were women and in the U.S.A. 9 per cent of the physicians were women.

6.05 p.m.

In the Soviet Union 36 per cent of the judges and 42 per cent of the prosecutors are women, and 7 per cent of the women are lawyers. Also, at the leadership level, 50 per cent of the women in the Soviet Union are leaders, 51 per cent in the local leadership, and 43 per cent in the central leadership.

If we are to compare our women in leadership or the women in our country who should have held great offices, we will find the sort of heritage that we inherited from the colonial masters. Some time ago there was a criticism in one of the newspapers of the women's arm of the People's National Congress, which was criticised for only catering for their womenfolk. But we do not have a bone of contention when you speak of women in our organisation. When we speak of women, we speak of the entire Guyanese women and I hate to see that anyone would try to make a separation between the organisation and what the organisation is trying to do for women.

At this stage permit me to take this opportunity to congratulate the women of the People's National Congress who were pioneers and who braved the attack of tear gas, harassment and embarrassment and stood side by side with the Leader of the People's National Congress in order to gain the total amount of seats in this House from the 1973 elections. Permit

me also to name but a few of these pioneers. Cde. Winifred Gaskin, Cde. Margaret Ackman, Cde. Jane Phillips Gay, jut to mention a few. These were other women also who fought in the struggles but, as I said before, I just sought permission to mention a few.

Also in those days, those of us who speak about socialism will realise that this Government, this party that was fortunate and will continue to be fortunate to form the Government, has been very considerate, and used its initiative to have in this House three women serving in the capacity of Minister of Education. We had first Cde. Winifred Gaskin, secondly, we had Cde. Shirley Field-Ridley, presently we have Cde. Cecilene Baird. I think that alone is a tribute to the People's National Congress. It shows clearly that on this side of the House we do not only speak, we do not only call words. We feel that we must let socialism be proved by deeds and not by words.

One wonders how we could speak of socialism and equality for women, or equality of opportunity for all Guyanese, when unmarried women a little above the age of 40 or from 40 upwards are deemed as old maids or women, if I am to use the colloquial term, "left pun hand", while an unmarried man of the same age is deemed a first class bachelor, is deemed a dude boy, and is deemed a man who can bat safely. Moreover, when an unmarried man has children here and there, he is oftentimes deemed in the colloquial term as being a smart man or even a silverfish because those of us who know about a silverfish know it is a very hard fish to catch. On the other hand, the woman who might have the same qualities of the man, as mentioned is deemed a black sheep, is deemed to be making bastards as long as she has children out of wedlock, and is deemed sometimes as a disgrace to the family.

Let us think in terms of marriage. When a woman is married she is told by the priest to uphold the sanctity of marriage. She is also told to be loyal and to be faithful. We agree. But what happens to the man who will have many wives. He is never deemed an unfaithful man or a disloyal man, but instead he is deemed as a real man. If we are to think in terms of women in the true perspective sense, then we must give women the type of regard that they must have.

I want to draw the attention of this House to a certain record which affects me very much when I hear it played although I have never found myself in that calamity. However, I am quite sure that other women have found themselves in that situation. I cannot remember who sang or who made that record but it goes like this:

“ . . . Every now and then, cuff them up, black up they eye, bruise up they knees,
Then they will love you eternally.”

I am requesting this House that that record be banned because we cannot speak about equality for women and then have such a record playing and instructing men what they must do to women.

6.15 p.m.

That particular record contradicts what we are trying to project in Guyana today and as such I am seeking the assistance of this House that it be banned.

There is another record which should be played very often for the men to hear. It has the words,

‘Remember your mother and your father,

What they did for you when you were small’,

and it reminds you of what you ought to do for them now that you are big. We can have that record played very often to remind some of us who have forgotten the use of a mother and a father.

Another thing which I think I should draw to the attention of this House is the way the passport forms ought to be filled. A married woman has to have approval from her husband before she can obtain a passport. Also the father has to sign the form before the mother can get her children to leave the country. If we speak of equality for women we have to try and reorganise the colonial way of filling up passport forms. Let us give women a real opportunity so that they can perform properly and effectively.

Our bone of contention in the W.R.S.M. is that there is a struggle to change the type of attitude which exists in our society towards women folk, regardless of whether they are married or unmarried.

We have another problem pertaining to legitimate and illegitimate children. They are our children. They were all conceived and born the same way. Why must we have a difference between legitimate and illegitimate children?

I would like to cast the minds of Members of this House to the desired role and status of women in Guyana after giving those few references on how I feel about women. I must mention in this House that the People's National Congress accepts a woman regardless of colour or creed. This being so, each individual woman must be allowed by society to function according to her capacity, according to her attitude, according to her ability. We must allow these women to rise the very highest point of their employment or area of contribution wherever they might happen to find themselves.

I would like to inform this House that the People's National Congress has also taken the initiative and, as I said before, the Members on this side of the House, and the Party to which we belong would like to have socialism proved by deeds and not by words. At this point I would make mention of women serving as Public health Officers; women serving in the technical field as electricians, plumbers, etc.; women serving in the technical field as electricians, plumbers, etc.; women serving as drivers, not only to drive their own motor cars but working with departments and institutions; women serving in the Postal Department as Postal Apprentices etc. We are hoping that they will reach higher stages. There are women serving as Permanent Secretaries. Never in the history of this country have we ever seen women serving as Permanent Secretaries. We already have three women serving in that capacity and we are hoping that we have more women serving in that capacity because we have a lot of women with ability.

Now we also have women serving as Directors on Boards. Quite recently we nationalised Demba and Reynolds and already we have two women serving on those two Boards. It is but right that we take ‘hats off’ to the People’s National Congress for making such strides and for fulfilling such promises that were made during the election campaign. **[Applause]**

Some time in this House a State Paper was laid which was introduced by the Prime Minister. In that Paper areas were identified that needed to be changed by legislation. As I understand it, there is a draft and it is strongly felt that the time is now that this legislation be introduced. **[Applause]**

If we are speaking of equality for women we have to look into all the pros and cons where women are concerned and not only just look at women as producing, not look at women as ex-slaves. Some women are treated as ex-slaves. We make no bones about it because men have no regard for women but I hope that, from the little I have said this afternoon, those who have that determined mind will make a desperate effort to change and to see a woman as a woman and a woman as a human being.

I would like to conclude by saying that the Budget which was laid in this House is accepted by Guyanese women with open arms. With regards to the electricity which was mentioned by a speaker in this House, I would like to say that it will not affect the small man because the small man only has two lights in his house: one for the bedroom and one for the drawing room and the kitchen. He cannot afford to have electrical appliances. The subsidy does not apply to him particularly.

With regards to the subsidy on flour, rice, oil and milk, we will make a sacrifice for that. The fact remains that with the rice industry we, the women of Guyana, will try to see that the production of rice rises again. We hope that our friends on the opposite side of the House will encourage the rice farmers and not discourage them to plant. Whenever there is a strike in the sugar industry, it is the women who suffer and I would like those who are responsible for calling strikes to realize that when a strike is called the women suffer. The man does not suffer because

when problems arise in the home the man will go outside and have a drink or go with friends but the woman will be left in the home to make up for all the little things she does not have.

I would like to call for the assistance of all the Members of this House to encourage the womenfolk to understand their true role in society. Those who have been fortunate to have a little more education than those who do not have, must use their education in its true sense to assist in educating the women who do not realise what part they have to play in building this nation of ours in Guyana.

The Speaker: We are only four minutes to go. So perhaps we may take the suspension.

Sitting suspended accordingly at 6.25 p.m.

8 p.m.

On resumption - -

The Speaker: We will now continue the Budget debate. Cde. Collymore.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Speaker, for the last two days we have been listening to view expressed on the Budget Statement as delivered by the Minister of Finance. We have heard the views of the Government speakers and the views of some of the speakers of the Opposition and we have taken careful note of what has been said particularly by hon. Members on the opposite side.

Some of the members on the opposite side seem to have a belief that on this side we see nothing good in what the Government has done and that perhaps we feel that everything the Government has done is wrong. This is a very mistaken view and we would like to clear the air. The hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs was at pains to point out that the People's Progressive Party sees nothing progressive in the Government's foreign policy. This is not correct. We want to set the record straight in that there are many things we see positive in the policies of the People's National Congress and in particular where foreign policies are concerned it is very good.

We note, in fact, that since the present Minister of Foreign Affairs took office there has been a dramatic change in the foreign policy of this country. It is a dramatic change in comparison to the policies pursued by his predecessor and we want to refer to the many achievements of the Government which the Minister enumerated. He mentioned two years on the Security Councils of the United Nations, Guyana's position advocating the new Economic Order for the world, a new foreign policy in relation to the African countries on the African Continent, the general anti-imperialist policies pursued by the United Nations and elsewhere, Guyana's role in the Non-Aligned Nations and in other forums the progressive stand taken by the Government. We know of all these and I think the Minister was actually beating his own drum and dancing because it has been projected time and again in many of our information articles in various forms that we recognise this particular aspect of the Government's foreign policy.

The Minister also went out on a limb to take Dr. Jagan, the Opposition leader, to task because he mentioned that the Government is externalising the crisis in the country. I believe he misunderstood what the Cde. Leader of the Opposition was trying to say. Dr. Jagan did not say that the Government is placing all the blame on the outside. The Minister also mentioned that there are a lot of problems within this territory but what he was trying to say is that the Government was placing too much emphasis on the external factors and ignoring the internal factors which caused the crisis.

We want to put the record straight that in his statement dealing with the crisis the Minister of Finance also stressed that economic factors abroad had a lot to do with the crisis facing the country. We recognize all of this because it is in the statement, it is a fact and we over here, as realists, cannot close our eyes to the facts. But this is the Government's fault and it has happened because the government is still part and parcel of the imperialist system, the capitalist system, of economic operation and in the course of my contribution I will ask the Government to make changes.

Before we proceed we should make reference at this point to another remark made by our good friends on the opposite side. The Minister inferred that we on this side do not want to co-operate; that we are very uncooperative and we are out to wreck. This is a malicious assertion. We on this side are willing to co-operate with the Government but it is incumbent upon the government side to prepare the conditions for co-operation. If conditions for co-operation do not exist, the Government does not expect us to create conditions. The government has great power and it wants us to make concessions. But what kind of concessions can we make? It is the Government which is supposed to make the concessions, to create the climate, the economic and the political climate, for national unity. As the Members of the Government say. Increased co-operation all around. So the ball is in their court. Whenever we are called upon and the conditions in the atmosphere are right we will lend them 100 per cent co-operation.

Talking about national unity, a lot of hot air has been blown in this august Chamber about national unity. National unity does not exist in a vacuum. It is a two-way street, and the members of the Government cannot expect the initiative to come from us when they do nothing. They just lambaste us at every turn, criticise us and make allegations, and accusations which are unfounded.

I heard speeches by some hon. Member on the opposite side which claimed that the People's Progressive party is responsible for strikes in the sugar industry, for rice farmers not planting rice and other things like that. The Government fails to observe that it is creating conditions for false ... we of the People's Progressive Party are not at the roo of this. National unity can come about only when both parties are concerned about national unity, to build socialism that is, and to get round the Conference table and discuss matters.

8.10 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, I think you are aware that talks have been going on, talks of a sort, with half-hearted gestures by members on the Government side. We are sincere on this side, but they are not serious, they raise a lot of red herrings; they produce pre-conditions; they make demands and ask for concessions and talks break down. That is how they want national unity. You should

come to the conference table and frankly discuss the problems affecting the country. Today we heard many of the Ministers and the Government Back Benchers eulogizing Marxism/Leninism. We have been eulogizing it for over 25 years. Therefore what are we quarrelling about? The Prime Minister, a few days ago, inferred that there must be an end to ...Political ... He must tell his Ministers and the other Members the facts and let us be serious in tackling problems of this country.

There is a general lack of consultation. Whom d they consult? They consult themselves. We have the classic case of the defence bonds. The Government instigated the creation of defence bonds with the co-operation of the Trades Union Congress and we now have a Defence Bonds Committee comprising 16 representatives. I have here a list of the nominees and representatives arbitrarily selected – because we were not consulted – the People's National Congress – four representatives; the People's Progressive Party – three representatives; the Trades Union congress – three representatives; the Guyana Co-operative Union Ltd – one; the Georgetown Chamber of Commerce – one; the Berbice Chamber of Commerce – one; the Consultative Association of Guyanese Industry Limited – ones; the Guyana Association of Local Authorities – one; and the Rice Producers Association – one.

The Members of the Government, our good friends on the opposite side did not consult us about this and they simply sprang a surprise, a fiatu accompli and asked us to go along.

According to the Minister of Finance, he hopes to collect \$30 million from these national defence bonds. The scheme is voluntary and interest is at 3½ per cent, a meager interest rate, if I may conjecture. We are saying now that they will not achieve this even though the aspect of coercion has already appeared as a huge dimension to collect these funds. We have information to the effect that circulars have been sent around to heads of departments, schools, institutes and colleges telling the heads to make sure that personnel under their control subscribe to the defence bonds. This is coercion. We feel that there is going to be a tremendous shortfall in this for many reasons. Largely because of the falling purchasing power of the Guyanese dollar, people cannot afford to give, and naturally they will give what they can afford. So there is a lack of consultation on the one hand, and on the other hand where it comes to collecting funds, garnering

funds, the Government is ensuring that it mobilises the widest cross section of the population. This is wrong. We feel that if we on this side and other organisations are to contribute to defence or to raise finance for the administration of the country we must have a say in running the country; we must have a say where power is concerned, we must have a say in the dissemination processes. But they want to have their cake and eat it at the same time.

Cde. Jack rose - -

The Speaker: Just a moment, Cde. Collymore. Cde. Minister.

The Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Cde. Jack): Cde. Speaker, during the course of his presentation the representative from the Opposition has just said circulars have gone around to heads of departments saying that they must make sure that people subscribe to the bonds. I rise on a point of order to find out whether he has seen such a document. As he is speaking he can tell us during the course of his speech.

The Speaker: Cde. Collymore, I am not prepared to rule that that is a point of order but what the Minister is saying is that the information is inaccurate at this stage. If you are going to continue in that vein you must make sure that what you are saying is correct, if not you will be misleading the House upon the premise of what you propose saying as did the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva earlier when she made an allegation which was unfounded. Please proceed.

Cde. Collymore: Thank you very much Cde. Speaker. I am glad that you have ruled that it is not a point of order. I will supply the Minister with the necessary information in due course. The trouble is the Cde. Minister would like me to identify the circular.

We were talking about Government's general attitude. Talking about national unity. What is the Government doing? Persecuting the left-wing forces in the country. All the left-wing forces have been persecuted. Persons and organisations which profess the same socialism which the Government is now professing and who have been professing this socialism for many years before the Government adopted it in 1975, these organizations, these forces are being

persecuted. We have the case of the Working People's Alliance, we have the case of the People's Progressive Party, we have the case of influential persons in the society who are not even given jobs. This is how the members of the Government claim to want a national consensus and national unity.

On the other hand, what is the Government doing where the right-wing forces are concerned? The members of the Government claim to be socialists, to be the vanguard of the new society being constructed, but yet they are persecuting fellow-travellers and at the same time they are feather-bedding enemies of the revolution. What are they doing to the right-wing forces in Guyana, the reactionaries? They are featherbedding them, patting them on their shoulders and doing nothing. We do not know why the Government has adopted this stand, but it would appear as though it is afraid to tackle the right-wing forces, while it will persecute **Dayclean** and lock up Kwayana, action which we condemn most strongly. While they will seek to suppress other left-wing publications there are two right-wing publications with the same status of **Dayclean** and they are being published without any Police persecution. One of them is entitled "Mukti". Cde. Speaker, I think you already know what is the meaning of the word "Mukti".

The Speaker: Isn't that a Trinidad publication disturbed in this country?

Cde. Collymore: We see the publication right here and we know who is the man writing it. I think the Police know. The scurrilous publication attacks everybody. It attacks you most viciously also, Cde. Speaker. I am ashamed to say what they are saying about you. I have so much respect for you that I would not tell you what they are saying but they criticised the People's Progressive Party and they criticised the People's National Congress and they lump both of us together and say that - -

8.20 p.m.

The Speaker: Well, I am in good company. **[Laughter]**

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Speaker, they are opposed to socialism; they are opposed to progress. They are allied – they say it openly – to the external forces and they carry out a line which is very, very reactionary and racist. They do not only talk about racial discrimination which will become unbearable in Guyana if she attacked but they are saying divide Guyana now. And let me read a part that they say about partition.

“Those who want freedom can choose the Indian state in the East;; no National Service, a free press and radio. Those who prefer Burnham’s Marxist dictatorship with corruption, official meetings, victimisation and absence of human rights, can go to the African state of the West. Mukti knows which state Jagan will choose. Of course he will be with his buddy Burnham.”

So, you see, they put us together and when the imperialist forces come, they will take instructions and directions from them and both of us would be on the firing line to be shot down. The Government is also aware of this because many of its top ideologues also know that if the imperialists come or the Brazilians attack, the P.P.P. and the P.N.C. would be dealt with.

Listen to that what the Regional Development Officer of East Demerara and West Berbice, Cde. Clause St. Romain said on Thursday, December 2, when he was addressing the People’s Militia:

“Many people felt that the Militia was an organisation only for people affiliated to one Party. He pointed out to the audience that when a nation attacks another, it does not ask if you are Christian or Muslim. It does not ask whether you are P.P.P. or P.N.C. they see us all as one people and they spare no bones to tear us to pieces.”

That is what he said. He is one of the ideologues of the Party on the opposite side and he is saying almost the same thing which this Mukti people are saying. I think, Cde. Speaker, that one of these days I will tell you what they are saying about you.

Now, we have another right wing publication called “Muffled Voices.” These voices are not muffled if they can appear freely. What is the C.I.D. doing? What is the special Branch doing? Locking up P.P.P. persons and progressives and they are leaving these elements to be at large. Criminals! That is what they are! This is also a racist publication, anti-socialist, anti-Marxist, reactionary and pro-imperialist. They have a list of P.N.C. top men here and they say scurrilous things about them, some of which are true. They talk about – and I am not going to abuse my privilege – I am not going to call any names. They mentioned a lot of people. They also mentioned the hon. Cde. Speaker also. I will not read these things. I will be decent tonight. **[Laughter]** The right wing people who are all around us these days do what they like and say what they like – abusing everyone. Why is the Government persecuting left-wingers? We are calling on the Government not to persecute left-wing forces. As long as the forces in the country are healthy and progressive, as long as they are in favour of the socialist revolution, hands off them! We must take this opportunity to ask Government to desist from trying to murder activists of the People’s Progressive Party on trumped up charges.

Now, we come to the general attitude of the Police towards the people. The Government claims to be socialist and we know that socialist Governments and socialist regimes do not attack workers and farmers but we see that Police have been set upon workers. When the sugar workers wanted house lots and they could not get house lots, they could not get the Government to move fast enough, they squatted and the Minister, or someone else, sent the Police and they beat up some of the squatters at Patentia last year and they man-handled some of the other squatters on the West Bank, on the West Coast of Demerara. Up to now these squatters have been unable to receive their houselots. What happened to strikers at Linden? Our good friend on the opposite side said that Linden is a P.N.C. stronghold. That is why the place is named “Linden”. The strike was called by the workers who protested against union membership and a collective agreement and the Government sent in the riot squad and the riot squad tear-gassed the workers. This socialist Government! It should be ashamed of itself! So we have Police brutality against workers and farmers in a country where the Government claims to be socialist.

Then, we have violations of freedom of the Press. This is a very sensitive point and I would like to ask the Minister of State in the Office of the Prime Minister to listen carefully. He has been making some very unfounded statements concerning this concept of freedom of the Press.

8.30 p.m.

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Narbada Persaud: I beg to move that Cde. Collymore be allowed a further 15 minutes to continue his contribution.

Cde. Ram Karran *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde Collymore: I was addressing myself to the Minister of State, Kit Nascimento. I would like to state what the concept of precedence is and we must know everything we do in this august Chamber or the community at large. We must deal with it from the point of view of the class state. We have to deal with the control of the Press and for what purpose. In the same way as we are asking the Government not to persecute the left wing forces, the Government must facilitate the left wing forces and we ask them to marshall them because these forces are working, they are moving in the direction where the Government is going and these are the forces that must have freedom of the Press, not the Mukti and Muffled Voices, not the right-wingers. We do not hold any views for right wing forces controlling the Press anywhere. Where freedom of the press is concerned the Government must have a policy of permitting socialist views to be projected and must not hamstring those who want to project the new society.

Dealing with co-operation, all the Ministers are asking for further co-operation. They want to have increased production. On the opening day of the debate, my good friend Cde. H.D. Hoyte, said we hope to have full national involvement in national planning and he intimated that the 1972 – 1976 Development Plan had rolled over into 1977. Co-operation in national

planning: this is good but where are the mechanics? They want to sit in their ivory towers and to crack the whip and snap their fingers and we will come running. We are not boys. He also said that we need production, we need productivity, it is the only way we can satisfy the socialist needs of the community.

I am saying in all of this the P.P.P. can become involved or continuously slide into oblivion. This is the attitude of the people who want national unity, a take it or leave it basis, no genuine concessions, no proper initiative and they expect us to come running. We won't come running. We don't need the P.N.C. The P.N.C. needs us. We are bargaining from a point of view of strength, not weakness. If we could not have helped them they would not have asked us for help. The terms they are asking are unacceptable at the present moment. Many things have to be done. Many measures have to be taken.

What about the Service Commission? **[Interruption]** The day I sit over there it will be as Prime Minister in a P.P.P. Government. Put that in your pipe and smoke it. I cannot be bought. What about the Service Commissions? They are making statements on the Press and the radio that we are going to have participation, shares, seats on the Service Commissions. We have not received one single seat yet on the Public Service Commission, the Police Service Commission or the Judicial Service Commission. Not a single seat. All we have is prevarications, or excuses, and postponements, that is all we have from them and they have asked for national unity. We want to be involved, not only in doing the jackass work but in making decisions; we want to have a share in power.

Let us have a few words about the militia. We have already ventilated our views on the Militia in this House but nothing has been done. We know that the People's Militia is very important, so important that it is supposed to be institutionalised in the society. But we do not know what is going on.

When we look at the Budget Speech of the hon. Minister of Finance we see nothing mentioned about the People's Militia. When we peruse these voluminous estimates not a single

word do we see there mentioned about the Militia. So we want to know exactly what is happening. Only a few weeks ago the Government asked for supplementary estimates and it got \$13 million. Now we don't see anything about the militia. We want to ask the Government what has become of it. If the Government is de-emphasising the Militia or if it is emphasising the Militia and keeping it a State secret, we feel that it should have been reflected in the Estimates. The national Service is mentioned in the Estimates. We have security charges which are new and they have Other Charges, etc. but not a word about the People's Militia. We want to know if this vote is going up or going down. How can we make proper constructive criticism if we don't have the information. If it is curtailed for some reason or the other we would like the Minister responsible to say whatever he goes to make an explanation. The Militia is very important because it can relieve the Police of formal duties and it is serving as a very crucial reserve for the Army.

I want to read to you, Cde. Speaker, from the experiences of the Cuban revolution. I am reading from the historical synthesis of the Committee for the Defence of the Revolution published by the National Office of the G.D.R., Havana, 1973, page 15. It says, dealing with vigilance,

“Revolutionary collective vigilance has been the first task of the G.D.R.”

It is the Militia in Cuba. The reason for its creation in imperialism and as long as the Yankee imperialist menace continues to exist it will remain the most important task of the Cuban people for the defence of the nation. Revolutionism is, so to speak, a state of consciousness and therefore it is important for this reason to be accompanied by Marxist-Leninist class ideological work. To these also ... the organisation the purposes and tasks of the G.D.R., the Militia, and he says the same point we have been making. From this moment guard duties by naval blocks was institutionalised in the towns and cities. In the rural areas guard duty was usually done and ... by patrolling sometimes on foot and others on horseback.

This type of vigilance continued in the towns and cities until the middle of 1969 when a more co-operative plan of vigilance was put into practice. However, during this time, vigilance was not limited to local blocks. It was also organised in public functions, mass meetings and

other activities, in public entertainment places, especially in theatres and movies since the counter-revolution tried to use these places for their actions, to provoke disturbances, commit sabotage, and

In all these places and others, railroad and bus stations, highroads and roads at the entrance and edges of cities and towns, the G.D.R. are active and continue one final paragraph:

“The G.D.R. Members who are named in the zone committees office are the liaison persons ready to call the sector of revolutionary police for help. This type of guard duty is done without arms and is divided into two shifts from 112 midnight to 6 in the morning. Its aim is to ... and to act but always assisted by the sector of revolutionary police which is called at the proper moment.”

8.40 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, the point we are making here is that the Militia can help the police and can result in a cost-out for the Police Force and the State and it can also cut costs for the army. But we see the vote is concealed. We do not know what is going on and we want to know whether it is being emphasised or de-emphasised. We want the Militia to be put to work. The members of the Militia do not have to be paid a salary. [Cde. Nascimento: “I joined the Militia.”] You joined! Well, you are a subversive element in the Militia.

The Speaker: Cde. Collymore, please withdraw that remark.

Cde. Collymore: I withdraw the remark, Cde. Speaker. We now come to the question of elections, the new Constitution and the sharing of power. They are talking about national unity. We want to know what kind of national unity they want. The Prime Minister said recently that elections are going to be held in 1978. But what kind of elections are we going to have? The same kind as in 1968 and 1973? Cde. Speaker, if we are going to have that, we might as well ease the taxpayers of the burden. We want free and fair elections, one man, one vote. We do not want the army hijacking the ballot boxes. We do not want wads of

ballot papers passing through a slit, as if by magic. We want elections in the true sense of the term.

We know that elections, as they are supposed to be held, would post a problem for our comrades on the other side. We recognise that and realise also that rigging, where even jumbies and horses vote, is an embarrassment to the Government and if the Government does not want to hold this kind of election we know we can sit down and discuss how to solve the political crisis in Guyana. There is an economic crisis but there is also a political crisis of grave dimensions, with a minority trying to stay in power at all costs and making maximum use of the army. We would like to know what sort of elections are to be held. If they are going to hold this same type of fraudulent contest to give the country a bad name abroad, then we will consider and decide how best to satisfy the aspirations of the people of Guyana.

There is much talk about the socialist Constitution.

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. R. D. Persaud: I beg to move, Cde. Speaker, that Cde. Collymore be given a further fifteen minutes to conclude his speech.

Cde. R. Ally *seconded*

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Collymore: Thank you very much, comrades on the opposite side and Cde. Chairman. We were speaking about the Constitution. We have not been receiving any feedback from this draft. For several years now we are hearing that the Constitution is in draft; we do not know what is in it. We are concerned about the Bill of Rights section and the Elections section. We know that there is going to be a deadlock, unless there is a consensus where the part about human rights is concerned and the part of power and the sharing of it is concerned.

We know that this is the reason why the Government is prevaricating and hesitating in moving forward with this Constitution. We know full well the whole Constitution has certain limitations and we will not obstruct where it concerns the new one. But we want to be consulted and we want agreement reached so that we can do away with this old kind of bourgeois political agitation. The Prime Minister said petty politics must end. Let us sit down and discuss the Constitution and the real issues which are a stumbling block to national unity, because, in the final analysis, it is the question of the power which is causing a shortfall in production and the economic crisis. That is it. So we want to have power.

We next come to the question of destabilisation which the Government is making maximum mileage of. The Government is claiming that it is being destabilised. The Minister of Finance has made reference to destabilisation in many areas and is saying that external forces have a lot to do with what is happening. On page 1 of the Budget Statement the Minister said:

“the fact that external powers, hostile to the path we have chosen for social and economic development, have been seeking throughout the year to create instability within the country is well known.”

On page 2, the Minister said:

“Apart from the direct external political threat, economic pressure and a hardening of attitudes to developing countries in general have been very evident.”

These are quite factual. On page 6 the Minister said:

“Notwithstanding the unresponsive attitude adopted by many of the western developed countries at Nairobi” – that is, the UNCTAD Conference

“towards the overwhelming problems of the developing countries, especially in such areas as debt servicing, low and unstable prices for primary commodities, and difficulty of access to capital markets, the developing continue to strive in other international forums to correct this undesirable state of affairs in their economic relations with the richer countries.”

And he went on to speak on page 21 and 22. On page 22 he said:

“The threat against our internal security is still there and must be countered.”

He then goes on to speak about bad weather, blaming the weather. What we are trying to say is that the Government must not only mobilise internally to counter destabilisation, they must mobilise externally. Where are the external alliances? If we are to fight the American imperialists, can the Third World fight Yankee imperialism? We need powerful friends with nuclear rockets to checkmate the nuclear arsonists, the American imperialists.

We are therefore calling upon the Government to look into this external situation and to weld a situation where the country could be guaranteed freedom from attack by American imperialism by what every way they feel to attack from outside. The Government has problems and we on this side of the House are sincere in helping them to solve the problem.

8.50 p.m.

Now, to conclude I want to comment on my hon. Friend across the isle, the Cde. Guystac Vice President and Cde. Trade Minister, who criticised the People’s Progressive Government and Party last night very erratically. He was trying to project that the People’s Progressive Party at the time when the British colonial power was the power in Guyana did not have control over foreign trade. This is true. But he quoted a series of trade figures and did not relate them to the situation which existed.

Now, what is the situation presently? For 12 years our good friends have been in office. What have they done to change the trading patterns of the country? Nothing. When you peruse the Bank of Guyana Report 1975 and when you peruse the statistical digest 1975 you see that the trade patterns remain basically the same, oriented towards imperialism.

I will deal with some figures to show that the trading pattern in 1975 was heavily weighted towards the imperialist countries. These figures are culled from the Bank of Guyana, 1975, and I am quoting from page 104 “Direction of Guyana’s Foreign Trade”. Total exports for that year \$850,000,000 and it was comprised as follows: The Serling area, which is the

Imperialist Area - \$366.7 million. The Dollar area, also an Imperialist area - \$238.1 million and the rest of the world - \$145.2 million. Imports: The total was \$806 million. The sterling area comprised \$362.7 million and the dollar area \$294.3 million. Rest of the world \$149.0 million. The sterling and the dollar areas combined together realise \$604.8 million per exports. This amounted to 71.1 per cent of Guyana's exports to the imperialist countries and the sterling and dollar area and where imports are concerned that is goods which Guyana brought in, they accounted for \$657.0 million or 81.5 per cent. The sterling area where exports are concerned – United Kingdom - \$252.4 million; Caribbean Common Market \$119.9 million; Other areas \$4.4 million. Sterling area where imports are concerned – United Kingdom - \$173.9 million, Caribbean Common Market \$172.8 million. And in CARICOM, with American monopoly dominating the area – that will satisfy our good friend Kit – over \$16.0 million.

You can see that the Government still is heavily oriented toward the Imperialist powers. So we have imperialism accounting for over 50 per cent of Guyana's imports.

To conclude, we must say that the Budget actually issues a call for national unity. We accept this call in good faith but we are asking our good honourable comrades and friends on the opposite side to also accept the call in good faith. If they provide conditions, we are willing to co-operate and make the country a success. **[Applause]**

The Speaker: Cde. Minister Jack.

Cde. Minister Jack: Cde. Speaker, as I rise to make my presentation, I would like first of all, to congratulate Cde. Collymore on the very frank, open and revealing presentation which he has made from the Opposition benches. We meet at a time of a certain amount of difficulty for our country but there are very positive developments which I propose to mention shortly. However, because of some of the revelations which have been made, I think that it would be proper for me to spend some time on the questions of national unity and some of the other points raised by the Opposition.

I wish to start, first of all, Cde. Speaker, with a reply to some of the remarks which were made about the recent strike at Guybau. Whatever I say I trust that the members of the Opposition will take in good part as being not an attempt to criticise them unduly but to lead them towards the light. Now, they knew since we have nationalised the Guyana Bauxite Company that we were using the Company as we have used other nationalised industries for the purpose of restructuring our economy and creating a base for further industrial and economic development. Nevertheless from the very inception they have sought to adopt principles which they must know to have been wrong. I do not wish to use a term like 'dishonest', it may be unparliamentary but I would suggest something as close to that as possible.

When we were going to nationalise, the People's Progressive Party contended that we should pay no compensation. The People's Progressive Party has been in the habit of speaking of principles. They have taken the word 'honesty' as their private possession. They spoke about how wicked we were, how we were in the pay of the imperialists because we paid compensation. Now, we have paid compensation in every nationalisation that we have carried out since 1966 and we have carried out, as you know, many. We have paid, over twenty years at 6 per cent holding tax and so forth.

I have been doing some research to find out where the People's Progressive Party carried out any nationalisation and, as a result of a lot of research, I managed to find one instance. The instance was the case of the Electric Company and I think this should be placed on a record alongside all the rest of the criticisms which have been leveled against us. It will be said that it was a Colony and I will come to that. This nationalisation, it would appear, was the result of a proposal by the International Power Company and a consortium of three British Firms who approached the Government of the day and offered to sell the Demerara Electric Company as a going concern.

9. p.m.

Now we have made it a principle when we have nationalised to take assets and not to buy going concerns because of all the liabilities that are entailed if one attempts that form of take-over. I wonder if the P.P.P. would have believed that this privately-owned company had not exploited

the people of Guyana. It appeared that they did not, because you see they agreed to pay compensation but not only did they agree to pay compensation but they paid that compensation off in three years.

That was the only instance in which the P.P.P. attempted any kind of nationalisation. And when they had nationalised the company did they change the structure? Did they attempt workers participation, workers control? The answer to that was a resounding NO. But they would plead that they were not in a position to do so and you know Cde. Speaker, if they plead that they did not have the full power and full opportunity I would accept. I was not about to criticise them; they thought I was going to criticise. I sympathise with that and I accept it, and I think that they were quite right. My only objection is that they were not honest enough to recognise the constraints under which we also acted when we nationalised the Demerara Bauxite Company.

Sometimes I manage to buy some of these Marxist books and upon occasions I have bought from the Michael Forde Bookshop. I would appear that there are some people who sell books but don't read them or read them but don't understand them. We are fortunate on this side of the House in having people at the highest round of the leadership of this Party who understand Marxism. I will not accuse the Opposition about not reading about Marxism but I think that we understand and because of that and because it is very popular with the Opposition and they usually feel comfortable if one quotes from the Marxist classics with your permission I would like to quote from page 22 of a very well-known book by Lenin "Left-Wing" Cmmunism, an Infantile Disorder. Here Lenin was replying to some attacks of some socialist revolutionaries who were criticising him for the Brest-Litovsk Treaty. Of course some of them, as the P.P.P. has done to us, some of them even accused him of being in the camp of the imperialists. This is what he said:

“Imagine that your automobile is held up by armed bandits. Your hand them over your money, passport, revolver and automobile. In return you are relieved of the pleasant company of the bandits. That is unquestionably a compromise. (“I give” you money, firearms, automobile, “so that you give” me the opportunity to depart in peace).

But it would be difficult to find a sane man who would declare such a compromise to be “inadmissible on principle,” or who would proclaim the compromiser an accomplice of the bandits (even though the bandits might use the automobile and the firearms for further robberies). Our compromise with the bandits of German imperialism was a compromise of such a kind.”

The people in the Opposition claim to know about imperialism but they have behaved as if imperialism does not exist and it had been painful over the years to listen to them shouting about what we should do and what we should not do when, if they had read their Marxism properly, they would have recognised that there is a time for everything. Of course, in all political parties there is a time to recognise mistakes and if, even at this late hour, some of our Friends are prepared to recognise their mistakes there is a great hope for the future. If, of course, they do not recognise their mistakes then we shall have to wait a little longer.

One of the mistakes that they made was, of course, the boycott of Parliament. Happily they have rectified it. I think it should be put on record that it was a mistake and again had they read the same book they would have found on page 21:

“The Bolshevik boycott of ‘parliament’ in 1905 enriched the revolutionary proletariat with highly valuable political experience . . .”

not what happened in 1973 –

But it is a very great mistake indeed to apply this experience blindly,”

And he goes on to say:

“The boycott of the Duma by the Bolsheviks in 1906 was, however, a mistake, although a small and easily remediable one.”

So they too made mistakes, but they corrected it. The proof of whether you have made a mistake or not has to do with whether you achieve power.

“A boycott of the Duma in 1907 1908 and subsequent years would have been a serious mistake and one difficult to remedy, . . .”

I read this not to be critical but to let the people in the Opposition recognise that is they would read and if they would consider carefully they would recognise their mistakes and by doing so rectified them in time.

9.10 p.m.

We have listened to talk of national unity. And I want to say something about that here and now. Yesterday, Cde. Balchand Persaud --- I’m sorry, Cde. Narbada Persaud - - **[Interruption]** I humbly apologise and it is only because my eyes are bad that looking at him I mistook him. It was not intentional.

Yesterday Cde. Narbada Persaud was making a very good attempt at a presentation and we were all listening until he descended to certain remarks which I would have said bordered on the vulgar side. If perchance the term “vulgar” is unparliamentary I withdraw it before you rule, but I wish to convey the impression of one’s distaste for the type of thing that has plagued relations between these two parties and I wish to state here and now that this Party will not accept, and the Government will not accept, any continuation of personal attacks on the leadership of this Party. **[Applause]** I wish to make it abundantly clear that if there is to be any hope at all of any kind of understanding between us – and I have chosen this forum so that not just a few of you may know but so that all of you may know and understand – if there is to be any hope at all of any kind of understanding between us it will be on the basis of mutual respect and it will be on the basis of that we do not attack you at a personal level and it will be upon the basis of -- **[Interruption]** That was a mistake. When I looked at him I thought it was Balchand.

Cde. Speaker, I apologise immediately and I will apologise then times over and if the P.P.P. will have the same good grace, if Cd.e Narbada Persaud would have the same good grace I will give him some of my own time to make a similar apology. I am not above apologising but what I wish to say is this – and I hope they listen because this to us is a fundamental principle.

It is a fundamental principle that this kind of carping personal attack will have the effect of preventing any kind of meaningful dialogue in the future between the parties. Cde. Speaker, it would appear that they do not even know what it is attached. That is the tragedy of it; it would appear that they are not even conscious. This may be a problem of culture but whatever problem it is and I am being quite sincere, I do not wish it to appear that I am unduly criticising the P.P.P. – I am saying what I am saying now and taking some time off of other things that I would have said in the hope that they would understand the seriousness with which we react at the kind of behavior to which we have been subjected in the past. And I wish to say further that – I would not deal with critical support – but I wish to say that if they wish to have the kind of unity that they are speaking about then it will be good at another time and in another place for them to consider seriously what it is that they want to do in the future. If they said that the Government must create the conditions for co-operation. What did they do recently at CUBAU? This Government has very strong support at Linden, as everyone knows. This Government is conscious of the fact that conditions at Linden need very serious and drastic improvement and this Government could have taken all of the surpluses from GUYBAU and put it into the Linden area but had we done so. I am sure that we would have been accused of discrimination in favour of the people of Linden.

The Cde. Leader and Prime Minister, on many occasions made it quite clear that he considered that the surpluses which our nationalised industries make were not for any particular group of people or not to be used for the benefit of the entire country. Nevertheless, as soon as a few agitators managed to get a kind of strike going, immediately certain people felt that they should fish in troubled waters. They rushed up and supported a claim at this particular time for 60 per cent increase. That is a type of irresponsibility. It could only emanate from people who do not intend at any time in the future to have real responsibility in this country. It can only emanate from people who unlike the ambitions of Cde. Collymore do not really believe it is possible for them either to have power or even to share in power because no rational being in 1977 would have thought of giving 60 per cent increase in the conditions of our economy. And it is not good enough to say it is only politics because that is the kind of bourgeois politicking which I hope we are getting away from.

If, therefore, there is to be this understanding then we need to recognize that there is a degree of responsibility on both sides. We were told in some 17 points of the things we must do and I think Cde. Collymore has also told us what we must do. We need to ask: What must they do? And we will tell you. We expect a certain degree of responsibility. We do not object to criticism, but what we do say is this: do not use ignorance as a licence for invention.

Cde. Speaker, I have given a standing invitation to the Opposition, and Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud is the most recent recipient of the reminder of this invitation, to discuss with them any matter pertaining to the Ministry of which I am the head. You know, it is most peculiar; they have thanked me and they have never availed themselves of the opportunity of taking me up on it. It would seem as if they do not want to know because they are more comfortable printing anything.

9.20 p.m.

Imagine, for instance, this is a small one I am not really complaining about it, on the 23rd December when they said how the ministers had gone looking for money all about, I was in Guyana at the time. They said, “So far, there has been no trace of Hubert Jack.” I was supposed to have been wandering about. I am accessible and they know what I am accessible. A telephone call could have prevented them from writing that inaccuracy. There seems to be a belief that once they are dealing with the Government they can say anything they like. This is no big thing and I am not making heavy weather of it.

I will come right now to what I went about – the Upper Demerara Forestry scheme. I went on the 17th and 18th and came back on the 20th. Among the things in which my Ministry is engaged in developing is a very large and comprehensive timber complex in the Upper Demerara Forestry area. We have been at this thing for over three years and in 1975 we held discussions with a certain Canadian firm with a view to partnership. Some of the conditions which were put forward were not acceptable to the Government and so the negotiations fell through.

I would like to state also at this stage that this Government, while it is prepared to have joint ventures with foreign enterprises will at all times ensure that the conditions under which we enter into any kind of arrangement with a foreign concern are such that the real interests of the Guyana people are protected and we will not accept, and we have not accepted, conditions which we consider to be inimical to the true interests of the people. As a result of the stand which we took, the negotiations came to an end but the project still remains. This project is one in which the World Bank has an interest and we have been promised a certain degree of financial assistance. In order to accelerate the development of this project I headed a team in December and went to Washington where we met representatives of the World Bank to discuss the further implementation of this project. It is to be expected that as a result of those discussions an appraisal mission will come to Guyana in late February or early March and assuming the progress which we anticipate, we hope to be able to sign an agreement before the end of the year.

In any case the Government has taken a firm decision that with or without the World Bank we will proceed with the scheme because it is in the interest of the country, we recognise that we have lucrative markets and we feel this is one of the schemes which is so far developed that it should not be allowed to hang fire any longer. Had anyone wanted to know the truth I would have supplied him with the information.

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: May I formally move an extension of 15 minutes to enable the Cde. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources to continue his contribution.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Jack: As I am on the subject of forestry, may I state a few other things which should be of interest to this House. In 1973 September, the Government established the Timber Export Board. You will recall that in 1972 the C.D.C., which controlled Guyana Timber, closed down on the ground that they could not make a profit and one of the reasons that they gave was that they had no markets. The Government, recognising the need for a clear marketing policy and also for a marketing organisation, established the Timber Export Board in 1973 September.

I have before me the figures for the sales and the value of our timber exports since that time. In 1974 we exported from Guyana to the value of \$5,365,345. In 1975 this jumped from \$5 million to \$8,546,534 and in 1976, our export sales amounted to \$9,700,186. We had intended to pass the \$10 million mark in 1976 but unfortunately there was a fire at the Guyana Timbers. Apart from that we were hampered by the very heavy rainfall which affected other areas of production as well.

Someone mentioned charcoal during the course of this debate and I can tell you that the Timber Export Board has already got on its books orders for charcoal. We have a charcoal committee and the same Professor Vrahman that you quoted from has been sitting on this Committee which is a co-ordinating committee to develop our charcoal potential.

We have also been working on the development of a chip project but this so far has been hampered by the shallowness of the draught of our harbours.

As you know, Cde. Speaker, we are also investigating a deep water harbor which is one of the prime necessities for this country if we are to exploit our natural resources to the full.

With regard to the mention of the deep water harbor may I take this opportunity to speak about the need for infrastructural development. For some time now it has been popular to say that we have spent too much money on infrastructure but unless we do carry out work to build roads, stelling, and other forms of communication etc. we will not be in a position to exploit our natural resources properly.

We have been told that we are trying to externalise the crisis in this country. I would like to draw attention to the fact that it is now public knowledge that the increase in the prices of oil have affected all developing countries. And this increase has affected developing countries far more than it has affected developed countries. Again, with your permission, I would like to quote a speech from Cde. Fidel Castro in Grandma of December 12, on page 3.

Here he says:

“The Shah of Iran’s delusions of grandeur, the fantastic number of weapons that that rust in the hands of the inept soldiers of the King of Arabia and the fabulous luxuries of the reactionary sultans of the Persian Gulf are paid for with the sweat and hunger of hundreds of millions of men and women, old people and children in the underdeveloped world. And that is literally so, because the developed capitalist countries have passed on the excess price of oil to all the equipment, fertilizer, food and manufactured products in general that they export to the underdeveloped countries, which, at the same time, have seen their markets drop still further, their export products devaluated, while they must also pay almost 100 dollars a ton for the oil they use. The industrialized capitalist countries have still other formulas for dealing with that excess price, among them the sale of military equipment, as mentioned before, which becomes useless junk in less time than it takes the oppressed subjects of the Persian Shah and the Saudi kings to learn to handle it. It is the repetition, in modern times, of the classical legend of America’s European conquerors times, of the classical legend of America’s European conquerors who bought the Indians’ gold with mirrors and colored glass beads.”

Further on he said:

“But why do the underdeveloped countries, with fewer economic and often fewer natural resources as well, have to bear the main, overwhelming and intolerable burden of the capitalist economic crisis?”

Cde. Speaker, we are an underdeveloped country and these words were spoken about a situation that affects us, that affects other progressive countries and affects other countries even if they are not progressive. So that to say we are trying to externalise the crisis is really not to understand what the crisis is all about.

We have embarked upon a process of mineral development and I digress for a moment to give the House the benefit of some of the things which we propose to do during this year. The Government has already in train a draft Bill which will create a gold buying agency, which

would allow the Government to be the sole buyer of gold. Furthermore, recognising that there has been much abuse by jewelers and others who trade in gold, in that they represent that they are selling you one quality of gold when in fact they are selling you gold of a much inferior quality, we have also decided to introduce legislation for a Hallmarkers' Act which will compel all sellers of jewellery and other gold articles to have clearly stamped what is the quality of the gold.

There was talk about workers' participation. I do not wish to spend too much time on this question since I know another speaker will be dealing with it, but let me say here and now that we do not believe that there is any full-blown scheme of workers' participation which can be picked from a shelf and handed to the people. We believe in making a start and we have already made a start. We have developed a system of worker involvement in the disciplinary procedure which is now being discussed by the workers at Linden and this is merely a first step towards greater involvement of the workers at Linden and this is merely a first step towards greater involvement of the workers in all phases of production leading eventually to workers' control. This is the firm resolve of the Government and one will be able to see the unfolding of this as time goes on.

One of the problems that face us in this House is the degree of rigidity which still constrains Members of the Opposition in their concepts of how development in this country should take place. And it seems that some of them believe that they are on to a good thing when they criticise us because we have proclaimed a desire to develop a Co-operative Republic in Guyana. But, Cde. Speaker, last year a very important conference took place in Berlin and at that conference it was clearly stated that every nation has a right to develop along socialist lines having regard to its own peculiarities and the special features of this country.

Again, Cde. Speaker, it pains one when one imagines that perhaps what I am about to read has been read by some of the people on the opposite benches. With your permission I will read an extract from the publication which is for Peace, Security, Co-operation and Social Progress in Europe. It was issued on July 1, 1976. It states:

6.1.77

National Assembly

9.30 – 9.40 p.m.

“In this spirit, they will develop their internationalist, comradely and voluntary cooperation and solidarity on the basis of the great ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin, strictly adhering to the principles of equality and sovereign independence of each Party, non-interference in internal affairs, and respect for their free choice of different roads in the struggle for social change of a progressive nature and for socialism.”

We in the P.N.C. and in the Government do not see that there is a necessity for any great controversy over the fact that we have chosen our own road for the development of socialism. Today there is a very healthy ferment of ideas in the socialist world. This attests to the strength and not the weakness of the socialist camp, but this is a strength which allows for a certain degree of diversity and which allows for healthy discussion of the various forms of development along socialist lines. This is not the time as it was when Staten was alive when one had an all-embracing dogma which no one questioned. If the hon. Members on the Opposition benches have one set of views, we do not quarrel with them. What we are saying is that this need not be a stumbling block to understanding if they do not make it so. We would hope that they would understand what we are about.

Now, we need to say a very few words about the Upper Demerara Hydro Electric Scheme.

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move that the Cde. Minister of Energy and Natural Resources be given a final fifteen minutes to conclude his contribution.

Cde. Bynoe: *seconded.*

9.40 p.m.

Cde. Jack: Thank you Cde. Speaker. I said at the outset of my

Cde. Jack: Thank you Cde. Speaker. I said at the outset of my presentation that there are very hopeful signs for this country. It is true that at the moment we are going through a period of difficulty but if the plans which the Government has on the drawing-board materialise this country will be in fact a very prosperous country and one of the main objects of our attention at this time is the development of cheap hydro-electric power. Now we have reached a stage where the studies have been completed and where we need during this year of 18 months to finalise all of the financial arrangements so that we can embark upon construction.

Already, however, we have built over 80 miles of a road towards the project site; we have surveyed the area where there will be a Township; we have held a Conference, the very first in these parts, on the environmental effects of the creation of a hydro-electric scheme because we do not want to have the scheme first and find out about the effects after. We have set up a Resettlement Committee which will look into the question of resettling those Amerindians as well as most coastlanders who may have to be removed as a result of the development of this scheme.

I think that the House should know that on this Resettlement Committee we have got representatives of the Amerindian community, elected by the Amerindian people themselves. We have also involved members of the Church. We have also included sociologists and other administrators and we have clearly set out that our primary concern is to ensure that in the ensuring contacts which will be made between the coastlanders and the Amerindians the culture of the Amerindian people will be preserved as far as is humanly possible and that steps will be taken to see that they do not suffer as a result of these contacts.

Furthermore, we have given an undertaking which we have already implemented that in those areas of employment where they can be employed, Amerindians in the area will have priority of employment.

A lot has been said about discrimination against various types of people and I would like to claim that in this particular area, which is a new area, we have been pursuing a policy of employing, as is humanly possible, all the people of Guyana.

Some time ago, in conversation with one of the leaders of the Opposition, it occurred to me that it might be a good thing, early in this year, if we could mount a visit from Members of this House to go into the area and see what is being done. If the finances permit and if the Opposition does not believe that this is squandermania, then perhaps we will be able to mount a visit so that they and the mini-Opposition can see.

We have taken a decision that this scheme is of such vital interest to the people of Guyana that all should be involved and following on what Cde. Collymore has said about sharing power and involvement, there has been some discussion about putting a representative of the People's Progressive Party on the Resettlement Committee. The fact is, Cde. Speaker, that so far we have not put any political person as such on the Resettlement Committee. They are all specialists in one way or another except for the representatives of the communities which are to be affected. But we are not unalterably opposed to a suggestion that perhaps we could include political persons.

However, we would want to know, first of all, whether the Opposition supports the scheme. We have not heard that yet and we would also want to know whether they have, in very broad terms, an appreciation of what we are trying to do and whether they think it is worthwhile. If that is the case, I am quite prepared to consider the involvement of political persons in the scheme. We have absolutely nothing to hide.

As a result of the flooding which will take place, it will be necessary to try to get out the gold and diamond as quickly as possible. The government has devised a scheme which would permit this to be done. We have already surveyed the area and we, recognising the interest of the Amerindians, have earmarked certain areas which will be for their exclusive use. Apart from that, to ensure that they will be able to share in the exploitation of the mineral resources of this region, we have recognised it is not sufficient merely to give them various areas since they would not have the equipment and expertise to exploit the area as the coastlanders would have had. For this reason we have carried out a training scheme and over 60 Amerindians from the various villages which are to be affected have been trained.

6.1.77

National Assembly

9.40 – 9.50 p.m.

The Government has also acquired 12 dredges which will be delivered to the Amerindian communities so that they will have both dredges and skilled people to engaged on an equal footing with the rest of the people of Guyana. Already more than 6 dredges completed have been delivered and the rest are to be delivered furthering this month. When this has been done and not before, that is, not before all 12 dredges are in the hands of the Amerindian communities, the rest of the area will be opened. That opening, however, will be done in a manner which we consider to be the fairest possible, that is, by advertisement and by the drawing of lots. It will not be a matter of people who have money being able to get large areas. It will be a matter of everybody having to take his or her chance drawing a lot.

I know that for a long time porkknockers and other persons have been interested in the opening up of this area. The Government has carefully avoided being pushed by the many entreaties of people into opening this area until we can ensure that the rights of the Amerindian people are safeguarded.

9.50 p.m.

Cde. Speaker I know that it may not be welcome since it is so easy to say that we have not been taking care of our Amerindian Comrades but all that I have said with regard to the opening of the area is capable of being checked and the members of the Opposition are at liberty not only to do their own checking but to make enquiries, if they so wish, as to how the scheme will work.

This is an indication of the progressive manner in which this Government, without being pushed, without any campaign, without any great agitation but with a recognition of what is right and what is proper has acted in the manner of the Amerindian and this is the manner in which we are proposing to act with regard to all of our citizens.

Those who claim that they want to co-operate with us and those who are looking for national unity will recognise in this particular action that this Government is prepared to meet with the legitimate aspirations of all of Guyana's citizens, but when it comes to this question of sharing of power, which is what Cde. Collymore has been talking about, this is something that

seems to have been a stumbling block in the discussion which, Cde. Collymore says has been taking place.

Here I don't want to harp on documents which I know might be embarrassing to some people but the fact is that if any discussions take place they must take place in good faith. We have reason to know that there are some people – I don't say all, but there are some people who really believe that by a process of cajolery or discussion they will one day wake up and find our positions reversed. This really is not the socialist way to go about things; this is not the progressive way to go about things. If you really want to share in power come and ask us nicely and say to us, "What you mean?" It will be a little difficult to jump right away and become Prime Minister, but what we need is this: We need a certain degree of honesty. It is not what goes into a man, I understand. I am not a religious person but I understand it is what comes out of a man that defiles him. If the belief is that these discussions will be used as a means of putting us off our guard and if things like some of the documents which I know have been printed are in fact printed. It is most indiscreet to print things like that. I am not going to repeat it, I would not say a word in the interest of national unity, but if there is this belief that somehow or the other we will be exposed, embarrassed, put out and so on, this is not the way in which you can enter into any discussion with us with any kind of hope of having a meaningful understanding.

If on the other hand, there is an abandonment of these aspirations which are not well founded aspirations, but if there is a recognition that there is more to be gained by fruitful co-operation with us, and humility, we will also be humble. Then perhaps we will have some of this national unity that you are talking about. But if we are to continue every time there is a strike, rushing up to places where you shouldn't be, if they are going to write in their Press that the Press is not free – and Cde. Speaker, it would appear that they don't understand what is the meaning of the word "Press" because the Press in this country includes the Press of the Government, the Press of the Party and the Press of the Opposition. If they are going in their Press to say that the Press is not free, if they are going to do things like that, then they are laying the foundation for the kind of unity which all of us want.

6.1.77

National Assembly

9.50 – 10 p.m.

In closing let me say this: During the next few days we will have a lot more opportunity to speak about other aspects of Government policy. I would sincerely hope that the Members of the Opposition will take kindly what I have said. I have meant every word that I have said but I have meant it in the best spirit.

The Speaker: You are not telling them about the sharing of power. That is what they are interested in.

Cde. Jack: I have meant it in the best spirit. If they will recognise what I have said before and if they will re-evaluate their attitude so far then it is possible, I believe, for us to start on a new road. In all seriousness, I would urge to remember what I said earlier in my speech: we will not make any progress and this Government and Party will not accept any further attacks of a personal nature on the leadership of the Party.

If, they understand that, if they can only understand that we are serious – I have said this privately and I am saying it publicly – we can make progress. If on the other hand they do not recognise that then it is no use Cde. Collymore asking for unity and, certainly, no use in asking to share power with us. And therefore, the chance of Cde. Collymore or anybody else on the Opposition Benches becoming Prime Minister in the near future will be most doubtful.

[Applause]

ADJOURNMENT

Cde. Ramsaroop: I beg to move that the House adjourns to Friday, 7th January, 1977 at 2 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 10 p.m.
