

**THE  
PARLIMENTARY DEBATES  
OFFICIAL REPORT  
(VOLUME 7)**

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

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**177<sup>th</sup> Sitting**

**2 p.m.**

**Thursday, 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1979**

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**MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (63)**

**Speaker**

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

**Members of Government – People's National Congress (46)**

**Prime Minister (1)**

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

**(Absent – on leave)**

**Deputy Prime Minister (1)**

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

**Senior Ministers (11)**

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C.,  
Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A.,  
Minister of Works and Transport

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

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

\* Cde. H. Green,  
Minister of Health, Housing and Labour (Absent)

\* Cde. H.O. Jack,  
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources (Absent)

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

\* Cde. G.B. Kennard, C.C.H., S.C.,  
Minister of Agriculture (Absent – on leave)

\* Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, C.C.H., S.C.,  
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

\* Cde. V. R. Teekah,  
Minister of Education, Social  
Development and Culture

Cde. R. E. Jackson,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

Cde. J. A. Tyndall, A. A.,  
Minister of Trade and  
Consumer Protection

## **Ministers (2)**

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

Cde. C. A. Nascimento,  
Minister, Office of the Prime Minister (Absent)

## **Ministers of State (10)**

Cde. F.U.A. Carmichael,  
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi)

## **\*Non-elected Ministers**

Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,  
Minister of State,  
Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operatives

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

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

Cde. J.R. Thomas,  
Minister of State, Ministry of Education,  
Social Development and Culture

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,  
Minister of State for Youth and Sport,  
Ministry of National Development

Cde. S. Prashad,  
Minister of State – Regional  
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)

Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman,  
Minister of State,  
Ministry of Agriculture

Cde. L. A. Durant,  
Minister of State,  
( North West )

\* Cde. F.U.A. Campbell,  
Minister of State for Information,  
Ministry of National Development

### **Parliamentary Secretaries (6)**

Cde. M.M. Ackman, C.C.H.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the  
Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip **(Absent – on leave)**

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

### **\* Non-elected Ministers**

Cde. M. Corrica,  
Parliamentary Secretary,  
Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture

Cde. E.M. Bynoe,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade  
and Consumer Protection.

Cde. C.E. Wrights, J.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic  
Development and Co-operatives

**Other Members (15)**

Cde. W.G. Carrington, C.C.H.

Cde. S.M. Field – Ridley

**(Absent- on leave)**

Cde. E.H.A Fowler

Cde. J. Gill

Cde. W. Hussain

Cde. K.M.E. Jonas

Cde. P.A. Rayman

Cde. A. Salim

Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P.

**(Absent – on leave)**

Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S.

**(Absent)**

Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.

**(Absent)**

Cde. H.A. Taylor

Cde. H.B.Walcott

Cde. L.E. Willems

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen

**Members of the Opposition (16)**

**(i) Peoples' Progressive Party (14)**

**Leader of the Opposition (1)**

Cde. C. Jagan,

Leader of the Opposition

**(Absent – on leave)**

**Deputy Speaker (1)**

Cde. Ram Karran

**Other Members (12)**

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

**(Absent)**

**(ii)Liberator Party (2)**

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

**OFFICERS**

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

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

15.3.79  
2.30 p.m.

National Assembly

2.30 – 2.35 p.m.

## PRAYERS

### ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

#### Leave to Members

**The Speaker:** Leave has been granted to the Cde. Prime Minister and to Cde. Salim for today's sitting, and to Cde. Tyndall for the period 12<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> March, 1979.

#### Re-assignment of Cde. J. R. Thomas

I have also been informed that Cde. Thomas who was Minister of State in the Ministry of Health, Housing and Labour has been assigned duties in the Office of the Prime Minister with effect from 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1979. [**Applause**]

### PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following paper was laid:

Annual Report, Accounts and Balance Sheet of the Guyana Agricultural Co-operative Development Bank for 1977. [**The Minister of Finance**]

## PUBLIC BUSINESS

### MOTION

#### APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1979

#### BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed debates on the Motion moved by the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives for the approval of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1979.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Narbeds Persaud.

**15.3.79**

**National Assembly**

**2.30 – 2.35 p.m.**

**Cde. N. Persaud:** Cde. Speaker, last Monday, we heard in the presentation of the Budget Speech by the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives, that there has been a departure from the traditional approach and methodology. True, this is. However, when we strip the 1979 Budget of all its descriptive and sugar-coated verbiage, what picture of the economy does it present? What, may I ask are the realities of the present situation?

There was a fall in living standards for the masses of this country. There is increasing unemployment and an increasing crime rate as a result of unemployment, reduced social services. Then there is the rising cost of living and with this Budget there will be a further increase in the cost of living since all indirect subsidies have been taken away. The figures produced by the hon. Minister of Economic Development do not really give a true picture of the of the economy as a whole. It looks good on paper but when one examines what is happening throughout the country one finds that today a new elite has developed. The poor people in Guyana have become poorer relatively and absolutely. Inflation, as we know it, is an economic disease which damages the masses of a country more than anyone else. The deficit financing which the Government has been indulging in since it came into office, with no increase in productivity, has caused inflationary pressures to rapidly develop in the country. There is no increases production to offset the increased money supply and the quantum of imported goods is decreasing. Deficit financing too, makes the rich in any country richer because the Government has to depend on and borrow from them by selling them securities.

**2.35 p.m.**

Again, may I ask what kind of a picture do we have? There is also presented to the people in this nation a picture of an economy in which the Government lives above its means. This has been admitted in a statement by the Minister. This Government is in perpetual debt. But being in perpetual debt makes the money-lenders and the banks richer. This condition in which the Government lives on overdraft is going to continue. While the Government squanders the taxpayers' money and talks about socialism, the masses of the country are being squeezed

progressively by the activities of the Government. Debt charges continue to rise and the masses will be taxed more and more in order to help pay these charges.

Again, according to the statement made on Monday last, we have the picture of a country that is totally dependent upon imperialist aid, the kind of aid that destroys political sovereignty. In the Budget Speech on page 18, this statement follows:

“The performance of the economy in 1979 was disappointing.

The physical production targets set in the main sectors of economic activity were not achieved. Sugar fell short by 36,000 tons (down 10%); rice by 30,000 tons (down 14%).

For the main bauxite based products, Calcined bauxite fell short by 42,000 tons (down 7%) Alumina by 63,000 tons (down 22%) and Metal Grade Bauxite by 30,000 tons (down 31%) – shortfalls which only partially counterbalanced by the performance in Chemical Grade Bauxite which exceeded projected levels by 77,000 tons (up 32%).

In no significant sector of economic activity was production higher than in 1977. The result has been that, far from achieving the projected 5 per cent growth, there was absolutely no real growth in the economy in 1978.”

What followed? The economy has failed. This is admitted in the Budget Speech presented here by the hon. Minister of Economic Development. Targets have not been achieved. There have been deficits in balance of payments, morals have dropped, there has been no increased production and productivity. In other words, the Government has failed. If the members have the guts with all these failures, they should resign. But they do not have guts. They should resign because with all these failures, obviously the Government has failed. Re-development did not assist the economy. Taxation last year did not assist the economy. Removal of subsidies also did not assist the economy. Lack of democracy or a further erosion of democracy did not also assist the economy. The rigged referendum in July last year did not assist the economy. Moreso, Jim Jones and his commune did not assist the economy. Is it not



really a shame for the Government to come to this honourable House to present a Budget like this admitting throughout that there have been failures? Despite the high taxation and the removal of subsidies for 1978, the economy has had a negative growth.

The 1978 Budget, according to the Minister of Finance when he presented it last year, was the first year of the Third Development Plan, 1978-1981. From the failures enumerated in this 1979 Budget, it is only obvious to conclude that this Third Development Plan will also in the same way the First and Second Development Plans have failed. Evidence to support that is that the first year has already gone down the drain.

There has been much talk about the involvement of the people. When I made my presentation last year, I agreed with the call of the Government speakers and also with the statement in the Budget that the economy can only survive, the economy can only grow, the economy can only prosper if there is full restoration of democracy. Production and productivity have to do with people obviously if the rights of the people are being trampled upon, how can you expect to have increased production and productivity, when these very people whose right you are trampling, are the people you expect to produce and move this country out of the precarious position in which it now finds itself. We talk about production and productivity, but do we ask ourselves what are really the root causes? What are the root causes that we do not have increased production and productivity? The Standby Arrangement signed by the Government last year with the International Monetary Fund, clearly states that production and productivity must increase in 1978/1979. But here it is in March 1979 and we have been told that there is no growth; no increased production and productivity. Despite all of these failures, it is stated in the Budget Speech that the callings placed by the I.M.F. have been reached, I would have liked the nation to know what callings really have been reached. It is stated very vaguely.

There is lack of confidence in this Government as expressed clearly by the ten per cent turnout in the referendum of July 1978. In 1977, it was estimated that the Government would raise

\$30 million by the defence bonds. In reality, it raised \$2.7 million, from the \$30 million estimated. In 1978, it was estimated that it would raise \$2 million. In fact it raised \$100,000. Is it not clear that there is no confidence in this Government? This year it has been forced to scrap it because it would not get one black cent. The Government knows this. It is ashamed to put it, that is why the Government removed it from the estimates.

Lack of confidence in this Government also manifests itself through brain drain. We in the Public Accounts Committee have a problem in that there is a big shortage of senior personnel. In every Public Service section that you can find, people are removing day after day out of this country. This brain drain is shown in the collection of professional fees. From 1976 to 1979 there has been a reduction of 20 per cent of the collection. What does it mean? Does it mean that a man who has paid in 1976 is not paying in 1979? No, it means that that man is no longer here and as day follows night, year follows year, this sum is going to be reduced because more professionals are leaving the country. There is a crisis in the Civil Service where personnel is concerned. I think the Minister of Finance ought to be advised about the present position. There is a crisis right now in the Department of Customs where we do not have personnel there. When the present will have retired, then there will be chaos. We must ask ourselves why.

What about the National Service? Sums of money have been thrown year after year into that pot. Let us examine the income. In 1976 the returns were \$1.3 million. In 1977 they dropped \$.9 million. In 1978 the returns dropped to \$.75 million and again \$.75 million is estimated for 1979. More millions are being thrown. Unfortunately, I do not have the over-all figure but from 1976 to 1979 one sees a progressive decline as far as returns are concerned despite they are far better established.

**2.45 p.m.**

In the 1978 Budget Speech, page 7, we were told that, “In the case of the present Budget,” that is, the 1978 Budget, “we have target 31<sup>st</sup> August, some six months hence, as the date for

review.” Was there a review of the 1978 Budget? If so, what was the result, I would like to know of that review? But the Government continues to fool the nation day after day, telling them “good, we are giving you these targets. We are fixing 31<sup>st</sup> August for review with a view to making changes.” The people are being fooled, day after day, by this Government but take note that the Shah had to go, Gairy had to go, and the question was asked: who is next? It must be a warning. I don’t have the power. Whoever have the power will have to decide who is next.

I move to the other aspect of the statement in the Budget. We talk about diminishing social services, an increased bureaucracy and the increasing debt burden. In 1978, Personal Emoluments amounted to \$176 million or 38percent of the Current Expenditure. Debt charges amounted to \$156 million or 33 percent of the budget. Social services therefore were reduced to 29 percent of the Budget. In 17979, we find from a total Current Expenditure of \$586 million Personal Emoluments alone will add up to \$195.3 million. It means \$19 million more this year than last year. This accounts for 33.2percent of the Current Expenditure. Debt charges have risen from \$154 million to \$234 million making it 40.1 percent of the Budget. Last year, it was 33 per cent. This year it is 40 per cent; Social Services, \$157 million, reduced by 3 per cent. Last year they were 29 per cent, this year, 26 per cent.

It is clear case where one sees that year after year the bureaucracy takes a bigger portion while the constant borrowing of this Government continues. Debt charges become more and more therefore it means that social services, year after year, decline. This is the position. We know very well what is taking place in this country today as far as health services are concerned. We know of the big ballyhoo shouted about free education in this country, the chaotic state in which the education system finds itself. Fifteen dollars a month to old age pensioners. In Trinidad, it is \$65 per month. No provision is made to increase, despite the rising cost of living, that \$15 per month for these people, some of whom are sugar who have sacrificed their rights on the sugar plantations.

I move now to debt charges or public debt. As I said earlier Government continues to fool the people as far as the public debt is concerned. The Bank of Guyana Report for 1978 shows the public debt at \$1729 million. Of course, this is the total of integrated internal and external long term and short term debentures, treasury bills, bank advances, security savings bonds. With more than \$500 million added to that for 1978, it has gone to \$2.2 billion. Debt is debt, public debt is public debt, money owing is money owing; it is useless to tell the people that we owe \$1141 million whereas, in fact, we owe double that amount, \$2.2 billion. Why fool the people? We have got to pay back. The Government has been borrowing. Who is going to pay? Obviously the workers have to pay.

Again I want to point out some contradictions in the 1979 estimates as compared with 1978. From the 1978 Estimates, I quote that at the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1977 the public debt will stand at \$971.2 million. This Budget points to the year after, 31.12.78; it will be \$974.9 million. With all the borrowing last year, \$3 million more! This is one public debt. The figures are here what we pay back. External borrowing at 31.12.77 was \$700.9 million. This year shows external borrowing at \$661.9 million. It is increasing. This is not fooling the people. Last year you told the nation external borrowing would be \$700 million. This year in spite of the heavy borrowing for last year you come now and tell them external borrowing is \$661.9 million. Is there something wrong or do you want to fool the people? External borrowing is \$270.3 million for 1978 and internal borrowing for 1979 will be \$3.30 million. It was anticipated borrowing \$175 million in 1978 and it is anticipated to borrow this year \$276 million. That gives a total for last year of \$116.4 million and the total for this year, \$442 million. Repayments for 1978, \$60.7 million out of \$154 million put aside in the Estimates for public debt. That means capital; therefore, \$94 million for interest charges.

When you take out that \$60.7 from a total according to the 1978 Estimates, you are supposed to be left with \$1055.7 million, at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1978. Yet the 1979 Budget comes up and says that at 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1978, the public debt was \$974.9 million. The figures are only extracted, they are not my additions or subtractions.

The 1978 Budget says that at the end of 1978 the public debt will be \$1055.7 million. The 1979 Budget says that at 31<sup>st</sup> December, despite all the heavy borrowing, it was \$974.9. What a contradiction! It is anticipated that this year we are going to borrow \$267.3 million. Debt repayments will be \$100.6 million. It means, therefore, that interest alone is going to be \$133.8 million. This how it goes. I will come to that in a minute.

In 1974, debt charges were \$56.7 million. In 1975, debt charges were \$67.9; in 1976 debt charges were \$116.8 million; in 1977 debt charges were \$125.0 million. Cde Speaker, this is the position. I have given the figures already for 1978 and 1979.

### 2.55 p.m.

May I at this stage, Cde. Speaker, turn to quote from this booklet that I have here. It is a memorandum presented by G.A.W.U. to a Trade Union Congress that there was in November at the Critchlow Labour College entitled “The Economic Crisis in Guyana.” Dealing with debt, I want to quote what the Prime Minister and Cde Reid, our Deputy Prime Minister, said. I will take the bigger one first. In 1970, Prime Minister, L. F. S. Burnham said that development would not come from foreign aid, according to the **Guyana Graphic** of 3. 2. 70. Prime Minister Burnham Told village fathers on the East Coast Demerara that foreign aid could not develop Guyana. In explaining the point that foreign aid could not develop this country, the Prime Minister said that it was too expensive in terms of the interest charges that had to be paid and also from the point of view of the fact that aid was always tied to the purchase at high prices of the goods and services of the donor country.

What did our Deputy Prime Minister say? Dr. P. A. Reid, Deputy Prime Minister told the P.N.C Annual Congress in 1970 that “aid is tied to political or expected political alignment to the donor country in major matters on the world scene and as part of this scheme, key off leers in the under- developed countries are subjected, ostensibly on training, to indoctrination in the donor

country or sent on free trips so that they can become sympathetic to the way of life and thinking in the donor country.”

Despite all the mouthings of the two ‘major political persons’ in this country, aid continues to be the panacea of this so-call P.N.C. Government. And they themselves are saying here, aid is tied up with political patronage. Cde. Speaker, what is the position? They made this statement, yes, but what is the present position? I would like to inform this House that recent developments, particularly the foreign investment code, have in no uncertain terms proved that this Government is moving more and more to the Right because of a closing of the gap in views, that is, between the Guyana Government and the U.S. administration. We have here that they are shifting to the Right and that is in the direction of imperialism and capitalism and they are borrowing heavily from whom? The U.S.A., United Kingdom, West Germany, Japan, Canada, and, of course all the other imperialist-dominated institutions, such as the World Bank, the Inter- American Development Bank, and the I. M. F., all these organizations and institutions are controlled and manipulated by the imperialist states.

But, Cde. Speaker, huge debt burden has to be met from taxation. Obviously. And it is going to be met from taxation, it means definitely that we have to pay. Now, I have said \$2.2 billion but let me just take \$2 billion and put the number of inhabitant has a debt of \$2,000. If you were to take the actual population of about 800,000 then it means that that debt will be more per head. I will also put the interest charges at 3 per cent and at 3 per cent will mean that every single person will have to pay an interest charge of \$60 per year. Every person! But, Cde. Speaker, I go further to take the work force, the working man, and putting that figure at 400,000. We do not have that but I am being very generous. If there are 400,000 working people in this country, it means that every person will have to find \$8,500 as debt; 400,000 will mean that every worker is indebted by \$5,000 right away and interest charges of \$150 per year will have to be found. This is why the Government cannot afford to pay the \$14 per day, but it means that every working man has to find that amount of money to pay in debt charges. Production and

productivity will not increase just like that. Obviously not! Government has borrowed too much money.

We have been able to do some research. We have been able and we have time and again been telling this Government of wrong priorities. I have been able to get twelve years' Estimates and here I have clearly put year after year all the monies spent under the Ministry of Economic Development, all the monies spent for roads, and all the monies spent for agriculture. Year after year, Code Number after Code Number, item after item, what does one find/ we have said over and over again that this Government was placing too much emphasis on infrastructure. Roads alone.

For the past twelve years, excluding 1979, using the Estimates for 1978 and the Revised Estimates for 1977, we spent \$255.9 million on roads. That is why we are forced to starve today. We cannot eat the roads. Call it \$256 million, as compared with agriculture, \$184 million. We have been telling this Government over and over that industry and agriculture are the two sectors that are going to take this country out of the financial mess in which it is. It was only one or two years ago that this Government decided to accept what we were telling it and so it has changed the emphasis, but, Cde. Speaker, let me ask this House so that the nation will know what advantages we have in spending \$38 million to bridge the Demerara River against setting up industries to the worth of \$38 million?

We had a transportation system there, however inadequate. But priority is priority. Food is necessary. Was it not better to take \$38 million and establish some factories here? In the process of the construction of the factories employment would be created. After the factories had been completed, employment would be there for those who would go into the production or manufacture or of whatever you want it to do. Between three to five years, you would find that we would have been able to recoup the capital. What is the reality? We have been telling the members of the Government but their heads are too hard: they will not hear! They will not accept! Let them resign now! Yes! If they have any shame they will do that. [Applause]

Cde. Speaker, industrial development. There is the amount of \$105 million spent against \$256 million in roads. Industrial development is needed for any developing country after it has won achieved its political independence. It is the country's duty to move on for economic independence. Industrial development and agricultural development are the immediate tasks. Much has been said about the fishing industry. Let us look into the development of fishing. We see that only \$481,088 was spent during the past twelve years to develop the fishing industry. Now the Government is talking about the expansion of the fishing industry and the shrimping industry. When we look at all the money that has been spent on land development schemes, we find that in relation to what we are now receiving, sums spent are really exorbitant in some cases. Let us take the North West Region, for example. We find that \$16 million has been spent there. When we take the estimate to see what we are getting from that \$16 million, we find and can only conclude that money went into North West Region, because of Jim Jones and company, to develop that region. On the other hand, when we take Anna Regina, we find the negligible sum of only \$63,775 as compared with what is demanded from that development scheme. Since time is against me, I will not go into the other places. Other speakers will deal with those in detail.

I move now to the financial position of the country. The consolidated Fund expresses the financial position of the Treasury. In 1975, we stood at a deficit of \$283.6 million. In 1976, it rose to a deficit of \$360.2 million. In 1977 it moved further to \$485.1 million. In 1978, it moved to \$578.2 million. In 1979 it has now gone to a deficit of \$753 million. As I explained, all revenues received go to the Consolidated Fund or the four hundred account, then the money goes into the general account or the four hundred and five account. Perhaps we have money that has been advanced there to the sum of \$97.5 million which will mean, as the balance sheet shows, a deficit of \$655 million. That is the present position of this country. When the Jagan Government left, \$5 million liquid cash was there. That has now turned over in thirteen years to a deficit of \$655 million.

I move briefly to the cost of living. We have found that the recent hikes in oil prices obviously will send up the cost of living. The Minister has told us in the Budget Speech that



there is no taxation. But let Cde. Hope tell me, when he is going to reply, how much tax, out of the increase for oil, is going to the Government coffers. People cannot get gas to cook so they have to go and search for kerosene and that price has been raised. This is the working class Government. This is the socialist Government. Let the Minister say how much of this tax is going to the Government.

Early this year we had increased price for milo, which is the small man's diet, bicycle tubes and tyres, which make up the small man's transportation, soap and soap powder. Is this Government a working class Government? Obviously not. From August, 1977 to August, 1978, all prices increased by 25.2 per cent. From December, 1977 to December, 1978 all prices increased by 39.2 per cent. This is the position and all these increases came about largely because of the I.M.F. Things are so bad in this country that with your permission, I am go, Cde. Speaker I am going to quote from a Photostat copy of a paper I have here which lists goods brought into this country by the mother of a Parliamentary Secretary present in this House. He lives in the same house with his mother. It was a barrel consisting of goods weighing 260 pounds. It consisted of rice, sugar, flour, oil, salt, corned beef, salt fish, sardine, jello, tomato paste, toilet paper, soap, soap powder, baby food, tea peanut butter, cheese, cereal, dresses, shoes brassieres panty hose. That Parliamentary Secretary who sits on the side of the Government lives with his mother and she brought in these things. It demonstrates clearly how things are in this country. They talk about assisting the poor man, yet rice, sugar and oil have to be imported into the home of a Parliamentary Secretary.

I move quickly to the question of trade. Since time is very limited I must admit that I will have to gloss over this one. This is the position. In 1977, we have been able to see that out of a of \$804 million worth of imports, only \$8.1 million worth of trade was done with the socialist countries. This Government is presently involved in importing goods from the C. D. R. They know very well how cheap those goods are. They are that cheap that Guyana Stores Ltd. Marks up about 300 per cent to 600 per cent on the goods. That is because the goods are so cheap and because I. M. F. said that the corporation has to increase its surplus. Why don't they go to the

socialist countries, prices are stable there. Inflation is under control. Instead, they trade with CARICOM and we pay higher prices for inferior quality in some cases.

I move now to the last item and that is public accountability. What is the present position? A lot has been said in this speech about public accountability. The recommendation by the Public Accounts Committee for the years 1962 to 1966 are covered with the cobweb on Minister Hope's desk. Recommendations of the Public Accounts Committee made for the years 1962 to 1966 are still lying on his desk and not brought into this Parliament to tell this House and the nation what they are doing about the recommendations made. Yet, for all, squandermania continues, stealing continues, corruption continues, and this Government has the temerity to come here and talk about people's involvement and accountability.

### 3.15 p.m.

Further to that, Cde. Speaker, the committee has just completed the examination of 1968 and 1969 reports. The examination of the 1967 report by the Public Accounts Committee has been completed and it will be tabled in this House as soon as you are prepared, Cde. Speaker. It will be tabled very shortly. Now the examination of the 1968 and 1969 reports has just been completed. The 1970 Report of the Director of Audit was given to Cde. Hope since November, 1977; he has not yet found it fit to bring it to this House to lay it so that the Public Accounts Committee can start examining the rascalities that have taken place during that year. Why since 1977 November, he has it and he is afraid to bring it to this house and lay it here? Then you speak about public accountability. Public accountability of what, when we are now examining in 1979, the 1968 and 1969 reports. Officers have resigned, officers have gone away, some to the far beyond. Even those who are here cannot answer because ten years have passed, records are no longer there and you talk about public accountability. This is where the stealing goes on. Let the Government set up a Commission to investigate where the \$2.2 million that is borrowed has gone to. Let the corporations also have public accountability to the nation. Million of dollars are being aquandered year after year in these corporations.

We know for a fact that the delays in presenting these reports by the Director of Audit really defeat the purpose of public accountability. But why do we say that we have a Public Accountability Committee when the 1970 Report is not laid in this House for examination? One can very well see what is going on in this country. As I said, public accountability goes beyond that. Not only financial. Public Accountability means that you must go and face the nation; you must prove your salt to the nation and if you have failed then be prepared to face the nation at free and fair elections. Obviously, if we were to have that tomorrow there would be no P. N. C. Government. These people are shameless. As I said the country is \$655 million in the red as compared with \$5 million surplus in 1964. Despite the fact that we were in colonial days and we were not able to borrow; we were not able to develop as we wanted to – that is the position today.

Year after year this Government come to this House and cries tears that the economy is falling and falling. Now it has started a new tune. Increase production and productivity. The Prime Minister says produce or perish. No production means that we have been to perish and we have been perishing. It is time that this Government seriously considers its position, if it is really interested in this nation, if it is really interested in the welfare of the people. It should really take a close examination of the only thing is for this Government to resign.

Last year, in my presentation, I quoted from a well-known world personality who said that tyrants and dictators are riding on the backs of tigers and those tigers are getting hungry. They get hungry in Grenada and obviously they are getting hungry here. Let the Government take note, let it take a warning. I am calling on it, having failed for all these years, having pointed out in this Budget all the failures for 1978, to consider carefully whether it wants to face the fate of Galary, or resign.

**The Speaker:** Comrades and hon. Members, I think I should inform you that we will sit until 5, suspend and resume at 5.30, and sit until 8.30 p.m. Cde. Hope.

**The Minister of Finance** (Cde. Hope): Cde. Speaker, much play has been made on the part of the Opposition of the very candid position taken by the Government to declare to the nation that in terms of physical output the economy did not perform as was expected. It is a kind of statement designed to bring the facts home not only to Parliament but to the people, in the sense that the Government has nothing in this matter to hide.

I think looking and concentrating purely on what happened to physical output was not and certainly is not enough in order to judge how the economy and the people performed last year. I think the Opposition will be the first to recognize that, after all, the purpose of producing more is in order to bring more welfare and better standards of living to the people. And when one looks at that aspect of things, how did the people fare last year in terms of employment, in terms of income, in terms of purchasing power, I think the situation would become much clearer in terms of judging the performance of the economy.

During last year, the public sector alone, to say nothing of the private sector at this stage, which represents something of the order of 70 per cent of the economy, paid wages and salaries amounting to some \$494 million. The public sector here includes both Government enterprises as well as the central Government. It compares with 1977 when the payment amounted to \$376 million. Through the instrumentality of the public sector, \$119 million more was put in the hands of workers in one year. But I think this one way in which we need to judge the economy. At the same time, contrary to what the speaker has been saying a moment ago, the cost of living as measured by the urban consumer price index rose 15 per cent in 1978 on average compared with the average in 1977. Compare this with the increase in wages and salaries in the hands of workers, an increase of \$119 million over a total of the previous year of \$376 million and we get there an increase of 32 per cent.

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Indeed, Cde. Speaker, the public sector put in the hands of its workers income amounting to 32 per cent higher in 1978 than it did in 1977. And even if one were to say fine, the cost of living went up, then the cost of living went up by an average of 15 per cent, so that in real terms, the real purchasing power of the majority of workers in this country, and I am sure what is true for the public sector was also true for the private sector, went up by 17 per cent in real terms.

In other words, the wages and salaries paid amounted to a figure 32 per cent higher in 1978, the cost of living was only 15 per cent higher. In real terms, there was an increase in purchasing power of some 17 per cent in one year.

### 3.25 p.m.

Secondly, there is the question of employment. One recognized that despite the failure of the economy to produce more good in real terms, employment did not lag. On the contrary, there is ample evidence to suggest that employment increase in 1978 over 1977. We have figures which suggest that in the M.R.A scheme alone there were 400 new employment opportunity and that will rise this year to over 800. In the Tapakuma, the employment figure was just over 400 in 1978 and this will rise again to a figure 600 by the end of the year 1979 and one can go on and point to a number of other schemes, for instance, what is happening in the textile mill, what is happening in the glass factory, to indicate that the level of employment, far from diminishing in 1978, was rising. On those two major indicators of people's welfare, economy came out in 1978 better than it did in 1977 on the ground of employment and on the ground of income.

Admittedly, what did suffer was the fact that many public corporations were unable to make returns of large surpluses and sometimes no surpluses at all were reported. But the question of the surpluses produced by the public corporation has to do with the ability of those public corporations in the future to pay for their own expansion. Certainly, when we are examining the performance of the economy in real term production terms, one need to examine as I said before, Cde. Speaker, the question of what was happening to workers welfare in the meantime. Certainly, no one is making any excuse for the fact that production lagged in

1978. The truth of the matter must rest essentially on two major factors, one of which was debated in here quite extensively the question of what was happening to electric power. The power failures in 1978 certainly put a damper on production within the economy. In addition to that, the fast of foreign exchange shortages also placed serious hindrances in the way of rapid production in real terms.

Cde. Speaker, the question of foreign exchange problems is not a matter in which Guyana is unique. It is a problem which arises from two facts mainly, one is the question of prices for certain commodities like petroleum and I am going to come to these petroleum prices increases very shortly, and has also to do with the changes, the rising prices of a number of other commodities like machinery, fertilizers and so on, all of which is the present circumstances, a country like Guyana has no control over. Let us understand it very clearly, Cde. Speaker.

It is not only Guyana and the West that are feeling the pinch of petroleum price but members of COMECON also are feeling increased prices for petroleum coming out of the Soviet Union. The truth of the matter therefore is that all countries which are users of petroleum, irrespective of where there are located, find it necessary to pay higher amount for petroleum. The same thing applies to machinery. At the same time, for many of the commodities that we are exporting - it is well known – the prices are depressed. Indeed and in fact, these are the elements which give rise to what happens to your foreign exchange and with low prices for sugar and high prices for petroleum and machinery, it is not surprising, Cde. Speaker, that the country is in fact facing difficulties with respect to the availability of foreign exchange. That has certainly hampered the flow of production within the country.

Cde. Speaker, the point was made also of the Government deficit. I think it is something of the past that we need to balance the Budget to the last dollar. I am not surprised that the P.P.P considers that balancing the Budget to the last dollar is sacrosanct. After all, they operated within a milieu which suggested that was the only thing they could do or seek to do. But management of the economy today is a much more sophisticated exercise, indeed, whether a

country can tolerate a deficit or not will depend substantially on certain things. One thing will be the level of savings which that country is able to generate within – because the Government now is operating in a much wider ambit than in the past. The Government today is not confined, is not restricted to administration. The Government is involved in the job economic growth and expansion and development. The Government does not leave growth and development in the economy to the private sector. The Government plays a dynamic and a leading role in the question of development and growth within the economy, therefore, its financial operations would need to be cast in a completely different frame from that to which the P.P.P. was accustomed when its sole task in the government was to administer and not to develop.

**3.35 p.m.**

The real question, therefore, is, can the country generate the savings in order to balance the deficit? One does not look solely, purely at the deficit. One look at the ability of the economy through the savings it generates to balance out that deficit. In other words, since the Government is involved in economic expansion, it is the Government that has to take the savings of the people to invest it, not the private entrepreneur any longer. In the past that is what happened. This private entrepreneur was took this domestic savings and invested them. Today, since the Government is playing this dynamic role in terms of development, it is the Government that takes the savings of the people for investment. You are bound, in those circumstances, to see a deficit from time to time because that recognises the level to which the Government is utilizing the savings of the nation, and to speak about a deficit per se is not to recognize a sophistication of economic management, one can be simple and take the very simplistic position and say this is the deficit. Fine! But the deficit along is not the whole story. It is the question of how that deficit is financed.

From there we have the familiar rhetoric about borrowing and public debt. We have the additional input of the foreign investment code and we hear the opposition speaker regarding to investment code as a moment to right. Nothing can be more wrong, nothing can be more

unfounded in his assertion. In the investment code, the Government is in fact saying that it welcome private investment, but welcome private investment within a certain framework which guarantees that the private investor recognizes that the Government has the dominate role and control of its natural resources, that it must pay due regard to certain objectives of the Government with respect to trade union and so on. It could never be an indication of a turn to the right. If not, why is it that today we find that all the outstanding debts of the Eastern socialist countries exceed 35 billion, and that those debts are owed exclusively to Western bank. Why is it?

Secondly, why is it that one of the leading commercial banks in North America is operating in the Soviet Union why is it that we read about joint ventures between what are certainly some of the leading Socialist countries in the world and Western capitalist organization. Then we hear about if you are borrowing from the world Bank it is evidence that you are to the right, that you are deviating from your Socialist objectives and yet, the meeting of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund this year is to be held in Belgrade. Yet, we hear the opposition here telling people that when you are borrowing money from the World Banks you are doing something which is inconsistent with socialism. How is it consistent?

Are we then faced with two measures, one for the right Eastern socialist countries and one for ourselves that they can work with the World Bank, they can work with the multinational commercial banks which are privately owned, and we cannot, without in any way compromising our own ideological position I say that is very naïve, maybe misleading, but certainly it is a clear demonstration that the speaker a moment ago is not aware of the full facts of international relations. He ought to know that it is longer true that Socialist countries do not deal with multinational banks like the World Bank, That longer deal with transnational private banks alike Citibank, Chase Manhattan and so on.

We heard a very unusual calculation that the public debts he includes not only long-term public debts which has sometimes thirty to forty year for payment, but the shorter-term treasury bills which move up and down, day to day, month –is to the tune of approximately \$2,000 per



head of population. It seems to me that if the opposition say that, once can also say that the income per caput in Guyana is \$1,200. Therefore, if one uses a debt of \$2,000 per head to earn income of \$1,200 per annum, one cannot be far out. The point I am making is that no objective analysis would deny that Guyana, even at the present level, carries a debt burden which it is capable of carrying. It does not strength its resources to breaking point. There are many countries in the world which has a debt is not burden way above what we have. The important issue in this matter of debt is not merely to look at how much is the debt, but we have to look at the structure of that debt. Certainly, if one has a debt, all of which has to be repaid in one year, it is much more onerous burden than if one had that same kind of debt to be repaid in forty years. Many of our debts as they stand here have repayment schedules that vary from twenty year up to forty years. These are the facts. The opposition/member do not appreciate those fact or recognize that in terms of analyzing a position once need to take all the relevant element into consideration and say very clearly that we have a debt burden which the economy can carry. We do not have a debt burden which is excessive in term of any kind of standard, and that is important.

We recognise that, one has also to look at the structure of the debt.

### 3.45 pm

Cde, speaker, last year the Government had put certain options before Parliament in term of the financial operation. It is in the 1978 Budget, this Government proposed expenditures on capital and current amounting to about \$644 million in total. In the event, the expenditure was of the order of \$633 million. We also forecast revenue at this beginning of the year at \$528 million. In fact, we received revenues current and capital amounting to almost 4540 million What those account demonstrated is simply this, that in the management of the financial resources of the Government during 1978, the Government sought to manage its resources in such a way as to bring its revenues and expenditure as close as possible to the planned figures.

It was on that basic that even the deficit that we anticipating turned out to be significantly lower and the fact that we had some amount of excess expenditures on the current budget was largely due to the fact that in 1978 we increase interest rates so that savers could be encouraged to save. That, of course, placed a further additional burden of about \$14 million on the Government.

The truth, therefore, is that the revenue performance was satisfactory in our view and through management of those resources, we were able to keep our deficit down to below the planned levels. One off-shoot of this fact is that we were able, as the budget speech pointed out, to meet our IMF ceiling. It is well know as this time that when we entered into the agreement with the IMF, certain target were placed and agreed on. One of those targets was the 5 per cent growth we had hoped for. Another target was the increases savings within the public sector. In order to measure the achievements of those target, certain ceiling were placed on certain critical factors within the Government's borrowing from the domestic banking system and they were three relevant dates. One of those dates, the last of the three, was on February 28. I think it was the Government's credit that the target was met on all three dates. That ceiling was met by all three relevant dates.

In addition to that, the IMF also set targets with respect to the rate at which we reduce the commercial arrears that the country owed to external suppliers. One of the requirements was that the level should have been \$55 million at the end of February, in other words, that we should have brought down our commercial arrears from \$100 million in August last year to \$55 million by the end of February this year. When we look at the figure, the level of arrears had been brought down not to \$55 million but to &45 million. In the two critical ceilings, the level of commercial arrears as well as the level of Government borrowing from the domestic banking system, the Government has met its ceiling with the International Monetary Fund and in face, on that basic was able to draw on the advances which the IMF was to make to this country in foreign exchange. Flowing out of these financial arrangements, the inflow between August to

today in something of the order of &70 million. And not so long ago we read in the newspapers that CUYMINE was able to restructure a part of its commodity in order to reduce the immediate burden in payments. That was possible because it was generally recognised that the country had moved back into a significant amount of stability to engender the confidence of the people of both financial and commercial levels with which the country deal.

In the final analysis, the budget is only one aspect of thing. One has to look very carefully at what is happening to the development aspect of things. It is there where the four year programmes become relevant. The Opposition member declared a moment ago that the priorities in the past have been wrong and those priorities have now become right. It seems to me that no one can build a country where infrastructure does not exist without first putting in infrastructure. Clearly, how does one guarantee some reasonable level in agriculture unless one puts in the drainage and irrigation works that are necessary.

That is infrastructure. One cannot start at the level of factories. One cannot start at the level of farming the land. One must start at the level of water control in our circumstances.

**3.55 p.m.**

Secondly, clearly communication is important. There are few countries that I know of that have been able to develop without an adequate road communication system, Indeed, much as one would like to move away from expenditure on roads, one finds that is impossible because today we are thinking of roads which are essentially for of market roads that will connect what is essentially farming areas to areas where produce is to be exported or where it is to be consumed, therefore, the question of priority is really a matter of where one puts the emphasis in terms of one's own assessment of what must come first. It is our view that the infrastructure, drainage and irrigation, road system, and water transportation system, are necessary infrastructure for any kind of development to take place within this country.

It is true that the previous plan might have put emphasis on that kind of thing but this is the whole purpose of plans, as one plan seldom emphasis the sane sectors that the previous plan emphasized. So the present plan puts emphasis on a number of things. It puts emphasis on agriculture development. It puts emphasis on proper water supply, it put emphasis on proper water, transportation systems. It put emphasis on the manufacturing side of things and it is because of this that we the textile mill going up, that we see the glass factory being installed. Now, the glass factory in itself is due to come on stream, I am advised, towards the middle of this year. **(Interruption)** When that factory comes on stream, there will be a large amount of import substitution that will be possible in that area.

The real problem is how you balance your development. It has no point over-emphasizing one sector to the detriment of the other sector and if one looks at the programme which is planned one sees a programme of very balanced development, balanced both in terms of the emphasis of the sector and in terms of its distribution geographically over the country so that we are establishing a water control scheme in the Essequibo, another in Demerara/Berbice, and a third on the Corentyne. The glass factory has been put on the East Bank of Demerara and a brick factory on the West Bank and so we have sought a balance development of the sectors as well as a balance throughout the country in terms of its geographical location. All of these projects are in the productive field.

We have sought to emphasis the productive sector which at the same time not denying developments in the social field. One only has to look at what is happening in the field of education to see the vast sums of money which are to be spend in the area of education.

Very soon, we will be signing up agreements which will see the commencement of building schools involving civil works amounting to some &31 million. These schools are stretched throughout the length and breath of this country. The same thing applies to water. In the estimated, there is a large sum of about &8 million which is to be spent on the development of pure water. If we look at the hospitals, the same thing applies. The Ministry of Health will

soon be embarking on a very expensive programme of (referral) hospitals and a number of health centers and cottage hospitals in various parts of the country. Indeed and in face, therefore, while the productive sectors have been emphasized, the social sectors are also given attention.

I should also mention as part of this ample development, our forestry sector. If one examines the estimates one will see provided there are some \$20 million for the establishment organization which is putting in equity. Apart from that, it is 100 per cent government-owned. That company, apart from that small equity, from the European Investment Bank, is going to be practically 100 per cent Government-owned and its purpose is to develop the forest industry in the area of the Upper Demerara. During the course of this year, the road leading to that site, which was commenced last year, should be taken very near to completion. In effect, the major sectors, agriculture, forest, fishing, as we can find fishing, as well as the social sectors, have received allocations in investments.

Cde. Speaker, we need to recognise that a lot that a lot of these plans can face serious problems because of developments which are taking place in the world today and one of these developments relates really to what is happening with the OPEC and oil. The comrade who spoke earlier referred to the oil price increases. It is well known that the OPEC countries have promulgated and increase in the price of fuel by 14½ per cent. Unfortunately, that is not going to be the full extent of the increase this year. A number of other developments have been taking place and one of those developments springs from what has been happening in Iran. Events there have ensured that the world supply of fuel shell diminished. The end result of that is that the demand and supply on the spot market today is moving in a way to push prices on the spot market up very rapidly.

**4.05 p.m.**

Today we are told that the spot market price is almost double the posted price for fuel and that increase is likely to go up further. If that were all I think the story might have been

somewhat different. What is happening is that even where the oil is being sold on contract, there has been a tendency for the suppliers to increase their prices above the posted prices to take advantage of the demand and supply position. It is clearly in that context that we increased the prices of gasoline recently.

I want to ensure this house that is calculating the increased prices for gasoline, the only increase that has been put there has been the increase in the landed cost of the fuel. In other words, the tax element was left static in many terms, so that indeed there has been no extra taxation in that prices of gasoline as a result of the increase in the price on the landed cost of gasoline. Clearly, if fuel prices continue to move in the way they are doing, this can have very serious consequences not only for Guyana but for all users of fuel. In fact, the developed countries themselves are forecasting today a recession on the basis of a higher price for all. In Guyana, it could mean all kinds of things. It could mean increases in the price of fertilizers, increases in the price of machinery and, indeed, practically, the whole gamut of manufactured goods. The effect of this is certainly going to the cost of development is going to rise and I think one needs to recognise that one off the effects of the increase in O.P.E.C. prices can be a serious increase in cost in this implementation of projects. Therefore, when one sees that purchases become more costly in terms of implementation and more money has to be raised, one needs to analyse the situation more fully and recognise what is happening to the price of inputs over which we have no control whatsoever.

In the process of the Government's dealings, we have in fact sought to change the structure of its trading relationship and I think it should be known to the country at large that we will now be selling to the G.D.R. rum, which we never sold before, rice, as well as bauxite. We will also be importing goods from the G.D.R. We are importing also from Hungary. We expect that a lot of drugs will come out of Hungary and a lot of goods, largely, will be coming out of the G.D.R. as well as out of the People's Republic of China.

At the same time, we are again in the course of negotiating the sale of sugar to China and they have also undertaken – and we are exploring this – to purchase bauxite. Indeed, in the process of examining our trading relationship, we have in fact been ensuring that more trade is done with the Socialist countries. More exports will go to them and more of our imports will come out of those countries.

I should also add that the Government is giving a lot of attention to the pricing policies pursued by the public corporations. While it may be true that in certain isolated cases there has been a rather heavy mark-up on goods going to those Corporations, the Government as a matter of policy is looking at the pricing arrangements in a number of public corporations with a view to ensuring that where goods have been received at reasonably good prices, the consumer gets the advantage of those prices.

On the question of public accountability, there have been substantial delays in terms of the preparation of accounts for the examination of the Auditor General. Last year or the year before, a programme was worked out on the basis of which reports would be completed on certain target dates during last year. Unfortunately, those target dates have not been kept largely because of the difficulties with electric power encountered by the Data Processing Division. Unfortunately, all Government accounts – at least for those annual accounts – are computerized. If anything goes wrong with the computer there is delay and there were a lot of electrical problems arising out of the supply of power to the division that was responsible for the processing of these data. There has been delay for that purpose but there has been something else.

In the course of the year we also change the priority slightly and we have been concentrating rather heavily on 1978 so that as of today, the 1978 information has been substantially processed. There is still work to be done, naturally, but it has gone much farther ahead than we had ever contemplated last year, so that we will see the completion of the 1978 report very early. That has in fact, caused delay on the earlier ones.

**15.3.79**

**National Assembly**

**4.05- 4.15 p.m.**

(Cde. Hope continued)

We are giving you a current report. We are giving you both reports. We are giving you current reports as well as the background. All the background will be done. What we are doing is allowing the Parliament to see the current position almost simultaneously with the past.

**4.15 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, the fact that these reports have been delayed has nothing to do with an attempt by the Government to hide any facts. The Public Accounts Committee is there. The reports go before the Public Accounts Committee when they are available and we are seeking to make them available rapidly. The Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee is Cde. Narbada Persaud, devoted member of the Opposition, and I am sure that where there are any unsavory parts of the report to Parliament, these reports will be made available to the Public Accounts Committee. This has nothing at all to do with any suggested attempt on the part of the Government to hide. The Government has nothing to hide. All its expenditures have been brought to Parliament, every bit of expenditure done by the Government over a number of years in the past has been approved by Parliament and therefore it is only the mechanical difficulty of getting the machines working constantly to bring all the reports to Parliament.

Cde. Speaker, in general, what we see in the budget for 1979 is an attempt to accelerate growth within the country. You look at the figures and see that the programme for 1979, the capital programme, has been pitched much higher than the programmed for 1978. Part of that is accounted for by the fact that a number of resource projects can now accelerate quite rapidly. For instance, on the Tapakuma, the second phase will be commenced this year, both phases will be going on simultaneously. In the M.M.A. there is substantial acceleration again because on this occasion in his year, very soon the contract for the work will be given to a contractor. Another group should also be working. In many areas we will see acceleration of the development process. This is why the programme has been pitched higher.



One advantage in this programme as it stands today is that on the basis of money there should be very little reason why the programme should be delayed. In fact our greatest fear lies in the fact that the manpower may not all be available to carry the full programme. And this is a completely different picture from that printed by Cde. Persaud earlier of unemployment and so on. If there is anything to fear in the development programme this year it is the question whether there is enough manpower within the country to see the programme through. That is a question of time. The programmes are there, the opportunities are there. We trust, Cde. Speaker, that the industrial relations climate will be sufficiently quiet to ensure that the work of development continues. We trust that the Opposition will not seek, as it has done unsuccessfully in the past to attempt to sabotage the work of development within this country. We trust and we hope that the Opposition will recognize the futility of its call to people to slow down production.

Cde. Speaker, you will recall in our analysis we told the House why production did not move ahead as rapidly as we hoped and, therefore, we did not in fact consider that the activities of the Opposition were relevant in that area. But, certainly, Cde. Speaker, it seems to me that when one looks at what happened in the sugar industry in 1978 where a lot of the canes were burnt, resulting in low sucrose content, one can refute the allegation that the sugar price was high but sugar returns were low. It was the aftermath of that futile strike which was previously called in the industry in 1977. It is true that members of the Opposition cannot really effectively and finally retard the course of growth; from their very negative activities they can and in fact do some temporary harm to our production efforts.

I therefore only hope that in this year, the Opposition will recognise that it needs to lend every support to the task of development because, after all, if development is for the benefit of the people, it is through development that the people will get free education, that there can be more and more schools to serve more and more children of kindergarden age; it is through development that we can get pure water supply in the districts; it is through development and the early fruits of that development that the Government can pass on to the people, subsidies.

Therefore, the efforts of production must not be restricted, must not be hampered by activities of the Opposition.

**4.25 p.m.**

To my mind, Cde. Speaker, my Guyanese today who does not join with the Government to urge, to mobilize and to activate people to production cannot claim to be patriotic. Production is vital to our survival. The Opposition quoted the Prime Minister as saying if we do not produce, we perish. But Cde. Speaker, which country has progressed without production, higher production and greater productivity ?It is out of that production and increased productivity that we can get higher returns to people and to the employee, and this Budget, framed as it is with its emphasis on development. I think, guarantees that in the failure there is the wherewithal to produce within the country. What we are doing now is putting in the pieces, putting in the installations, putting in the water supply, putting the equipment and it is in future years that one will see the production. I trust, Cde. Speaker, that the Opposition will recognise that it could have a part to play in galvanizing people to produce and will seek to join the Government in that laudable exercise. **(Applause)**

**The Speaker:** Cde. Basir.

**Cde. Basir:** Cde. Speaker, I have been listening to the various speakers and the speech that was delivered last Monday by the Hon. Minister Cde. Desmond Hoyte. Cde. Speaker, when we look at the 1979 Budget we observe that it is an admission of colossal failure and this failure has reflected the stagnation of the economy, the further suffering of the working people, an atmosphere of non-commitment and the result is lack of motivation, lack of production.

Cde. Speaker, I call your attention to page 56 of the Budget Speech where it states:

“Comrade Speaker, the stark and inescapable fact is that our expectations for growth

in the economy during 1978 have not materialized. Production remain static.”

Cde. Speaker, how was this possible? How was it that production remained static when the State machinery or what we can term the coercive apparatus is in the hands of the Government? For example, all these are in the hands of the hands of the Government? For Example, all these are in the hands of the Government, the army, the National Service, the Police, the radio, the press, two-thirds of the Parliament, and, for the matter, so per cent of the economy is in the public sector controlled by the Government. How is it that the growth in the economy has not materialized when the Government has such a commanding position and all these facilities in its hands? This is the major question one has to ask and therefore, if we are to speak on sabotage as the last speaker mentioned, I am wondering from what angle the sabotage is coming. This is why we have to have a realistic analysis of what is going on in this country here today.

Cde Speaker, I quote from page 18 of the Budget Speech. The Minister states:

“What did we achieve in 1978? The performance of the economy in 1978 was disappointing. The physical production targets set in the sectors of economic activity were not achieved. Sugar fell short by 36,00 (down 10%); rice by 30,000 tons (down 14%).”

And so forth, Cde. Speaker, why is it that the economy was disappointing? If we are going to look at this Government has done a number of things but some of the most important things, vitally important things for the upliftment of this country, it cannot do and this Parliament should understand this by now. It is rather unfortunate that this Parliament is a bit destitute. The Chamber is empty; even some of the very important seats here are empty and sometimes I wonder to whom we are speaking. But this shows not only that there is weakness and that there is lack of production and productivity but is shows a lack of interest in the public affairs of the State. That is very serious indication.

I would like the remind this House that one can rig an elections; one can rig a referendum but one cannot rig production, neither can you rig productivity and even is you rig an economy,

it will not produce in real terms. These are some of the facts that people must learn to understand at this stage. Budget 1978 and Budget 1979 were based on hope. We hope to achieve; we hope so; we hoped so. Eric Gairy was hoping that somebody would have kept him there for ever and ever. To hope is unscientific. In this modern and advance age, people do not hope.

What is the significance of a Budget? The significance of a Budget is such an examination as this: What was our failure? If we are to examine the Budget, we should ask: What were our failures? What are the causes of failures? What is the present situation? What are we going to do about it? How are we going to do it? And, what do we expect to achieve? That is the way you should present a Budget so that the people can be imbued with what you are going to tell them and settled this task of nation building. What we have here as a Budget, as I said, is something based on hope and hope and hope.

Cde Speaker, I have listened very attentively to the Cde. Minister of Finance. The word “diminution” was used in the speech. I do not know how to look at it, whether as redeployment or what, but the whole 1979 Budget Speech, like the 1978 Speech, was littered with the words “production” and “productivity.” I wanted to count the times. But what does that mean to us? Cde. Speaker, the call for production is no call unless there is specific, planned and precise objective and total participation of the working people. And when one puts forward such plans, it does not mean tentative calculations nor the formation of a forecast in terms ..... under capitalism. When one puts forward such plans, there should be set forth, definite task attainment in the estimates in relation to production and marketing export and import, finance and investment, work force, labour productivity, wages and social and cultural needs of the people. Then there is the correct us for surplus. You don't short production and productivity all the time. You are not going to get anywhere.

4.35 p.m.

Last but not least, it is only when you put forward such plans that you can ensure the stability needed to raise production and productivity and to make sure that all the enterprises in the public sector operate as a profitable venture. This plan must not be seen in its fulfillment as simply bureaucratic. Therefore, I would like to urge the senior colleagues, the experienced people over there, to do some very careful examination because time is running out.

If we look at page 39 of the Budget, the Minister stated the following:

“Workers can earn the \$14.00 daily minimum wage and more in 1979, through incentive schemes.”

I do not want to go into this question of labour and units. But what I want to say here is that people will not produce by more incentives. Before you think of incentives, there must be a properly-fixed material base and many other things and if one is going to hold incentives like a little purse of sweets, well, you will not get anywhere. One has to look at the social and cultural needs of the people. One has to look at the ideas, one has to look at their attitudes and they must be properly placed. Merely speaking about incentives will not work because it is more than the typical theory of surplus value. The material base, as I said before, has to be corrected. That is, many things would have to be properly fixed.

I do not want to go into all those figures which our colleagues have dealt with, I am not an expert on that. Actually, I am a new comer to this Parliament but I want to bring to the attention of this House some problems which are going on and which the House is not aware of. I am of the opinion that many of us here, fortunately or unfortunately, do not travel much to know what is going on. The social and economic life of the Guyanese people reaching a point which can be regarded as one of the worst aspects of degradation in relation to Guyanese History. One can observe crises and corruption becoming the order of the day. I am no stranger to the Essequibo Coast and the Hon. Deputy Prime Minister also knows the coasts very well. Actually, he visits the coasts very often and he can say whether I am speaking the truth. There are shortages of all types, shortages beyond one's imagination. There are shortages to such and extent that one of

the Ministers recommended that the people of Essequibo should use Conga pump and sweet broom branches. When a Minister is going to tell a farming community to use conga pump and sweet broom for tea, what can you expect? On the Essequibo there are three consumer co-ops and two G.N.T.C outlets. How do you expect to feed the people and how will they produce when this whole development depends on production? It is very important and I hope that this House will perhaps, in future, not only increase the G.N.T.C outlets but have food in all these areas where people need food so that they can work and produce.

I do not want to deal much with transport but this has to do with the life of the Pomeroron people. There are usually black-outs on board the Transport vessel. We find it very embarrassing because there are people who say that it is happening all over the country. I hope that efforts will be made to correct this situation.

On the question of roads – and I hope I am not tiring you, Cde. Speaker, because this has to do with production – there are some 38 miles of roadway from Devonshire Castle to Charity and it is impossible to travel on that roadway if you have one hour of rain. This affects the general traffic. Even the taxi services operates on about 20 miles of this roadway. This is just to give you a picture. Pure water supply is ridiculous and sometimes I wonder to know who should be blamed. For nearly eight months now there is a very important device for digging wells lying idle in front of the Regional Development Office. I am wondering if that equipment is also redeployed.

#### **4.45 p.m.**

With reference to medical service mentioned on page 48 of this budget Speech on the Essequibo Islands and on the Pomeroron River, there are two doctors. There are only two doctors serving this area. I think one doctor is expected to attend to about 10,000 people. In East Germany, to which the comrade just referred, I think there are 500 persons to one doctor. In the county of Essequibo and the Essequibo Islands, the ratio is such greater, more than 10,000 persons to each doctor. In such a manner, Cde. Speaker, clinics suffer many setbacks because of

transportation. If you look at the medical service in the Pomeroun, I think the dispenser's launch has been out of order for nearly six months. And for that matter, the dental service is limited only to Suddie. That is, a man might have to travel 50 or 60 miles in order to have an extraction. All these things affect the economic and social life of these particular people whom you are asking to produce and what not.

Cde. Speaker, let us look at the force because I must touch some of my good friends. The police is virtually immobile. I am embarrassed to go and take photographs of the amount of equipment packed up there because we have approximately 8 or 9 vehicles which are there broken down and in such manner it affects the investigation of crimes. They are suffering losses on the Essequibo Coast and lower Pomeroun and when policemen are called to make enquiries and so forth, they cannot move. In the Pomeroun River, if there is a report of some act contrary to the law of Guyana, that person who is making the report has to find a boat and engine and then the police will be able to go. Well all this must be looked after because it has to do with a very important part of production.

Cde. Speaker, on page 20 of this Budget Speech, it says:

“Despite such problems, there were significant achievements during the course of 1978, including the completion of the Canje River Bridge, the Demerara Harbour Bridge massive sea defence works along the Essequibo coast....”

Cde. Speaker, I don't know if they have achieved much here with massive sea defence works. On the Essequibo Coast, and this was aired in this Parliament, Government has declared Dartmouth and Hampton Court an emergency area since 1777, perhaps it was earlier, but no immediate work was done on that project and there was a complete neglect which resulted in the damage of rice fields and other good things like poultry. Cde. Speaker, Mrs. Judith Hart visited that site and I think some money was allocated. It shows the importance of such a situation there and as I said no intensive work was carried out until the flood waters came in. And even before

then the work should have been going space, some of the workers were brought to break strike – I understand, to cut cane. This is one of the examples which have been set by the present Government. It is very very embarrassing and should not continue.

In the Dartmouth area, Cde. Speaker, the situation is very dangerous because heaps of mud have been placed there and it means that with any extra high water and breeze, that thing can be washed away. Very serious. And not only Dartmouth but there are large areas which are affected, there are priority areas and so far we are not satisfied with the work that is being done there in spite of all the statements and photographs about what is being done there. If we are going to speak about production, if we are going to speak about incentives and productivity, then we must ask ourselves what we are prepared to give to those farmers who have lost their rice fields. This is a question yet to be answered. People will need ploughing fees, people will need a number of things and so far, we have not been told and the farmers have not been told what they will be given. I understand that a few bags of paddy will be given to them but that cannot compensate and that cannot ensure the type of understanding that we need with the farmers especially in that situation.

Cde. Speaker, workers' ideas are not accepted and that want to make this quite clear here that we cannot bulldoze ideas and get thing going. It is only when the working man's ideas are taken into account, his attitude is taken into account, then you have political and social tasks emerging, then you will have production. This, you must understand. If I am going to ask you to do something which you don't like to do, which you are not interested in, you will not have a result. This is simple logic and I expect civilized human being to understand this.

Cde. Speaker, when the P.P.P was in Government, large pontoons of stone used to be taken and put along the shore and when the water came up, the stone was fetched onto the seawall. It is not being done now. It is being off-loaded at Riverstown and trucks are being used continuously to fetch the stones. A tremendous number of trucks. The road is deteriorating and



there is a lost of manpower, of fuel and of all sorts of things. Somebody needs to have his head looked after somewhere.

And then, Cde. Speaker, tidal works. It is all embarrassing when you speak to the supervisors and they will tell you “Look, Cde. Basir, I have said so and so should be done but look I in’t pushing my neck out, I don’t want to get knock of here.” And this is what is going on. Nobody wants to call a spade a spade. And this is the result which is affecting the economic which you were talking about and will continue to talk about in the same manner unless you make some drastic changes.

Cde. Speaker, imagine one of the Ministers is going to say it is an act of God. If a Minister is not intelligent enough to know what is an act of God or what is an act of negligence on the part of man, then I feel he should vacate his seat. Cde. Speaker, if next week at this very period this Parliament and this Government are to be overthrown, you cannot term that as an act of God because man has something to do with it. It is only when man cannot effect control and has no relation to some matter or some situation that you call it an act of God. And if you do not put the stone on the seawall and the tide is coming in you can’t call that an act of God. Cde. Speaker, there is a similar situation on the island of Wakenaam where tremendous flooding is going on, here large areas of coconut cultivation, over 300 acres, and rice fields are effected. I am not saying that you can move a mountain, you are human being, but you have to make effort and show the initiative and people will follow you. If you show the initiative and set the pattern. I myself will come over there but I am not seeding that as yet.

But let us come to the Tapakuma project. Cde. Speaker, on page 20 of this Budget Speech there is something about the Tapakuma project. Well, the first phase of the Tapakuma project is in operation but the first phase of the Tapakuma project can give the people only about 12,000 acres of land. The first Tapakuma project in the early 60s or late 58s brought about 33,000 acres of land under cultivation. But the first phase of this present project which is now in operation will give you approximately 12,000 acres of land or perhaps less. Cde. Speaker, people will

need more land. That will not solve the land hunger problem on the Essequibo Coast and the Deputy prime Minister knows about this very well because he also has a very good picture of the areas about which I am speaking.

I don't want to criticise the project but I want to inform this House that little will come the overhauling, the infrastructure, the cleaning out of some canals which were blocked up. One must not sit in this House and expect that when the first phase is finished that so many thousand of acres will become available or will increase. Not to that extent. I am not saying it is not a necessity. I know very well that at present the whole project is not properly kept, the dams, canals. The honourable Deputy Prime Minister Cde. Reid recommended that we have manatee or something in the canals. Well, I do not know if he does not understand the type of appetite that we have in Guyana. This would result in what we call, produce local and consume local. And for that matter, manatee cannot work in canals where there is very fast – running water. But no manatees came.

#### **4.55 p.m.**

Incidentally, I must mention this. The very Tapakuma Project which is in operation right now, the first phase is not now to the present contractors because work was undertaken by them. I cannot call names because the Speaker warned me on several occasions not to mention names – but they dug several canals and what have you and now under this present project the same contractors and refilling and re-digging the same canals. But Cde. Speaker, I want to inform this House that that second phase of the Tapakuma Project will not bring now lands into operation.

Not acre of new land will come into operation. Of course, we will have better drainage. I just mention this to let this House know that such a Project will not bring much land into operation, More has to be done to satisfy the land-hungry people.

If I may continue further, the land distribution system on the Essequibo Coast is discriminatory and several supplications have been ducked and bona-fide farmers who can really farm are not given the opportunity. There is the case of the Lamron Land Settlement Co-operative Society, where over \$570,000 was spent and that cannot be accounted for. From what we have been told, several farmers supplied for that area but their applications were kept somewhere and then the land was given to that co-operative. Now that the co-operative is defunct, I understand the farmers can have the land again. This is the sort of situation that exists in that area.

Cde. Speaker, on page 47 of this Budget Speech, there is mention of cattle rearing and artificial insemination services. I want to make it quite clear to this House that the cattle industry on the Essequibo Coast is virtually dead. This is also true to some extent of pig rearing because I have been told by some of the largest pig farmers that there is a shortage of medicine and the food which is normally used to fatten these pigs also is not available. Breeding stock also is not available. That is why production of pork on the Essequibo Coast is reduced to a very marginal point. On the question of cattle rearing, the impounding fees are exorbitant. The artificial insemination service which was put into operation by the P.P.P. Government has been stopped since the early sixties and now we have virtually no milk supply on the Essequibo Coast.

A very important point is land. Land which was allocated under the Tapakuma Project for pasture and cattle rearing is being used up by the G.R.B. as a State farm and when I looked at the last report, the profitability of that Project is very marginal. Therefore, I thought of bringing this to the attention of this House to inform it of what is happening there and to inform it of the type of production it can expect. Cde. Speaker, on page 41 of the Budget Speech, it states:

“Fourth, we must reduce drastically spoilage and other post-harvest losses in the agricultural sector, and in particular, ensure that all produce reaches the consumer, at home or overseas, in a fresh state or as a high quality processed or prepared commodity.”

Cde. Speaker, Pomeroon farmers are down to their knees. The Hon. Minister of Agriculture knows- he is not here now – there was a congress in Essequibo in 1975 and a lot of fancy promises were made about Puerto Rican cassava sticks, how much they will produce and what not, and even the number of Hymacs, Draglines, bulldozers that were to be given. Believe me, Cde. Speaker, I myself, like a fool, was there taking notes, hoping that these machines would have been coming, thinking that this hon. Gentleman really meant what he was saying. A number of Pomeroon farmers kept writing, “dragline”, “Bulldozer”, and so forth. How are we going to function like that? You do not treat people like this!

Production has come to a standstill because of the cost of transportation. Cassava production has virtually come to a standstill, I do not want to go into all these details. The G.M.C. normally buys the produce. I want to invite some of you comrades to go down on the marketing days to see what is going on there and to hear from the farmers, not only to hear from me. And for that matter, I want to inform the House that I am a farmer also, so when I speak, I speak as a farmer. Sixteen items were taken off the list. At one time, the farmers were told to produce all sorts of things. One man went and cultivated fifteen acres of carambola to be told “We do not buy carambola any more”. Pumpkins. Farmers are producing a tremendous amount of pumpkins but they are being told that the G.M.C. can only buy three thousand pounds from Parika, two thousand from Wakenaam, Three thousand pounds from Supenaam and so on. One man told us he alone can give ten thousand pounds of pumpkins. What type of bottle neck is that? How are we going to go about it? Coconuts, copra production and all these things are going down. It is not because the people do not want to plant.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Basir, your time is up but I will give you five minutes more to conclude.

**Cde Basir:** Cde. Speaker, files are \$14 each, cutlasses are \$20 each and sometimes there are none. What are we going to weed the grass with? I was standing near Guyana Stores the other day and some Pomeroon farmers were there. I said “What are you going in town, man?”

They said “We want cutlasses, we want to work, we want to produce.” Pomeroon is not a mechanized area; the North West is not a mechanized area. You need cutlasses and there is not even such a simple thing and you are asking for production. Well, we cannot produce under these conditions.

Cde. Speaker, I mentioned that unless these positions are fixed, we should not be able to produce as we would like to produce. It has been said and it is being rumoured – and I think it is a scapegoat – that the P.P.P. is trying to discourage people producing and so forth. We are none of that and I am not going to be part of that either. The Government must investigate properly before it allows these sorts of wild statements, but these statements help to isolate the Government. On page 20 of this 1997 Budget Speech, it speaks about achievements but achievements which are more in the negative than in the positive. I can count them down very quickly: stagnated economy, denial of democracy, rigged referendum, and last but not least, government’s intemperate relations with the Jonestown issue. All of these things have a serious effect. Then one might ask, what is to be done? That is the biggest question. As the bottom of everything, it has to do with democracy, involvement of the people and that is what we have to examine and that is what we will have to understand. That is why we call on the Government to think of the question of a National Patriotic Front Government where we can be able to involve the people at all levels because as people see the situation on this country here, things will not go well and the present regime is not capable of motivating the people of this country.

Cde Speaker, if I may use the word hypothetically, the P.N.C. was a “rose” but that rose is withering away. It is no longer a rose and therefore to prevent that process of going completely off, I would like to advise it that it should take up the opportunity and seriously examine our call for a National Patriotic Front Government. Cde. Speaker, it is rather unfortunate that I cannot go into all the details. I would have liked to use this time to—

**The Speaker:** Well Cde. Basir, I am prepared to give you half an hour more but then Cde. Nokta would not speak. No problem with me.

15.3.79

National Assembly

5.05 – 5.07 p.m.

[Cde. Basir continued]

**Cde. Basir:** However, Cde Speaker, I want to say this. The People's National Congress must make up its mind now and examine this proposal which is being thought of the Government people. The n you can see how it applies there, how this rough drop-off still maintain some resemblance. I am certain that 75 per cent of the Guyanese people are wondering what this theory of National Front Government is all about.

I wish to congratulate all of those persons in this House who have arrived at that startling conservation. I wish to congratulate all those, although they do not share our ideas, who are honest progressive democrats, for we known that consistent n practice of political honesty is a road that leads men's minds to the socialist ideal. For if it was once said that all roads lead to Rome, we in Guyana in the near future can safely any that all minds of progressive thinking persons lead to the National Patriotic Front Government.

**The Speaker:** The Sitting of the House is suspended until 5:30 p.m.

*Sitting suspended at 5.07 p.m.*

*On resumption*

**The Speaker:** Cde. Van Sluytman.

**The Minister of State Ministry of Agriculture** (Cde. Van Sluytman): Cde. Speaker, this afternoon I want to make my contribution in the field of drainage, irrigation and sea defences. Notwithstanding the temporary economic constraints this nation is passing through. The Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulics Division, has embarked on a massive drainage and irrigation and sea defence programmes to take us to the year 1984, totaling some \$500 million (Guyana). This programme is intended to provide drainage and irrigation to 509,350 acres of land and permanent sea defences of 34,600 feet, providing immediately new jobs for over 2,000 persons. These drainage and irrigation schemes, when completed will benefit 17,000 farmers. The drainage and irrigation schemes are the Tapakuma Irrigation Project, the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Agriculture Development Project, and the Black Bush Frontlands Project.

These schemes will enhance our agricultural output not only for local consumption but also for export, easing our foreign exchange difficulties. The sea defence programme in the Essequibo Coast lies between La Belle Alliance and Better Hope at a east of approximately \$47 million (Guyana). The areas are as follows: La Belle Alliance to Lima -1,500 feet; Lima to Devonshire Castle – 9,200 feet, Devonshire Castle to Dunkeld - 4,600 feet, Perth to Westbury – 4,200 feet, Westbury to Better-hope -10, 700 feet of itself - 700 feet, making a grand total of 30,900 feet. Apart from this, work is due to be completed for the year, apart from the Essequibo Coast, amounting to 3,700 feet in the island of Leguan - 1,800 feet; West Demerara -1,800 feet, and Corentyne - 100 feet.

Notwithstanding, as I said before, what appear to be financial constraints Government is pursuing development in the field of agriculture. I want to say a word on drainage and irrigation with special reference to the Drainage and Irrigation Board. This Board is responsible for minor drainage and irrigation work outside of major projects. I have already alluded to the major

projects which we have on the way but this Board continues to do work outside of the major projects. This Programme has in the past provided for minor drainage and irrigation work in areas not covered by major projects. Expenditure in the past under this subhead has not been restricted to civil works but key items of minor equipment have been procured to carry out maintenance works in the various areas.

Over the period 1976/1977, an estimated amount of \$2.7 million has been spent on infrastructural works for agriculture development in miscellaneous areas between the Pomeroon River and the Corentyne Coast. In 1978, \$550,000 was voted and a programme was drawn up. However, a revised programme had to be made reducing total expenditure to \$399,000. Under the revised programme, works were scheduled and completed on the Aberdeen-Cozier Empolder Dam; drainage works at Philadelphia-Branwell, the Golden Grove Road Bridge, and the construction of a culvert in the Industry Canal were also completed. The purchase of spare parts was also provided for.

In 1977, it is proposed to spend \$505,000 under this subhead; \$250,000 will be spent for the continuation of works on the Aberdeen/Cozier Empolder Dam, design and part construction of the Canefield sluice in Leguan, the reconditioning of drains in the La Grande/Nismes area, and the construction of two revetments upstream to the Garden of Eden sluiced.

The remaining \$255,000 plus other financing, will be spent on fire minor drainage and irrigation works. They are as follows: First, Pomeroon improvement works. These works include placing concrete culverts at Aberdeem, La Bonne Mere, Try Best/Unity and Perseverance and improving drainage of some 800 acres at La Bonne Mere and Aberdeen. Secondly, Moor Farm, Wakenaam. This is for raising some 5,000 feet of sea dam and placing a box culvert to save some 450 acres of coconut trees at Moor Farm, Wakenaam, Thirdly, Fryish/Gibraltar. These include placing two checks to assist water control for some 200 acres of rice land. Fourthly, Timehri. It is proposed to spend \$100,000 for improving drains and placing three out falls to



benefit some 500 acres at Timehri. Fifthly, it is proposed to spend \$100,000 on Soesdyke/Linden for placing four concrete culverts along the Soesdyke/Linden Highway to benefit farmers.

Cde Speaker, we move on to the control pump-drainage project which also falls within the control of the Drainage and Irrigation Board. In 1971, a technical team examined the Inadequacies and existing drainage systems in certain selected areas along the coastlands of Guyana. In the report submitted by the team, it was recommended that a definite programme for immediate remedial works should be implemented based on a financial feasibility presented in the report. Cost estimates for the purchase of forty-one electric pumps, the necessary civil works for installation and rehabilitation of the drainage systems were also included in the report and the project as a whole was put up to certain institutions for aid financing.

In 1973, forty-one cascade pumps and ancillary equipment were purchased under the Credit Agreement No. 1699 at a cost of \$7.1 million. Civil works for the project started in 1975 and to date four pump stations have been constructed. Eight pumps were commissioned and two pumps are committed to completed stations. Two of the former eight pumps were installed in the Greater Georgetown Project in the latter part of 1977. Approximately 10,500 acres of agricultural land in the Victoria, Golden Grove areas have been provided with the highest standard of dependable drainage along the coast as a result of the installation of the other six pumps and improved internal works.

Cde Speaker, the other nine remaining pumps out of 13 are programmed to be installed along the coast. The remaining 24 pumps along with their motors and switch gear will be maintained in good order to be used on the M.M.A. Project, and the Black Bush/Block III Irrigation Project.

**15.3.79**

**National Assembly**

**5.40 - 5. 50 p.m.**

**5.40p.m.**

In 1979, works will commence on the Borlan/Sibrelder pump station to benefit the Sheet Anchor/Fryish Area (16,318 acres) along with the re-conditioning works on the electrical equipment for the pumps earmarked to be incurred in these work in 1979 is \$1,675,000.

The Boerasirie Internal Works were undertaken during the period 1975-1977 with a view to providing the area with adequate main drainage and irrigation for 600 acres. Inclusive in the operations were the construction of two timber bridges, the excavation of collector drains CD IV and CD V, and the construction of intake IB II and III.

The Vergenoegen/Bonasika area consisting of 29,463 acres, which was in dire need of improvement works prior to 1975, received a shot in the arm (1975-1977) with the Philadelphia sluice being constructed together with the reconditioning of Vergenoegen East and west side lines and the Parika main drain. These works coupled with the construction of the bridges across the Parika main drain, the excavation of the irrigation canals in Naazmryck, and the excavation of the drains and canals for the Vergenoegen Co-op Society and Local Authority, respectively, completed the scheme planned to bring more land under cultivation in the Vergenoegen/Bonasika drainage and drainage Area. It is estimated that approximately \$1.2 million was apart in this area during the period 1975-1977.

Lots of things have been said about the sea defences on the Essequibo Coast. In fact, earlier this year, the Leader of the Opposition was trying to get the House to debate the condition of the sea defences on the Essequibo Coast. And not too long ago, Cde. Basir told us something about the condition of the sea defences on the Essequibo Coast. I concede that the sea defences between La Belle Alliance and Hampton Court are in bad shape. I do not want to be reminded by Cde. Basir of their condition. The Oceanic Coast of Essequibo between Hampton Court and Better Hope is now undergoing a period of intense and rapid erosion, part of a unique pattern of cyclic accretion and erosion which have plagued the coastlands of Guyana. There was an engineering Company that did some work on the Georgetown sea wall, that Company is called

Netherlands Engineering Consultants. It has done surveying for us on the Essequibo Coast and it has reported as follows:

“That this area was expected to undergo erosion between the years 1972 and 1980 and that the erosion at any location would last between 4 to 6 years when the defences are subjected to strong wave attack forces of breaking waves, run-up and overtopping.

Erosion in the Hampton-Court/Devonshire Castle and Forth/Dartmouth areas intensified during 1976 and during two (2) years all foreshore protection was removed thereby exposing the earth dams to strong wave attack.

Construction of permanent walls commenced in 1975 and has been continuing since. In addition to the permanent walls, it was necessary to do emergency works in the boulder pitching and gabion protection so as to minimize erosion of the seaward face of the earth dam.

The concentration of resources into immediate emergency works, because of the critical situation had effected the progress of permanent works somewhat.

Earth dam approximately 14,000 linear feet, had been under direct wave attack since late last year. Both emergency protective works and permanent works are in progress.

During 1977 a breach occurred at Dartmouth and this was sealed. During 1978 and 1979 breaches occurred at Westbury Hampton Court and Devonshire Castle. Remedial works are in progress in these areas as well as in other threatened areas e.g. Lima to Windsor Castle. The rate of erosion has far exceeded the rate of construction of permanent walls. To cope with this problem, it has become necessary to increase the number of operating sites. Therefore, additional plant and equipment had been ordered in 1978 under the O.D.M. Loan to equip the various sites.

During this year, it is proposed to spend \$3 million in emergency works and \$7 million in permanent works.”

Because if the sea walls go, then residential and agricultural lands would suffer. One of our drainage and irrigation projects, the Tapakuma irrigation project, I can remember Cde. Basir saying that we are thinking of more lands which that scheme would embrace. I do not know where he has gotten his figures from. What we have told is that additional lands will be provided and the existing lands will be drained. We have never told anybody in this House or outside of this House that we are going to emploter massive lands at Tapakuma.

This two-by-six project was conceived as a means of a rehabilitating, improving and extending agriculture on the Essequibo Coast by means of improved irrigation, drainage and access facilities. The total area affected extends from the Supernaam River in the south to the Cozier Canal in the north in the Pomeroun River.

It follows an earlier schema which was originally called the Tapakuma schema which was implemented in the 1960-1964 period, covering the area from Zorg-en-Vlygt to Somerset and Berks. The area of this earlier scheme is contained within the present project.

This new project comprises contracts one and two which are for civil engineering work, and contract three and four which are for the supply of pumps. Contract one is underway and contract two is in the phase lust preceding being bid for. Contract three is complete and the manufacture of pumps under contract four is proceeding at this moment.

The total cultivated acreage within the project was about 30,750 acres, of which 23,750 acres fell within contract one area between Somerset and Berks and Zorg-en-Vlygt and 7,000 acres within contract two area from Zorg-en –Vlygt to Supenaam. About 5,000 additional acres will be added, under the project, to the contract one area between Somerset and Berks and the cozier canal, and about 4,000 acres of uncleared land throughout the project will be brought

under cultivation. This will give contract one a cultivation area of about of about 28,750 acres, and contract two about 11,000 acres, making a total of 39,750 acres.

Regarding contract one, the original world Bank financial provision was about 12 million (G) based on feasibility studies carries out in 1971- 1973 the U.S . Consultant Harza. Of this, 65 per cent will be provided by the International Bank for Reconstruction and development, and 33 per cent by the Government of Guyana. Consultants, Sir Williams Helcrow and partners, were appointed to commence survey and design work in May 1975. Contract one, covering the area from Zorg-en-Vlygt to the cozier Canal, was awarded in August 1977 to the Contractors, Reed and Mallik Ltd. By this time the estimated coat of this Contract was \$26.5 million (G). The successful Contractor's bid was \$29.8 million (G). Government instituted cuts

#### **5.50 p.m.**

to bring the coat down to the level of the Government's Financial Provision at that time, and this was affected within the terms of the contract. The completion dates for contract one is May 1980.

However, the very considerable increases in the cost of the work over the original lending body's estimate, which was due to heavy inflation of international construction costs, placed a much heavier burden on Government and the World Bank. Costs have escalated that the Local Government has to pay the equivalent of th4e 65 per cent that the World Bank should have paid, if the Government wants to proceed with this project at a revised cost. As a result of this, other resources of finance were sought with the result that the project is now supported externally by the I.B.R.D., OPEC, the U.K.'s O.D.M., and the Caribbean Development Bank. This cost is divided between Guyana Government which bears about \$8.8 million (G), and the lending bodies, are now finance the remaining approximately \$17.7 million (G).

The benefits of the project will continue to be improvement in rice production with additional benefits to the production of cassava. Farmore will benefit from an on-going agricultural extension service, rice research advice, mechanical equipment, support for the

Maintenance on farm development, assistance in clearing, ploughing and leveling land. It is hoped that a more disciplined approach to land preparation and irrigation water supply will result from group activity which is being encouraged. We have been holding classes with farmers imploring them not to waste water. In fact, we have found out that in these schemes in which water is very expensive, people have been using more water than necessary. We have been holding lectures with them and trying to implore them to use less water because the water in these drainage and irrigation schemes is basically pumped into the reservoir from either creeks or rivers and at the high cost of fuel, it is important that we use less water and in fact, there is not the necessity in good production to use as much water as we find the farmers are using.

Cde. Speaker, the estimated expenditure for this year on this project is \$15.3 million (G). During 1979, the Tapakuma Irrigation Project will employ some 600 persons and after completion will benefit no less than 5,000 families.

Cde. Speaker, the work on the Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Project was started by the Ministry of Agriculture, Hydraulics Division in 1974, and was suspended in 1976 in preparation for a more comprehensive scheme with assured finance from the Inter-American Development Bank and the Government of Guyana. The Mahaica/Mahaicony/Abary Agricultural Development Authority became a legal entity on 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1977 and the project under its charge is divided into two phases – one and two. The final project will embrace some 423,000 acres of land but the first phase is primarily the West Coast Berbice, will cost \$186 million (G) providing drainage and irrigation for 115,000 acres of land and flood control for 150,000 acres. This first phase is due for completion in 1983. The consultants for this project are Sir William Halcrow and Partners in association with C.A. Liburd. International Contractors have not yet been selected, however, twelve companies have been prequalified and one local Contractor is already building the control sluice, the largest of its kind in Guyana.

6.00p.m.

We have already embarked on the major trust on the development of phase one – that is, West Coast Berbice area, and it is programmed to be completed by 1983, which leads to the completion of Engineering Works of:

- (1) Over 700 miles main canals and drains;
- (2) Over 500 Drainage and Irrigation structures and various types;
- (3) Three modern pumping stations at Rose, Onverwagt and Onderneening;
- (4) A land Development Scheme of over 10,000 acres a back of Kabawer Ranch;
- (5) A conservancy dam of 31 miles;
- (6) A main canal of 29 miles;
- (7) 30 miles of all weather access road to the Abary area;
- (8) Land leveling for 71,000 acres;
- (9) A headquarters and housing area at Onverwagt, covering nearly 134 acres;
- (10) Spillway 9,000 feet long; and
- (11) A seven door water control sluice.

The consultants commenced work on the first week in July last year and together with personnel of the M.M.A./A.D.A., set out to finalise designs for the project, re-activate \$7, million worth of equipment, strengthen the management structure of M.M.A./A.D.A., and to do agricultural development.

Conservancy dam: To date, preliminary construction work has been completed on 26 miles of the 37 miles long conservancy dam and by the end of 1979, it will be 70 per cent completed.

Control sluice. Work is in progress on the Control Sluice and at the end of 1978, 60 per cent of the work was completed. This sluice is programmed to be completed in mid-May 1979.

Spillway. To date 2,000 feet of piling and 1,000 feet of sand creting have been completed on the spillway. The spillway is programmed to be completed by February 1980.

International Contracts. By September, 1979, two international contracts will be awarded to do the major construction works. Of these contracts, the contractors will be encouraged to utilize

local contractors to the maximum. The total work force of the Authority is now four hundred and it is hoped that the contractors will employ a similar number by the end of 1979, bringing the total employed to eight hundred. Improved housing for workers is under construction at Dageraad and Copoman. Six prefabricated houses are in the process of manufacture. A Headquarters site at Onverwagt for the Authority has been planned by the Town and Country Planning Department and work on its development commenced early this year.

The M.M.A. project is, indeed, a magnificent one. When phase one and phase two are completed, the project will embrace the largest amount of land in any one good scheme in Guyana. The Project is designed for rice, ground provision and cattle. As we move on, we will see other work we have done during the year 1970.

I will now deal with surveys. During 1978, land surveying of over 500 miles was completed and a master plot of farm holdings on State Lands was 90 per cent completed.

A programme of agricultural research was launched in the fields of livestock, soya and rice. By the time the project is completed, farmers will have the necessary information to make maximum use of the new farming opportunities made possible. Others, along with the Executive of the M.M.A./A.D.A., took off to meet farmers in West Berbice to explain to them the system under which this M.M.A. scheme will be completed.

**The Speaker:** Five minutes more.

**Cde. Van Sluytman:** I have discovered that the farmers were very interested and very happy to be part and parcel of this gigantic drainage and irrigation project. There is quite a lot more to enlighten this House on as regards our drainage, irrigation, and sea defences, but since I have only five minutes to wind up, I would like to answer some of the charges labeled by Cde. Basir in his contribution. Since the word "liar" is prohibited in this House, I dare not call Cde. Basir, a liar. But I want to say that Cde. Basir has misrepresented the situation. My own feeling is that he is either a joker or he is a dramatist.



I will deal with the first charge which is the shortage of basic food items in the Pomeroon. I daresay that Essequibo and the Pomeroon have not suffered more shortages than any other area in Guyana. We are not saying that there was not a shortages of foodstuff. But if one should look at Cde. Basir alone, one would see that he is well fed, and your humble servant's physical condition allows one to believe that he is well fed. On the Essequibo Coast there are three outlets, two are owned by the Guyana National Trading Corporation. One is at Dartmouth and one is at Anna Regina market. There are also a consumer co-operative society with three outlets, one at Zorg, one at Queenstown and one at Henrietta. There are basically retail outlets. There are also a number of wholesale outlets. If my figure is right, there are a thirty-five shops at Pomeroon and they are all supplied by J.P. Santos at Charity I the Pomeroon I know there have been periodically shortage in basic terms not only in the Pomeroon but all over Guyana, but I do not like things to be said which ought not to be said.

**The Speaker:** But I myself would not like to tell you that your time is up, so you had better finish in a minute.

**Cde. Van Sluytman:** There is one point I would like to make before I close. Cde. Basir said that the Ministry of Agriculture some years ago hold a meeting at Anna Regina and promised that draglines would be sent to the Pomeroon. Cde. Basir got up in this House and told us that there are no dragline in Pomeroon, yet he claims to be from Pomeroon. There are three draglines operating in the Pomeroon, two at Little Dayshore - Unity and one at Adventure - Marlborough and I am surprised that someone from the Pomeroon would come here and say there are no draglines operating in the Pomeroon.

**6.10 p.m.**

**Cde Nokia:** Mr. Speaker, last Monday, Guyana experienced yet another tragedy. Presented in this House was a range of guess work bound in a book and called Budget Speech. This Government for 14 years has been practicing the politics of deception and today it has run this country into ruin. All of them over them now, all of their faces in this Parliament are now taking on a different colour. I cannot read mine to know what goes in below. Look at how these

people are fooling a nation and I want to quote page 56 of the Budget Speech. I will run through quickly because I do not have much time.

**“Conclusion**

Comrade Speaker, The Stark and inescapable fact is that our expectations for growth in the economy during 1970 have not materialized. Production remained static.”

In all the developing agencies production remained static. Let me quote page 18 of this same book. What did it say? Look at how these people are deceiving a nation.

“The performance of the economy in 1978 was disappointing.

The physical production targets set in the main sectors of economic activity were achieved. Sugar fell short by 36,000 tons... Calcined bauxite fell short 42,000tons ... Alumina by 63,000 tons... Metal Grade Bauxite by 300,000 tons ....

And the minister is telling us about the economy remaining static. What is static? Static means when it stays one place; it does not go up or down, it does not move forward or backward. But this, their own book, shows decline in production, so my friends are fooling a nation, this economy is on the decline. This is in reality. Guess estimates. My friend, whatever they call it, try to polis off and juggle with figures.

Five years ago, we got regional development ministries, economic development, national development. These are all development agencies. How come now they are telling us the economy remained static? We will have to change this word “development” and say, Ministry for economic crisis, Ministry responsible for regional crisis, Ministry responsible for national crisis, because there is not development. This is what they are responsible for and they come to give it to us in the form of a budget. So much bumper crop!

My friends, why? My colleagues have been telling us we will be hearing many of the reasons, what are some of the reasons for the economy not performing. The economy remained static. I am saying it is declining. Lack of democracy, corruption, stealing in high places, had

economic policies, discrimination and party patronage in employment, creating unnecessary ministries, filling offices and state corporation with pen pushers and clock watchers, jobs for the boys, crushing debt burden, threatening and coercing workers. This is why the economy is sick, and now in their own book they say they have economic their sense new.

Let us reads page 42. How far eight years, the P.P.P has been saying all along that the Government machinery has becomes over-bloated, state machinery today is like a parasite on the back of the working class, and the debt burden is so crushing.

“Too many government agencies continue to be overstaffed with clerical types of personnel, the result of whose activities is a reduction in the efficiency of the agencies where they are employed...?”

It is now they are realising that. Too many pen pushers all over the place, people wearing shirt jackets, three, four pens in their pockets, two brief cases in their hands, no production and the Government is telling us that now. Some of them have two brief cases. What they are carrying inside, we do not know. **(Interruption)** But this is how – Ask Jeffrey Thomas how many brief cases he walks with. Mr. Speaker, it is a tragedy that this thing has to happen.

The next tragedy is, we have in this Parliament today a Minister defending a budget which he has not presented. That is another tragedy. And I hear them talking about performance and balance. What do they think they are running? A show? It is an opera? We seems to have a lot of sectors here and when we explain these actors we really see that these people are making Guyana into a stage show and some of these actors are grinning and laughing while the nation is suffering from the want of food and clothing and housing. I do not want to go into any of the jokes but we have jokers today. When things get bad, one actor says he is writing a prescription, the Prime Minister will become a doctor. He will write a prescription. Economic recovery.

We have some actors. What happened to the co-ops? Co-ops, they say will make the small man, the economy will become viable. There is the Minister of economic Development. Look at how he is performing – Desmond Hoyte. He examines the co-op and says, “I pronounce the living.” George Hoyte, he examines the co-op and says, “I pronounce thee dead, I strike you off

the register.” Every week, every Saturday when you open the Official Gazette, some co-op is liquidated. These people are performing and while they masquerade, the whole society is tumbling down in poverty, bankruptcy, hunger, misery and all the crimes that we can hear about, But it is not only the lack of democracy that it responsible for me production; it is not only this bureaucratic elite that we have which is depressing the people that is responsible.

Let us look at public transport. Transportation facilities are a vital entity to enhance production but today in Guyana, transport becomes a nightmares; in every walk of life, everywhere you go in this country people have to wait thousands and thousands of man hours, hours when they should be producing, they have to be standing by the roadside, standing by the ferry, standing by the car park, they cannot get transportation. How can they produce? This is a reality of life. Everybody is talking about the oil crisis.

When they were stopping the train, they did not know that the train did not work with oil. They did not have sense them, so now they talk of oil crises. Out of \$800 million which they estimate for importing goods into this country, \$200 million is now allocated, one quarter of this budget is allocated to buying oil and fuel. They are telling the people that they must go back to dray cart and jackass cart. Is that what a Minister is going to tell people and still say we must live modern circumstances? We are human beings, we must live decently. Go back to coal pot. Why do they not consider going back to the train? This is what we must do. What is your reality of life when you do not have roads, you do not have buses? Look at the Corentyne. I passed through Rosignol; there are more buses that are broken down and in the garage than there are on the road.

### **6.20 p.m.**

Look at Kingston: TATA busses were going to solve our problems and so they scrapped the trains. Look at the East Coast of Demerara! Now what are they telling us? When all the buses are actually scrapped for want of parts and repairs and they cannot even pay their bills, they are telling us now on page 47 that they are going to open a workshop. Is it now that they realizes

that a workshop. Is it now that they realize that a workshop is necessary? But even in this Budget Speech it states that the workshop will not be completed by 1979 so what use will the workshop be now even if they start it now?

Buses are laid up not only for want of repairs but for spare parts and tyres. The Government is telling us it does not have foreign currency. Tractors are held up for want of batteries; hire cars are held up for want of tyres, and people are living like real puppets in this country. Mr. Speaker, it is said. Let us look at the conditions. Leguan for instance. There is a Minister for Leguan here who drives around with his boys in a jeep. Five years ago, the people were told that the Government would spend \$1 million to extend the road to the western side of Leguan. Over \$1 million was spent, sand was put, thousands of truckloads, and then everything was scrapped. The Minister is not telling us anything. All he is going is wielding power when he is at Parika. Government does not repair the steamer—

**The Speaker:** Cde. Nokta, you have been making a lot of allegations about several Ministers and people and you have been making scurrilous remarks about Ministers and people on the other side. Please refrain from doing that. You can say the same thing in some other form.

**Cde. Nokta:** Lots of people are wielding power, standing by Parika Stelling and saying: “Hold one, Captain; I am coming”. They have power to delay the steamer for hours. The steamer is filled with passenger but they are delaying it for another hour. They are wielding power but they are not helping the people. In Leguan now, people are virtually travelling in jackass carts. Last Sunday, I was there. The buses cannot traverse the road.

Let us look at Wakenaam, from Zeelandia to Meergorg. When the rain falls, no hire car can go in.

People have to jump on tractors or trailers. What about Ridge? The same thing happens. They had to go around by rivers; they had to go into a boat to get to Ridge.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at Bartica/Issasno Road. People living in the interior cannot always afford to travel by plane. There are over 100 piles of bad road in the Bartica/Issasno area

due to look of maintenance. In some places there are not only ditches but trenches and even at the Transport Advisory Council it was reported that over 120 miles of roadway had overhanging trees which obstructed the traffic and trucks cannot ply the road. Where are the transportations facilities?

Look at Ituni! Last month, February, I was at Ituni. The people at Ituni told us that they have one goods train which is more dead than alive and there is one passenger bus which they have to get them to Linden to buy their goods. If the bus leaves at 5 o'clock, they have to go into the bus from 12 o'clock midnight before they can secure a seat in that bus. That is at Ituni, Demerara River, How r we providing transportation? As a result of all these things, people are suffering.

Look at Rupununi! The big boys fly around in planes, They do not go through the trail. My friend will deal with this extensively but I am just showing that today the villages in the Rupununi are virtually cut off from one another. Why? Because they have new re-scheduled the planes and many of the villages which used to enjoy once-a week plane services today have them only once-a-month. Sand Creek. Once a week a plane goes into Sand Creek now. I asked the a Minister in Parliament last year to consider renovating and putting into action the Wichabai Airstrip. May be he does not know the location, he does not know Geography. If you put back the Wichabai Airstrip in operation, Wichabai will serves Sawariwau, Sand Creek, Dadanawa Ranch, Macushi, Ambrose. One airstrip will serve all those villages. But good advice falls like water on a duck's back. As a result of that, the people in the Rupununi today are suffering from the want of food. I had to call him on the telephone last year—

**The Speaker:** Cde. Nokta, I told you just now, I will not repeat it again. Please do not refer to any particular Minister. You can make general remarks.

**Cde. Nokta:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry. I apologise. I just want to make the point for it is not for the want of advice. Last year I had to call up a certain Minister, the Minister responsible for transport, telling him about the plight of the people in Karanambo and Lumidpau. The people are cut off, they cannot get food. All the goods are delayed at Timehri, sometimes for

months. When they reach their destination, the weights are short and sometimes the goods are spoilt. He had to tell me that he will get the G.D.F to send up food into the Rupununi. That is how it is going. The Government seems to fear nothing about transportation services in the interior.

What about the cost? Not everybody can afford a plane flight. Not long ago all the flights from the interior used to land at Ogle but his Government, without even consulting the people, has now shifted all the flights to Timehri and it is costing everybody who comes from the interior an additional \$7 to come to Georgetown. That is the reality. Every passenger who lands at Timehri has to spend an additional \$7 to come to Georgetown, but when the plane landed at Ogle it used to be cheaper. Mr. Speaker, this Government seems not to care.

What about river transportation? Time and again I keep repeating in this Parliament about the state of river transportation? At the moment now there are very few steamers left in the service. The Government keeps shifting and putting them around like when there are playing draughts. "Lady Northcote" which used to ply the North West Service is now near to the grave yard. They removed it, it sprang a leak at Morawhanna and now they have it plying the Bartica route. Well, Bartica is the grave yard for Government steamers, near to the cemetery. Look at the other one they put, "M.V Pomeroon". On the 17<sup>th</sup> of last month I was at Morawhanna. When the steamer arrived at Kumaka, 125 bags of rice and sugar and flour damaged in the hatch because of a steamer leak. That is the type of service we have. Sometime ago when I spoke about it, the answer was: the steamers are old. After fourteen years of this Government in office, is it now that it has realized that the steamers are old? Has the Government replaced the steamers? Are they being serviced? Now, where is the policy of the Government? Instead of servicing them or replacing them, we are having promises and promises.

North West people are now pregnant with promises! It is sad. More Ministers, more the pregnancy grows. They used to tell the people about giving them a steamer. They give them a thing! It is not a steamer, it is not a sluice, it is not a launch, it is not a speed-boat, what did they call it? It is a sea horse. They put it in the Kaituma River. A G.D.F soldier shot a boy by the name of Patrick Rodrigues. They tried to fool the Amerindian people saying, "Look, we will

name it after that good boy, that dedicated boy". They named it after Patrick Rodrigues. The Chronicle stated that Patrick Rodrigues died by accident by the was shot dead by a G.D.F solider. Fooling the people!

**The Speaker:** Cde. Nokta, I will stop you. You cannot make those statements. What proof have you got? I have been continuously warning you. You seems to be only interested in vilification.

**Cde. Nokta:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry for that.

What is the budget speech telling us? Two years ago we were told about a new steamer that would have been built. The Budget Speech is now telling us about a passenger launch. Well, we will see when the passenger launch comes out. As a result of not having any proper policies, not looking after the Transport and Harbors Department the way the Government should, today we do not have a Transport and Harbors Department. We want to ask this Government the questions: are you talking about socialism? Well then, where is your practice? What about the socialist thrust? Socialism means taking control of all these enterprises.

**6.30 p.m.**

Now they have already advertised that the Pomeroon Steamer service is to go back into private hands. Already they have contemplating putting the service into private hands. Where are we going? There is a talk about State control and yet they are inviting private people to run Government services. The Government is bankrupt; this is what is happening. Now they are talking about earning revenue from the Transport and Harbours Department. This Government has not yet considered reverting to the train. We have been told about the bridge and what it cost. Bridges like those are built for military expediency, not to serve day to day transportation services. Every month the bridge breaks down. How much revenue will the Government get to cover that? I can go on and on talking about transport services, but no doubt we may hear more later on.



I would like to say a little more about the interior. The people in the interior are generally farmers. They earn their living by tilling the soil and selling whatever produce they reap. This is what they live on. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of last month as soon as I came off the plane at Mabaruma, the first thing the Amerindians asked me was if I took cutlasses for them. Worse than that, when the farmers produce, the G.M.C buys the crops on credit and pays three and six months after. As a result of that, the hucksters are cashing in. For example, the G.M.C buys peanut at \$1 per pound and hucksters are paying \$3.50 per pound. G.M.C buys coffee for \$1.50 per pound and hucksters are paying \$3.50 per pound.

There is talk about people's development. Now you are telling us about a cassava factory. When I enquired about the cassava, the man told me that G.M.C is not buying, GUYSUCO is buying. GUYSUCO is offering six cents a pound for better cassava and six cents for sweet cassava. Who will produce cassava in those days to sell at six cents per pound? I was told that the G.M.C man went there last July and told them the G.M.C would buy all cassava produced but they must produce industrial cassava. This is a new type. What is it? You must have a certain diameter.

What about the oil palm? It has failed in terms of their expectations. I was in the scheme. Even those trees that are bearing ---

**The Speaker:** Five minutes more.

**Cde. Nokta:** Farmers are suffering. Those are produce are plagued. Wild animals are destroying their crops. People cannot get licenses but Jim Jones was able to stockpile 50,000 pounds of ammunition at Jonestown. Where did it pass? It pass through the Morawhanna gate.

**The Speaker:** I am not going to allow any debate on Jonestown.

**Cde. Nokta:** I do not want to debate Jonestown, but this matter comes in the Estimates, page 216, subhead 16. I see provision is made for \$170,000 to assist the Jonestown Agriculture

complex. I want to deal with it. Let the Government tell us how 50,000 pounds of ammunition passed through Morawhanna and went to Jonestown. Where were our customs officials? When the poor Amerindians bring their monocots, policemen jump in the boats and they take one for themselves and one for their wives. But they did not see when “cudjoe” was passing. It is a big ship.

**The Speaker:** Apparently you do not understand what I said. The Jonestown Agricultural Complex is a different thing from the Jonestown incident. If you don't understand it, I understand.

**Cde. Nokta:** All right, Cde. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that whilst certain things could be given to certain people, others cannot have the same facility, yet they are telling people to produce. Jonestown comes under Matarkai. At one time they used to call it Matthew's Ridge/Port Kaituma Agriculture Complex. When it failed they were ashamed about it and they called it Matarkai. New Jonestown has smeared it and they are going to change the name soon. American experts failed, Canadian experts failed, Britain experts failed. Now some North Koreans are in the area and they are going to produce cassava and plantains for Guyana. The local people do not have the mean to produce, they don't have marketing facilities, now the North Koreans are going to tell the people how to produce cassava and eddoes. It is a shame. What about things like files and cutlasses? A man by the name of Broomes who lives in America and who belongs to Mabaruma, in sympathy with farmers, brought a few cutlasses and sold them to the people. All are now finished so production today gone static.

The steamer service is deployable. Many times farmers send their goods to Georgetown but by the time the Steamer reaches the city, the goods are spoilt. They are losing thousand of dollars. The Government is talking about reorganizing the steamer service. People have to pay \$7 to hire a car when they reach Morawhanna to get to Kumaka. Why does the Government not examine all these things to see whether it can alleviate the problems of the people. Definitely, if

Guyana is to move forward, then this Government must think about the people. People matter in the field of production. As Cde. Basir told the House, you cannot rig production. Production depends on human labour and unless people are treated the way they ought to be treated, we will have no production.

We call upon this Government to let us have better and more efficient air services to the interior. Let us have better steamer services, more adequate steamers. Let us examine the bus service of this country to see whether we will be able to provide better transportation on the roadway for the thousands of Guyanese who are suffering every day. Stop this wastage of man hours which could be used for the production of wealth in this country. Now that we are debating this Budget, it is a sad state of affairs.

**The Speaker:** It is a sad state because your time is up.

**6.40 p.m.**

**The Speaker:** Cde. Carmichael.

**The Minister of State Regional (Rupununi)** (Cde. Carmichael): Cde. Speaker, on Monday last, 12<sup>th</sup> March, there was a great amount of enlightenment for us in this House, although to a certain extent some of us did not recognise that, but most of us particularly on this side of the House recognised how much there was to be learnt. The event was the presentation of the national budgetary proposals so ably presented by the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives.

An intelligent study of this document would reveal the extent to which a further strengthening of the national economy is dependent upon the involvement of all the people, and I repeat, Cde. Speaker, all the people including the members of the Opposition. The Party and its Executive have always recognised this fact of life and so in 1973 the regional system was introduced. We, on this side of the House, do not believe that life is static: we do not believe that merely introducing a system will bring all the solution for development but what we do know is

that we have the leadership, the resources and the competence to closely monitor and review any system.

However, to date we have recognised and we have found that there is no better system than the present regional system which guarantees the involvement of people in the national development, a system which strikingly indicates that the economy is a people's business and that development must be people oriented. It is with this in mind, Cde. Speaker, that I seek to support the Motion and to draw attention to the fact that the regional system is indeed an instrument for the involvement of people in national development.

Basically, this new system which was introduced some six years ago is one of decentralisation and ensuring self reliance. It has become quite clear to the Government that in order to make a reality of our policies of socialism and self reliance, the planning and control of development must be done locally. The comrades on the other side all afternoon have been remarking that there is no democracy. But it is well known all over Guyana today that democracy is at work, once the regional system is effectively used. Too many things are happening nowadays for people at the centre to understand which takes place in the rural areas and this regional system is a departure from the traditional way thereby ensuring that the voices of the people in the rural areas are heard. Local people were not able to use their initiative because of a number of irritants, a number of frustrations, using the old system. Too much of letter writing backwards and forwards. Many officers in the regional in the rural areas could not co-ordinate properly, many of them going their own ways, but with the introduction of this system there is greater co-ordination. That is what the regional system is all about, solving the problems on the spot with the Government's presence in the local area.

The regional system is a system that has given local freedom for both decision and action on matters which are primarily of local impact. Everybody is crying for development throughout Guyana and this is what the People's National Congress Government seeks to do. The biggest requirement is consistent hard work. The regional system but an important institution for social

reconstruction and development. Development is about people and only a man can cause development to take place, the service of man, the furtherance of his human development, in fact, the purpose of society itself, hence our regional system is a valuable instrument for the involvement of people in national development.

Let us look at some of the objectives of the system: To facilitate and accelerate the process of development and create self-reliant, confident productive communities, to understand the nature of national development, and accept individual and collective responsibility for this task.

Our liberal education system is geared to emphasis a co-operative endeavour and not merely individual advancement or any form of intellectual arrogance but service to the people and service for the people all the time. This together with the active involvement of all easily paves the way towards strengthening the national economy.

The regional system is a development instrument. It can hasten community programmes through the total involvement of people because it is structured and intended to facilitate the prompt and intelligent decision-making process. We know too, that the Regional Minister is also the Regional Chairman of the Party and uniting these two functions augers well for the system. He has jurisdiction over all Government personnel, vehicles, equipment and materials in the region. And with that authority, on-the-spot decisions can be made to expedite development for the people. The very fact that the Cabinet Authority is in the region is in itself a boost.

**6.50 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, we talk about democracy in the several communities but the regional system affords the opportunity for the masses, the little man, to have a say in what form of development he feels should take place. This is why we have such institutions as Community Development Council, Sub-regional Development Councils, Regional Development Councils which meet regularly to plan and not only to plan on paper but to seek to implement their programmes and ensuring co-ordination of Government policies, etc. Even in the absence of the Regional

Minister, the Regional Development Officer has the authority to carry on in the same progressive manner.

Through the Regional Administrative Council which is chaired by the Regional Minister and which is comprised of the senior supervisors of the Region, including corporations and Local Authorities, all public sector activities could be monitored in the region. This makes it easy to identify areas of weakness and solve problems much to the satisfaction of the communities. In addition to that, the Council advise the Regional Minister on all relevant matters including the development of the Region, for example, to enable political mobilization. In these days when we talk about total involvement, the system must be so organized so that people could be easily mobilized and organised for productive work, to ensure the involvement of people in the decision-making processes in the community's planning and implementation and the subsequent development of their areas.

Cde. Speaker, as I mentioned before, the Regional System is people-oriented and we did hear from across the floor that socialism is about people. The Regional System ensures that the people's welfare is taken care of. This is so because people are able to identify development works to be done in their regions, their districts, their villages. It is for the people to mobilise, educate and motivate the people for development. In short, Cde. Speaker, the Regional System affords the dictatorship of the masses, for it is easy to hasten national development programmes when the masses are seized with the zeal to pursue activities which they have initiated for their own development.

The Regional System as an instrument for this type of involvement gives the people the opportunity. We believe as a Party and Government that all the people should have equal opportunity and no one can gainsay the fact that under this comparatively new system all citizens are given equal opportunity once they are willing to perform. The system ensures proper understanding of the nature and objective of regionalism, sympathizing with the objective. Because, Cde. Speaker, we know that a change is usually painful and while we have been

operating the system for a little over five years there must be teething problems, there must be fears and we continue to regard the system with the sympathy it deserves and seek to correct the weaknesses, working to implement the objectives and at the same time we must demonstrate patience and persistence. We must be able to criticize ourselves. Now, when we talk about criticism we mean constructive criticism, not rankings and ravings as has been our experience today and we must be able to have constructive and purposeful evaluation of our performance.

Cde. Speaker, the system must enable Central Government to give guidance and assistance to our local people as well as to monitor the progress being made and at the same time reduce unnecessary red tape. The system must maximize the use of the scarce resources. It is one thing for the members on the other side to remark that we do not have this and we do not have that, but we know that so often we can maximize the use of what we have. I refer to our human resources as well as our material resources. But without the involvement of man, anything can happen. And it is our Leader and Prime Minister who said and I quote:

“The end of all political and economic action must be the welfare of the people.”

I believe and we on this side believe that the Regional System is so geared.

I referred to the question of mobilization for development. Under the system it is relatively easy to mobilize and organize comrades for community exercises. It has been our rewarding experience over the years since this Government has been in office, how much self-help has been a way of life in Guyana today and we can at this forum enumerate a number of projects which were initiated and completed by self-help all over this country. It is only those who really do not have eyes to see who would not see. I would not wish to burden the House with a catalogue of these projects but Cde. Nokta in his usual ramblings all over the country, verbally, did try to paint a picture of nothingness particularly in the hinterland areas. And so at least I could touch a little on the situation in the hinterland areas and bring the truth to the fore.

I feel – and this is the second occasion. I think – that there is always an attempt to mislead those of us who are not familiar with the hinterland. But if the spirit of self-help has caught on in Guyana, it has really caught on in areas like North West, Mazaruni/Potaro, Rupununi and the Pomeroun. We can talk about the number of schools and extensions to schools that were built by self-help and under the system particularly in the hinterland areas where we have touchans, captains, and councillors. There are the people who spearhead this self-help exercise in the villages and in the Amerindian communities.

**7 p.m.**

Recently, we have been talking about nursery schools and the special attention being given by this Government not only financially, but otherwise for the proper training of the youngest comrades. Perhaps many of us do not know how many of these nursery schools have been constructed by self-help. I know in the Rupununi, for example, many of the nursery school were constructed through committed self-help schemes built entirely by the people for themselves with no aid at all from the Central Government. Why is all this possible? It is the sensible form of administration in the form of the regional system that has been able to mobilize and motivate these comrades to provide these amenities and facilities for their own benefit. Production has been re-organised and set apace through the regional system.

If I were to touch briefly, too, on the hinterland areas, in the case of the Mazaruni/Potaro area there is an increase in the production of the minerals we mine in those areas. The important thing here is that it was through the regional system, the Amerindians particularly, that we were able to achieve this and we have to be very grateful on these occasions not to accept what is usually peddled, that the Amerindians are and some time ago in colonial times they used to be called children of the forest. It was this Government that made the change to regard them as first-class citizens. Since 1976 they are enjoying equal opportunities as any other citizen in Guyana. They were the people, particularly in the Mazaruni area, who were given half a million dollars worth of equipment by the Central Government to proceed and increase production of precious stones, minerals etc.



In The Rupununi, We boasted last year of increased production of peanuts. We produced over 120,000 pounds of peanuts for the first time in the Rupununi area and all of that was shipped to the centre. At the moment we are reducing the amount of rice imported to the region and already some sixty acres of land have been prepared to reduce the importation of rice. The programme continues for the growing of more food and this has been made easy by thy regional system which, like an Octopus, spreads throughout the length and breadth of Guyana. It is through this urge to work together that we see also the birth of more co-operative to give further meaning and significance to our national philosophy.

One comrade on the other side spoke about co-operative and the question whether there are two or three co-operative in a certain area. The regional system is no geared that people, out of their own judgement, out of their own initiative, have organized a number of co-operative groups all over the country. The hinterland area is no exception. But I want to make particular mention of the East Berbice area where approximately \$100,000 was subscribed by approximately two thousand families and they have established already three consumer co-ops. This is without any direction from the centre. It was done through their own self-reliance. So the regional system is encouraging group work which ultimately lends to the formation of co-operative societies. We believe that the co-operative must be the vehicle through w3hich the little man will improve his quality of life.

The regional system has also been instrumental in cultivation amongst our people of varying political persuasions, religious groups, ethnic origins, genuine unity for community development. It is unusual to me people who before nurtured all sorts of fears and suspicious, now combing their efforts to build for themselves community facilities. This has also been made possible by the well-ordered approach of the regional administration throughout the country.

What about our culture? It is this Party and Government, through the regional system, that has recognised the real cultural heritage we have all over this country. Many of us have been treated and entertained by the creative ability and the latent talent of our people. This has been successfully used to break down and so there s this unity of will and unity of purpose amongst Guyanese, despite the discouraging statements or the sometimes negative approach of certain

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**7.10 p.m.**

**National Assembly**

**7.10 – 7.20 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, while Cde. Nokta was making his presentation I had some difficulty in identifying to what I should respond and I still find there is not much to say to what he said but since he touched on shortages in the Rupununi, I would wish to say to this House that the Member has not from the truth. There is no shortage of food in the Rupununi. In fact, what we are doing now is to ensure that we take in the basic items and no one in the Rupununi or in the hinterland, for that matter, can ever starve. To say that people are starving in the hinterland is not true.

But more than that. It was at the beginning of the year that two public corporations Guyana Stores and the Guyana Trading Corporation, and the Co-op Complex took over the running of a number of outlets in the hinterland, in the Mazaruni-Potaro area and in the Rupununi and in the North West including Baramita, Quebana, Karasabi, Lethem, Aishalton, and the Mazaruni area, Kamarang and Mahadia. All these are reliable outlets managed by the State through the regional administrative. And more than that my colleague to my immediate right is the Chairman of a special institution called HEAP, Hinterland Emergency Action Programme, which ensures that a regular supply of basic food item is sent to these areas. Cde, Van Sluytman did say there comes a time when certain things run out. In the best regulated system this happens but to say that there is starvation in the hinterland is far from the truth.

The members of the Opposition must accept the fact that we know, and they know too, that they have been the ones who have said to the people in the North West and elsewhere. Let Georgetown people starve; don't put food on the boat. We know of that but despite that, the people have confidence on the leadership and will continue to produce. In fact, the people's democracy is at work. Honestly, I really cannot say anything else. I should not say anything else about the two briefcase because what Cde. Nokta sought to do was to join the number of actors he referred to. I can recall on the last occasion I spoke, I referred to him as acting his part well.

In conclusion, I would like to say that the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operative in the Budget Speech re-echoed the call for greater production and productivity.

We also gave this House the firm assurance that the Party is mobilized for the task of national economic... and such an assurance must be the result of a sensible and functional administration of the P.N.C. Government through the regional system, a system which still has its weaknesses, a system which is evolving, but we know it does not matter how excellent a system is, it will be useless unless the people work it effectively.

Over the years, the Guyanese nation has built up a great confidence in the regional system by their hard work and dedication to the socialist cause. There is absolutely no doubt in our minds on this side that all Guyanese will really and rise to the great challenge for survival and set us swiftly on the road to national recovery.

**The Speaker:** Cde Chowritmootoo.

**The Minister of State – Regional (Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)** (Cde. Chowritmootoo) Cde. Speaker, I would first wish to extend my congratulations to the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operative for the able manner in which he presents the Budget for the year 1979. It is a factual Budget, it is a Budget which is characteristic of the People's National Congress, the Party and Government, to tell it as it is. The Budget seeks to hide no punches and has made it quite clear what is the situation and what is expected of the Guyanese people to remove themselves out of the present economic crisis.

I would wish to refer very briefly to the remarks made by one of the Opposition speakers. He spoke of stagnation of the economy, lack of motivation and one or two other things. Let me refer to the motivation. In his experience he can tell this House of a particular occasion where people were motivated to such an extent that they provided many of the social services for themselves, thanks to the leadership of the People's National Congress. Has he forgotten that in 1978 the largest self-help project valued at over \$29,000 was constructed at Jacklow in the Pomeroon? He himself claimed some bit of participation in that activity. Perhaps his memory is short and he needs to be reminded.

On lack of production and growth in the country it is merely to remind some of our friends that the Union of Soviet Socialist Republican did not reach its 1913 level of production until

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**7.10 – 7.20 p.m.**

1927, ten years after the revolution. We do learn from the mistakes of other people. One other reference about using things Guyanese for the benefit of Guyanese. I would like to remind some of the Comrades here that everywhere in the world where there has been active socialist construction, it has always been the principles to internalise the economics of those countries, that is, using what the country produced and producing what the country needed, and if a Minister of this Government is asking the people of this country to use what they have in this country, that Minister is giving a direction in the right way.

No country that has ever moved itself into an industrialised state of development has done so without using indigenous and appropriate technology and those who claim to be socialist and students of „Sovietology” and Socialist history ought to refer to that **[laughter]** There is something like “Sovietology now **[laughter]**.”

Cde. Speaker, I, like anyone else, have the privilege of coining now words and perhaps for the benefit of some of my friends, they can refer to that one.

**7.20 p.m.**

The comrade referred to the Essequibo Roads being in a very poor condition. We acknowledged that that is a fact. But there is another comrade who said in the same vein that the People’s National Congress in Government is giving priority to Roads when on this occasion we are emphasizing a drainage and irrigation scheme and sea defence in priority to construction of roads. That is not to say that we are neglecting the roads. We are saying that as our priority, we are putting a drainage and irrigation scheme so that many more thousands of acres of land would be put into production.

It was wrong to say, Cde. Speaker, that when the scheme shall have been completed in its totality there would not be more lands put under production. The comrades would know that at the present state of local mobilization of land for production, the Essequibo Coast has about 40,000 acres and when this scheme shall have been completed, that is, the Tapakuma Drainage and Irrigation Scheme, the total land to be drained and irrigated for production would be in the vicinity of 68,000 acres.

Cde, Speaker, the world has come to recognise that the rate of development in our society is determined and influenced by many factors in as much as the developmental process itself is multi-faceted and approaches to it very from place to place, objective conditions and circumstances. While it is universally accepted, and it is a truism among progressive thinkers, that development can take place without any positive significant effects upon the masses, it is generally accepted that development undertaken by a socialist Government, a Government informed by the principles of scientific socialism must affect the working class made up of the prolaterist, the poor peasant and the working class intelligentsia. It is similarly true that a well-informed and conscious working class, an enlightened society in the best partner in development. That it is abundantly evident that the Government of the People's National Congress has, as a priority consideration, the heightening of the consciousness of the masses, is for all to see.

As conscious and active participants in the process of development, it is recognised that the levels of awareness have determined the actions of the working class masses. In this free and unrestricted society where the wont it not to constructively criticise, to enhance, and to help, but to derogate and malign for pure and unadulterated political ends, the People's National Congress is continuing its duty to inform the nation as we have done in this Budget. Against this background must a positive Government seek to positively inform and raise the consciousness of the masses for positive development. Cde. Speaker, this has been the arduous task of Government bent on providing for all its people the benefits of the country's wealth, which it has managed and which it continues to manage in the interest of the entire society.

It was never the intention nor could any spoken word or deed or action have led anyone to believe that the Government of the People's National Congress has the wherewithal to create a Utopia. Ours has always been the position – it remains the same to this moment – that Guyanese have the capacity and ability, that Guyana has the ingredients of development, and with the continued astute and sagacious leadership and management of the People's National Congress in Government, combining these elements with a willingness to sacrifice, the latter condition arising out of a knowledgeable, well-informed and conscious people, we can and must make Guyana our own Paradise.

Cde. Speaker, whilst it is true and self-evident that changes wrought upon the physical environment are tangibles of development, it is equally true that the intangibles of development are discernible in the attitudes, values, the mores and the working-class consciousness of the masses and total society. Progress is recorded as an improvement in things, and following that the improvement of people. This Government has quantitatively and qualitatively improved by its guidance and direction the things material and the people. That the people are aware of the forward march in their lives cannot be erased and confused by harangues and diatribes that we have record earlier this afternoon from the other side.

Cde. Speaker, any society lacking absolute direction in determining the broad objectives for achievement is doomed to stagnation, regression and economic fossilisation. Directional vacillation is likened unto a ship sailing not knowing its destination. Inherent in such a situation is the undermining of leadership and the loss of confidence in the ship's attendants. The analogy is remindful of the ship of State to the coming into being of the People's National Congress in Government. The ship of State at that point in time did not know whether it Goeth. But fortunately, its people saw that it was rearing the precipice of anarchy and fratricidal genocide. The people, having lost completely confidence in the masters, took matters in their own hands.

In this, a different people, which had little confidence left in themselves hoped merely for recovery and not even dreamt of the startling changes for the better? Progress for the people could have been measured in terms of their being able to live. To have a progress that was outside those terms was as remote as the P.P.P.'s chances of winning the confidence of the Guyanese masses.

### **7.30 p.m.**

It was, Cde. Speaker, out of this muddled economic morass and psychological aimlessness that the People's National Congress took over the reins of Government. Immediately the task of rebuilding the confidence of the Guyanese people in themselves began, and coupled with this has begun the salvaging and reshaping of the tottering economy. The then lapse of people's confidence in themselves was not disjointed from the enormity of the task of overcoming the already ingrained submissiveness and psychological dependence of people who were subjected

to the will of others over centuries of subjection and economic dominance. It is an unwholeness paradox to note to this day colonialism/imperialism has its advocates and protagonists. That we have overcome and have succeeded in escaping self-destruction, that today our nationhood stands highly respected, that today Guyanese are proud of themselves, that today Guyanese are a people confident in themselves in overcoming seemingly insurmountable difficulties, must be record achievements, high in any unbiased judgement.

In spite of short memories and political decadence, and in spite of the unholy efforts of political deviant, to obscure the truth and blind the minds of our people, right-minded Guyanese are forever mindful of the anarchy, the “nowhereness,” the chaos characteristic of that period of misgovernment of the P.P.P. To have evoked that consciousness and confidence in a people whose contribution to development today stands monumental for all to see, is evidence of positive direction of good government, a Government which succumbs at all times to the well being, the wishes and the desires of its people.

In the history of the social development of man, it is recorded that that class of society which had organized itself in the particular era, emerged into a new historical dimension, destroying the tentacles which had previously bound it to the former time frame and socio-economic development stage. The struggle of man throughout the ages was dictated by the organized class in society to harness the strength of the masses to effect the changes in history. It was the consciousness of the masses to improve themselves that provided the dynamism to move forward and onward and to bring about changes in society. There had never been uniform and equitable transformation in mankind’s societies. Some societies lagged and became anachronistic and some, by the revolutionary soul of the masses in the particular historical era, have moved out and emerged into new contemporary historic dimension, the catalytic force which prevailed in the latter condition was and is the consciousness of the masses.

It is against such a background that we must examine the role of the People’s National Congress, the vanguard of the working class, its organized detachment, in raising the consciousness of the masses, motivating and propelling the energies of the masses for its self development, which in our context is significantly coterminous with national development. In the

chronology of our Party in Government, every year is marked by the forward and onward march to enhance the lot of the masses. Yet, nothing which appeared has been achieved and constructed without the knowledge and active concurrence of the masses. How else could we have explained the tranquility and peace, the justification and exemplification of the peaceful resolution in the increase of the acuteness of the contradictions inherent in fundamental changes wrought upon our society? How do we explain revolutionary changes in reshaping and restructuring a backward non-industrialised and dependant society to a severely independent society resolved to becoming economically self-reliant? It is only the Party which forms the Government, with a unity of purpose and a resolve to see the masses becoming masters of their destiny and the wealth of their country used for their benefit that would stand firmly and unwaveringly resolute pursuant to the set objective of achieving socialism.

The struggle for the construction of socialism, we have always recognised, is not a struggle only for the organized detachment, the vanguard, but for the entire society with the vanguard giving positive leadership and guidance. The People's National Congress has always maintained its closeness with the masses as its duty bound, never forgetting in it it was born and that it is firmly rooted to inform and to involve in the process of positive national development of change as a priority.

The history of the democratization of the Guyanese society is known to all and sundry. Did independence come by political manipulation of a single political party? Were the people, the masses at the time of its achievement, prepared to compromise? The answer is no. The leaders of the People's National Congress by their active involvement with the people, now institutionalized meet the people tours, which is only one of several measures to heighten the political consciousness of the Guyanese masses. Where else in the world is the head of Government so mundanely active and still maintaining that unsurpassed brilliance of leadership unequalled in the Third World? Governmental remoteness deriving from the capital syndrome was never a high point of the People's National Congress Government, and it will never become thus. Who it was that in the highest of racial cleavage and discord, had injected unity and harmony and by deed made it possible for all to have become involved.? Is this not reflected in the recent festivities? How truly national have they become? Are we today not a people much



more appreciative of our brothers' and sisters' cultural practices? Do we not see these as the threads of the same national cultural fabric?

However much is done, like a broken record we still sometimes hear the old tune of the political losers, the song of division, mistrust and hate. History has no lesson for the mentality fossilized and archaic. The conscious masses, realizing their importance through their representatives, the People's National Congress, slowly but firmly shedding the psychology of dependence and battling the economics of exploitation of colonialism/.imperialism, rehashing the education for submission and stemming the flow of cultural aggression of developed industrialised societies, were active participants in Government through the process of consultative democracy.

**7.40 p.m.**

The innovation gave the masses the opportunity to express their varied interests , as socio-cultural, economic, political organizations were guaranteed places of prominence and focus, and their needs felt and acted upon. Representation was open to all – the voice of the masses was heard and headed. No wonder, there is union in the mass support. To this day the process of democracy has deepened and remains meaningful and pivotal in our task to construct socialism.

The People's Congress of December, 1978, and the representation of the people's organizations in the Constituent Assembly, which is tasked with the responsibility of making a people's Constitution for the people of Guyana, are but a few manifestation of democracy in practice, and the over willingness of the People's Government to keep the doors of consultation and participation open.

Perhaps it is my duty to remind this noble Assembly, that it was the people's National Congress which broke new grounds when it introduced the Regional system. In this institution, the optimum of Governmental openness is achieved. The Regional system has completely destroyed the colonial heritage and the antithesis of governmental remoteness. The people are governmentally involved at the base. There are kept attuned to the process of development as it affects them. This institution has consciously set itself the task of making people feel that they

have a part to play in the decision-making processes of Government. National consensus is derived not only through the traditional method of period elections but more intimately by taking fundamental issues to the people, the nation, as they arise, and therefore pursue the task of Government. In the process of the intimate involvement of all the people, the simultaneous heightening of the masses' consciousness, the Government leaves no stone unturned in bring to the attention of the masses its intentions: endemic in which are policies for implementation. We are assured that from an informed mass must flow understanding and knowledgeable participation in the development process.

Today community meetings where every issue, small and large, is discussed unrestrainedly and candidly, manifest another example of the People's National Congress's practical demonstration of informing and involving the masses. It is upon the basis of an informed working class that the pursuit of independence was achieved.

It was upon the confidence of knowing that independence – the formal break with colonialism/imperialism – was readily acceptable by the entire society. It was through the constant and consistent dialogue of the People's National Congress in Government and the masses that the latter understood that the pre-requisite, the pre-condition to economic liberation and freedom was our ability to manipulate with out being hamstrung by the political agents of colonialism/imperialism. It is in this course that the people voiced their agreement to the leadership of the nation taking steps to our becoming the first Co-operative Republic in the world thus severing the formalities that kept us and reminded us of British imperialism.

The leadership of the Nation, The People's National Congress, know that the informed masses would not be satisfied with the mere trappings and frills of independence to wit - flags, anthem, coat of arms, etc. The leadership was conscious, and still is optimally conscious, that true leadership lies in our ability to recognise our self-worth as a nation, as a people, our capability to perform to private the goods and services we needed, a proud polity to stand up in defence of our sovereignty.

The leadership as well as the masses were fully cognizant that the indiscernible of developments, the breaking up of the psychological chains of dependence, a positively oriented

mass, the exposing of the subtleties and insidious contrivances of colonialism/imperialism's education for submission, are task not made by any easier, with the openness and license of the of the detractors' adventurist day dreams and political fallacies of the Budget. There are even some who aspire to talk to us into a new colonialism, to have us bound to a new master. The masses are severely conscious of their attempts at compromising our Nation's independence – these fork-tongued bigots – and it would not allow them to have their way, no way.

In a systematic and, of course, scientific manner, the Party embarked upon a programme of informing the masses of raising the consciousness of our people by becoming the apostles of Guyana self-worth as a nation, promoting their our national identity. Albeit we were severely aware of the ingrained nefarious and noxious attitudes and values prevailing as a heritage of our colonial past.

It was the People's National Congress which has begun the process of de-colonialisation of our society and the introduction of the process of Guyanisation of our society. Whilst is it true that this process lacked the rantings and ravings and the vilification characterisation of political charlatans and mountebanks, the People's National Congress and its working class intellectuals quietly and unobtrusively, grappled with the deep-seated problem of focusing the vital role Guyanese must of necessity play in the development of their own society. It was not expected that the over 200 years of intellectual and physical subjugation could be erased in the twinkling of an eye. And it was not the intention of the People's National Congress in Government, expressing the desire of the vast majority of the Guyanese people, to have embarked upon any unprecedented maligning campaign as characteristics of our political positions. This attitude did not contradict our revolutionary objectives: we were not leaving things to time and fate to evolve, rather, the attitudinal changing process was methodically tackle, and no doubt, has borne fruit.

It was not the character of the People's National Congress to leave matters inconclusively. The logical termination to be political aspect of the process of Guyanisation must be Republican status and the nationalisation of our natural resources. These were achieved by the People's National Congress in Government. The sons and daughters of the masses are today their

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representatives in Government. The Head of State is a Guyanese. Guyanese are managing the vast enterprises of sugar and bauxite. Our services are all manned and managed by ourselves – Guyanese. The innovative and skilfulness of people are flowering and blooming everywhere.

**7.50 p.m.**

In technological and the scientific development we have a last crept out of our shell, a shell that was the prison colonialism/imperialism. Today, the masses of the Third World countries have this.

We are not merely producers of fodder for imperialism's growth, but have taken steps to industrialise our society knowing that only industrialization can multiply wealth. I make reference to the glass factory and the textile mill. The break through, for our economic well-being must be seen with its roots, in a conscious programme, which was mounted by the People's National Congress even before it had become the Party in Government.

Imagine a principled position of complete political independence was a bargaining item for some – and I refer to that political party that was bargaining when we were to become a Republic. How long can some become and how utterly bare-faced to prevail upon the emotions of some of our people! Time and the people will deal with the miscreants. Posterity would make judgement too, on those who think of non-Guyanese being more capable of interpreting and applying the laws of our society better than Guyanese. The debacle of the removal of the Privy Council as our final appellate Court still lingers in the minds of many. For some, you can take them out of colonialism but you cannot take colonialism out of them.

Cde. Speaker, advertising the benefits of changes and the resulting fruits of socialism in good, but even better must be the advertisement, and we have a tendency to under advertise it, if we sought to prominence to the sacrifices which are necessary in Socialist construction. While none can dispute that each experiment in Socialist construction is a source of very valuable lessons for us, we however recognise that there cannot be a model for the construction of socialism which can be transferred lock, stock and barrel into the Guyana situation.

The historical experiences of some societies which have decided to pursue resolutely the

task of building Socialism have, as is most event, internalized the society; there from stemmed their economic self-reliance, the use of what they produce in goods and services to the strict exclusion of what used to become from abroad. That was a way of life –

**The Speaker:** Cde. Chowritmootoo, it is a way of life that you have only two minutes more.

**Cde. Chowritmootoo:** It was a way of life and one from which there was no recourse. Our model is fundamentally different. Our internalization is restricted to a limited consumer item while we remain basically open to the influences of the developed industrialised society which continue to influence the taste and values of our people.

It is that the objective conditions of society's history, its socio-political cultural experiences, its indigenous economic practices must be the determinants for the construction of socialism. This consideration, in no way, contravenes the principles of Marxism/Leninism which inform and guide us in revolutionizing our society. But foreign models, their successes and benefits accrued fare dazzled before the eyes of our people. Political chicanery invalidates measures for sacrifice for the good of the nation's well-being and our people are fed with the negativism of the protagonist of foreign infiltration and national compromise. While we seek to adduce the position of self-reliance as a philosophy achievable through the practices of self-help and guide by the overall principles of co-operativism, which we maintain in our method to delineated the workers and which contrasts the antithesis of capitalist alienation and the remoteness of centrally directed enterprises, others opposed to the masses being informed and becoming aware of the truth of their worth, the need for their effort for the removal of ignorance- as I am trying to do here this afternoon to some- and want, seek to ritually misinform the masses.

How naïve can some get! When the Wholesome and even righteous acceptable programme of feeding, clothing and housing the nation was announced ---

**The Speaker:** Cde. Chowritmootoo, you seems to be going on to something else. Comrades, he has had 45 minutes without an extension of time.

**The Minister of State, Minister of National Development** (Cde. Corbin): Cde. Speaker, with your permission, I ask that Cde. Chowritmootoo be given 15 minutes to conclude.

*Cde. Van Sluytman seconded.*

*Question put, and agreed to.*

**Cde. Chowritmootoo:** Cde. Speaker, how naïve can some people get! When the Wholesome and righteous policy of feeding, clothing and housing his nation was announced, they sought to defame and malign that policy. They sought to smear and pronounce doom. One would have thought that in consonance with their pronouncements, the latter-day prophets of doom would have actively promoted the programme in keeping with their alleged interest in the masses. But we have recognised how consistent has been the inconsistent Opposition. The opposing forces of change, the strike “fuellers”, the chronic protesters, they can do nothing, but protest.

However, the dialogue between the Party in Government and people continues as the words are revealed in the tangible of national development throughout the land. Today, the leaders of Government are in the fields, the factories and in the offices informing the working-class masses of their responsibilities and obligations, their rights and privileges of the partners of development, the people and their Government.

Cde. Speaker, with your permission I quote from the utterances of the Cde. Leader and Prime Minister of fourteen years ago, on the 14<sup>th</sup> December:

“how much we wanted peace, how much we wanted to survive, how much we wanted to prove to ourselves and to the world that we could live together and make a nation of Guyana, how much we want to leave the past behind, and built a new future, a new society for ourselves even through some of us did not know how that could be accomplished.”

These words were uttered a long time ago. Let me remind this honorable House that it was the People’s National Congress, which had engendered the survival and worth instinct into the Guyanese people. It was the People’s National Congress which had natured and cared the

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growing worth of the Guyanese people. It is the People's National Congress alone, which has the capacity, the will and determination to continue the struggle to bring our efforts to greater fruition.

[Applause]

8 p.m.

**The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Co-operatives** (Cde. Wrights): Cde. Speaker, on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1979, the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operative presented a budget of recovery. . .

Community development, as the term implies, denote activities aimed at the upliftment and development of the community including improvement of prevailing standards. In our context, it must include the involvement of residents in the respective communities or sections of the communities and does not confine itself to physical projects, but it can be social, cultural, educational in essence. Community development activity is a major tool used by developing and under-developed countries as a means of obtaining the maximum results from their limited resources. Developed countries have from time to time utilized the community development strategy to advance. Under-lining community development activities must be a demonstration by the people of their willingness to involve themselves in the activities. Our People's National Congress Government is commissioned and is always prepared to accept involvement in various communities. I heard the first speaker on the opposite side saying there was no involvement and nothing was being done in the North West region. I am prepared this evening to educate them about the number of projects and the developments which are being carried out and those which have been completed in 1978. I think they should move around a little more and stop fooling the people.

In 1978, in the Rupununi area, there were three medical huts which were opened by self-help by the people's involvement. At Lap fencing of the playground was done. At Mahaica, a pig pen was built. At Meten-Meer-Zorg, a chicken hut was built and it houses 1,000 chickens. At the Buxton Congregational School, sanitary work was done. Work was also done at the

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Annandale Government School on the East Coast of Demerara, the Crabwood Creek Government School, Albion , Grove, Haslington, L.B.I., Alness, Zeelust Government School, Leonora Secondary School, Good Intent, Sisters, Rose Viv Government School, Narakeete Phoenix Park Community Centre and Government School, St. Monica Government School. The time has come when Guyanese should not be fooled any longer. It is time all Guyanese should realize that this is an independent country and manna will not drop from clouds. We will have to make sacrifices to achieve the goals we want to achieve and that is the type of Budget that was presented on Monday, 12<sup>th</sup> March, 1979. It is time, Cde Speaker, that all of us as leaders in our communities question clearly and put the truth to our people in our communities that unless we produce we shall perish.

**8.10 p.m.**

When the Comrade on the other side was speaking, he mentioned no involvement, but I can assure you, Cde. Speaker, that due to the involvement by the people in the Pomeroun, Grant Trooli stelling was built at a cost of \$53,000 by the hands of the people of the Pomeroun. No one can deny Grenville stelling at La Bonn Mere. I heard the member saying there was no dragline in the Pomeroun. My colleagues enlightened him that there were three draglines. He did not know what type of mobilisation, what type of activities are carried out in this country. They do not even know of the involvement of the people in the forest areas. They do not know what is really going on. They are always hoping to have a Budget to allow them to air their views. But let me say, Cde. Speaker, they will be on the other side watching the Promised Land and shall not enter. Rig or no rig, there will be no other Government.

Let me enlighten them a little more. The involvement of Guyanese by the hands of the people in their communities saved over \$1 million. My good friend Cde. Nokta does not know what is going on. Does he know how many wells have been drilled in the Rupununi/ does he know how many nursery schools there are? Does he know how many teachers' houses there are? They will learn of the development of the People's National Congress and the interest that we have in the masses.



Does the hon. Member know of the teachers' houses and schools to be built in the Essequibo River/ he has learnt now that Troolie Island will have a new school. The People's National Congress in 1978 has done more than any other Government and at the end of 1979 we shall prove to the nation that this Government has never betrayed it as it was betrayed by the People's Progressive Party. The People's Progressive Party was never loyal to the nation. It never had the masses at heart. It has never done anything constructive so that it could say, "We have done this."

The Demerara Harbour Bridge is there, which my good friend uses every day. He cannot speak any more of the road on the West Demerara. He cannot say anything of the roads in the Canals Polder. The roads on the West Demerara are there for anyone to see development.

May I say that the People's National Congress presented this Budget for 1979 and the economy will recover through production. It is for the Opposition to tell its comrades not to produce. They themselves have to produce.

**The Speaker:** Cde. Rayman

**Cde. Rayman:** In the present world conditions, and more particularly in Guyana's context, where prices of imported commodities keep rising whilst prices for exported commodities keep falling, we, like many other developing nations would have to rely more on our creativity and inventiveness thereby optimising the use of our natural resources.

We are fortunate, to be in a land which is free from natural catastrophes such as hurricanes, tidal waves, and earthquakes. We are provided with plenty of water and arable land and, fortunately, few people. It is abundantly clear that with such good fortune we must of necessity make the produce and eat what we produce. Long gone are the days for us to depend on imported goods. The Caribbean imports over one billion dollars' worth of food, and I see no reason why we cannot become the source so as to reduce this quantity or perhaps totally supply the needs of our neighbours.

In rice, and sugar, our traditional crops, we are holding our own although the time has come for us to expand. As you are aware, we have embarked on some very large schemes

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**8.10 – 8.20 p.m.**

including the Tapacuma, Machaica- Mahacicony- Abary, and later, there will be the Balck Polder frontlands. Our Government is not unaware of our potential and we are tangibly demonstrating this. The rearing of cattle for beef and milk is being encouraged and if one takes a trip up the Abary River, one would find cattle grazing in abundance on our savannahs. What a beautiful and encouraging spectacle! We are also increasing our production of legumes, vegetables, corn and other products.

**8.20 p.m.**

Cde. Speaker, I have eaten yam chips and I can easily say they taste just as good or even better than potato chips, and I have not all forgotten that taste. **[Applause]** I want to say Cde. Speaker, necessity is the mother of all inventions and I am sure the time is drawing near when we will discover the true value of our foods. **[Applause]**

We have also Cde. Speaker, embarked on our weaning foods for our babies. Through the Pharmaceutical Corporation, much is being done to control the ingredients and to maximize the locally available inputs, the vitamins, calcium, phosphorus, iron and protein. Cereals are already on the market and I am certain you will agree with me that they are a true “delight”. We have tasted the preserved carambola and again this amply has come to the aid of those who require some sweet to aid digestion. Arising from this process, I would wish that some more of our fruits could be preserved.

Cde. Speaker, as I said before, our Government is not unaware of our potential and it is assiduously pursuing the full utilisation of our natural foods. Our distribution outlets are being geared to make these products available to the consumers. There are constraints but I am sure as time goes by we will gain the experience which is so necessary in the marketing field. Outlets are being set up in various areas of the country and are being well serviced. More will have to be introduced and better systems arrived at but let me say, “Rome was not built in one day.”

Cde. Speaker, as a woman, as a comrade, I can say that things are not the same as before, where one was able to place one’s hand easily on an item for the preparation of a meal. It becomes very frustrating but if one is conscious of the present circumstances under which we are

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**8.20 – 8.23 p.m.**

existing, one tends to accept it. We are even better off than many other developing countries and so I am confident that with Guyanese grit and determination, we shall overcome. [**Applause**]

**ADJOURNMENT**

**Resolved:** “That this National Assembly do now adjourn to Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> March, 1979, at 2p.m [**The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House**]

**Adjourned accordingly at 8.23 p.m.**

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