

**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**

111th Sitting

2 p.m.

Tuesday, 11th January, 1977

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Speaker

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

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

Prime Minister (1)

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

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Ministers (9)

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

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

***Non-elected Minister**

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

*Cde. F. E. Hope,
Minister of Finance

(Absent)

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

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

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

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

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

Ministers (5)

Cde. W. G. Carrington,
Minister of Labour

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

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

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

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

Ministers of State (9)

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

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

(Absent)

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

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

*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

***Non-elected Ministers**

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

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

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

(Absent)

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.

(Absent)

Members of the Opposition (15)

(i) **People's Progressive Party (13)**

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. B. Jagan

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran

Other Members (11)

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 – on leave)

Cde. C. C. Belgrave

Cde. R. Ally

Cde. Dalchand, J. P.

Cde. Dindayal

Cde. H. Nokta

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

Mr. M. F. Singh

Mrs. E. DaSilva

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – F. A. Narain

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

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ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave To Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Leader of the Opposition Dr. Jagan for three weeks from today and to Cde. Lillbachan Lalbahadur for two months from the 7th January, 1977.

Comrades and hon. Members, Cde. Basil James, and elected Member of the National Assembly has now been absent from twelve sittings of the Assembly which have been held as follows:

Thursday, 9th September, 1976;
Friday, 10th September, 1976;
Thursday, 16th September, 1976;
Wednesday, 24th November, 1976;
Monday, 29th November, 1976;
Thursday, 9th December, 1976
Monday, 13th December, 1976;
Thursday, 30th December, 1976;
Wednesday, 5th January, 1977;
Thursday, 6th January, 1977
Friday, 7th January, 1977 and
Monday, 10th January, 1977.

There have been consecutive sittings and the last seven have been held during the two calendar months of December , 1976 and January, 1977 within the present session of Parliament.

Cde. James did not apply for, and was not granted leave of absence by me. He has therefore, in accordance with the provisions of article 61 (2) (b) of the Constitution and Standing Order No. 77, vacated his seat in the National Assembly. I will formally inform Cde. James of this and I will take steps to have the vacancy filled as provided by article 70 of the Constitution.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Paper was laid:

Audited Accounts of the Guyana Broadcasting Service for the year ended 31st December, 1973. [**The Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister on behalf of the Prime Minister**]

The Speaker: When I make remarks about the behavior of some Members of Parliament they do not like it. The Prime Minister is to lay a Report and not one Senior Member of the House is here to present it on his behalf.

PERSONAL EXPLANATIONS

(Cde. Nascimento): Cde. Speaker, yesterday during the course of his speech, Cde. Belgrave told the House that I had misled the House by distorting the information in regard to the number of employees required to operate every bus placed in operation by the Guyana Transport Services Ltd. and Cde. Belgrave referred the House to the number of employees presently engaged by Guyana Transport Services Ltd. to support his contention. In fact he quoted to the House, because I took the advantage of checking the official report, the figure of 4.58 persons per bus presently employed. The exact figure I received today from the management of Guyana Transport Services Ltd. as at October 31st, 1976, in fact is 5.7. Since then we have added some buses and a few more drivers have been employed.

What in fact I did say to the House was that, on an average, every bus placed into operation requires, and the operative term is “requires”, seven persons to be employed and I went on to say that since the projected expansion of Guyana Transport Services Ltd. to 1980 is 700 buses, the result would be the provision of employment for just under 5,000 persons. I did not say, as Cde. Belgrave contended, and I quote him, “to each bus seven persons are employed.” I

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did not say that. Perhaps Cde. Belgrave misunderstood what I said and I am prepared to give him the benefit of the doubt though he did refer the House to the press. I have a copy of the **Sunday Chronicle** of January 9, 1977, with me and in fact the Chronicle correctly interpreted what I said. The **Chronicle** says, “He has further indicated” – and I am quoting – “that each bus put into operation requires seven workers, so the expanded fleet would provide jobs for five thousand persons.” So that the House may be fully informed and that there is no confusion on this at all, Cde. Speaker, let me state that the present situation at G.T.S.L. - -

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The Speaker: I will not allow that. You will have to keep your remarks to what you said in this House.

Cde. Nascimento: Thank you, Cde. Speaker. As I have stated before, what I did say was that each bus requires the employment of seven persons, not that each bus at G.T.S.L. today has seven persons employed per bus.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1977

BUDGET DEBATE

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

Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, in the year 1976 the Government badly fell on its face. The fall was so great that it hurt its waist. Now it is crying shame! And on others it wants to shift its blame. But it is true that the public is crying out “Shame! Shame! Shame!”

I just want to go back a little on milk. I know that some of my colleagues have dealt a little with this. What I want to point out here is that in the year 1964 milk farmers and vendors of this country were supplying the milk pasteurisation plant with 2,500 gallons of milk per day. Milk was so plentiful that the milk pasteurisation plant was moving milk by trucks as D’Aguiar move aerated drinks by trucks all over this country. In those days the Government was in a position to call on the public to drink more milk because milk was then cheaper than even the sweet drinks in this country. But in 1965, as soon as the P.N.C. got into office, the same milk pasteurization plant which had never dumped farmers’ milk before, started to dump the milk. The dumping was so great that from 1st July 1965 to the 3rd August, 1600 gallons of milk were dumped.

In the year 1966 the cost of milk production went up but what the pasteurization plant has done in turn is to reduce the price of milk from 64¢ per gallon to 56¢ per gallon. So the farmers had to raise their voices in protest and the milk supplied to the milk pasteurisation plant dropped right down to 250 gallons per day.

Things went so bad at the milk pasteurisation plant that in the year 1972 Dr. Jagan had to call on the Government. At a press conference, Dr. Jagan made it very clear that the milk industry was going to the dogs and he called on the Government to do something so as to save the plant. The Government did not harken to this call at all. Automatically, imported powdered milk took the place of fresh cow’s milk at the milk pasteurisation plant and as a result it was completely closed down.

In the year 1965, in a G.I.S. newscast, it was reported that the Minister of Agriculture, Cde. Kennard, would officially reopen the milk pasteurisation plant. So there is no doubt that it was completely closed down. The Government did everything instead of encouraging the

farmer at the time when they reduced the price from 64¢ per gallon to 56¢ per gallon. If they had increased the price to 96¢ per gallon, today milk production could have been doubled. Instead of 2,500 gallons at the milk pasteurisation plant, today it could have been 5,000 gallons of milk and people all over the country would have been in a position to drink milk. Today they are starving, they are suffering from malnutrition, our children are dying from starvation in this country. At 65¢ per gallon it worked up to 7¢ per pint. At the same time imported evaporated milk in this country was selling for \$6.64 per gallon. Just imagine! This Government was doing everything possible to help foreigners instead of helping their own to improve production in this country.

A few days ago Cde. Salim stood up in this House to tell us that by this year we will be producing 751,500 gallons of milk. In 1964, the production of milk that was delivered to the milk pasteurization plant was 912,500 gallons. So if the milk production had doubled by now it could have been 1,825,000 gallons per annum instead of 751,500. This amount of 751,500 is just 161,000 below the milk production in 1964. That is what we are going to produce this year. There is no doubt about it that this Government has done everything possible to kill the industry because even the cattle pastures were not maintained by this Government.

The Minister of Works and Housing is in the House today. In 1972 there was a shortage of irrigation water in the Black Bush Polder area. He was then the man in charge of Drainage and Irrigation. I came down with a delegation and I took him up on the Corentyne. He invited management of Skeldon Estate to locate irrigators because he thought he could use the irrigators to pump water from the cattle pasture into the rice cultivation area. These were furnished him by the management of the Estate. We took a speed boat and went down to the backdam. When he got there he said that it was a real surprise, he did not know that there was no longer a trench there.

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This Government failed to maintain drainage for the cattle pasture. But, Cde. Speaker, the Government is responsible for the cattle industry being where it is today. Whom the large cattle owners had their cattle deep down in the interior, tigers started to attack them in the forests. The farmers appealed for guns so as to prevent tigers from destroying their cattle. I can remember in this very Chamber in 1970 I raised this very important point of tigers attacking the cows and destroying the cattle industry. I asked the Government to look into it so that trustworthy people who kept cattle could have the necessary guns. Mr. Jordan, a Minister in this House, asked: The Deputy Prime Minister, Dr. Reid, said we were to use carbon cans. This cannot work. When farmers removed their cattle from the interior and thought they were running away from the four-footed tigers and brought them in front nearer the cultivation area, they met with the two-footed tigers.

This Government has introduced fee of \$10.00 per head for cattle impounded. The members of the Government loosed their thugs on the people's cattle. The situation was so bad that even the Police could have paid stray catchers as much as \$100 - \$150 per day. The cattle farmers had to start selling cattle "like mad." When the Government saw that the cattle industry was going out of existence they made laws to make it illegal for farmers to slaughter a certain type of female cow. It that a lie? This is all wrong. It is the bad policy of the Government which causes us to be where we are today.

I only hope that the members of this Government are not only prattling. Some of them had the opportunity of going to Cuba and they have seen what is going on there. The Cubans were buying grain from America, in order to get feed for their cattle. Automatically, pressure has been put on Cuba by the Americans. What took place? The Cubans went back to their own country to see how they could produce their own feed, and what have they done for livestock? They have used molasses and magasse which we are burning today.

Today, what is going on? We have got so much molasses in this country that the Government – and this has never happened in the history of Guyana- is digging big ponds and dumping the molasses. Why should we import some of these things from abroad when we can produce them right here.

Let me just quote one or two figures before I move on. I would like to inform this House that today beef has become a luxury in this country. In some areas where there were 9 butcher shops all have disappeared. If you want a pound of beef, then you have to go to the municipal markets and the fare to get there alone will cost more than the beef. So you can imagine what the position is today.

The members of the Government are talking a lot about Agriculture and I do not know whether they mean what they are saying but the thing is this: I have appealed to this Government several times to protect farmers. Let me just quote some figures here, sir. These are the latest figures on how farmers are suffering everyday on the Corentyne River. Eddoes are selling today for 50 and 60 cents per pound. Flood destroyed 260 acres of eddoes, drought 370 acres and wild hogs 340 acres. Flood destroyed 175 acres of plantains, drought 158 acres and 141 acres were damaged by white wash and tapir. 270 acres of bananas were lost by floods, 392 acres by drought and damage was done to 154 acres, a total of 816 acres. That means 976 acres of eddoes were lost, 474 acres of plantains, 141 acres of other crops, 816 acres of bananas, 53 of corn. Coconuts: 643,000 coconuts were produced yearly. Monkeys are destroying them in that area. Yams are scarce in this country. People are also searching for cooking oil and cannot get any. And this Government will do nothing. That is the reason why farmers are running away from the land instead of going towards the land.

I would like to call on this Government to do something meaningful. It should set up a farmers' cooperative insurance scheme for farmers to ensure their crops. They should also set up shops for agricultural machines and spares parts at different points in this country. Today,

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farmers are suffering because they cannot get spare parts and they are running helter skelter all over the country. As soon as businessmen in Georgetown know that the buyers come from the Essequibo Coast and the Corentyne, their prices will go up three times the amount they are supposed to be.

The Government must not only open shops to sell spare parts but they must see that they are well stocked with all the parts needed for agricultural machines and that they are sold at reasonable process. The comrade is saying it is a good point but I want him to understand that the agricultural situation is so bad that today the thing called “provision soup” is a luxury in this country.

I met a 14-year old boy the other day – I am sorry Dr. Reid is not here – he could have borne me out. I asked the boy about foo foo and he did not know what foo foo was; he had never seen it. The Minister of Agriculture boasted that this year the rice spring crop will be 150,000 acres and he said that this spring crop, which will be reaped early in 1977, will be one of the largest. I only wish that he has seen this item in the newspapers by the weather man: “Farmers warned, May will be wet.” Because of the late crop means people will suffer and who is responsible for the late crop? People cannot plough their lands because of shortage of diesel fuel . . .

The Speaker: Cde. Ally, I don’t think you need a microphone.

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Cde. Ally: Because of the shortage of fuel Government also failed to supply the farmers with irrigation water. There were no fertilisers. When will farmers sow the crop and reap it? The weather man said that the latter part of this month will be dry. I do believe that if this prediction is true – and his predictions in most cases are true – and the farmers suffer then this Government should be blamed. I know that last year, 1976, while the weather was wet and

we were bustling with the spring and autumn Crops the Minister of Agriculture was calling on the farmers to do everything possible so as to save the last grain. But while the farmers were bringing the crop out of the fields what happened at the G.R.B. rice mills? 22,000 bags of padi were thrown outside in the rain and all rotted, and over 50,000 empty bags were spoilt. At Anna Regina 80,000 bags of padi were reaped, today the same Government is refusing to sell rice to the farmers for local consumption. We do even have rice to supply our markets. They are thinking of other people and not of the people at home.

It does not have a plan for agriculture. Let me tell them something because I am here to help the Government. We must have a planned agriculture policy. We cannot be importing corn, soya bean, blackeye peas, while we can produce them in Guyana. We have the climatic conditions, we can produce. We also have the labour force. As someone said, nearly one-third of the population is unemployed. We have to estimate how many tons of blackeye peas we need, how many tons of soya beans how many tons of corn and how many heads of cattle and then plan properly. We can carry out a soil test to see what land will be most suitable for each and give proper drainage and irrigation as well as supply farmers with necessary machines and loans.

I heard the Manager of the Agricultural Bank make a statement one night over the air. He was saying that they would be borrowing money at 4½ per cent interest and they will be lending that money to the farmers at 9½ per cent interest. This is a commercial bank; it could not be a farmer's bank. While I was in the G.D.R. I saw how they operate it. They borrow at about 3 per cent and they lend to the farmers at 3 per cent and the Government subsidises 2 per cent that is when the Government has the interest of the farmers at heart and when they really want to push production in a country. This Government will do nothing at all whatsoever and we will be suffering for years. We will have to plan these things properly; we will have to think what we are doing. We cannot be discriminating against certain sections of the people who are the real farmers. We are trying to train another set of people who do not want to go on the land.

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There is another thing, which is very important. You cannot go into the interior and tell people to produce and not look at ways and means of bringing the produce out. When you

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produce things like potatoes you cannot bring them out. Who knows whether potatoes were grown or whether the money went into somebody's pocket.

These are some of the things. You will have to look at how you are doing it. The Ministers are saying that they are consulting the people. But there is no consultation; consultation is only at party level. Which one of the Ministers has gone to the people for discussion with them? During the colonial days when Governor Lethem, an old man, was here I was a boy and I stopped Governor Lethem on the road just to complain that water was too heavy at the backdam and all the kokers should be opened so as to release the water for the cattle. Can anyone in this country today stop the Prime Minister on the road? **[Government Members: "Yes"]** **[Interruption]** The Governor had one policeman with a motor-cycle.

The Speaker: Comrades, please let us have some order.

Cde. Ally: Today when the Prime Minister is travelling he has about two or three motorcycles in front of him, a jeep - -

The Speaker: What does this have to do with the debate?

Cde. Ally: What I am saying - -

The Speaker: What I am saying is please do not be rude. What has that to do with the debate?

Cde. Ally: **Cde. Speaker**, what I want to say is this, if the people are suffering in the area and they want to meet someone responsible how are they going to do it? Therefore, Ministers of this Government do not know what is going on and when they come here they say the opposite of what is happening.

The Speaker: Two minutes more.

Cde. Ally: I am appealing to this Government. As I have said before, they should do something tangible in the field of agriculture. Today people are starving in this county, there is no doubt about it. People are suffering. Even the big oil companies have refused to take up fuel on the Corentyne because of toll gates on the Corentyne road and that is the reason why the people had to purchase diesel fuel on the Corentyne at \$2.50 per gallon. The toll gate is responsible for this. Kerosene is sold \$5.25 per gallon to the farmers on the Corentyne Coast. I have seen them running about Georgetown. This is just in front of your noses and what are you doing about it? Nothing. Fold your hands and the people are enjoying life.

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Talking will not help us; we need action. Words are like wind. Action is what the people want and they want the Government to get up now and get. You cannot be sitting down in an air-conditioned room and want to know what people are doing outside in the mud and the sun. You will have to be there with them; you must go among them; you must talk with the people. Only then will you be able to do something to help them. **[Applause]**

The Speaker: Cde Minister of Health.

The Minister of Health (Cde. Harper): I am very happy to have been afforded this opportunity to speak in such an important and historic debate on a very important and historic budget but, before I enter into my speech proper I would like to comment on the remarks made

by the shadow Minister of Health yesterday when, in the course of her statements and remarks on the state of the health of the nation and the performance of the Ministry of Health, she took it upon herself to give me and the Ministry of Health a very poor rating. I am a very patient man and I try my best to be polite. I would have hoped that a member of this House who had at some time formerly borne the burden of office of the Minister of Health would at least have been a little more objective and fair in her evaluation of the problems confronting the Ministry of Health, because, we who claim to be socialists in Guyana inherited a . . . system and a structure and a bureaucracy with which to work which were alien and were rather difficult for a person of the socialist philosophy to operate in very effectively.

I suppose in politics some of us find it very difficult to be fair. I suppose that my friend on the opposite side of the House has reached the stage that some politicians reach after a time where they begin to believe what they read about themselves in the papers. At some time in the past, I suppose, some writer from our big neighbor up North must have described her as the best Minister of Health that Guyana had ever had up to that time and perhaps ever since she has spent her time in front of the mirror asking: “Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest of them all?” **[Laughter]** Now that she and her Party are declining into the dustbin of political history in Guyana, she finds it very difficult to be fair and objective on a very serious situation that confronts us as Guyanese.

The Health Ministries everywhere are not easy Ministries to administer for the simple reason that the benefits of a good health service are not highly visible. Most of us who live in the western world and are the objects of the highly sophisticated mass media, the advertisements and so forth tend to go for the tear-jerker St. Joan. We get very emotional about polio because everybody can see a child with polio but we do not get very upset about older citizens and about other health problems which do not arouse much emotion and for which we cannot get people to go into their pockets rapidly for a donation or for a fund.

I feel that with all that confronts us in the world today all Guyanese of every political situation, especially those who have had some political experience and claim to be political pundits, realize that health programmes and health situations in most countries have to be considered in their historical perspective. That is the reason why our Ministry of Health feels that much of the good work that we have done has not been highly visible because much of the essential work in competent, effective, health administration involves health planning and health education and that is not obvious except to trained observers.

Before I talk about what we have done, I will try to clear up some misconceptions or answer some questions that were asked yesterday. A statement was made about nutrition: that the Government had not made it possible for enough milk to be available for the children of our country and that, therefore the community was forced to rely on powdered and tinned milk for most of their milk supplies. Now, I thought that it would have been very obvious to even the most casual observer that in a county that is situated six degrees from the equator, the storage of fresh cow's milk would be a real problem and therefore if we have to store and transport milk, the powdered form and the tin form will make it more convenient to do so. Even in the United States of America which is the world's leading agricultural country, most people buy milk in the powdered form because, if the manufacturers' directions are followed, powdered and tinned milk, when prepared according to the manufacturers' directions, have the same quality and the same constituents as cow's milk.

A comment was made on two persons still being on one bed in our Public Hospital. Strangely however, the comment was made about the woman's ward. I do not know why. But, there are many reasons why today in Guyana you still find two patients in one bed. One of the reasons is that our hospital is a central hospital and very many people who come to the Georgetown Hospital by-pass many other health facilities that they may use.

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Although the Government has made provision for domiciliary delivery services, many mothers in Guyana come to the Georgetown Hospital for normal deliveries. Also, since, traditionally, we have never developed an effective social service component for our hospital, we find that very many of the patients who take up hospital beds are more social cases than medical cases. At about 5.15 this morning I was outside the hospital compound and I noticed people arriving with suitcases in their hands. They did not look pregnant to me but very many Guyanese people who do not feel well come to the hospital prepared to stay and very many of the physicians who see them at the Casualty ward refer them to the doctor on the ward to get a medical evaluation and these people stay overnight.

Those people who go to the hospital compound know that it is traditional for many old people to be abandoned in or in the vicinity of the Georgetown Hospital and many of these cases we have to take up on the grounds of compassion, so that very many people who are in the hospital should not be there.

Those of our colleagues on my right who claim to be familiar with what is going on in Guyana would know that Mahaicony has a very beautiful cottage hospital. It is very attractive. It is well staffed. It is well operated but for some strange reason very many people in that area still come to Georgetown for normal deliveries. This is a problem which I think we all Guyanese have to work with, because I think it is a matter of health education. We in our Ministry have recognized this and have included measures to try to overcome this in our national health planning programme. One of these, is the more effective health education and another is by staffing our rural health facilities better but we must remember that, unlike many other countries, we do not require people who live in a certain region to attend the regional health facilities first before they could be referred to the central facility, so that the people are free to move; they come to Georgetown.

There was a question about the appalling lack of rural and riverain health facilities. We are aware of this but I think last year our Government constructed four new health centres, one at Santa Mission in the Kamuni Creek, one at St. Francis Mission, one at Buxton, and one at Long Creek. The nearest of these is at Buxton and I would like to invite Members of this House and of the public to go and visit the Buxton health centre because it is one of the three centres designed by the Ministry of Health which reflects some of the thinking of our technical personnel on what a health centre should be.

It is spacious, it has two operating and examining rooms, we have a community room which could be used for teaching the community mothers how to prepare the baby, how to correct his nutrition. It can be used for a meeting of the mothers themselves to discuss any topic which is of interest to them. It also has a dental clinic, a medical laboratory; it also has four toilets for the public. It also has a private lounge for the staff because if one goes all over Guyana one will find that historically many of our health facilities were never designed to afford any accommodation for the people who work there. But I would like members to remember that the design of the Buxton health centre had to be modified on account of the limitations that the land had. So it is shaped like three arms of an oblong figure and the inner courtyard is used as a playground for the children of the patients who visit there. The only room that is air-conditioned in this health facility is the laboratory which is necessary in order to keep it germ-free. But it is designed in such a way that we do not have to use air conditioning in the other rooms.

What we are doing in our rural communities, according to our health plan, is to encourage every region, every community, to have community health advisory councils who would meet with other people in each area and help to discuss ways of improving the health services as they exist. We hope that after a year or two, after discussing the plan of these new health centres with the people who work in them and the people who use them, we may fall upon a model design to be used nationally.

Our Ministry has been well aware of the manpower needs in the Ministry of Health. As a matter of fact, recently we have identified and recommended to the Cabinet that the two priorities for health in the next decade should be first, more effective primary care by the expansion of rural health facilities and, secondly, development of adequate health manpower. And in order to do this, because these are two mutually related objectives, we have done several things.

First, we are taking steps to re-organise and restructure the General Nursing Council; we are taking steps to re-organise and restructure our health science training programmes. We are also engaged in discussions with the University of Guyana in order to institute a Faculty of Health Sciences in September. This Faculty of health Sciences will be the umbrella under which most of the personnel for the Ministry of Health should be trained, such as the medical technologists, pharmacists, public health inspectors, who now want to call themselves environmental health officers, sanitary engineers, nurses, nurse assistants, our medex, and our physiotherapists, radiographers, X-ray technicians, and so on.

In re-structuring this programme, we have to use cross curricula whereby students indifferent disciplines will attend the same courses wherever possible so as to cut down on the need for teaching manpower and for the availability of laboratory and for lecturing manpower.

3 p.m.

The question was raised: why are there so few doctors in rural areas? I am surprised that any person with a socialist philosophy should ask such a question in a National Assembly where both sides of the House claim to be socialists. Even in the United States of America there is a scarcity of doctors in rural areas. This, however, is not the case in the Soviet Union or in Cuba and I thought most socialists would have recognized that since we are in an in-between state, because most of our physicians on our payroll now have been trained under the capitalist system,

they were oriented to respond to a cheaper service situation, they were taught that a doctor's greatest mission in life is to have a large practice and a large bank account. Also, very many of them came from middle class or lower middle-class families where members of the family had to perhaps mortgage the house and pawn their jewellery to see the person through school.

Let us talk facts. When a poor family mortgages a house and pawns the family jewellery to see a young person through medical school, the first ten years of that person's medical practice has to be devoted to paying back the bills. The second ten years has to be spent in taking care of his whole family and he cannot think of the community until after the first twenty-five years of practice. Anyway, our Government has recognized this and we are sending more and more of our students to socialist countries. We have Guyanese now studying medicine in Hungary, we have Guyanese studying medicine in Cuba, we have Guyanese studying medicine in Mexico. We also have Guyanese studying medicine in India. It is important because in all those countries the medical training has a very strong community orientation. As I said before, since we hope to have our own Faculty of Health Sciences starting in September, we hope eventually to train our own dentists and physicians here.

I just want to give the other side of the House a word of warning. Training dentists and physicians is not an inexpensive undertaking and we have engaged in discussions with other Caribbean countries about forming regional centres of training. As a matter of fact, now Guyana is one of five centres that have been funded by the U.N.D.P. for the training of adequate personnel. The others are Nassau, Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad and Tobago. Eventually, we hope to train our own personnel ourselves. That is a long term project.

The question was asked: What are the reasons for a doctor shortage. I think I said it before in this House but I think it could bear repetition. The Minister of Health of Jamaica, year before the last made a speech at Caribbean Health Ministers Conference to this effect: He said that the University of the West Indies spend a Medical School twenty years ago with the hope that that regional institution would train young people to meet the needs of the region. Very

many countries, Guyana included, made very great sacrifices to contribute to the Budget of that institution. But after twenty years it has found that out of one thousand physicians trained only three hundred were in the region, most of them had emigrated to Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. What this really means is that the Caribbean regions have been giving technical assistance to Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. *[Interruption.]* If you read our history and the health laws of Guyana, you will see that in the colonial times, especially in the medical and, until recently, the legal profession, the ability to practice medicine in Guyana or any other British colony was predicated on your ability to gain the licence to practice in the United Kingdom and North Ireland. Guyana has led the Caribbean in this: We were the first Caribbean country to allow physicians who had graduated from schools other than schools in the United Kingdom to practice in Guyana and we are expanding this.

This brain-drain is such a problem in the Commonwealth that last year at the Commonwealth Health Ministers Conference it was the occasion of a special paper. I would be quite happy to make a photocopy of this paper and send it to my friends on my right. It is very interesting because they make some very strong and pertinent recommendation. I hope that when the time comes for our Government to make the changes necessary so will get the unstinted support from our friends. The recommendations were that we should not train our doctors to practice in metropolitan countries; that we should not structure our programme in such a way that the eligibility to practice in the developing country would be equal to the eligibility to practice in a highly developed country.

I will give you an example. In America, for instance, if a dentist from Germany wants to practice there he has to go back to school for three years. They only give him one year credit for his medical degree in Germany. What that means is that he has finished four years; he is a doctor in Germany but if he wants to practice in the United States he has to start school as a sophomore. He is only given credit for one year. What I am saying is that although many of us are giving lip service to socialism and to socialist philosophy, very many of us are the socialist comrades are still making efforts to get their children trained in non-socialist countries and then

they profess to not understand why it is difficult for some of the young people to come back and practice in a socialist country. It is very easy. I can talk about dentistry because I was trained in an American Dentist School. In an American Dentist School, at least when I was there, the students were taught to practice a very high level of dentistry but they were also told that the dentist is not a social worker and the dentist should not be concerned about the patient's ability to pay. You have a service and if the patient cannot pay for the service, too bad for him. This is the philosophy.

I think we as socialist do not share that view. In socialist countries there is a different orientation and we have recommended that our students, wherever possible, should be sent to countries that have a strong community health orientation.

There was a question about the shortage of drugs and I am happy to report to the House that the shortage is more apparent than real. On the 1st December, 1976, 65,000 vials of streptomycin arrived in Guyana. On the 16th December, 15,000 more vials arrived. On the 10th January, 1977, 50,000 vials of insulin arrived in the country. I have been advised that this amount reflects eight months supply in terms of streptomycin and six months in terms of insulin.

3.10 p.m.

I would like to spend a few moments talking about drugs.

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: **Cde. Speaker,** I beg to move that the Cde. Minister of Health be given an extension of 15 minutes to continue his contribution to this debate.

Question put, seconded and agreed to.

The Speaker: Cde. Minister of Health.

Cde. Harper: Our Government has been very concerned about this. I thought I had told this House before that two years ago a Guyanese and a Canadian conducted a regional survey in the Caribbean concerning improving the methods of ordering drugs and several decisions were made. One of these is that we should have a National Formulary. What does this mean? It means that instead of allowing 18,000 and 25,000 different drugs to come into the country of dubious potency, where the public is buying drugs not because of their effectiveness, but according to the blandishments of the drug store or the amount of money an unscrupulous doctor wants to make on the bargain, national formulary would limit the amount of drugs that could be imported. In Canada and in Scandinavia this has been an order of 900 drugs.

We are . . . penicillin but if you buy bicilin or some other decilin, which are proprietary names, you usually pay sometimes two or three times as much. Very many times when we hear about a shortage of drugs, it is not a real shortage of drugs in a medical sense because many of the drugs that are being sold in Guyana are medically unacceptable and we are taking steps in order to correct this situation.

All Guyanese will have to collaborate in this exercise because very many times the drugs that the people of Guyana have paid for start disappearing over the side of the ship when it is tied up on the harbor. It disappears from the wharf and very many times drugs that have been bought by the Government for the people of Guyana to be dispensed free have to be brought by the people of Guyana because they reach private institutions by devious means which many

Guyanese are familiar with. This is a small community and we all know what is going on here so let us not kid ourselves.

There were questions asked about the mental health programme. Our mental health programme needs improvement. That should be clear to everyone. At present we have one

consultant being trained overseas. One of our doctors had his initial training at the University of Cairo and we are now implementing a programme where we are phasing out the custodial type of care for the psychiatric patients and trying to stress rehabilitation in order to make them fit to resume normal life in the community. Those of you who have visited the Mental Hospital at fort Canje recently will have noticed that we have constructed some small cottages where the patients will live in groups of not more than 16 or thereabout so that they will be able to duplicate a situation of living that is nearer to that of normality and it would not be difficult for them to resume life with their friends and relatives.

Now there was a general statement made as to the lack of action on the part of the Ministry of Health during the last year. For the benefit of those of our colleagues who do not read the newspapers, I would like to review some of the things that happened last year in the Ministry of Health. In January, 1976, Guyana sent, for the first time in its history, a team to sit on the Executive committee of the World Health Organisation. The Ministry of Health in 1976 was successful in getting Cabinet to accept a national nutrition policy. We have also restructured the administrative sectors of our Ministry because we have noted that it would be very difficult for us to implement the socialist thrust in the area of health with the structure that we have inherited from the colonial past. And since we are stressing a programme of preventive health we are trying to organise our Ministry more effectively in order to meet this objective.

The maternal child health programme is the core of our national programme because a programme of maternal child health automatically takes care over 60 per cent of the population. We recently made history for the first time in Guyana. Every midwife in Guyana is on the payroll of the Government. **[Applause]** I would like to elaborate on this a little because some of you who do not know what the facts are might not realise how important a step this has been.

Traditionally, in Guyana, the midwifery care in the rural areas was performed under the banner of the Infant Maternity Welfare League which was not a Government organization as such but a voluntary organisation subsidised by the Government. The women who worked for

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the Infant Maternity Welfare League were not paid on a scale comparable to that of their colleagues who were paid by the Government. They worked in the rural areas which meant they had to get up all hours in the night, travel long distances in the rain and in the mud without modern transportation. But they did a good job and they met the needs of the people as best as they could. And this is another reason why our central hospital is overcrowded. I shall have to give you some facts and figures to understand what used to happen.

The rural midwives, as they were called, were specially trained to function in the rural areas. We have another midwifery programme which requires the applicant to be a professional nurse first and then take midwifery after. But the rural mid wife was a different level. This system was designed to meet the need at the time. They were paid \$75 a month and the people in the rural areas were supposed to implement their salary by paying them for delivery.

3.20 p.m.

Those of you who are familiar with rural life will know what happens in very many cases. The poor midwife used to get a bunch of plantains sometimes or a few gallons of rice or sweet potatoes and sometimes she would get \$5 on account and many times when she was delivering the fifty baby she was not yet paid for the first. Also, in certain areas of our country people had to pay a taxi over \$20 to get a midwife, and if, when the midwife arrived at the cottage the baby was not ready and another person in the community came for the midwife, they had to find some extra money to get a taxi again by the time the taxi driver was paid there was no money for the midwife.

Our Ministry examined this, and from recommendations from our Cde. Leader last year, it was decided that every midwife in Guyana, at all levels, should be brought on the Government payroll and be pensionable. **[Applause]**

We have updated our midwifery programme because all the midwives who have been trained for the last seven years get one year's training as an assistant nurse and then the second year's training as a midwife, because we have discovered from a past analysis that very many of our midwives in the rural areas have to perform many other essential functions besides midwifery.

We have decided in the future that we are going to phase out the midwife programme as it used to be and train what we would like to call community health workers where the community health worker would be trained to do midwifery and to do nursing, to do health education, to do immunisation, and very many other of the tasks that we discovered the midwife used to do without being trained or paid for it. [Mrs. DaSilva: "How much do they get now?"] They get \$231.00 the same as in Georgetown.

We feel that in harmony with the objective of the Government to give strong infrastructural support to the productive sector we are stepping up our training programmes for all levels of personnel, the nurse assistant programme which used to be two years has now been condensed into one year; we are re-organising and restructuring the professional nursing programme; we are about to institute a medex programme on March 1st. For those of you who are not familiar with the term I would like to explain that, with your permission, sir. The medex is just a new word for an old familiar health person on the Guyanese scene, the dispenser. The sick nurse and dispenser, as he used to be called, was traditionally trained to take care of the many workers on the sugar estates because there were not enough physicians to do this, but historically their training was largely confined to pharmacy, to the dispensing and administration of drugs. But we found on another ... Analysis that very many of our dispensers were called upon in the rural and riverain areas to perform very many functions for which they were not trained in their official training programme, and very many of them had to do a lot of self-help and self-education, and this produced some very effective and competent dispensers as every Guyanese over forty in this room well knows. So what we have done recently is we have made a contract with the - -

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: May I move that the Cde. Minister of Health be given an additional fifteen minutes to conclude his contribution to this debate.

Cde. Fowler *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Harper: The Medex is well-known internationally. It was instituted by Dr. Richard Smith who is now the Professor of Community Medicine, at the University of Hawaii and it is a contraction of two French words **medicin extention**, an extension of the doctor or a medical assistant. They are going to be trained to perform very many functions which the doctors used to perform very many functions which the doctors used to perform but which very many people internationally in public health circles have come to recognise require five years of medical training. What we did is to phase our old dispenser programme into the new Medex programme, so for the new Medex programme we are taking professional nurses who, after a year or eighteen months, will be ready to get out into the riverain and rural areas under the supervision of a doctor in order to improve the level of primary care to the people of Guyana.

Those of you who have been to the Out-Patients Department of the Public Hospital Georgetown recently will have noticed that for the last three months we have had dispensers assisting the doctors there. They are trained to use the stethoscope, they are trained to examine a patient, they are trained to treat emergency cases, and they are also trained to diagnose cases so they will know what they can treat and what should be referred.

This programme is going to start on March 1st. The project director is Dr. Frank Williams and the Assistant Director is Dr. La Rose, the first Amerindian trained in Guyana by

this Government as a physician, and we also have on tutorial staff Dr. Chin See. We have also Cde. Sase Naraine Singh who is a dispenser at Mahaicony. He was selected to be trained as a tutor. There is also Cde. Moore, the Public Health Nurse from the Buxton Health Centre who also had a diploma in Public Administration at the University of Guyana. They will be the first two tutors. We also have the curriculum specialist Cde. Lynbette McKenzie who is a professional nurse and a member of our Health Education Department.

What does all this mean? It means that this Government has accepted its responsibility to provide better primary care in the places where it is needed. Candidates for the medex programme are told that they are expected and required to work out of Georgetown because that is where the need is.

What we have done also in the last five years of the Government is to institute a programme of Pharmacy at the University of Guyana which is a regional programme. We train pharmacists from Trinidad and Tobago and other Windward and Leeward Islands. It is a three-year diploma course so that the dispensing functions of the traditional dispensers will now be performed by the pharmacist and the medical care functions of the traditional dispenser will now be performed by the new medex who will be trained to do what he used to do better.

Also in the programme there is a research and evaluation component. The programme is going to be evaluated every six months, and every three years the trainees will be brought back to the centre to get their knowledge and skills updated. We are very sure that those of the members of this House who are feminists will be happy to hear that we have not discriminated against the women in this programme. But we have made an attempt to recruit people from all over the country and from all the regions. We have a very good staff and we hope that the community will accept this new level type of personnel and help us to make this programme a success. The Medex person in his or her training will be trained to train a lower level of personnel who will be working directly in the community level.

3.30 p.m.

Since nutrition has been one of the areas of activity that were highlighted last year, we have a programme for developing a more effective nutritional programme. We are hiring nutritional field workers who will go out into the fields, into the homes and into the village communities to the people that need the information.

Since the accent of a health programme is on prevention, the Health Education Unit in our Ministry becomes a very important unit because a preventive health programme is a health education programme and every member of the health team is a health educator or a source for health education.

This year, on Radio Demerara, every Thursday night at 9.20, the Ministry of Health is presenting a five-minutes programme, Talking About Health. I recommend that members listen to it. They will hear more about what we are doing and what we hope to do.

We also have been resuscitating the radiography programme. Members will remember that some time ago we trained radiographers and all of them ended up in the United States of America. We have tried to remedy this situation by recommending large salaries and more favourable working conditions but we are also training a lower level of health professionals in that field, the X-Ray Technician, who is going to serve the health centres and we have the radiographers who are diploma people in the hospitals. We are very fortunate to have with us a very competent and hard-working radiologist who came to us from India under the commonwealth programme. Those of you who are familiar with our regional hospitals will know that in very many of them the radiography department is one of the best organized departments.

One of the problems we had in our Ministry in the recruiting of personnel is that very many young people have been trying to use some of our training programmes as a launching

board for getting into Canada. Whenever we discover this in time we refuse to accept them in our programmes. We feel that the national objectives of this Government can only be fully met when our national manpower is fully mobilized to meet the needs of the nation. For this we need planning we need support in terms of money for the facilities and for training and we are sure that if anyone of you should visit any one of our Health Centres at any time you will see how much work is being done by so few people under circumstances that are not ideal.

What we are concentrating on is training people to serve people and for that reason we are going to recommend to the Government a do-emphasis on certificates and that an attempt should be made to devise different methods of selecting, recruiting and evaluating applicants who want to enter the health field. Now, let me explain what we mean by that. The programmes that are going to be at University of Guyana will have to meet the standards of the University for entry but we have discovered – and this is talking to a lot of people in the field – that in Guyana there are very many people, young people, who have skills, who have talents and have the ability to learn but whose families, perhaps cannot afford to pay the \$90 for four or five ‘O’ level subjects. Many of those young people have formerly been omitted or passed over from many of our training programmes. We feel that the time has come for this to stop and we are taking measures right now for reorganising and structuring this. This will require inter-Ministry collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

An effective health programme depends on many other agencies for a successful implementation. We have to depend on the Ministry of Agriculture for assistance and support in our veterinary public health programmes, one of the most obvious sectors. I am proud to announce that last year the Ministry of Health was given the supreme authority over all the abattoirs in the country to have them under one central co-coordinating unit.

We are in the process of completing the implementation of the Food and Drug legislation so that we may improve the level and the quality of our meats and food inspection. We are re-organising and re-structuring our training courses to meet the needs of our people. We are also

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aware that since our preventive programme is a health education programme, we need to co-operate and collaborate with the Ministry of Education. We are proud to announce that our health Education Unit has been the first Health Education Unit in this part of the world to write a manual of health education from the kindergarten to the College. [Applause] Last year, a seminar was held with the teachers and Ministry of Education in order to complete the teachers' manual and we hope in the near future that the Pupils' manual will be ready.

We also have to have collaboration and co-operation with the Ministry of Trade because without their co-operation our drug programme will not be successful. We also have to work very closely with the Ministry of National Development because very many times in very many areas the Ministry of National Development can help us to accelerate a programme or make a programme come alive when the more bureaucratic and traditional procedures seem to bog us down.

In short, Cde. Speaker, I feel that in spite of all the limitations under which we have to function and the exigencies for the international situation, the Ministry of Health succeeded in improving the level of care to the people of Guyana and took very important steps towards creating the structure for a more effective health management system for the Guyana of the future. [Applause]

3.40 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Dindayal.

Cde. Dindayal: **Cde. Speaker,** during the course of this debate in this House we have heard a lot of criticism. We have heard about improvements and all such. First of all, I wish to say that we do not support the withdrawal of the subsidy. This will create more hardship for the workers and farmers of this country. We realizes that money is needed for the maintenance of essential services and improvement in them and since there is a significant cut we believe that

this will impede progress, especially in the field of agriculture which we so much depend on for the progress of this country.

I do not intend to criticize anybody but I wish to present certain facts to you, Cde. Speaker, that members of this House can use their judgment and let us see what can be done to improve the situation. Poor services such as defective sluices, kokers, were brought to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture. They were also brought to the attention of the Regional Minister, the Local Authorities, Rice Action Committee Chairman, and still no redress.

There is a sluice at Cullen, Wauna Creek, which serves a very important purpose and this sluice has been defective over the past five to six years. It is causing farmers in that area to suffer losses year after year. Presently, 1 irrigation water from the conservancy is draining out, going to the river, and with the prevailing weather conditions I do believe that these people will suffer losses again.

A farmer who is cultivating 26 acres of rice reaped only 13 bags of paddy. He went to the Local Authority and reported this to them indicating that he would not be in a position to pay up his rates and taxes. A week later he received a notice to meet payment within 14 days. I have the notice here. No discretion was used and it is the negligence of the Drainage and Irrigation Board, because this matter was being brought to their attention over the past three years.

At that time the Minister of Agriculture who was then the Executive Chairman of the Rice Marketing Board was in sympathy with these farmers and she advised the Board to write the Drainage and Irrigation Board in order to have this sluice repaired. Nothing has been done. It is surprising to know that he is now the Minister of Agriculture, with power to do everything, and still nothing has been done. I am appealing to members of the Government on the other side to investigate this matter. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Agriculture, Cde.

Ambrose, went there and he saw the plight of these farmers and still up to now nothing has been done.

There is another koker at Adventure right in front of the nose of a Member of Parliament and he cannot see it but this koker is causing flooding in that area. Many of the rice cultivation lands became so soft that they cannot be cultivated. Crops are being damaged and nothing has been done.

Five Parliamentarians live on the Essequibo coast. Among them are two Ministers and yet there is so much negligence. Farmers at Affiance are now realising serious difficulty. There is an instance where a proprietor wanted his tenants to purchase the land at exorbitant prices. Some of the farmers have been there for the past forty years; they took fork and shovel and broken up that land, and because they refused to purchase the land to proprietor s threatening them. He is taking his tractor and damaging their kitchen gardens; he is taking his tractor to plough up the land without carrying them to court. At times he takes his car when nobody is there, and threatens to run them down. This matter is in court now and it was brought to the attention of the Regional Minister.

I personally went to the Minister. He told me that the Government is thinking very seriously of purchasing that estate and giving it to the farmers. I told him that while this case is going on, I think he should go in to the police and have a serious talk with them and stop this harassment. Nothing has been done.

I agree that regionalism is a very good thing to protect farmers but in this case what protection is there? It is a very serious matter. I have a score of letters here, these are duplicate copies of letters, which have been sent to the Minister of Agriculture. We need some protection for these farmers. At one time the Deputy Prime Minister said that if we are to develop this country we have to depend on agriculture for about 80 per cent of the development. That is true but what are you doing to protect agriculture? **[Interruption]**

This is the situation on the Essequibo Coast. We have no development programme in this area to solve the unemployment situation. There is a cassava factory at Charity but there is no cassava to be milled. We have some ideas that we can put to the Government so that we can make that project a reality.

3.50 p.m.

I would like to put forward our suggestions:

The confluence of the Amazon and the Orinoco washes a large amount of silt into the Pomeroon Mouth which is presently in a Bay having a flat of seven miles on its Right Bank. The low tide allows a channel of 5-10 ft. The down-pour of rain forecast the water between the Essequibo and Waini River into the Pomeroon Basin. Excess water from Tapakuma is not the sole cause of flooding. The Pomeroon River always took care of Tapakuma water.

One of the large swamps in Guyana, water locked, can be located between the Pomeroon and Waini, a span of about 75 miles, flooding is thus inevitable. What should be done?

First for the left bank of the lower Pomeroon River from land slip area to the Akawini Creek, there should be a well drained planned scheme, similar to that of Tapakuma. This area can concentrate on rice, ground provisions etc. Rice is grown in some quantity and the supply of fresh water for such venture is very good.

The right bank of Pomeroon River links up the Aberdeen Canal and Cozier backlands and allows the cultivation of new land suitable for coconuts and ground provisions. It should be noted that all the remaining coconut estates can be located on this bank of the Pomeroon, which is subject to some infiltration of salt water. The lower Pomeroon is more fertile than the upper and, therefore, cost of production of most farm produce is less here than in the upper end.

As for the upper end of the Pomeroun River on the left bank from charity to Warapama, an area of about 15 miles is exposed to the full pressure of the always over-flowing swamp between Pomeroun and Waini.

The poor sub-soil and deep pegasse render farmers insolvent when his farm extends beyond 150 rods. Dams made in dry season float away when the swamp is flooded.

It would be very unwise and uneconomical for Government to attempt any type of drainage for this bank. Those farmers remaining will be ruined in due course by natural conditions and by other competition. Those who are young and who only maintain a home-stead should be rehabilitated elsewhere.

The upper end of the right bank from Charity to Siriki school has great potential for better drainage and control.

The Cross Canal for Siriki to Manikuru Canal should be rebuilt with a road parallel to the right bank of the Canal. There can be a canal mid-section parallel to Pomeroun River with about four outlets about 24 ft. in width at various points of the river. This area will bring about 3,000 acres of new land under drainage irrigation and can possibly rehabilitate about 200 framers. It offers much hope against the typical flooding. The large area of land East of the Cross Canal, bordered by Siriki sands, St. Deny's Mission, Tapakuma Lake and Mc Nabb Sand can also be drained. Supply of water can be had from the Tapakuma Lake and drainage can be organised through Pomeroun River, Somerset and Berks or repumped into the lake.

This area has about 30,000 acres of land which can produce ground provisions in great quantity. This area can be mechanised as it is parallel to the Tapakuma Project. No river transportation would be required for machinery.

This area is also land located between sands on two sides, so there is access to sand to build roads. Dams and other construction will be no problem. The flat fertile sands between Siriki and the Pumping Station should be made into a project similar to Kumaka/Kwebanna/Moruca in the North West District.

The area from Warapana to Akawini should be identified with an agriculture project with Government and self-help communities and appropriate transportation and social necessities.

Another important area for development is from Tapakuma to Waini, Upper Pomeroun to Akawini. This project will not only resettle people on lands free from flooding which can be mechanized but will form a link with the great Akawini Savannah thus making the development of other areas possible. The entire Amerindian population from Makasima to karawab can be resettled on such a project and facilitate them to make a meaningful contribution to produce food.

All these areas can be developed and permit mechanisation whereby a good base can be formed for pioneer farmers.

The production of cassava, corn, yams and other vegetables will be guaranteed. This will permit the farming community to revolutionise farming in these areas on a modern and economic basis. Young people must see the challenge for betterment rather than retrogression. Pomeroun farmers cannot continue in the old way. The whole concept of farming has to be changed and new areas and methods have to be adopted if we are to make Pomeroun Farmers and agriculture a success.”

We are putting suggestions to the Members of this House. It is no use for us to come to this House, the highest forum of this land, and make jokes with the lives of the people. We are responsible and we have an obligation to these people. They are looking to us for guidance. We have to shape the destiny of these people and if we fail we will be cursed in our graves.

The Minister of Agriculture told us that the production of pork has increased by over 5 million pounds. But what project is there on the Essequibo Coast to protect the pig farmers? They cannot get bookings to sell the carcasses and when they are transporting them from Essequibo to Georgetown, many of them are damaged, the Board rejects them and the farmers lose.

We also have suggestions to solve this problem. We have the Electricity Corporation at Anna Regina and we have the Guyana Rice marketing Board mill at Anna Regina. There is a vacant land behind the Electricity Corporation. A processing plant can be set up there. Electricity can be had very cheaply because it is very expensive. We can get fuel from the rice mill and assist these farmers and prevent losses. That will create more employment and ease the unemployment situation on the Essequibo Coast. For too long the Essequibo is being neglected. Let us try and do something. There are five Parliamentarians and two Ministers living in that area. But this is our contribution, let us stop harping on the past and move towards the construction of this country.

It is not difficult to realise that without the co-operation and involvement of the farmers and workers nothing can be achieved. What we need now is unity. We can have all the glorious plans but without unity and co-operation nothing can be done. This is the first thing we have to try to achieve. Let us remove all the obstacles that are in the way and let us create better conditions. We will support any measure for the progressive movement of the country. We are willing to help provided these obstacles are removed. Remove all the square pegs from the round holes and put them where they belong. We have the potential and we can do it. Respect the farmers' organisation through their –

The Speaker: Cde. Dindayal how much longer do you want to speak?

Cde. Dindayal: I have nearly finished.

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The Speaker: Proceed then.

Cde. Dindyal: The key to success is co-operation. Let us try to forget the past and work towards the construction of socialism. [Applause]

The Speaker: It is now three minutes after four, we will take the suspension until 4.30 p.m.

Suspension accordingly at 4.30 p.m.

4.30 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Leader of the House

Cde. Ramsaroop: Cde. Speaker, I beg to move the suspension of Standing Order 9 (2) to enable this Assembly to meet beyond 6.30 p.m. to such time as the general debate on the Budget Speech is concluded.

Mr. M. F. Singh: **Mr. Speaker,** it is indeed surprising now that the P.N.C. Government admits that it has failed in its budgeting after having boasted about good budgeting for so many years. But the hard cold fact is that at long last the chickens have come home to roost.

The P.N.C. Government has acquired the habit of talking in millions and throwing away millions and now the natural result is a huge deficit. It is no use blaming the drop in production, blaming bad weather, hostile and external influences and so on. The cold, hard fact was that the Budgeting for 1976 was bad. The Government had to get supplementary votes totaling several million dollars. Five applications for Supplementary Provisions totaling approximately \$145.6 million were made.

One cannot escape coming to the conclusion that the hon. Minister of Finance either did not know what he was doing or that he was being advised or directed by people who really did not know their business. All they seemed to have been thinking about was borrowing funds, taking over manufacturing and commercial concerns and, by no means, putting the boys into top jobs. Indeed, instead of controlling expenditure in the various Government Ministries all their energies seemed to have directed towards a seriousness of a threat to our political sovereignty.

If a nation aspires to political heights in international affairs, the country must be strong financially. It must have good natural resources for development. It must not have to depend on the charity of other countries. Guyana congratulated itself on its business astuteness when it took advantage of the high prices for sugar to sell sugar and to benefit from the balance of payments. But again nothing was put in reserve. This is what any prudent businessman would have done. But the Government did not in fact do that.

The Government seems to have expected that high prices would continue to benefit Guyana only. Now, the call is being made for high production. Are we sure that when we have this high production other countries will in fact want to buy from us? In the same way that Guyana are now being told to use and eat local products, other countries are also finding substitutes for such things like cane sugar, rice and even oil. If we look at pages 2 and 3 of the Budget Speech we will note that reference is made to developed countries substituting sugar produced from maize for cane sugar and expanding acreages under beet sugar. **[Interruption.]**

I really have no intention of taking up hon. Members' in answering their interruptions but I was alluding to what was incorporated in the Budget Speech:

“A number of developed countries embarked on a process of substituting sugar produced from maize for cane sugar.”

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and the comment was made that this was capitalist propaganda. How can it be capitalist propaganda when it is embodied in the Budget Speech?

“Even then the maize sugar was subsidized in order to make it sufficiently competitive with cane sugar. Added to this, acreages under beet – a major source of home produced sugar in Europe – were expanded.”

It is clear that the inference is that capitalists were partly to be blamed for our misfortunes. But let us not forget that in 1974 the Government was complimenting itself at every opportunity on its great astuteness in managing the economy and taking advantage of the high world market price for sugar. It broke binding sugar agreements in order to sell at higher world market prices. Did the Government not realize then that if they held people up to ransom in such a way that, at a time of scarcity of a commodity they fell at higher prices, then those same people would try in the future to be less dependent on them? Of course, if they did not realise this then I would say that this Government is indeed very naive.

We ourselves, as I have said before, in order to conserve on our foreign exchange have embarked on the very laudable policy of import substitution. What I cannot understand is the Government’s reasoning in this matter. Apparently, when we indulge in this policy of import substitution that is O.K. but when others do it they are to be blamed for causing disruption to our economy. The reasoning one cannot follow.

4.40 p.m.

Again, if this is the kind of naïve mentality displayed, then no wonder our economy is at the present moment in such shambles. We are now going to be digging holes in order to fill holes, and unless, as happened in 1974 when we had sugar, something very extraordinary and very fortuitous happens, then I am afraid that the economic prospects for Guyana in the future look very bleak indeed.

Let us look at the factual situation. The year 1976 ended with the P.N.C. Government in debt. There is a \$370 million trade deficit and no matter how much you limit imports in the future the Government will have to do more than break even in 1977 imports and exports. It will have to earn more on imports to pay for the 1976 trade deficit. How will these deficits be made up? The fact is that sugar prices will remain as they presently are at 17.5 cents per pound on the world market. There is no guarantee that E.E.C. prices will remain as high as they are presently. In fact the United Kingdom subsidises the E.E.C. sugar prices and the United Kingdom economy cannot continue for very much longer subsidizing its former colonial territories. I cannot see that happening.

Algeria is attempting to re-negotiate its contract with Guyana. China requires Guyana's sugar to be marketed in Chinese bags and that effectively lowers the selling price. The United States has a perpetual tie-up on sugar. The Soviet Union has all the Cuban sugar it can possibly buy. And the uncertainties of the weather and one may add the G.A.W.U., make predictions for sugar in 1977 very risky indeed. I understand that the 1976 production of sugar will be much less than the 340,000 tons predicted by the Minister on page 16 of his Budget Speech.

Rice Production will not be as high in 1977 as it was in 1975. Why? The Spring Crop will see the results of the inability to plant in October and November when the ground was not properly prepared and indeed one may also add rice was also affected by the fact that not enough attention was paid by the Government to drainage and irrigation. We talked a great deal about the M.M.A. Scheme but how fast are we making progress on that? We are making progress very slowly in respect of the M.M.A. Scheme. Perhaps what we should also do is to try and get the politics out of the Rice Action Committees and then we will have increased production in respect of rice. Markets were lost in 1976 because Guyana could not meet her contractual commitments in 1976. [**The Prime Minister:** Which rice market was lost?'] What about bauxite? [**Interruption**] Examine the rice markets and you will find that markets were lost. The Minister has admitted it in his Budget Speech. [**The Prime Minister:** Read the next line.'] I will continue Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker: I was not aware that I had stopped you.

Mr. Singh: When there is an interruption like that, I will stop, Mr. Speaker. Bauxite production was down in 1976, but it was down not only because of rain; it was down also because of mismanagement. The overburden had not been cleared away in advance as it should have been. There was not the same pace being kept with the extraction of the ore and the clearing away of the overburden. What about the new dragline? For a great part of last year the new dragline was in fact not working. Why? Because of bad maintenance and that happens to be a fact. Is it not true that skilled personnel had to be brought down here to look at it?

Another problem is that personnel is being siphoned off to go and work on the Upper Mazaruni Hydro road and the development project there where people are getting much higher wages. So there is in fact a problem in respect of manpower at Guyana at the moment. The result is that these needed skills in an export-earning company are being used on a project that may earn some money in the unforeseeable future.

The Guyanese economy is based on three major export commodities, and the Government cannot guarantee that these three will earn enough foreign exchange in 1977 to take care of the 1976 deficit, indeed, to take care of 1977. In fact with proper management we should also be earning some more to help us in 1978. This will not happen, and still we continue merrily along with such schemes as the Upper Mazaruni project.

Let the appropriate Minister deny whether it is not true that in March 1976 the Bank of Guyana held Government of Guyana securities amounting to \$5,917,440, that it held Treasury Bills amounting to \$27,126,480 advances to the Government of Guyana by the Bank of Guyana were \$8,858,055, a total of \$41,901,975. But what were the figures in September 1976? In September 1976 Government securities were \$5,913,508; Treasury Bills, 148,807,491, advances to the Government of Guyana \$14,672,261. What a terrific difference between March and September? That total in September is \$169,393,260. It is a very good thing that Guyana

currency cannot be negotiated overseas. How much would it be worth if we attempted to negotiate it overseas? It is a very good thing for Guyana that our currency is worth nothing because we are not allowed to take it overseas.

4.50 p.m.

The Minister alluded on page 28 to the increase in Treasury Bills. I am not saying something that has not been referred to. On page 28 the Minister alludes to it.

He says here:

“In addition, the interest payments on Treasury Bills had to be increased by \$6.0 mn. Because of the large purchases of Treasury Bills made by persons and institutions in Guyana.

But he says nothing about the advances to the Government of Guyana which incidentally increased even more at the end of 1976. The fact is that there are no foreign reserves. The \$256 million in reserves as at the end of 1975 has all been used up as well as \$40 million more.

Bauxite production. What was it at the 30th June, 1976? Dried Bauxite was 425,000 tons, calcined bauxite, 300,000 tons, alumina, 110,000 tons, alumina hydrate 10,000 tons. On page 17 and 18 of the Budget Speech, Minister Hope gives the following figures as approximate figures for the output for the whole of 1976. Now that was half of 1976 but he says for the whole of 1976 the output of dried bauxite is not expected to exceed 1.1 million tons, calcined bauxite 741,000 tons, alumina 274,000 tons. While it might have been impossible to reach these figures in the last six months of 1976, the fact remains that the excavation of the ore took precedence and the removal of the overburden was neglected so what is the position? In 1977, so much more time, so much more energy will have to be spent removing that overburden that I predict that our bauxite production will be much less because we are not keeping pace with the extraction to remove overburden. It has always been the policy to remove the overburden in

advance but we have been concentrating on taking out the ore and not removing the overburden. Our bauxite production for this year will be very low. That is what worries me because while the picture painted is a gloomy one, I do not think it has been painted gloomy enough by the hon. Minister. It is very, very gloomy indeed. The impression the outside world will have is of a country which cannot manage its finances and that is bad. Granted that there was heavy rainfall until the middle of the year but when it was commonly known that we had all these problems, should we not have started pruning?

Let us recall that we had financial papers 4 and 5 coming to this Parliament towards the end of last year amounting to approximately \$132.2 million. Prudent financial management would have caused us – if we had been managing our affairs properly – to start pruning even from then.

The budget estimates for 1977 indicate that the Government will have to borrow \$63 million approximately. Over \$25 million approximately will come from external sources but where are those external sources listed? Where are the socialist countries? I have looked at page 8 here. Where is Algeria? Where is Libya? Where is Yugoslavia? Where is the Soviet Union? Where is Cuba? Where is Communist China? Where is the help that we are to get from them? Where are their loans? Is it not really an absurdity that remarks have been made alluding the Western countries which are listed here as destabilisers? Is it not really something to think about that these are the only ones listed as being willing to assist Guyana? It would seem that Guyana has unconcerned friends and friendly enemies. That is how it would appear to me or is it that the P.N.C. cannot discern who their friends really are? Is it so?

We all know and we all accept that the state of our economy is very serious indeed and therefore we must all, get down to business of recognising this and we must all be willing to do everything within our power to help our beloved Guyana. That includes every single one of us because this is our country and it is in the interest of all of us to see it survived. If bauxite production drops, we are all affected, if rice production drops, we are all affected; if sugar

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production drops, we are all affected. That is why I make this point for all of us to try and help and that is why I would go further to point out to Government that in certain areas they should give instruction for stricter financial control.

The Speaker: Hon. Member, Mr. Feilden Singh, two minutes more.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, I was saying the hon. Minister himself has alluded to this on page 26 when he issued a warning to accounting officers and that is why I would ask that the Government give instructions to its agencies generally. I would like to mention one agency in which certain allegations have come to my attention, Small Industries Corporation. Apparently this corporation has embarked on the policy of lending to some ventures which have failed, for example, approximately \$70,000 in respect of a cosmetics venture, \$100,000 in respect of a venture for the making of hats for the Guyana Defence Force, \$200,000 in respect of a venture at Bartica. These are significant sums of money and we have to be careful in respect of expenditure of that nature in the future.

I have also looked for Kibilibiri and I have not noticed it. Apparently all that we heard about the produce at Kibilibiri is not so. What is being produced there? What is the revenue from Kibilibiri?

Is it not true that last year the sum of \$6 million was written off in respect of Kibilibiri? Let the appropriate Minister tell us that.

5 p.m.

The Speaker: Time!

Mrs. DaSilva: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the hon. Member *Mr. Feilden Singh* be given 15 minutes to conclude his contribution to the debate.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud *seconded.*

Question put, and agreed to.

Mr. M. F. Singh: There is also the question of the food processing plant at the industrial site. The fact of the matter, as I understand it, is that there are many problem there. A specialist was brought down towards the end of last year. Except for the Guyana Marketing Corporation, shops have been returning goods produced at the plant because after a short while they have been going bad. I sincerely hope that that specialist will be able to thrash out the difficulties in respect of the food processing plant at the industrial site.

Another point I must mention is the big fanfare in respect of the opening of the cassava mill at Look Out. It is all well and good to have cassava mills. It is all well and good to have a cotton gin, to have cotton pickers, but we must have the produce to keep them rolling. Again, the fact of the matter is that these pieces of machinery are all lying idle, and idle machinery is in fact money. It is costing the nation money to have machinery lying idle for the want of produce.

I should also mention the recent disappearance, even though they have been found, of five cars at Guyana Gajraj. The police have recovered them and I do hope that the people will be dealt with accordingly.

I want just to deal very shortly with the estimates of revenue because we will not have an opportunity to do that in the debate. There is an obvious mistake on page 6 where the revised figure for consumption tax appears. It is not \$490 million; it obviously must be \$49 million. I certainly would like to know why is there no estimate of revenue for Matthew Ridge on page 6. It must be stated somewhere. In the approved estimate for 1976, there is a figure of \$200,000 but nothing is there revised. It must be somewhere. **[Interruption]** Revenue is not for debate in Committee of Supply. I want to point out also that the figure for the tolls for the Corentyne highway as shown on page 7, is certainly very significant, \$1.8 million. I want to repeat my

appeal to the Government to consider a reduction of the tariff in respect of the toll for the Corentyne highway.

In respect of page 8 of the estimates of revenue, I have been borne out in my prediction in that the figure for the Guybau estimates for 1977 is \$9.4 million as against \$28.7 million revised for 1976.

In respect of Public Corporations on page 8, the 1976 Approved Estimates show \$300,000. There is nothing in the column for revised estimate for Public Corporation under GUYSTAC but yet the estimates for 1977 is \$37,500,000. I am not saying that is not realistic. We have taken over the former bookers but I certainly would like to see a breakdown of that. The Guyana National Engineering Corporation, which is now listed as expected to yield \$1.5 million is listed separately when, in fact I understand it is under the umbrella of GUYSTAC. What about GuySuCo? GuySuCo is not under GUYSTAC but nevertheless nothing at all is listed for Guysuco. Of course, there is the sugar levy but no revenue at all is listed for GuySuCo.

In respect of defence bonds, I note on page 8 that the issue of defence bonds is expected to yield \$30 million. Will this really be voluntary? That is the question I would like to ask. Will it be as on a previous occasion when the public servants were coerced into making contributions? If we are estimating a level of contributions as high as 430 million one would expect there would be coercion and if that is so then I would recommend for the consideration of this honourable House that we make the contributions, like the approved securities, tax deductible as insurance premiums. At least there would be some benefit to the people who are coerced to contribute.

In conclusion, I would like to issue the call to the Government to put an end to such policies as the paramountcy of the party which could lead to allegations that the administration of justice is in accordance with the wishes of the ruling party. I would like the Government to

put an end to such things. I would like to ask it to put the best man for the job at all times instead of it just being done on a party basis, to stop indulging in propaganda and ideology, to stop dragging red herrings, to stop fooling the people and really get on with the job of feeding, housing and clothing the nation adequately.

I would like to call on the Government to re-arrange its priorities in order to put our nation back on a sound economic footing, to cut out even the allegations of squander mania in that wherever there is smoke there is usually fire. Cut out wasteful expenditure. Let it adhere strictly to the provisions of the Constitution relation to fundamental rights and freedoms. In short, let it strive to provide for all a full life. And what do I mean by full life? I mean enough food, enough clothing, a good home, security so that we can all enjoy dignity and happiness. Let the Government recognize that all men are brothers and that God is the Father of us all.
[Applause]

5.10 p.m.

The Speaker: Deputy Leader of the Opposition

Cde. Ram Karran: Cde. Speaker, I wish to tell you a story. This is an incident that occurred - -

The Speaker: Before you proceed, Cde. Ram Karran. Comrades and Hon. Members please allow Cde. Ram Karran to speak. I know there are some people who have not been given the opportunity to speak and they have been taking full advantage sitting in their seats doing that. I am sure you would like the same type of silence and non-heckling to be accorded to the Government benches. So let us give the Deputy Leader of the Opposition that same courtesy.

Cde. Ram Karran: I am most grateful to you sir.

The Prime Minister: On a point of order, Cde. Speaker, If the Deputy Leader of the Opposition is going to start telling stories and giving jokes, we are only human beings.

The Speaker: I think the Prime Minister is confusing the word I prevented somebody from saying last night, so I will make that remark again. I think he is mixing up heckling with something being laughable, which is permitted.

Cde. Ram Karran: I can confirm, sir, that the hon. Prime Minister is just as confused as his deputy. The incident I am about to relate took place a little before the last war in one of the yards in South Georgetown where two women were quarrelling at the stand pipe. They were saying all the words you can think about that were conversed in those days when two women met. While they were doing that a little daughter of one of the women was tugging at her skirt calling her attention. It took some time before she was able to relate to the mother and she told the mother: 'Tell her about her gig foot before she tells you about yours'.

Sir, despite the very frustrating, and eloquent, address by Cde. Jack to this House calling for co-operation and calling for a situation where there will be some sort of understanding between the two Parties in the House, this debate has been treated by some of the comrades on the opposite side, including front benchers, as if this Budget Speech had been prepared by the Opposition and as if they were dealing with a very unfavourable proposal put up by us. If you look over the speeches, you will get that impression. In fact, if someone were in this Chamber during that period that person would come to no conclusion other than that the Opposition has been creating trouble in this chamber. The venom which has been released against those speakers on this side would give one the impression that we are responsible for all the sins. Of course, those sins are only in the imagination of the comrades' minds.

We take the point that the Budget is an austerity one; it is so related in the Budget itself. But some of my friends on the other side would think that there is nothing more wonderful, there is nothing better than this Budget for the welfare and the well-being of the Guyanese people.

We take the thing quite seriously. We recognise that we are in a difficult position but we go further than that and say we recognise the other aspect of our problems, that is, the question of destabilisation.

We recorded long ago that having moved against the monopolies in Guyana, the big giants, Bookers, Demba and so on, a situation will be created for the destabilisation of our country. We recognise it and now that destabilisation is here – according to our friends, and they know everything – we are prepared and we have continued to give them unstinted support in (1) the nationalisation and the success of these ventures; and (2) in standing firm behind the Government in so far as attacks in any form are made against our Guyana.

We welcome the point made by Cde. Jack that this is a period when we should try to work together to get out of this difficulty. But have our friends across there been approaching this problem in that same spirit? The learned Minister of Justice told us not to go back to history, don't worry with history; history only serves a limited purpose. But we know that when the serfs in England cut off the King's head, that the Lord, whatever you call him, Cromwell, the Emissary to what is now the Soviet Union was virtually chased out. The same applied to Didero the Frenchman. Destabilisation which we have today, perhaps in another form, was in existence in all those years. Indeed, we are aware of the fact that destabilisation, with even more disastrous consequences, is followed in this hemisphere: in Guatemala in 1954, in Chile, which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister dealt with. Unfortunately he did not seem to understand the issue there. He mentioned it and we give him a mark for that. At least he remembered. I say that Cde. Speaker, because when I approached him in this Chamber some time ago when the atrocities were taking place in Bangladesh, I told him to let us move a Resolution denouncing what was taking place. I said that either he could move it and I second it or I move it and he second it. He said that that was interference in another country's internal affairs.

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I am glad that the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is becoming acquainted with the international situation because, in this small world of ours, it is necessary for us to be our brother's keeper. We must examine these things because they are very important. We must understand history correctly and move in the right direction to end destabilisation and avoid the disastrous results that have been recorded in some of the territories in this hemisphere, like Guatemala, Chile and so on.

I do not want to go back to the 1960s and my friend, the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice persuaded us not to. But there are lessons to be drawn from that period and the lessons that we draw, I hope that our friends across the table draw them too and don't come and tell us that we must not attack the leadership of the P.N.C. and of the Government. We do not make personal attacks, we do not criticize for the sake of criticising. When we relate history, when we refer to the dirty incidents of the 1960s those were acts of destabilization directed against our country. Do not let us go into the gory details because we can go back to the photographs, we can go back to the Central Duaggery Report and we can go back to a lot of their things. I think that, against their own will, we will convince them that some have acted against the best interests of our country.

5.20 p.m.

Today, at this very very difficult period when small men will think that it is our turn to give tit for tat, we want to stand up like men. We want to stand up like patriots, as we are, to say that we forget the past; we forget what the hon. Minister asked us to forget although we cannot forgive. We will stand behind the Government even though the Government came into office by dubious means.

There are other things that we want to draw to the attention of this House in relation to the Budget. When we criticise the Government on its outing to Sri Lanka, we do it not because we are jealous because no member of the Opposition went. We do it because we wanted to

avoid Budget Statements such as this. Because when you get a Budget Statement like this, even though my friends were able to put up a picket line outside this building, food is going to be very dear to the Guyanese people. My colleague and friend on my left pointed out the difficulties that will face the working class people who are earning an income of about \$40 a week and will still, at that figure, be unable to make a decent living. What do you consider the position will be to those who get the minimum wage payable to Government employees, \$4.50 per day or thereabouts. We do not attack them for that; we attack these things and I hope that hon. Members will take it with the proper understanding that these extravagant expenditures must come to an end.

The members of the Government are imposing conditions, namely we must not attack the leadership of the Party if we want to have discussion and debate. We are saying that if you want this country to be run properly and if you want us to be able to talk of a progressive Government in Guyana, then you must stop all this nonsense. We carried more people to Sri Lanka than the Indian Government sent there. Our delegation was larger than the delegation of a country that has hundreds of millions of people, a country that is within a stone's throw of Sri Lanka. I am referring to the Republic of India. The Guyanese people must know these things and if when we tell them these things our friends across the table become angry, we are sorry about it. We will have to continue to tell them.

When we call upon the hon. Ministers to reduce their salaries, to reduce their allowances and to reduce all these fantastic entertainment allowances, and when we ask them to do these things we ask them in good faith because these things will help the lowly-paid man, the man whose income can hardly stretch to meet his cost of living. Perhaps the hon. Minister of Agriculture will tell us at a later stage about the position of senior personnel in the Rice Marketing Board and, indeed, other Ministers can say what the position in some of these Government Corporations is. One man gets a salary of \$2,600 and his allowance is \$250; his car allowance is \$280. Cde. Speaker do you know he gets, in addition to that, a mileage allowance on that car? Three officers on the Board are getting that. The man on the next

echelon gets \$1500 then you go down to \$1200 and they all are backbiting each other. “Why can’t I get his salary?”

This situation is rotten and, as I said, the same applies to many Heads, Assistant Heads and Senior Officials in the Government Corporations. When is the Government going to call a halt to all these fantastic salaries and allowances? Besides that they get free watchmen in their houses. They don’t have to pay them. When is the Government going to call a halt to that? Ask them to make sacrifices not merely by putting into the levy money that they will normally pay taxes on. When are they going to stop these leave passages?

We have finished with colonialism since the year 1966. There might have been a few residual cases of expatriates, serving and entitled to these facilities. That I can understand. The Government would not breach a contract. There may be cases of Guyanese recruited outside of Guyana who might have been recruited on contract. I have no quarrel with that but don’t tell me about those blue blooded Guyanese who draw fantastic salaries and want to go home to England to spend their vacation.

I hope that we have arrived at the stage where, if we can get agreement on these things, then the need to criticize will not arise as often or be as great as it is at the moment. Perhaps we can work closer together with a view to solving the very many problems that are likely to take up much of our time.

One thing I would like to deal with is the question on which the hon. Deputy Prime Minister dealt with at some length. He said that historically his Ministry, the Ministry of National Development, which seems to carry no responsibility, has always had a block vote and that block vote should continue. Well I have done a little research in this matter and I have found no case where, in a Ministerial system, a block vote is allowed except in war time and in the case of secret weapons and so on. I don’t know if the hon. Deputy Prime Minister is still

planting dynamite and if this money is going to be used for activities of that kind. I think that exercise has been finished.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran I may have to strike that remark out of the record and I ask you to withdraw it.

Cde. Ram Karran: I withdraw it, Your Honour.

The Speaker: Yesterday, I was making the point. I do not believe in apologies when you are going to make the remark again. If that type of debate is going to be put forward into his House I will not see those members again.

5.30 p.m.

Cde. Ram Karran: Your Honour, I will not again make the remark. The Speaker knows me; he knows that I have never given my word and taken it back.

This question of a block vote bothers me and bothers the members of my party because this ministry or, in fact, any Ministry that has a block vote can use it, as I suspect that this is being used, not in the best interest of the Guyanese people. We are entitled to know. That is why Parliament meets; that is why we have these long sessions to go through these figures in detail and to go through the Budget Speech of the hon. Minister of Finance, to examine it in principle and to examine it in detail.

As I said there is a very elementary book dealing with this question of national finance. The name of the book I want to quote from is **Government of Britain, the Commonwealth Countries and the Dependencies**. It is written by Harold Plaskitt and Percy Jordan, B.S.c. (Econ). It is the 8th Edition revised by ...

The Speaker: Is that not colonialist in concept? I thought we had moved away from that.

Cde. Ram Karran: If we have moved out of colonialism and colonialistic practices I would think that this structure and the rules prevailing here should all have gone and that the hon. Minister of Finance would not come to us; he would take a bag with the money and he would go by the seawall and dispense with it. But the fact is that we are meeting here to discuss it. This is an authority on the ministerial system of administration with particular reference to finance and finance control and even in those socialist countries that I know, the Soviet Union, Bulgaria, and even Cuba there is central auditing control commissions that have much more power than we have in this Chamber. Ministers and the Governments can be made, of course, and we have provision for amendments but we can only use the rules as they relate to this particular institution and this institution falls in line with what obtains in the United Kingdom. This book from which I wish to quote sets out the points very clearly. I am talking about the block vote on page 119.

“. . . expenditure on atomic research must largely be taken on trust by political chiefs. Experimental work for all the armed forces is subject, in greater or lesser degree, to the shroud of secrecy. This is an established convention, and political heads of departments do not expect in all cases to receive all the relevant information.”

This is in relation to matters of a very secret nature and we are not going to indulge in that sort of activity. But page 120 it is stated:

“But even in war-time the formalities are observed, and in peace or war there are still some rivers to cross.”

If I may go on to the latter part of the paragraph of page 126:

“Treasury sanction in necessary, and then approval must be sought from the comptroller and Auditor-General, who must not be a member of the Commons or the Lords. He is an official independent of the Government, who holds office ‘during good behaviour’.”

You will recall the hullabaloo that was raised the other day by the Government when it was suggested that the Director of Audit should not be removed from that important function of certifying funds that are drawn from the Consolidated Fund. We are going to a non-colonial last when we begin to remove these structures which, to our mind, for the time being – at least until you replace them with something more serious – should remain.

We are telling the Director of Audit, as the people of England say, that this man must see that the sums withdrawn from the Consolidated Fund have been authorized by him. But that is not so apparent to the Guyanese people. I think the Government ought to tell us why it is that the Public Accounts Committee has not been functioning since the year 1968 or 1969. Why is it that the Director of Audit has not been submitting his reports so that we can know what these funds are. The hon. Deputy Prime Minister and General Secretary of the P.N.C. has a tremendous lot of money, it runs into millions of dollars, in a bag - -

Prime Minister: I rise on a matter of privilege. It does not lie in the mouthing of my honourable, I suppose, friend to ask about the public Accounts Committee, he is the convener.

Cde. Ram Karran: I really do not know - -

The Speaker: The position is that you are saying that the Public Accounts Committee has not met since 1969. The point that was raised is that you are the Chairman of that Committee and if it did not meet then who should be blamed?

Cde. Ram Karran: I do not think that the hon. Prime Minister understands the situation. I was Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee until the elections of 1973. Up to

that time we were only able to examine the public accounts up to the year 1968 or 1969. No more reports were submitted to us and therefore we were not able to examine them. **[Interruption]** We submitted reports from the Public Accounts to this House. I remember my friend the hon. Minister of Economic Development was then the Minister of Finance and those Reports submitted by the Public Accounts Committee have not seen the light of day. They have not been submitted to this House.

I do not want to be robbed of my time by being taken into these side alleys. I merely mention that the Public Accounts Committee is not functioning now and that reports from the Director of Audit are not coming to the House. Where are we? What is going to happen in ordinary budgeting, where every Head is shown. We have had the devil's job to find money. I remember we talked about \$13 million missing here, we talked about no vouchers. What is going to be the position? How is the Deputy Prime Minister going to submit his vouchers for these sums that are taken in a bag? **[Interruption]**

Well, if that is going to be examined in the year 1992, I can assure you that our grandchildren will never be able to know how this money was spent.

There is another thing we talk about and my friends on the other side are very thin skinned about it. We accuse the Government of mal-administration, of chiseling the funds and here we have their own report. Of course, the Cde. Minister for Trade said that the **Chronicle** is wrong. There was some support when my friend the hon. Member Mrs. DaSilva tried to read from the **Chronicle** to say that they had published the electricity rate to be 23.4 and the Minister said that you cannot rely on the Chronicle.

The Speaker: No, the Minister never said that. The Minister said that no such information was given out by his Corporation to the Press.

Cde. Ram Karran: I do not know if this information was given out Cde. Speaker:

“GMC chief deplores widespread pilfering.”

It goes on:

“Last year was a ‘fairly good year’ for the Guyana Marketing Corporation but during 1976 the corporation was plagued by widespread pilfering, absenteeism, unpunctuality, and time wasting.

According to General Manager Hugh Saul, pilfering has become one of the ‘largest single units at the corporation’ and some ‘comrades’, ‘big comrades’ and even ‘bigger comrades’ at the G.M.C. have a tendency to spend 70 per cent of their time ‘messaging around in the compound’, or on the road ‘simply doing nothing.’”

The Speaker: Please identify this paper, the date and page.

Cde. Ram Karran: It is from page 8, Guyana Chronicle, Tuesday, January 4. It is from their own lips, their own report. I do not know if they want to deny the accuracy of that; I am willing to accept it if they do. But, this is only one incident that crept into the Press. There are many rumours all over the country. **[Interruption]** I just listen to them. I am not in a position to check.

Another thing we criticise is: what is the justification for this excess of empire building? The British cabinet, as I understand it, has twenty Ministers. Cde. Speaker, Guyana has to outdo everybody else; we have twenty-seven. England has a population of nearly sixty million people; Guyana has not yet reached one million. **[Cde. Nascimento:** “We’re the same size though.”] **[Laughter]** I really cannot tell my friend what I feel about him. I hear some of these comrades talking, but they do not face the electorate. In 1964 and again in 1968, the hon. Prime Minister said – at least, I understood him to say something like this but I do not know if these are the exact words: “The material that we have is not ministerial and therefore we must amend the Constitution to bring technocrats.” Well, the House agreed, or the Government

agreed, or it was bullied out of us, and a few technocrats came. What is the position today? If you have a look at the Minutes you will see that they are nearly more than the elected members. We have gone back to the days of Savage and the nominated system? The principle is there. Cde. H. Green, Cde. H.O. Jack – I can understand Cde. H.O. Jack, he said I must call him “Ho Jack.” He told me so. **[Laughter]**

The Speaker: Order please, order!

Cde. Ram Karran: He said he is the representative of Ho Chi Ming in Guyana so he does not like the dot between the initials. We have Cde. Hope, Cde. Naraine, Cde. King, Cde. Kennard, Cde. Baird, Cde. Wills, Cde. Harper, Cde. Mingo as non-elected Ministers. Let us go over the page: Cde. W. Haynes, Cde. A. Salim, Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael. None of them faced the pole. We have a ridiculous situation. Besides, some of them are hidden away. One Cde. McDavid was travelling abroad and he said that he was a Minister and she showed his credentials. He had credentials! What kind of Minister is that?

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That reminds me of a former ambassador to the United Kingdom. When his tenure of office had come to an end, he travelled back to the United Kingdom with a wig and presented credentials as a Minister and committed an act which would have been punishable in law but because of the fact that he had ministerial status - - [Interruption.] I do not know law. Why did he need ambassador status? [A Comrade: “That is his business.”] That is the country’s business; it is our business to have people gallivanting all over the place saying they are representatives of Guyana.

Cde. Speaker, an attempt was made by no less a person than the hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Justice and, of course, supported by Cde. Hubert Jack, who is my friend. I gave him a book once and he said he could not take it from me because he had signed some declaration

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that he can only accept presents from a friend. I had to sit down and write a document saying that Cde. Jack is my personal friend and certify that, before he accepted the book from me.

I want to quote from an article written by Cde. Todor Zhivkov, the First Secretary of the Bulgarian Communist Party to demolish the contention made by my friend over the other side about pragmatism. Since Marxism became one of the leading philosophies of the world in Europe and elsewhere soldiers and pragmatists have been trying to distort Marx in order to prolong the life of the ruling class and the capitalists. We are always warned against that. I can forgive my friend the hon. Deputy Prime Minister but I do not think anyone here will forgive Cde. Jack and Cde. Wills when they try to tell us that pragmatism is the solution to all socialist goals. We cannot accept that. This is what Zhivkov said – of course he was speaking in another context; he was referring to the east-west détente:

“Having been forced to accept the establishment of peaceful relations between states, imperialism is trying to attain its old strategic goals by seeking new means . . .”

Did I call the name of the book? It is the Information Bulletin, Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Number VII, XXX, Sophia 1976:

“Ideological diversion aimed at destroying from within the unity of the world socialist system, of the international communist and workers’ movement, takes up an ever increasing place among its weapons. Now bourgeois ideologists put forward the thesis alleging that peaceful co-existence between states required peaceful co-existence of ideological compromise.”

The Speaker: Time!

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Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I move for the extension of 15 minutes for the Member to continue.

The Speaker: Are you moving for him to conclude?

Cde. Narbada Persaud *seconded.*

The Speaker: I must say this: the agreement was not that. If we are to have agreements made and they cannot be honoured, then it is no sense coming to me again about any agreement. However, it is up to the House to decide. The Motion is that Cde. Ram Karran be given 15 minutes to continue.

Question put, and negative.

The Speaker: The decision of the House is that Cde. Ram Karran be not given 15 minutes further to continue his contribution. May I have another Motion now?

The Prime Minister: I beg to move that the hon. Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Cde. Ram Karran, be given a further 15 minutes to conclude his speech.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Ram Karran: Thank you, Cde. Speaker. I want to warn, perhaps we didn't have the time here today to deal with all these pragmatists who seek by subtle means to distort Marx and to betray the revolution which has been started in this country. The situation is that we have successfully, or nearly successfully, completed the anti-imperialist revolution. We must now move on to the socialist revolution; we have not reached there yet, and we must persuade our friends across the Table to ensure that we do not betray that sacred trust which rests in our hands.

I listened very carefully to our friend Cde. Bancroft, and he tripped all the way from Groste Creek up to the Upper Mazaruni. I thought that on his trip there he would have seen the

“Ambrosio.” But he did not see it or he must have spent a lot of time making those bush women, as he called them, into angels, and building roads in the interior.

I would like to feel that I can persuade the Prime Minister to transfer him to Industry and to the road which lies between Greater Georgetown and Plaisance, where the people pay taxes to Georgetown on one side and to the Plaisance Local Authority on the other side. They are using some new invention; I do not think it is Cde. Ramsahoye’s invention of cement expender it is coconut husk that they are making the road with. I would like Cde. Bancroft to come down with his engineers, he is making Guyanese into Barbadian engineers, and let them do some work there so that the people who are paying taxes can get the roads built.

As I said, I thought he would have seen the Ambrosia is a vessel which was given to this Government free. The Government has re-engined it and it strands like a sentinel of death at the mouth of the Makouria. Didn’t you see it Cde. Bancroft? I perhaps expresses the gloom which is going to follow the maladministration of this Government after its years of misrule.

Have you seen the “R.H. Carr?” Cde. Speaker, as they say it was a going concern. I think Cde. Kasim had told us what and what he wasn’t going to do with the “R.H. Carr.” Where is it? Is it at the mouth of the Siparuni? I haven’t heard about it. And the returns that are made, the Transport and Harbours Department returns, do not have, as they used to have in the time of the P.P.P. and before the P.P.P., detailed accounts of all the vessels so that one can trace them, so that one can see how many sea miles they did, how much they cost. Accounting has bone to the dogs. Cde. Kasim can tell us. What has happened to the “R.H. Carr?”

They do not have launches to take the vessels out to see. Let the Minister of Works and Housing tell us. The day a pilot was taken out to the sea by an ocean-going vessel and he said: “Put me off here” and the Captain said: “You will take me out there to the statutory limits of the bar.” The launch could not go so the man had to be taken to Surinam. That is how you are

going to run a Government? These are very important things. No vessel is going to come to the country if you don't have pilots. **[Interruption]** The pilots have gone. You squeezed one. You killed another one. You don't have anybody else? Retired people are doing the work.

Where is the Tarpon? The hon. Prime Minister himself asked about the Tarpon a few years ago. Has anyone in this Chamber except Cde. Harripersaud Nokta and myself, taken the trouble, to travel up to the North West on that apology for a ship? Did you see women vomiting? It is difficult to describe it, and you pack it with all sorts of shop goods on its way up, and coming back with all sorts of produce. I hope that something will be done.

I want to deal with another matter: the question of foreign exchange. It is one that I feel very strongly about. Of course, the Government obtained a great deal of foreign exchange from the sale of sugar, and other commodities - \$140 or \$130 million and three hundred and something million dollars, the following year. The Prime Minister deals with it in his book. He warned about it, but his Minister did not take account of it in his budget. However, I do not have time to deal with that. Factories are lying all over the place, cassava factory, tomato factory. They were bought with foreign exchange and they are not being used.

Foreign exchange bought the silos. We warned about these and the Rice Producers' Association warned about them but instead of taking the advice of these knowledgeable people, they took the advice of these so-called "Rice Action Committees." One man is an expert at playing a ukulele. He does not know rice unless he sees it in the plate. And he is on rice. They bought silos all over the place and these silos are not going to be used until the year of Our Lord 1980. Do these people have any brains? I don't think so.

Not very long ago, the Minister of Works and Housing told us that people are wasting water. Water is a free natural gift of God to the community in Guyana, Land of many Waters, but what are they going to do? They are bringing maters, like my friend Cde. Kasim, who was bringing pumps. Pumps cost foreign exchange. Pumps have to be operated by oil and there is

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an oil crisis. Do what the Dutchmen did and try to devise a scheme to drain by gravity. They are bringing pumps, they are bringing meters to put further burdens on the working people of this country when they can perhaps, add fifty cents to the water rate or something. You do not have to pay foreign exchange for that. It does not need brains. It does not need brains. It does not need degrees to know all of that.

The rhetorical question asked here over and over: Where is the money going to come from for free education? I went to answer that question in the words of the hon. Prime Minister. This is what he said in 1952 when he was the Chairman of the People's Progressive Party. He suggested that the additional money which – and I quote – “is left in the pocket of or squandered on luxuries by the capitalists in British Guiana can be used for education by increasing income tax on bauxite and luxuries, raising the income tax rate to U.K. rates.”

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In addition, he wrote that money can be saved by economies in the cost of administration. Can we take a Motion now, Cde. Speaker? That is what we want. Money must be saved in the cost of administration so that money can be found for education. That is what the Prime Minister said in 1952. I hope he is not going to say, as in the case of the Education Bill, that ‘Man can change he mind’.

In 1961, over \$400,000 was spent on travelling and subsistence alone and it is a notorious fact that some public officers make a personal saving on travelling allowances after covering all their travelling expenses. What you think is the position today when you take into account these figures, like \$280 a month, which can pay the installment, and on top of that they get mileage? These people are making a joke. Cde. Aneurin Bevan who was the right hon. Minister of Health in the U.K. Government, described the behavior of this Government and the utterings of some of the people on that side as political masturbation. I hope we put an end to that sort of thing and be sensible and move forward with a view to uniting all the Guyanese people, including the

P.P.P., to build a Guyana free from the sort of parasitic living of some people, to bring it to an end so that Guyana can move on to peace and tranquility in the years ahead.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, we did miss you very much when you left this House.

The Prime Minister: Cde. Speaker, as I listened to the Leader of the United Force, the smaller of the two small Opposition Parties, fortuitously there came to mind two lines from Shakespeare's Macbeth:

“It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

Can you, Cde. Speaker, imagine in this day and age that one who was born a Guyanese and claims to love Guyana, goes through a tale of inaccuracies and inconsistencies? Obviously from his utterances he does not support the position of the Third World in seeking to get better prices for its commodities. He paints a gloomy picture of what is going to happen to sugar and how the subsidized sugar from corn and from best will displace sugar cane in the European markets. And then he ventures into a field, not his own, for unfortunately he does not seem to be one of those shoemakers who stick to their lasts.

He essays to give us a lecture on what is happening at Guybau. He says that this new dragline, which it was my honour to commission during the course of the Tenth anniversary celebrations, is broken down; it is not working and has not worked for the year. Were this another forum I would have described that as a lie. This forum, however, demands that I describe it as a hopeless inaccuracy. The dragline did go out of commission for a few days. It could have been repaired locally but it was under warranty and the manufacturers sent a representative to do the necessary repairs so that it would cost us nothing.

In any case this infant – I am inclined to say enfant terrible – says that the production of bauxite and bauxite derivatives in 1977 would suffer as a result of the non-use of this particular

crawling dragline. First of all, he ought to know, and he is a person of some professional training, that he should examine his facts carefully and not necessarily accept the pleadings that appear from his solicitor. No harm meant, sir.

The Speaker: It depends on the quality of the solicitor. [Laughter]

The Prime Minister: This dragline stripping exercise is not supposed to yield ore for extraction until 1980 so it could not possibly affect what happens in 1977. But I suppose it is of the essence of democracy, such as we know it, or such as has been mispractised in this place, to come into the House, the Leader of a Party – and it is a Party – and utter these inaccuracies in the presence of the public and to leave the impression with the public that the particular matter or matters have been researched. He asked us to believe that for the Bank of Guyana to hold securities, Treasury Bills, from the Government is a sign of bankruptcy. Now, as I understand it, the Bank of Guyana has resources. The Bank of Guyana, like any other agency or person in Guyana, can invest in Government securities, particularly Treasury Bills, which are short-term papers and the Government, therefore, gets the money that is invested and repays the money with the interest. Incidentally, all the profits from the Bank of Guyana ensure to the benefit of the Government of Guyana. But one who was my learned friend does not understand this simple fact.

He speaks of a plethora of financial papers, he who once – I must use the correct word – “adorned” the ministerial benches. He does a simple first standard arithmetical calculation; he adds the estimates of the previous year to the supplementary requests and says that the total represents the amount of money spent. It is true, as I shall attempt to point out later, that we propose by the end of this year, in preparation for 1978, to remove this out-dated system which makes virement so difficult and impracticable. But my learned friend ought to know that Supplementary Estimates do not necessarily represent in total the extra amount of money required, but in some cases it is a matter of moving a sum from one head to another head which the old and archaic laws, do not permit without a supplementary of the normal virement.

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He asks about Kibilibiri. Kibilibiri which was fairly recently activated, has been producing. Perhaps they will have an opportunity during the course of the debate in Committee to ask a question and get a full answer from my colleague Cde. Kennard. It has been producing corn, black-eye and cotton and all of the cotton which was produced last year by Kibilibiri was ginned or is at the moment being ginned at the National Service centre at Kimbia.

An Opposition is supposed, if it has any faith in itself to put forward criticisms which indicate that if perchance it won the approval of the electorate it had an alternative programme to that of the Government's. But I have listened and I have listened in vain and I remain of the same opinion that the United Force is forever confined to be in the Opposition, if at all it enters this House again.

6.10 p.m.

As for my good friend Cde. Boysie Ram Karran, I agree with you, Cde. Speaker, that this House was the poorer for his enforced absence between 1973 and May 1976. He seems unsure as to what he wants. He speaks about Marxism and Leninism. He prattles about these things and then he quotes Laski on now the British Parliament is run. I am sure that he did not intend to mislead this House. Rather, I sympathise with him for the confusion that has supervened on his mind.

But even from what he quoted he gave us a clear indication that he did not understand for he admitted that military expenditure is normally not discussed or set out in detail. And perhaps he might have so indicated to his young ward, Cde. Collymore, who a few weeks ago, when we were discussing a supplementary request, wanted the details of the expenditure under G.D.F. for equipment. Why did he mention it? He mentioned it because he is my friend and even though we share different political ideologies, he is always willing to supply me with the "correct" answers to these questions which others may ask. It is quite clear that he has given the answer that it cannot be expected in this House that Government would give the details of expenditure

on military equipment. Even senior officials, says he, quoting from his bible written by Laski do not expect to know those details let alone the public. It is not that one wants to hide anything from one's public but the public may consist of other than one's public and in that case the security of the State may be *pro tanto* endangered.

I listened with great interest, Cde. Speaker, to his castigation of those managers and some of the senior executive officers who are employed in the GUYTAC group of Companies or in other Public Corporations. I was a little disappointed to say the least. First of all he said that these people always want to go away and have their holidays. I am not capable of entering into their minds but what I do know for a fact is that since 1973, except for a short period in 1976, those persons were not allowed to get leave passages or holiday allowances but were given the opportunity of investing their leave entitlements in Government securities or approved securities.

He has moved up in life since Cde. Ranji Chandisingh left that shambling Party. It is impossible for a man of low morals to believe that there could be one who has high morals. If my friend were to suggest that the former Deputy Leader of the P.P.P. was bribed, he must therefore criticize the judgment of his leader and mentor in choosing such poor material. He was poor material. He was always sitting above one Ram Karran, as far as I remember.

As I was saying before this slight digression, what does the now toothy Deputy Leader of the People's Progressive Party want? Is he suggesting that in these days when skills are short we should not attempt to pay what those skills carry on the market. So far as I am concerned, personally, I would like to see, and I would prefer to find that people with these skills would be public-spirited enough to work for less. But the facts of life are that they would not, and their services could be bought elsewhere.

During the building of the Soviet Union there were occasions when the Soviet Government was prepared to and did, in fact, pay high levels of remuneration where the skills were not existent indigenously and they had to be purchased. It was as simple as that. There

was no ethic to it. There is just the question of the facts of life, thought I believe some of my friends would spell it 'fax'.

We hear about the solicitude for the poor man, the suffering man. I do not think that that solicitude can be felt any more deeply by my good friend the Deputy Leader of the Opposition than by us on this side and I want to make a suggestion not out of bitterness but out of the desire to see Cde. Ram Karran consistent. Now he owns 46 \$100-shares in a company called GIMPEX; his leader owns the other 46. There were seven others who had one each. These seven have died and I have checked with the Deeds Registry. Those, too, have gone to his leader. I would suggest that from the income earned by GIMPEX he should pay, first of all the employees including Narbada Persaud properly. And secondly, thought he is an atheist, he may distribute to the poor some of the superfluity which comes to him from his ownership of 46 per cent of the shares of GIMPEX. I say this, Cde. Speaker, not to descend to the level of the gutter but so that the public would know what inconsistencies there are in this House on the part of Members of the Opposition. Were I, again, in another forum I would have said "What heights of hypocrisy they have achieved" but that word hypocrisy I understand has been banned and I do not use it. **[Laughter]**

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As I listened to my fellow citizen from Greater Georgetown, the Deputy Leader of the People's Progressive Party, there came to me a song which was my favourite. It used to be sung by the late Nat King Cole "Rambling On." My voice is not noted for its mellifluousness in singing so I would not attempt to sing it, but he rambled only. He sought to quote from a book by Chekhov and then he was beginning to say something about pragmatism. Pragmatism is a word which became a bad word during the Stalinist period. That is what Stalin was accusing his opponents like Bukharin of. Of course, by that time Stalin controlled the state machinery; he also controlled the party machinery and he controlled all the necessary machine rics.

What is pragmatism? If pragmatism is a philosophy it is to be eschewed but if pragmatism means – and though the definition may not be wide it is sufficient for present purposes - if pragmatism means, as I understand it, taking a serious and objective view of particular circumstances and taking certain action as dictated by those objective circumstances without betraying your philosophy, your ideology, if that is the meaning of pragmatism as I understand it, well then, what is wrong with pragmatism? Was it not pragmatic for Lenin to return to Russia in a sealed German train? Was it not pragmatic for Lenin to introduce the new economic policy? Was it not pragmatic for Lenin to criticize the social revolutionaries with whose boycott of the 1905 and 1906 Parliament he agreed, but with whose boycott of the 1907 and 1908 Duma he disagreed and for that castigated them?

Browsing through some of the books that I have read in my salad days when I was young and green in judgment but still receptive and, I hope, perceptive I recall that one of the things said about Lenin was that he showed an absolute in tolerance for those of his colleagues who could merely repeat shibboleths without any conviction or without any ability to propose concrete action in the circumstances.

I think it was Lenin himself who said “Theory without practice is sterile”, though he did add “Practice without theory is blind” – and I would like to commend these elementary readings to those who seek to wear the scutcheon of Marxism and Leninism in a relatively unsophisticated society, deluding the public and misleading the people.

We have been accused, for instance, of saying that the People’s Progressive party is in shambles. We didn’t say that here. *Qui s’excuse s’accuse?* We did not say it here and the anxiety with which they deny the allegation leads me to believe that they are in shambles.

As was said when Absalom died. “How are the mighty fallen!” Are they not in shambles? Where is Ranji Chandisingh, brilliant theoretician? He went to Moscow for curses,

his is a brilliant mind. Where is Teekah, Chairman of the P.Y.O? Where is Majeed? It is not for me to rub salt into the sores of my friends.

On the day that they returned to this House, chastened, I congratulated them upon that act. Let me say that I am still of the view that they should be congratulated. [Cde. Ram Karran: “Again.”] Yes, again. I am an extremely generous man to infants. But they would have the world believe that it was out of the largeness of their hearts and their commitment to the nation that they returned here. There happened to come into my hands a circular which was addressed to all P.P.P. groups – it ran something like this: “So long as we are outside of the Parliament we have no status. We must return to the Parliament to give status and prestige and from that position we shall be able to expose the People’s National Congress Government.”

I am not sure whether the proclaimed objective in this House is the correct one or the one sent to party group secretaries. Speaking for myself, however, and so far as the Party to which I belong is concerned, the communications that we send to our groups represent our innermost and real thoughts. It can be judged by other standards. And if I were to act on the assumption that comes from my own knowledge within the People’s National Congress I would say that all this talk about critical support is correct, but supporting whom? Themselves. They are not supporting any country or supporting any People’s National Congress the way they have been behaving. In numerous cases it has been a question of recognising the critical part and needing a microscope to recognize the supporting part. [Interruption by Cde. Ram Karran] His authority on masturbation, as he showed in his speech, like Falstaff he accuses other people of his sins. You will remember he spoke about masturbation with such authority. He spoke not as one of the Scribes and Pharisees but as one having authority. [Laughter]

Quite frankly, so far as the P.N.C. majority is concerned, we are prepared to welcome them, we are prepared to discuss with the People’s Progressive Party because they do represent some element of the society which would make it easier for us if they saw the light.

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Let us not from the mouths of political babes and sucklings have to endure a remark like this: “The P.P.P. does not need the P.N.C.; it is the P.N.C. that needs the P.P.P.” He has got his priorities and his subjects mixed. The P.N.C. Government was getting on well. When we came into office in 1964, it was after a period of mayhem. After that there has been no such mayhem in this country. A certain secretary of a certain organisation, I think its name is the Rice Producers’ Association, as far as I was able to learn from my intelligence, which is not to be ignored lightly, under the instigation of his political colleagues, went around telling people “Don’t plant rice” and while he was telling people that – now he has absconded. So sorry, “migrated” to Canada – he was taking a loan from the Guyana Rice Board for the ploughing, a loan for the seed paddy, a loan for the fertilizer to plant 50 acres of rice which he reaped. Be it said in his favour, he repaid the loans. We survived all of that.

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There is the prattle from time to time that the rice industry was producing more before 1964. Here is Cde. Kennard, he was once their colleague, though only an official. He was able to show that in 1975 the production of rice in Guyana was the highest ever. How long, Oh Lord how long, must we plagued, sometimes amused, and sometimes irritated by these inaccuracies? The facts are here, but this is the measure of the opposition that we have to face here. That is why I think we should welcome them because there would be no other room for irritation and we would have an opportunity to carry out some education.

It has been said glancingly that the People’s National Congress Government is sitting on the fence, “it is socialist, it is not socialist.” Now, I would like for us to look at some of the actions taken by the People National Congress Government and, like my good friend over there from Essequibo, leave it to the judgement of the audience. It was the People’s National Congress Government that nationalised the commanding heights of the economy in Guyana bringing into the possession of the people the assets of the country. There was bauxite, there was timber and there was sugar. And I recall the history of nationalisation of the bauxite. The

terms and conditions that were insisted on by the Opposition, “do this but don’t do this, and you must agree to this” – but I cannot descend to those levels. Bauxite, timber, sugar. We have also taken into our hands the control of the import trade and are proceeding now to control absolutely the export trade as well.

I was a little amused the other day when it was reported to me that one of the most carping critics of this Government found himself in another Caribbean country purporting to be advising another political party and was saying, “You must do what we in Guyana do. Take over trade; set up something like the External Trade Bureau.” That is the type of thing that happens. When they are here it is unpopular but when they go abroad they say you must do as we are doing in Guyana. Accomplishment has a way of attracting band-waggoners.

Now, Cde. Speaker, we have at the same time set up, as has been remarked in the budget statement, certain financial institutions. There has been the Co-operative Bank, the Mortgage Finance Bank, the Agricultural Development Bank and more recently the Insurance Services Corporation. Those who paid Demerara Electric Company in three years, at going value, tell us we must take over the banks now, but nothing before its time. You see, if Lenin was as simple as they he would not have introduced the new economic policy; he would not have made any concessions whatsoever. But of course, he dealt with those at Kronstadt with vigour.

We have heard a lot of talk about state capitalism. This is not the place for us to enter into an argument as to whether there is state capitalism or not in Guyana so far as those business and industries and enterprises that have been taken over are concerned, but may I just commend those who seem to have a penchant for wanting to know what Lenin wrote and what Lenin did to the Elementary Book, the History of the G.P.S.U., page 352, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1960. This is a history of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. I am not going to enter into all of that because basically socialism is about raising the lot of the common man, so organising the economy that you put an end to exploitation and you put the proletariat in power and you have the dictatorship of the proletariat. It is for us to judge to whom the

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proletariat, such proletariat as was have in Guyana, owes its allegiance and gives its political support.

Then we are entertained by another excursion when I am called upon to justify a statement that there is an inconsistency between the co-operative and scientific socialism. Absolute nonsense and rot, for Lenin himself advocated the formation of co-operatives and, what is more, the Soviet Union invited the Cde. Minister of Co-operative and National Mobilisation and was prepared to sponsor our entry into the International Co-operative Movement and the co-operative movement continues. It does not really matter in the final analysis, only that these irrelevancies have been introduced.

I am prepared to concede that in the circumstances which Stalin found after he had triumphed over Bukharin and Zinoviev that state ownership was the best tactic to be used. I cannot dictate for another man in his country who has a better view of the circumstances, who has a better view also of the tradition and the ethos of his people and who has a better view of what is facing the particular country. I do not criticise Stalin or those who supported him.

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But don't come here and lay down as a matter of faith that there is an inconsistency between co-operativism and socialism unless you are that naïve – if I may borrow an epithet from my good friend across the room, my toothy friend. And to think that when the People's National Congress talks about co-operatives it is talking about the Rochdale Pioneers or the utopianism of Robert Owen. But there is another place and another time for this academic and ideological discussion. I was proceeding to point out where we have started to lay the base for the socialist development.

Education. I heard with great pleasure, and the young man has a far way to go, Cde. Feroze Mohamed saying that it is wrong to compare absolute figures, you should compare

percentages. I congratulate him upon his sophistry, if not casuistry.

What I learnt at school was that there are lies, damn lies and percentages. Certainly I must concede that the percentage of the total budget in 1962 spent on education was higher than the percentage spent on education of the total budget in 1976. I concede that, but the whole has become bigger because in neither case was there included the money spent on educating Guyanese abroad. Let me give you an example. In 1964 the then Government – and I am not doing this to pull them down. As their leader admits, he was in office and not in power. The leader of the Opposition admits he had great faith in the British sense of justice. A great Marxist who goes and trusts the British. I am not saying this to denigrate them. I am merely saying this to correct the record for whereas \$39,000 was spent in 1964 on training and educating Guyanese abroad, in the year 1976, \$7 million was spent by the present Government. And therefore if the whole Budget has increased you do not merely compare percentages. You compare what is done and you compare what can be accomplished. Of course we never appointed a would-be calypsonian as a school master.

Take for instance, the University of Guyana, \$430,000 in 1964, \$6.4 million in 1976. Free education from the nursery to the University. It is of historical interest for me to attract to this House's attention that lo and behold when everyone recognized the paucity of skills and the need to produce more skills, that when this Government entered into office on 14th December, 1964, it found that fees were still being paid at the Government Technical Institute.

Let us be consistent. Let us be human and say we did not do so well, and we would not be reminding them of their errors. We would merely say "We forgive you for you knew not what you did", and we will then get together to build a better Guyana.

There to see are the community schools that have been established bringing the opportunity of education in its pure sense with a re-orientation of the curricula and also the work

study programme. I of am own knowledge know that at the multilateral school at Bladen Hall after one rice crop the students there made a surplus of \$7,000 which was re-invested in agriculture, surpluses from which they hope to contribute to the improvement of the school and taking care of some of the current liabilities of that school. [Applause]

But as we have said from this side of the House time and time again, education must not be interpreted restrictively. Education must not be confined to the walls of formal institutions, of what we call schools. Education is a process which can take place on many a situs.

Take, for instance, the National Service. That is an institution of education. Sp far as this Government is concerned the institution of the Guyana National Service is part of laying the socialist basis. First of all, as I have said ad nauseam, it allows people from different parts of the country, people from different walks of life, to meet and know each other. That is most important. In one case one student said after spending his time there he did not know the other people were so good and he received the same compliment from a member of the other people. And he was speaking honestly. It therefore means that if we are to unify the nation and lay the basis for socialism there must be the opportunity of exposure.

A great deal has been said about entry into the University. The Government has said its last word on this. This is not a matter for discussion. This is not a matter for compromise. Those who desire to take advantage of the taxpayers' money and go free of cost to the University of Guyana must enjoy the privilege of service. This is not whimsical and to come here with some outworn mediaeval prejudiced rationalised will not solve the problem. Normally you are building socialism. You have to rely on the force, the power, the inspiration of the proletariat and they have to combined with the intelligentsia and intellectuals. It is true that some persons have become intellectual without going through institutions like a university. I can see some would-be aspirants to that category here, but normally it is the institution of the University with its discipline that tends to produce the intellectual.

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If there is a scheme of things of bringing people together, teaching them the dignity of work, teaching them to live with each other and naturally to work with each other and to produce, then you have intellectuals who are of potential assistance to the proletariat if not leaders. On the other hand if there is some graduate who has not been exposed to this experience; his will be a task of not memory but of imagination when he has to deal with the proletariat or with those who are building socialism from the bottom. His would be a case as Gramscian would have said of the non-indigenous intellectual, in which case he is a waste of time. He is likely to be easily attracted by the old ruling capitalist class and she is likely also to join the elite and to protect the old system mouthing shibboleths but at the same time in his actions and in his proposals showing his commitment to the old order. The Guyana National Service is an important part of education here and it is an important part of the building of socialism.

I have heard, when I was here on Wednesday, from the Cde. Leader of the Opposition that while he was generally critical of the Budget he did not propose to make any alternative proposals. He read by rote 17 demands which I have heard over and over again but he said his other colleagues would make the proposals.

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Somewhere along I picked up a proposal, and that is the only proposal that I can put my hand on, that we may be able to avoid the type of Budget we have had to present if we cut down on the expenses of the National Services. In the first place, the National Service, as has been admitted by visitors from socialist countries, from the leaders of the socialist countries, is a fine institution of training, orientation and education. That they cannot argue with.

In the second place, therefore, since we cannot afford to neglect education, no matter what our circumstances, the Guyana National Service has to stay. But, the Guyana National Service is not only an institution of education, it is also a productive agency in our society. For instance, the Guyana National Service has produced cotton. It has got us back into cotton

production when some jokers from abroad who came here to advise told us that we could not grow cotton. The cotton ginned late 1975 and early 1976 was exported earning foreign exchange. It has also ginned cotton from Kibilibiri which is a few miles up river from Kimbia and already it has ginned over 200 bales. There is more ginning proceeding and the cotton is either to be sold or to be kept in anticipation of its being used in our textile mill.

The National Service has been supplying most of the Berbice River area with fresh sea fish. The National Service has not only become self-sufficient in things like chicken and small stock, but has also been selling into the area and to the Guyana Marketing Corporation its product. And those who have been producing are trained so that if and when they leave National Service they are not aimless but they have been trained in a particular and relevant skill.

The National Service has also trained many of its members in tailoring, so much so that all of the slacks needed by the Guyana People's Militia have been produced by the Guyana National Service. The Guyana National Service produced, not a satisfactory crop of black-eye last year, because of the weather, but it hopes to do so this year and to that end has already erected a black-eye dryer at the centre there. And we can go on and on.

The Guyana National Service has trained some of its members in silk screen work and has set up a Publishing Centre which at the end of last year showed a net intake of \$187,676.58. **[Applause]** The Guyana National Service trains young men as sailors on the Jaimito and as fishermen on a trawler which it owns. The Guyana National Service, incidentally, but importantly, provides medical services to the people in the Berbice River because it has a resident doctor and a cottage hospital. **[Applause]** I am not making a big argument about the National Service, but those who can, state, those who can't, argue.

When in 1972 the objects of the Development Plan 1972 – 1976 were announced – these have been dealt with and other aspects of it have been dealt with by my friend and colleague Cde. Hoyte, it is interesting to note that we did not, in conventional terms, say the object is this

per cent growth and that per cent growth and that income **per capita**, because that is a capitalist way of looking at things. The total growth is important, the total income **per capita** is important and when those are achieved, there is the ranking off where the few have too much and the many have too little.

We presented the firm objectives of that programme in terms of feeding, clothing and housing the nation. That is a typically socialist objective. If we were capitalist oriented, as some would like to suggest, if we were, as some would have us believe, tied to the apron strings of our erstwhile masters, we would have had a conventional programme about growth, about income **per capita**. But no, we said, “Let us all feed, clothe and house the people.”

When in 1964 we acceded to office, we found a rudimentary planning unit in what was the office of the Premier. I remember speaking to two persons, one who was going and the other one who was prepared to remain. May I add, Cde. Speaker, that if it is desired or planned to establish socialism there is no alternative to careful and sound central planning. We enlarged the planning unit considerably. To say that we doubled it is to say nothing. We more than quintupled it. There were certain inhibitions if we were to have total planning of the economy because in those earlier stages we did not have in public hands, or under public ownership, the commanding heights of the economy. That was to be achieved later according to a time schedule. So now that that is achieved and so far as the banks are condemned – and some of those who say “Nationalise the banks”, have their bank accounts in the foreign banks. And if they tickle me I shall tell them who. You see they do not answer me. “Monkey know which limb to climb ‘pon”.

Now, the financial institutions, they will follow **ex mero motu**. No problem. Now that we control the commanding heights of the economy it is decided and it is important that we set up a full scale, not planning unit, but planning commission working out macro and micro plans, globally, at regional levels and at levels even lower than the regional levels. If I may recall, on the evening of the 22nd February, 1976, speaking on the eve of Republic Anniversary, I said that

the taking over of the leviathan Bookers now gave us an opportunity to reconstruct our economy along socialist lines.

Now, we are modest and we are human. This cannot be done overnight so the first thing that was done was to appoint a committee to which were invited not only members of the professional staff in the Ministry of Economic Development, but two West Indian economists, eventually the T.U.C. and, of course, the People's Progressive Party.

I understand that their representative were **Cde. Narbada Persaud and Cde. LalBachand LalBahadur**. And out of that Report which is to be submitted by April, it is hoped that we shall be able to be well on the way to set up the Planning Commission. With the assistance of friends and friendly countries, we hope to make a reality of the Planning Commission this year and at the same time draft the development programme for 1978 to 1981.

So when one looks at these various steps that have been taken – I am not talking about our reputation, our earnestness and our commitment in foreign affairs, all of which are well known, because that is, as far as I can see, additional to these major measures which are being taken and which have been taken in Guyana who in his right senses dares seriously question an socialist thrust.

And we in the People's National Congress have always thought that basically foreign policy is dependent upon domestic policy. And you cannot afford to have these contradictions which some States have had. It is in those circumstances, that I contend, Cde. Speaker, that we have begun to lay the basis by certain actions.

During last year we had problems. As a matter of fact I recall that at the end of 1975 when we were delivering Christmas greetings, I pointed out that 1976 was likely to be a difficult year; difficult not because money was not going to be available because as a result of the reserves that we had accumulated over 1974 and 1975 there would have been money available,

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but it was important that during 1976 we should earn enough foreign exchange to have an anticipatory financing of the 1977 Budget.

That was not to be and this is where I find it a little difficult to understand some of the Opposition speakers. Some of them seem to speak with forked tongues. They admit that the weather was bad; they admit that the prices – I think as a result of a conspiracy on the part of the industrialised countries, the price of commodities like sugar, fell terribly, in the same way that the price of copper fell and then, of course anyone could have seen – and this nonsense about “If you had not been extracting the bauxite and the ore.” “A little learning,” said St. Paul “is a dangerous thing.” The fact of the matter is that we do open-cast mining and if you do open-cast

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mining when the water comes, it comes and when the water table rises you have two waters meeting and when two waters meet, Cde. Chairman - -

That that calamity was recognized led us to be in receipt of compensatory finance from the International Monetary Fund. This year, however, if the weather goes well, in spite of these Jeremiahic prophesies we can and will perform in the bauxite, the rice and the sugar industries. It is interesting to note, so far as the sugar industry was concerned, at the beginning of the second crop, there was a Prime Minister’s award for certain targets. The recognised Union said “None of those targets could be met,” Yet at least four or five of the estates got the eight days; the maximum was 10 and I was led to believe from the information at my disposal that hadn’t there been these disruptions of work primarily motivated by a desire by some to show that they still have some little power, those sugar workers would have earned the full Prime Minister’s bonus. In fact, most of them have also earned annual production bonus and they have produced over 332,000 pounds in 1976 in spite of the difficulties of the weather. **[Applause]** I should like to congratulate those workers and also the workers of GUYBAU who have done well under the most disgusting and trying circumstance.

Now let us look at the Budget. The main aspects that have been dealt with are those which concern the subsidies. And we hear them with crocodile tears saying “You are putting the burden most heavily on the poor people” and this and that. I heard one of my friends from over there saying, “Water is God’s gift, it should be free.” In Cuba the Government has now put water on meter. In Cuba they have now started charging for telephone calls. If your situation is grave it demands grave remedy and when the grave remedy is to be applied we all have to feel the pinch. And this Government makes no apologies.

I was listening with bated breath for alternative proposals. They came up with some week-kneed things: Drop the Ministers’ salaries, drop the parliamentarians’ salaries. You see these people. They voted against the increase for the parliamentarians’ salaries in the last Parliament and were the first to draw! They voted against the pensions and were the first to meet Frank Narain’s office asking for their pensions. Oh wicked and adulterous generation!

Let us examine these Estimates. Let us assume that we take off all the Ministerial salaries, Parliamentarian’ salaries, allowances, everything. It is \$1.7 million. I am speaking of taking away the salaries, not reducing them. Let them work for love, like the Pandit over there who, I suppose says his Gitas – Om Shanti, shanty. Let us all be like him and work for love. It is only \$1.7 million. The subsidies had to be removed.

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Now take flour. We hear some saying that the subsidy on flour has been removed. No, Cde. Speaker, the subsidy on flour has been reduced, otherwise the price of flour would go up to 36 cents per pound. And furthermore why should we continue subsidising North American and European wheat? If anything, let us subsidise our local alternatives. We have decided that when the cassava mills come onto operation there will be 20 per cent of the flour coming from cassava.

We have taken off the subsidy on feed for chicken. All sorts of wicked suggestions are made as to the reason for that. The fact of the matter is that with the shortfall in the rice production and the practical ruin of our corn production in 1976 there was necessity to import and import at high prices. Could we afford to continue subsidising the feed for chickens and at the same time give free education from nursery to University when there are alternative sources of protein? Fish is virtually subsidised, actually it is subsidised but it does not appear in the Estimates of the \$47.5 million. The subsidies to which reference was made by the Cde. Minister of Finance were those subsidies which represent actual paying out of money. But there is a subsidy on fish.

The subsidy so far as the feed for swine is concerned is at a much lower level because the swine feed does not have the high and expensive foreign import. We hope with good production this year that without subsidy the price of chick feed will fall, if our corn comes in and our rice from which we get brokens also comes in as expected and anticipated.

Over the last year, 1976, this Government out of the taxpayers' money subsidized the consumption of electricity to the tune of \$9 million. In Cuba the Government has asked the people to cut down on coffee which is their national drink. In Guyana we say, "Let us face the facts." There is the economic problem which we have. We are subsidizing the use and consumption of electricity to the tune of \$9 million and this subsidy runs throughout the country. We ask people to consume less electricity and some of these house owners do not seem to understand what it is to consume less electricity. With great reluctance the Government proposes to this House that the subsidy on electricity consumption be completely removed, but we are solicitous of the small man, the 50,000 small people, who have just a few lights. Their rates will remain unchanged and their light bills will not go up. **[Applause]** Those who, however, were on tariff 2 and tariff 3, in bulk business and commerce they will have to pay but for the little man. We are socialists: from each according to his ability. But there were already tears about the electricity. Did they imagine that this P.N.C. Government would have put an extra load on the little man who pays \$1.88, who has his few lights? No. From each according

to his ability. But the howl that is set up by those who say we are pressing the little man. Do they remember that built in to the price of fertiliser to the rice farmers every year is about \$6 million that has not been removed? Do they realise that there is built in the price of rice to users in Guyana over \$5 million subsidy. That has not been removed? Do they realize that there is built into the price of sugar the sum of \$10 million which has not been removed? Do they realize that in working-class housing it is as high as about 20 per cent that represents a hidden subsidy for working-class housing? Those have not been removed. We have, of course, removed the greater part of the subsidy on the ferries. But we have kept constant the fares charged to bona fide school children buying season tickets. **[Interruption by Mrs. DaSilva]**

Thank you so much. You know, the Lord is really kind to us when out of the mouth of our enemies we are reminded of the salutary measures that we are undertaking. Old age pensioners and social assistance recipients will travel free on all public transport. And what is more, the qualification is raised from \$16 to \$35. In other words, you can work for as much as \$35 and still apply for and be in receipt of an old age pension. We look after the poor and the needy, those who need help, and in a socialist society the rest of us must seek to carry the burden because when a child is admitted free into a nursery school it is not asked: Who is your father? Or Who is your mother? And How much you can pay? When that child transfers to an ordinary primary school there is no question as to whether the mother or father can pay either for the training or for the text books or the exercise books. Similarly, when they go to the secondary school, and similarly when they go to the University, except, of course in the case of the University – they are asked: “Have you done national service?”

Those of us who may be somewhat better off – judging from my own experience I would say “less badly off,” since we are enjoying the same facilities as the man who has less resources, we must make up for that elsewhere and we will have to carry it, and that includes me. We will have to carry the bill on the electricity.

The Trade Union Congress came to speak to us in the Government and asked at the same time what could they do? And a proposal was put to them: Well since there is a threat of destabilisation - - Nowadays we have no argument with the Opposition except the mini Opposition as to whether there is destabilisation or not. The Leader of the mini Opposition now absent - -

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The Speaker: I shall ask you not to make mention of that fact. As I am interrupting you, he told me that he had to leave on a matter of a very urgent personal affairs and no discourtesy was meant to those who were going to speak after him.

Cde. Prime Minister: **Cde. Speaker,** I apologise to you, the House and my good and learned friend Mr. Feilden Singh for that chance remark which I had no right to utter. It is only the mini Opposition that does not see destabilization. Everyone else sees it though some may see as an opportunity to carry forward their nefarious schemes. Some may see it as an opportunity to earn from those who would destroy us and halt us in the Socialist revolution. And the T.U.C. came up with a proposal for the establishment of a national committee to encourage the public to purchase bonds.

The members of that committee were to be drawn from the T.U.C., the People's National Congress, the People's Progressive Party, the Guyana Association of Local Authorities, the Rice Producers Association, the two Chambers of Commerce, Georgetown and Berbice, and the Co-operative Union and maybe there were others. All I can say is that so far the committee has met and there have been in attendance, the T.U.C., the P.N.C., G.A.L.A., the Co-operative Union and the Chambers of Commerce. Further I say not. **Inclusio unius, exclusion alterius.** And then we will hear "we are being destabilised." We admit we are being destabilised but all sorts of reasons and explanations are give, for not attending the committee – long sheets of letters. But Cde. Speaker, I am not worried. I am confident that the people of Guyana will subscribe the \$30

million in bonds with or without the People's Progressive Party. **[Applause]** It is not what we say, but what we do: critical support for sooth!

Now there are other matters. The undertaking was given by the People's National Congress on the 14th December when celebrating the 12th anniversary of its term in office that there were certain things come what may on which there would be no reduction. One was education and training. These are not the days of Guggisberg, those are not the days of the P.P.P. administration where at the Transport Department and Public Works every November there was retrenchment. These are serious days, these are the day when we have embarked on the socialist thrust and are involved in the socialist revolution. No diminution, so far as education is concerned, nor health – in fact, extra has been put into health – and no drop in the level of employment.

Undoubtedly some of the heads tend to show that we are proposing lower votes than were existent last year but there are two elements of variables which are not immediately obvious. First, that we can, by combining projects, reduce overheads and even finish the particular projects faster. And we have found as a matter of fact, during 1976 that sometimes we have the machinery, we have the money, but we do have the personnel. So by a re-deployment of personnel we would hope to reduce overheads while keeping the personnel better deployed and all in employment.

The next thing is this; we have got to realise – and I hope and pray that it is realised throughout Guyana – that what is at stake is the survival of our country and our shaping our economy according to our choice. Therefore there will be required also a war on waste. We can discuss that when we go into the Committee of the House.

As I said when my good friend Cde. Dindayal was speaking, I agree that if what he alleged was true that he had a good point because, as I understand it, the productivity of a rice farm is dependent upon your ability to control water, take in when you want and let out when

you want. Isn't that so? I am a rice farmer Productivity must mean that those responsible for that sluice should get on with the job because funds are available but on the other hand there must be no assaulting of those who go to fix the sluice, it is anti-national to go and attack the people who are going to fix the sluice. But that will be the subject matter for tomorrow. Whether it be in the rice field, the cane field, in the office, the factory, the mine, we all have to produce more.

I sometimes ask myself how many of us who work are satisfied in our own minds that we are producing to our maximum and our optimum. There is a tendency to feel that productivity is for the man who tills the soil and reaps the crops, for the man who works in the mine, the man who tools the parts but some reflection would show that in offices too we need a great deal more productivity and production, in the public as well as in the private, but I can speak more definitely for the public.

In many parts of the public sector, a few people in some offices are asked to carry the whole burden and so many do not address themselves to completing their work in the proper time and performing efficiently. That has to come to an end. In the public service, in the public sector itself, we have also set up an informal intra-government committee to look at staffing, not with a view to dismissing, but with a view to re-deploying.

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To give an example. One may find that in the central office – let us say, Office of the Prime Minister, so that no one can be offended – there are more people than you need there, while the regional office, let us say at Kaituma or Matthews Ridge, is understaffed, or the regional office at Enmore could do with more personnel, or the Guyana National Service Centre at Konawaruk could do with more personnel. It must be understood in the public sector that that type of redeployment is part of their terms of employment. And I hope that I shall not be hearing from people in the public sector “Oh, I have a wife and two children.” Wherever we

send you there are good schools. No longer does Georgetown provide the best, or only, education. Guyana scholars are coming from all parts of the country. You cannot sit down in an office and decide on the fate and destiny of people who are way out and who you have never met, with whom you have never shared experiences. The re-deployment will begin in the public sector.

And now I would just like to deal with one matter and that is the presentation of the Budget. Those who criticize the presentation of the Budget as being in its traditional form are absolutely right. We agree with you. It is stilted; it is unimaginative, through no fault of the Minister of Finance. It is in the form in which we have seen Budgets since we were in knee pants and it is in many cases a break on the continuation of projects from year to year and on smooth administration. That difficulty is not solved by the Act which gives you authority to spend one-twelfth of the previous year's allocation every month while the Budget remains unpassed. We hope to bring to this House during the course of this year the 1978 Budget in completely different form which, while it permits of control of spending, is flexible enough not to hold up the project an necessary expenditure during the period when the Budget is being debated.

I am no Columbus. I was born in Kitty. I did not discover America. I was brought here. The year 1977 is a grave year. In the past, however, we have shown resilience. Some have said that it was the windfall of the sugar prices that helped us out in 1974 and 1975 and that it was the windfall which we should have nursed and not spent to give people employment. That is a capitalist way of doing it. You keep the money and you look at it and worship it and bow down before it like some of those Maharajas who, in the midst of poverty, have their basements running over with jewels and every morning they worship their jewels and say they are religious.

But it was not only the price of sugar that was responsible for the bounce forward of the economy in 1974 and 1975. It was also the dedication and the production of the workers in our main areas from which we get the commodities to export. [Applause]

It was also the interest which ordinary people show in using up every little bit of land that they have to plant some legumes here, some ochroses there, bhaigonor what have you. It was basically the determination of the people to see that we succeed that helped us to succeed. It is true that we got extra for the price of sugar in those days but if the sugar was not produced it would not have mattered. It is true that because we control our bauxite industry we were able to take control of good contracts but you cannot sell bauxite which you don't produce. We have not been eating potatoes and we have not starved.

Therefore it seems to me that in the year 1977 when we have learnt from the experience of 1974 and 1975, as has been remarked by the Governor of the Caribbean Development Bank, the Guyana economy should recover quite quickly as long as the weather holds. I thank him for that, but I would say "so long as the weather holds and we produce" because some people may want to take the bright sunshine as an opportunity for basking therein rather than working. Also, in spite of the nonsense that we have heard at the street corners spoken by the uniformed to the ill informed, we are capable of borrowing. As Cde. Hope has remarked during the course of his contribution, the safe limit is between 20 and 25 per cent and we haven't reached 10 year. But those who used to think in terms of asking the Secretary of State to lend them £250,000 in a secret telegram which I got before it left, would think that borrowing is a terrible thing. No. We can borrow but in the final analysis, what we borrow we must repay and we cannot repay if we have not properly and productively used what we have borrowed. And if we cannot repay, our image is *pro tanto* damaged and our capital to borrow again **ipso facto** reduced.

Finally, the hopes of 1977 are the hopes of all of us. Let us not believe that some of us can stand by indulging in nit-picking and windmill tilting. We all are involved. I have remarked that after its face-saving declaration of critical support which seems to have been more

critical than supportive, I am prepared to offer the major opposition the opportunity in 1977 to show how serious they are in ensuring that this economy comes back into its own. We do not ask for blank support. A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds. We are prepared to accept criticism, discussion based on a conscientious approach to the problems of our country.

The People's National Congress concedes that national unity is a prerequisite to the ultimate prosperity of this country but - - **[Interruption]** My toothy friend again. Sometimes the air just escapes between his teeth. **[Laughter]**

But, Cde. Speaker, it is not a talk about power. I understand one Member said they are interested in power and he wants to usurp the position of his Leader because he says when he sits over here it will be as Prime Minister. I credit that to the ebullience of youth speaking the truth when he ought not to. Let it be understood: It has to be on the basis of mutual respect and as my friend Cde. Jack has said, Don't you imagine that there can be any dialogue if there is going to be this gutter type of attack, in or out of Guyana. And we are at present in and out of Guyana in all forums. **[Applause]** He would be a fool who does not admit the need for unity. But let me say this: The People's National Congress is willing to welcome the P.P.P. if it really believes in unity and is willing to make concessions, but there are not two Governments in Guyana. **[Applause]** If they want, they are welcome but let me say two things: If you don't want, we are going to make it without you as Isaac Hayes says. But, certainly, we think it would be better for you and all of us if we are able to make it together. **[Applause]**

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, this concludes the general debate on the 1977 Budget. From our next sitting tomorrow the Assembly will be resolving itself into Committee of Supply to consider the 109 Heads and Divisions of the 1977 Current and Capital Estimates of Expenditure. Circulated to you is a statement showing the times allocated and agreed on for the consideration of the Estimates during the next seven sittings of the Assembly. It is hoped that the sixteen Ministers concerned and, indeed, all the other Members will note the statement and give their co-operation and make every effort to keep within the times allocated as

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National Assembly

7.40 – 7.45 p.m.

this will enable us to consider all the Heads and Division and complete them within the seven days allowed. Cde. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this National Assembly do now adjourn to tomorrow, Wednesday, 10th January, 1977 at 2 p.m. [Cde. Ramsaroop.]
