

THE
PARLIAMENTARY 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**

178th Sitting

2 p.m.

Friday, 16th March, 1979

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (63)

Speaker

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

Members of the 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 (12)

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

(Absent)

*Cde. H. Green
Minister of Health, Housing and Labour

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

(Absent)

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

(Absent)

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

(Absent)

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

(Absent)

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

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

(Absent – on leave)

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

(Absent – on leave)

Ministers (2)

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

(Absent)

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, Office of the
Prime Minister

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,
Minister of State, 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 – Regional
(North West)

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

Parliamentary Secretaries (5)

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

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

***Non-elected Ministers**

Cde. 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

(Absent)

Cde. K.M.E Jones

Cde. J.G.Ramson

Cde. P.A. Rayman

Cde. A. Salim

(Absent)

Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P

(Absent)

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

Cde. C.A. Sukul, J.P.

Cde. H.A. Taylor

Cde. L.E. Willems

Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. Jagan

Leader of the Opposition

(Absent – on leave)

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran,

Deputy Speaker

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.

Acting Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – A. Knight

16.3.79

National Assembly

2:10 - 2:15 p.m.

2.10 p.m.

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave to members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the Prime Minister and to Cde. Jackson for today's Sitting.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE ROR 1979

BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed the debate on the Motion moved by the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives for the approval of the Estimate of Expenditure for the Financial year 1979.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karren.

Cde. Ram Karran (The Deputy Speaker): Your Honour, I am most grateful to you for giving me an opportunity to intervene at this stage. I want to say, sir, that this House, in its long history, has never been subjected to such a poor Budget Statement as the one we have before us. Even in my own recollection of the long number of years that I have been here, we have never had such a document that say absolutely nothing. My friend the Deputy Prime Minister clears his throat. I think even the fishy Budget that they presented here some years ago was somewhat better than this useless piece of paper. What does it say? of course, there is not much that one can say about it but there are a few things I would like to say in general sense.

The Minister who presented it told us that "the Guyanese people no longer accept the passive role of merely filling a crowd scene in the drama of national life." It is worth quoting. ". . . they demand the right to be fully involved, as active participants and protagonists," . Yes, we

agree with that and they have shown very clearly, on July 10th last, by staying away in massive numbers from the so-called referendum to change the Constitution. They have shown it and, if coming events cast their shadows, then that staying away on July 10th is indicative of what is to follow. I hope my friends are taking note of these developments rather than merely writing rubbish and presenting it to the Parliament at Budget time. He states:

“In these circumstances, the old-style Budget with its limited perspective and equally limited financial and economic data has become inadequate and anachronistic. The Budget can no longer be a mere Central Government book-keeper routine: It must have a much broader conceptual basis and serve a wider economic and social purpose. It must now assume its proper function as a major planning tool and a strategic instrument of social and economic policy.”

2.15 p.m.

What he is saying here is that the public should take part in these things. But you know very well, Your Honour, that that is not so. The public does not take part and cannot take part because the Government will not use this House to debate the public's business. Your Honour is fully aware of that. Motions are piled up one after the other, they never see the light of day. I am not saying that Your Honour is contributing to this, but you have said very clearly that you are impotent to put them.

The Speaker: I do not like that word, Cde. Ram Karran. You may speak for yourself but not for me.

Cde. Ram Karren: At the moment I am speaking about you, sir, His Honour is unable to put those Motions on the Order Paper because the Minister is not ready even though the Standing Orders make it clear as to how these Motions and questions should reach the Chamber. But how can the public participate when the newspapers are strangled, when the P.N.C. organ, the so-called **New Nation**, the **Chronicle** and the radio Stations are commandeered to public only what the propaganda chief of the P.N.C. decrees. The public cannot participate. The public must have both points of view to be able to make up its mind. That is what we ask for, that this Chamber should become a debating, not what it is, a ceremonial piece of thing that passes Government legislation when it becomes necessary. Let us go through the record and see how many times this

House has met on a Wednesday to debate Opposition Motions. It does not. It has met about two times in Five years. This is shameful.

My friends used a bit of philosophy and said here that whenever institutions become obsolete or irrelevant he must apply his intelligence and experience in devising new and more appropriate models My adage would be that when institutions become moribund and irrelevant, they must be swept away and the time has come for the P.N.C. to be swept completely out. It is being said: "The Shah gone. Gairy gone. Who next"

We must examine this bit of verbiage. My friend tells us that this document was prepared by the State Planning Secretariat, the professional organ of the State Planning Commission, and it will continue to prepare this document in the years to come. We have taken into account that out of twelve senior Ministers, eight of them are out side of the Chamber. That is, they are not properly here. They might be here legally but they did not face the electorate. They are accountable to nobody. Eight out a twelve Ministers have been taken in as technocrats. It is their duty to assist the incompetence of the elected Minister because they cannot get intelligent people to face the polls. So they have these technocrate to sit here allegedly to help them. They are drawing fat salaries, tremendous allowances, living it up and now they are bring another non-elected element, the so-called faceless Committee, the technocrate from the Planning Unit. They have been in the seat for such a long time and they cannot cope with the so-called increasing complexity of the Government. They have to a faceless Planning Unit to supercede the functions of the elected Ministers.

There is one last thing I would like to say about this document. The Minister said the advantage of this bit of paper, this system of preparation, is that it will tell us by 1981 what is the projection. Can they tell us when they have to so many problems as they themselves claim? What is going to be the price of oil next year? What is going to be the effect of the so-called recession in the West.

[Interruption]

The Speaker: Comrades, lets us get on with the Budget.

Cde. Ram Karran: Sir, I think that you your self no doubt recognised thay my friend, the Minister of Finance, in typing to defend this document yesterday, was almost hopeless in his attempt. You cannot defend this and I would like to see my friends across there defending it in the course of this debate. Frank Hope appeared like Bob Hope.

The Speaker: Now, Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: I am sorry, sir. There are many inpediments. My friend, with all his past record of presenting vigorously Budgets in this House, stumbled all through his speech yesterday in trying to support this empty document. Who will not, because there is absolutely nothing in it.

Appearing on many pages and in many paragraphs of this document is the slogan “production and productivity”. I have often, myself, made use of these words to show the Opposition’s position on the well-being of our country, and I say that production and productivity are necessary things for the workers to contribute to with a view to improving their own lives. Of course, our friends across there often accuse us of plots and counter plots to affect the economy of the country. But we have recognised very fully the need for production and productivity. But I often ask myself and I ask my friends across the table how they are going to have production and productivity in the environment they have created and continue to create. And then they blame the inability to get greater production on others.

2:25 p.m.

I dont’t want to refer to individual cases but I can refer to this one, where a Senior Minister, one of the most Senior Ministers, went into an area, made out a charge aganist an employee, recommend his dismissal. He did not have to recommend, he just called the estate Manger and said, “fire this man”. How can you have proper trade unionism developing when the poor Manger with trembling knees carries out the instructions of the big sahib: Dismisses a man summarily. How can you appeal in a case like that? And these people are supposed to know trade union practice and so. How can you do that? It is to make sure that one of their own supporters

fills this position held by this man? That sort of thing cannot ensure any sort of understanding among the people. How can he, in any case, expect a fair trial when Ministers interferes in matters of this kind?

We have often accused and successfully charged the Government with political and racial discrimination. They deny it, of course, but the facts speak differently. How is it that you knock off 70 Indo-Guyanese at L.B.I? That is discrimination. Even if my friend is right that the P.P.P. may have indulged in racism, I know that he is wrong, but even if he is right, for the sake of argument, is the P.N.C. pursuing a similar course, is it a correct thing to do if in the same Budget they are talking about national unity? Shameless man. He admits it. At least, he is honest.

The Speaking: Cde. Hoyte, please do not heckle Cde. Ram Karran because he is moving away on extraneous matters.

Cde. Ram Karran: The General Secretary of the T.U.C. in 1976 reported in his Annual Report that delegates going to Congress have to sign resignation forms and hand it to certain big wigs in the P.N.C. before they participate there. Yes, he said so. So that if they do not behave themselves, the forms are filled and they lose their seats. The Speaking knows how to check up on all these things.

No wonder my friend could get up and talk about a political strike in the sugar industry when the T.U.C., even though it had such characters, uttered the correct slogans all the way through, except that failed to follow the slogans resulting in the workers being denied to this time. But it called the correct slogans.

At the T.U.C. Congress of 1977 the correct slogans were there. At the Caribbean Congress it was the same thing. Minister of Labour, Health and Housing met the T.U.C., of course, at his convenience, and give all the indications as how not to settle a strike. I am not saying that the workers have lost. The profit-sharing is going to be paid to them. The representation made to International Labour Organisation have clearly said that it is a matter that needs further negotiations but the called to Government for negotiation has so far fallen on deaf ears. That of course, does not mean that it will not be pursued and even though the complexion

of the T.U.C. is being changed very rapidly as a result of the Government's interference in these matters, T.U.C. will itself be accountable to the workers one of these days- very shortly too.

Sir, you know, this House was not given an opportunity to debate the profit-sharing strike it has been admitted that, because of the strike for profit-sharing in the sugar industry, and it continually being admitted by the Government and by others, millions of dollars went down the drain – because of the Government's failure resolve it to the satisfaction of all concern. It is no use weeping now over spilt milk as the Government does because that Motion for its debate, an attempt to discuss the matter before the rising of the House upon the Adjournment, was refused. That was the ruling which was made but which, as you know, has now resulted they say, in losses of millions of dollars to the economy of the country. That is what we are talking about. Up to now that Motions has not been debated. What happened? The Government thought that it could crush the people. The saying is that you can fool some of the people all of the time, you can fool all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of them all of the time.

The people in Iran are seeing that very clearly and this Government is going to see it. You can be certain about that. They seized the people's food. Shame! Hundreds of people were locked up, activities of the Union, leaders of the workers. GAWU representatives said so. Can we say we have a free judiciary in this country? Many of us say that we have a free judiciary but let us examine what occurred during the strike? Hundreds of people were locked up. What was the bail fixed for simple offences like intimidation, threats? Ten thousand dollars, \$12,000. I have myself related this House what occurred at Sparendam, where I went to hear one of these cases. All a man did was to abuse his mother-in-law but because he was on strike, as soon as that evidence came out, the very independent judicial officer presiding as the Magistrate fixed the bail at \$12,000. What is significant about this? Sir, is that when the strike was ended, I would say that 98 if not 99 percent of the people were acquitted, and we have a free judiciary in this country.

2:35 p.m.

I was at Sparendam, as I told this House, some time ago. This man who was alleged to have been on strike was put on \$12,000 bail and another man who was found with weapons,

ammunition, was put on \$450 bail. I think in the minds of every one of us here, the latter offence was a more serious offence. Not only were these people acquitted, the armed Police and the Court were being used to subject the people to this sort of treatment and we are told that we are working towards national unity. More than that! Today we are told, sir, that everyone who wishes to be employed in the sugar industry must go to the Employment Exchange. Well, table in this very Chamber was a document – the Clerk will remember – in the time of the hey-day of the PNC/UF where the decision made to discriminate in favour of the PNC/UF coalition, was read out here. It was signed by one Rupert Tello, who incidentally, sir, sat in your place, giving a directive

The Speaker: I thought, Cde. Ram Karran, he also sat in your place.

Cde. Ram Karran: Yes, temporarily.

The Speaker: He was a Deputy too.

Cde. Ram Karran: Well, he was a Deputy; Cde. Ram Karran was not a Deputy.

The Speaker: You are not a Deputy?

Cde. Ram Karran: I will challenge you, sir, if you are sick and stay away for a week, this business will be closed or they will catch “Bush Bull” and put him there.

The Speaker: well, probably they are not satisfied about your competence.

Cde. Ram Karran: If you get ill now, sir, and can stay for a week, this session will be closed completely. **[Interruption]** Yes, sir, that document was table here as a record to show the rascality of these people who use high institutions. **[Interruption]** So what is happening now? The workers are told to go to the Employment Exchange. They go to the Employment Exchange and they given a pink card and they go day in day out; they cannot get the green card.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karren, you know, I do not like to disturb an experienced man like you but really you said the Budget has nothing and I can see you are finding great difficulty in criticising the Budget. You have gone completely off, on to something else.

Cde. Ram Karren: If it has no thing, what can you criticise? I am referring however to the reference to national unity and I am trying to point out that we adhere to the principle of national unity, world unity Caribbean unity; any kind of unity, we are there. But I am saying that their reference to national unity is insincere. It is insincere because of this: when these people go to the Labour Exchange and go back for their cards, they have to go to Melanie Damishana and see one Mr. Bacchus.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, as a very senior and experience parliamentarian, you know that the principle of the House is not make reference to a public officer who cannot defend himself.

Cde. Ram Karran: Sir, Mr. Bacchus is not a public officer. Mr. Bacchus is a co-ordinator of the P.N.C. After the strike, the strikers decided to join the G.A.W.U. Mr. Bacchus stood up there and said that none of those people who were members of the union can get the truck. I was there, 5:30 in the morning. When I called the Estate Manager, he said “Boy, I am going to resign. You will have me between the deep blue sea and the devil.”I said that I was neither of those two things. It was Mr. Wilkie, one of the most experienced managers in this country. He said “Well, wait until Bacchus goes away and then I am going to give them trucks”. Those people went to work at 10 o’clock that day! You are talking about production and productivity when Bacchus sits there and bedevils the work of the workers?

I have a Photostat copy of a letter signed by Bacchus – unfortunately I have not got it here – instructing the Personnel Manger of L.B.I. to employ three people. That sort of thing cannot bring about production and productivity. That sort of thing cannot bring about national unity. Bacchus is not a public officer. “Production” and “productivity” are two very important words in the Budget and if the Government wants to be sincere about bringing about these two things, it has to abandon Bacchus and all like Bacchus and move towards national unity and then we will achieve production and production and productivity and all the things that flow from that.

How can we have production and productivity when the chief conciliation in Government in labour matter, the hon. Cde. Hamilton Green also know as Bilal rushes every time out of the

Ministry saying “This is political; this is that; this is this.” The sugar strike was political, the C.C.W.U. strike was political, the bauxite strike was political. What sort of a chief conciliator is that? He has not seen the facts; the facts have not been presented to him but he opens his mouth. His inexperience and arrogance cannot be about national unity nor can it bring about production and productivity. It cannot! **[Interruption]**

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, I did not know that the hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh and you want to have a private Conversation. You may go out you know. You will be excused.

Cde. Ram Karran: No, he made reference to a relevant point about my friend the former Minister of Labour. I was just pointing out that we have a system, a hybrid system though it be. In England, they elevate you to the House of the Lords. Here we give them honours and as a backbencher he has his salary intact. Isn't that so, Winslow? Everything is intact.

The Speaker: Cde . Ram Karran, let us carry on with the debate now. I think we had had enough “Bob Hope-ism” around the place.

Cde. Ram Karran: Yes, sir, how can we have these important ingredients in our country's history-production and productivity and national unity – when we have a situation where the Minister jumps out and criticises this and that without having the evidence before him? The Chief Labour Officer who formerly was the chief conciliator in trade union matters, never jumped out of his crease, never could. We have the other situation at GUYBAU. We have all been regaled with the development there. Workers became dissatisfied and disillusioned with the leadership of the union which was operating. They wanted a change. The Supreme Court gave them the right to change but we know that when the Labour Officer who was acting as Returning Officer went to hold elections at the fixed time of 2 o'clock, nominations were held at 1:30. How can we have justice? How can we have a fair- play? How can we have production and productivity? And as you yourself know, sir, prior to 1964, even up to 1968, no Opposition element could have gone for a visit to GUYBAU without policemen. Today, the Government cannot go there. They have to go with the police because you cannot have dishonest practice at the top and expect to get production and productivity at the bottom, nor can you have national unity.

16.3.79

National Assembly

2.45 -2.55 p.m.

2:45 p.m.

These very important ingredients which are required in our country's politics are lacking in so far as this Government is concerned. Today we are told that the M.P.C.A. strike at the Electricity Corporation is illegal. The conciliator does not jump out of his crease, as he has done in this case, to talk about illegalities without having the facts before him.

All through the Budget Speech we have been regaled with the bankrupt situation that faces the country. Of course without the use of the word "bankrupt". Let us examine the situation in so far as the past Budget is concerned. My friend talks about projections to 1981. Don't let us cross our bridges. In 1972, my friends across there got up and said that we are going to run down the foreign exchange. These people want their heads examined. A country that does not produce oil, a country that has limited resources, a country that is divided as a result of the Government's policy can talk at a time like coming after a war, about running down foreign resources. What are you to run it down on? Having run it down you were so fortunate from 1974 to 1976 to get over \$500 million from the unprecedented rise in the price of sugar. What have you done with it. You people will have to account to the Guyanese people one of these days and I think that time is fast approaching. What have they done with the \$500 million?

Shah and Gairy got away but I do not think you all will be so lucky. Only one man is living near the airport. "Tolo" might get a chance because of his age. I do not think the rest can run. What have they done with these millions of dollars? Now they tell us we have to tighten our belts. You will tie your belt to the point where you cannot tie any more. But they are not tying their belts. Whilst going through the Estimates, I saw increases in certain Heads. If the poor people have to tie their belts, surely you can ask the President to pay some of his cooks and some of his domestic servants and ask the Prime Minister to do the same. In the Ministry of National Development there is a block vote. I have repeatedly made this point that the parliamentary system does not allow for block votes except in times of war, in serious crises. That is one of the principles of the ministerial system. But my friends continue to get away with it. How can they talk?

In this Budget Speech my friend talks about better control and central Government financial operations. How can they talk about that when the P.A.C. is now considering the expenditure for this country for the year 1969, ten years after? He wants to project to 1981 but he does not know yet what yet what happened in 1969/1970. They do not even have a little shame to laugh or smile. No wonder they are asking the Planning Unit to do their dirty work. How can you talk about national unity and production and productivity when the money that you have spend in the year 1969 is not yet accounted for? How can you know what is going to happen in 1981 when you do not know what happened the year before?

We are told that because of these alleged difficuclties – and the only ones they pointed to were oil and foreign exchange. But let us examine oil. The Guyanese people are not so foolish. What is the position on oil? Tax on oil, as we know, gives the Government an increased advantage because the duty on oil is *ad valorem*. In 1964 then the price of petrol was 79 cents, the Government obtained 24 cents as duty. With the increase in the price of oil, the duty increased accordingly, *ad valorem*. Get off the back of people. If a sum of 24 cents was adequate for duty in 1964, and the cost of things has gone up, make the duty alittle more reasonable but don't jack it up *ad valorem*. You are squeezing the people further.

My colleague, Cde. Persaud, read out a document the other day directing the managers of public Corpporations, notwithstanding the price that had been paid for the goods, that all the prices should go up. I went to G.N.T.C. and I saw a mop which they were selling for \$6.73. They scored out the amount and put about \$8. The businessman would not do anything like that but the Government, which accuses other people of blackmarketing, is doing it. The Government Minister responsible for trade should also go to jail for blackmarketing because they are doing the same thing. But, the Government continues to make super profits. It is jailing those who blackmarket, who are selling soap 12 cents above the fixed price; what are u doing with the jokers in this House? The managers ought to tell those who issue instructions how unprincipled it is for them to do things like that.

I think the Government ought to change its policy of taxation in so far as oil is concerned because that seems to be an excuse, that because the price of oil has gone up in this way. I am

impressed with the aspect of the request that we should use less oil. But I want some of these people, particularly those in Georgetown, and I am referring to the ministerial clique and their friends, to use firewood as they are asking the poor people in some parts of Georgetown to do. We know all about the gas shortages. All this gas business was exposed already by Miss Cox in the newspapers.

The reason for this gas crisis is that the Government used to take these huge one hundred pound cylinders and carry them to the remote parts of the interior. It is a crime.

They do not want to bring them back. The Company said, well, they are going to ask for a deposit on these cylinders because they are losing the cylinders. Without consideration, the Government said, "No, you cannot do that". The people said, "All right, no more big cylinders; you will have to use the 20 pounds" Everything falls back on them. Perhaps if they were to use their imaginations and bring back some of those big cylinders that they have in all these guest houses and sport places they have in the interior, then it would relieve the situation somewhat.

2:55 p.m.

I went to the Guyana National Trading Corporation, sir, and I saw a book, believe it or not, "Sugar without slaves". I saw the book in London for £3 and a few shillings, £3 is about \$18 or \$20. How much do you think they are selling it here for? For \$44.30 with a hard cover. When I ask the manger, "how is this price like this?" he said, "Comrade, we had to bring it by plane." If you take it from there and you carry it back to England six times, it cannot cost that. Or is it that the Government does not want people to read? Of course, if you are illiterate and you are stupid, they can rule you better. That is why books on which no duty is paid in this country have climbed to such unprecedented heights. I cannot understand this Government.

I think, sir, I know, that if I had put a Motion, Your Honour would be unable to put it on the order Paper even though it might go on the Standing Orders, and the Motion would never be debated. I am going to call in a friendly way for the Government to set up an inquiry into the mark-up on goods in the Public Corporations, all the stores. I think that the result will be frightening for the public to know what prices the Government pays for these things and at what

and what prices they are sold. The people must know. You buy the soap from East Germany for 16 cents and you are selling it for 48 cents, sometimes 52 cents. Those things are shameless. If a businessman were to do that, no matter if he went to Church every Sunday in the month, you would still look up for blackmarketing. Why should the Government not be subjected to the same treatment? They are murders.

I want to deal briefly with the Government's solemn promise was made to the T.U.C. on the payment of \$14 a day. The Government reneged on that. They talk of production and productivity and you have got one masquerade outside of this Chamber. Civil Servants: As four o'clock rings, you see them dropping their placards and they are going home. How are you going to have production and productivity when you have people who should produce masquerading on the road? What do they think they are doing? Whom are they influencing? I think they are only making themselves – I don't want to say what they are making themselves, sir. They do not get them \$14 a day. Then the other joker says you are going to get the \$14 a day by incentives.

The T.U.C. in 1976 passed a resolution saying that the cost of living and everything else required \$15 per a day at that time. In the course of negotiations, the T.U.C. accept the situation where we would go to \$14 in three stages: \$8,\$11, \$14. That was the agreement; in fact that was the T.U.C. Resolution. Let me tell you, I was in the T.U.C. The boys did not give you the right message. It turned to \$8.40 because the minimum wage was\$5.50 and above and most of the people were getting \$5.50 so it worked out to \$8.40. So it is \$8, \$11, and \$14, what they call round money. However, sir, that was the agreement. The T.U.C. and everybody agreed that \$15 was the correct figure. But as I said we took it in three stages, a compromise. Now that we have reached the third part of the Agreement, the Government says it has gone bankrupt. The Government says. "We are going to have unemployment. We are going to have retrenchment." But there has already been retrenchment. They did it last year. Redeployment they call it. The English Language is being changed. Thousands of people were sent on the street. Do you mean that is what you have in store for us again? That is a shocking shame.

All of you are sitting down listening; not one of you can make a contribution to the debate. This is the bureaucracy here: Eight non-elected Ministers out of 12. Don't you think you should send people to do some constructive work? They started training them to cut cane; they should continue. That is Productive work. This is not the first time the Government has made an agreement, solemn agreement and reneged on it. The \$14 has got to be paid as far as I can see. It will have to be paid because, notwithstanding the fact of many these people in the T.U.C., even though they have assigned resignation forms, they have been put in a position where they have to act on trade union principles and I cannot see this Government can make this agreement and now talk about an act of faith. The act of faith was in 1976, when the spiralling cost of living was already, what, fifteen dollars a day. When they owe the people money, they would not pay them. They say that needs examination.

I think, sir, that the workers of this country, the trade unions of this country, and particularly, the leadership of the T.U.C. at this moment, are very perturbed about the Government reneging on this very import issue. And I would like to suggest in closing that the Government cannot call itself a Government interested in labour, the Government cannot say it has the interest of the workers at heart and at the same time, attempts to deny them what they have worked for. This is already March going on to April. The first quarter of the year is running by and this Government cannot maintain a decision which it took. This is a very cheeky way of dealing with the situation.

3:05 p.m.

I want to deal with one last point. My friend, the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives, I am sorry that he is not in his seat, argued and he wept over the fact that the co-operative system has failed in the T.U.C. And I was not the only person there. The cooperative system has failed and yet in this document the Minister was talking about co-operativism. He state on page 29:

“Co-operativism as a way of life remains the cardinal principle of our development strategy and the dynamic for social and economic transformation.”

He has admitted that it has failed in the T.U.C. I was present there. Every day, if you read the newspaper you will see the co-operatives are failing. Everyday some co-operative has been knocked out. This is like crying over spilt milk. He said that the system has failed and it is also published in the newspapers day after day that co-operative number so and so struck off the list.

And more than that: The Non Parell Co-operative Livestock Association was a functioning co-operative, but the people were run off their land by terrorists armed with guns – I am not calling names, sir. The co-operative was closed down; The Ministry of National Mobilisation and Co-operatives seized the books and examined for a whole calendar year.

When the books were returned, I asked the Minister what was wrong. He said that the people contribute to the P.P.P. and therefore they cannot have the co-operatives, even though it was a live co-operative, functioning for the benefit of the members. Is that it or do you meant you want the P.N.C. adherents? If that is the case, then we are not going to have production and productivity; we are not going to have national unity; we are going to have chaos, and like the Shah, you will have to fly as I said just now, all of you do not live near to the airport.
[Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Reid.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Development (Cde.Reid): Cde. Speaker, I wish first of all to congratulate the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives for the Budget that was presented in the House, the 1979 Budget, and I claim that it is a Budget that is socialist directed and also very realist. I suspect however, that my good friend has been trying to draw so many red herrings across the line that people will follow his trail to make a lot of noise and finish up by saying nothing at all, for the world knows that there is an economic crisis on, that prices continue to rise. Every little child is conscious of the fact of what it means when there is an upward rise in the price of petroleum products. So many things depend on petroleum products. That is accepted implicitly.

As far as books are concerned, I believe that the comrades who have students studying abroad- fortunately for us, the Government of the day is bearing the cost of education – if they should get the details of what it cost now to go through school overseas and pay for those books,

it would be alarming that courses that at one time cost US\$5,000 over the period now cost sometimes US\$73,000. However when he talks about raising prices on books, it is clear that all our comrade has been trying do was to make much noise without saying anything at all.

What about the referendum? Ten per cent of the people voted. Our records show some 70 per cent of the people voted. But then there have been the custom over the years to cry “Wolf”. Before elections they cried, after elections they cried, and I want them to know at the end of their days they will be crying before and after elections and they will never get any place at all.

But, Cde. Speaker, the Guyanese people should have a sense of pride at this time when they have a Government in office that can put, unapologetically, the facts of the situation in the world and in their own country in such a straightforward manner not fooling, so that the people of this country would understand. It shows the faith that the Government has in the good sense of the people, the respect the Government has for the populace and the trust that the Government has in the populace that it can come to this House and tell the nation the situation as it is. The development process has its hills and its valleys, its plateaus, the mountain top and the slopes, if development really is to take place in this country. It is not something that goes on in one upward movement all the time. But one thing is sure, that this Government is determined to maintain and increase the workerforces and face the sensible decision even though it is an unpopular decision not to make a change upward in the minimum wage of this country at this stage of our development.

Of course, there is an agreement but an argument is not a one-sided document. One would remember that when the first announcement was made about this agreement it was made clear that it was done as an act of faith and good care was taken in the follow-up work to make sure that this agreement was not a one-sided document, for in Article one – and I have the document in my hand – paragraph two states:

“2. The new Public Sector minimum wage rate shall not be less than-

(a) for 1977 - \$1.05 per hour/\$8.40 per day/\$200.0 per month

(b) for 1978 -\$1.35 per hour/\$11.00 per day/\$258.00 per month

(c) for 1979 - \$1.75 per hour/\$14.00 per day/\$333.00 per month.”

But this is not an agreement with just one article. This agreement has seven articles and if we are to keep any agreement then all these articles have to be observed. Notwithstanding the circumstances then, the first payment was made retroactive in an economy that was not doing well, under circumstances of an economic crisis in the world and so in Article six there is the interpretation. Now, interpretation always presents a difficulty and so the people with good sense who fashioned this agreement – the T.U.C. being included among those people - state in Article six:

“This Agreement shall be interpreted as an act of faith, and the Trades Union Congress and its affiliates will do everything within their power to ensure that in all sections and areas of activity, there is full production and increased Productivity.”

The country knows beyond the shadow of any doubt and the workers know what is our present situation as far as the keeping of Article six is concerned. And so in the face of the present circumstances it could not be otherwise but to indicate to the nation that the Government and the economy of this country can in no way meet that last increase in the minimum wage at this time and I am sure, Cde. Speaker, that the people of this country – and even though my friend shouts what they will do – are not prepared to allow misleaders to prey upon their emotions to create history and lawlessness in this country, chaos and darkness. People have had experience of that in the sixties. I am certain that they are not prepared to go back to that state of affairs.

3:15 p.m.

Innovations reflected, Cde. Speaker, in this Budget were foreshadowed in the 1978 Budget statement. They are far-reaching as far as the structural and institutional changes are concerned. So today we have to give up some of the old institutions as the Minister indicated in his presentation. Some are irrelevant. But when one thinks of the state Planning Commission, if we are moving in a socialist direction, all my friends know that this is one of the basic institutions that must be. Therefore, after all the years in our planning work, this time the Minister presenting

the Budget was in a position to say that the State Planning Commission has now to be established.

In a developing country change is inevitable. In fact, changes are constant as we move from progress to progress. The People's National Congress having been the Governing Party for some fourteen years, has experienced progress and along with this progress it has brought about many changes in building the foundation for genuine development. Development can become so dependent on other nations and on other people that instead of being independent a country can become totally aligned and subservient, servile to bigger and more powerful nations. This country, however, is genuinely non-aligned due to the will, the courage and leadership of the Cde. Leader and Prime Minister, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham.

But administering the needs of 1964 British Guiana is far out, very far out from administering the development of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana in 1979. As such, our relationships, functions and operations have to be changed in keeping with our development thrust, for development of all the people of Guyana, and in the pursuit of our commitment to the socialist ideal. We need national unity. We need everything in this country. But it does not come about by talking and having slogans. Institutions established to bring about that national unity have been frowned on by the members of the P.P.P., even when it is an institution that will bring development to their supporters in this country. They have frowned upon them because I think deep down they have one belief, that with a greater number in a particular radical group then that is the way the management of the affairs of this country must go. Some of their friends who are advising them from overseas also think in that way. But this is Guyana. This is independent Guyana. This is Republic of Guyana and we the people of Guyana have to make it work.

In these changes that cannot be postponed any longer, we have three things happening. One, the institution of central planning by the establishment of the State Planning Commission, the proper monitoring by the State Planning Commission, the necessity to put to greater use our natural resources, our potential wealth, soil, forest and where by further development through relevant education and practical training of our total human resources, for we still have much to learn as far as development is concerned. Having recognised that the greatest need lies in the

16.3.79

National Assembly

3.15 – 3.25 p.m.

education of the people, the People's National Congress has shown great determination to effectively carry out a national policy education all over this country because it is only through education will all the people be ready to grab and understand what has to be done in both theory and practice. Only through proper education will the communities arise and become zealous doers of the nation in the construction of the new society, what it takes to achieve genuine development in this country where only a few years ago blinding dusty roads were the norm.

I talked with somebody who came back home after being sixteen years abroad. He said that notwithstanding the rumours and the pettiness, when he travelled from Corentyne to Georgetown, he told his friends "I have experienced Development. Before I left this country I would have been in total red dust from head to toe if development did not take place at all."

Of course my friends believe that that there is no point in constructing better roads in this country. Today we talk about farm-to-market roads that would soon become the norm. Now, when the farmers have reaped the product, it is difficult for them to bring it to market places, so much so that sometimes what would have been A-grade deteriorate to C-grade and the economy bears that kind of loss. It is that kind of road that we need now, where you can ride in a vehicle from Georgetown to the distant parts of the hinterland. That is a dream that is already come true, where you can cross over rivers and creeks over bridges constructed by the workers of Guyana. This is a vision that is now not unrelated to reality. It is no more any Utopian fantasy.

These are now realities in our country, yet they ask where has the money gone. I think they should travel around the country with open eyes. If not, get a guide to show them the massive changes that have taken place in this country. Look at our school buildings. What does it all mean to you when you see all these development changes in this country?

3:25 p.m.

When the 1978 Budget was presented, emphasis was placed on the medium-term investment programme and the medium-term projects in the country's economy. Very great emphasis is being placed on the economic and financial programme for 1979, because the world is in an economic crisis. Our country is part of that crisis and now we must struggle for survival,

to achieve any measure of success. The programme for 1979 and onwards has to be pursued, as the Minister said, with imagination, with vigour and with ruthlessness on broad general fronts.

Cde. Speaker, we sometimes hear in this House what has happened in other countries. But if you examine some of those countries you will find out that they do not, and I repeat, they do not tolerate some of what we take for freedom and democracy in this country, for a man forfeits his freedom when he uses that freedom to prevent some other person from enjoying his freedom. Let them tell this country of some of the countries that they know how many people are still locked up as political prisoners. Only the other day, the reading public would have seen what is happening in some of those countries because they know that the confusion, which is sometimes created by the people for their own objectives and motives, would cause the people who are working to be so confused at times to withhold their energy.

I remember when our rice industry had to be rehabilitated how comrades from the opposite side made it their daily task to preach to the workers not to grow anything. And they did not stop there; they went further and intimidated them to the greatest extent. But still production took place. Because after all, people themselves prefer betterment, prefer peace to conflict. And notwithstanding what has been said, this Government has the concrete evidence because of the way people have been treated that production has taken place and even though 1978 was a difficult year it could have been even worse than that. For some years before, we were persuaded to grow as much of our food as possible, so that when the crush would have come, and we are facing the crush now, our food import bill would not have been the same. Commodities that we used to import, many of them are not imported today and still the people of this country are not suffering from any unusual malnutrition, because here in Guyana we the resources to feed ourselves.

I listen with great amusement and sometimes concern when people condemn, even in this House, what we produce. This is what our Colonial masters taught us to do, that what we have is no good; so that we believe what they produce and send to us is always the best. That is why we talk of Milo. Because they, our Colonial masters, had the good sense to take our own coca from the tropics, carry away our coca to their country, process it, mix a little milk in it and some other

extraneous ingredients, and send us back in fancy times and we fall for that. And if anybody tells us not to use that, we think that person is against us. What is there so much in tea that we cannot put in its place some local leaf? I am certain that many of the comrades who are talking, when they go to some metropolitan countries, they have to use what those people produce. Send them now to the prairies in Canada, send them to British Columbia, send them to London, but for the large number of West Indians now crowding out London, they have potatoes and flour as a meal because the people grow them there and the people have been so wise, so skilful, that they took the potato plant from here and developed it. Remember the days of Sir Walter Raleigh? Two plants he carried back, tobacco plant and potato plant and then renamed one Irish potato and sent it back to us. Sometimes they make it more fancy. They say English potato and we believe if we do not get that then somebody is spiting us.

And we evidence of the deep-seated colonialism is staring us in our faces and impeding the development of our country. There is no greater certainty of constructing the Socialist State than that which rests on the function of mobilisation and change. I know my friends hate to recognise that there is a Ministry called National Development and they think they are interfering with production. Cde. Speaker, formal training in formal institutions cannot suffice even though formal institutions and formal training are not important.

Our own historical development in this country points to our experience of mobilisation exercises long before the P.N.C. came into Government. What did our British masters do on Empire Day. What did they do on King's and Queen's birthday? What special day Christian Churches had? Trinity day, St. George's day. Even in my own little village there was St Barnabas day. That was a big day for mobilisation. But nobody used that word because they did not need to use that word. Whatever they said we did without any understanding, without any explanation. And so those were their days to mobilise the nation, to orient the nation; to teach and direct the nation so that they could get things done, not for the development of this country but they did all for the development of themselves, and took all the profits away. And we did it for them. Now today, when we are here to do things for ourselves, people criticise these certain and proven methods of mobilising people for development.

16.3.79

National Assembly

3.25 – 3.35 p.m.

Think of the Boy Scout programme; think of the Girl Guide programme; think of the Boys Brigade programme. Why were these here? To train people in the discipline that the capitalist society needed for development. Of course, history itself teaches that meaningful changes can be brought about with people capable of giving the proper leadership. And the People's National Congress Government is determined to do just that. Spokesmen are needed who will stand up for the construction of the new society and we have to train those spokesmen and spokeswomen. Indeed, I sometimes think we have begun a little late in this work and there is evidence, all around our country of this late beginning. But we cannot conceal the fact that there is much work to be done. We still have some ridiculous opposition yet to be converted. Some have already been converted. We need to give more light that they will see the new road that leads to the new Socialist society. When I used to preach, I have said, "Give light, oh, Lord, that they may see the way that leads to Thee."

3:35 p.m.

Our mobilisation is not simply getting persons to participate in activities. It is not just that. It is more than that. It is to make people become more aware, more conscious, to make them accept the new idea, for only human beings can cause development to happen. Hence, our first duty is to ensure that the human beings are properly trained and properly developed. So, in our mobilisation programme, some of the activities will be the Republic Celebrations and we had that only very recently. Some say that there is no support; there is no involvement, there is no participation; I do not know if they blind their eyes to the fact when one can crowd the National Park with thousands and thousands of people from all over this country. What does that mean? Bringing people together!

International Women's Day, the 25th Anniversary of the T.U.C., the youth week, the workers' day, Enmore Marter's Day, the Opening of the Demerara Harbour Bridge, the Opening of the Canje Bridge, the People's Congress with over 4,000 people attending from all walks of life, from all organisations all over the country. That is mobilisation which was never before seen in this country of ours because we recognise, Cde. Speaker, that a conscious worker is a

productive comrade. We have to train the workers more so that they would not ever allow themselves to be led by the blind, for the blind cannot lead them anymore.

We also are involved in other less informal programme like the overseas visits when we allow our comrades to see what happens in reality in Socialist countries, because too many people from the other side probably know the truth and prefer to do like my friend, talk about all sorts of things without coming to the point. I used to have a professor who said “Better to know the truth and talk of palm tree” and that is what I suspected my friend was doing over there, He knows the truth of what happens in those countries; he knows the interpretation of freedom for them; he knows how they get that workforce. They know all of that, Cde. Speaker. They known of the lines; they know of the kind of scarcity – if we will call it scarcity- of some of the things that probablythey were used to.

So, we send our friends overseas and my good friends from the opposition side also send people overseas but I will advise them to check and evaluate what happens after they have gone, after they have been, after they have returned. That would be an interesting assessment, an interesting analysis for them, for once their eyes are open, they find the People’s National Congress. **[Applause]**

We have not been able to established the Knowledge Sharing Institute, a new thing in this country. It is called K.S.I. This project commenced in January,1978, and it’s being actively developed by the employee of the Ministry of National Development together with youths mobilised from the East and West Coast of Demerara mainly. The expansion of this project to include participation by public sector workers has been delayed by lack of understanding, of course, by some leaders. By education and persuasion, however, soon they too would get in step and in tune with the P.N.C. Government.

We have not been able to establish the development practice that we had hoped to establish by now but work proceeds on the work-study programme. It is interesting, Cde, Speaker, to note that the school children and the school teachers volunteer on a regular basis to do stints of work at the Knowledge Sharing Institute, because development practice is important.

We sometimes lose sight of what our colonial masters have done to us. Even when they took us in their own institutions for training and learning, it was not the same content as their own nationals experienced. Hence we must now have institutions here where we will not only talk of theory but where people will get an opportunity to practise.

In my experience, I am certain that when the British Student went to university, he had gone there with work experience. In many cases he had gone out of industry to university. His holidays were spent again in industry. We who went only to pass examination, rushed through the courses anxious to come back to take over some supervising task, many times supervising what we did not understand. The change in the methodology of our educational system formally and non-formally is to ensure that our people, especially the young, being properly. And I wish to offer sincere congratulations to the teachers and the enthusiastic groups of young Guyanese, our most precious assets, Guyanese children, for the kind of total involvement that they have dominated in the Knowledge Sharing Institute. **[Applause]**

One may ask, Cde. Speaker, why we have so named it. The project is called the Knowledge Sharing Institute because it is designed to teach us to teach each other and to learn from each other. There has been too much selfishness with knowledge in our country. The time has come when we must share that knowledge so that more people will know more, for today we need the versatile man and so the K.S.I. is another place of learning for the work/study programme in our schools. Again I wish to congratulate the school population.

Cde. Speaker, it is there we expose people to agricultural practices, so important in the development of this country where the land is plentiful, the population is few, and still we find people searching for work and finding none. It is because people fear what they do not know. It is good that these days we return to learn some of our own history instead of learning the history of the British Constitution and all of that, for if we understand our own history, we will appreciate some of the divisions in our land; for it was our masters who frightened us away from our land and it has taken a long time for total recovery to take place. It was the floods that chased people away. These are things that will have to be rectified now so that our rural communities

16.3.79

National Assembly

3.35 – 3.45 p.m.

may come more and more to have an appreciation of this vital task of how to exploit our vital resources.

3.45 p.m.

The Knowledge Sharing Institute is giving people that opportunity because they will be able to appreciate what it means to go abroad and if they have to give service to the farmers then they would be in a better position to give intelligent and wise service. Therefore, in all areas of interest in agriculture, including the growing of fish, work is being done at the Knowledge Sharing Institute.

Cde. Speaker, again I repeat, education and training must play the vital role in developing human ability to work more efficiently and productively. Indeed, some politicians as well as economists debate about the justification of investment in human capital especially when the country is preparing itself for development. However, they recognise the need for further education and training because of these facts.

It is well documented and proven that in the highly and efficient organisation education plays a leading role in preparing the human mind to reach the demands of a constantly changing environment. It has long been agreed that emphasis be placed on investment in human resources in the national economy so as to develop a suitable institutional and productive framework and the necessary skill in order to absorb material capital and to use it for effective development, both in the national environment and within the organisation. It has been observed that there are urgent problems in trying to implement large-scale programmes within the organisation and economy without sufficient and qualified people to carry out these programmes successfully. So, Cde, Speaker, we move on to train some of the older people, some who are already employed, and we have, as I said in this House before, another new thing, not as new as the K.S.I. We call it the “Developers’ Course”.

The aim of the Developers’ Training Course is to provide facilities for the fertilising of ideas and experience by comrades trained from the various public, co-operative, private, cultural and religious organisations, so that we can have a mixture of people to have practical experience

of what it means to live together, what it means when we talk about unity in an effort to create greater awareness, understanding and appreciation at both the theoretical and practical levels, consistent with Guyana's national objective and development strategy.

It was only today that I received a document from a course that is now in progress, where participants have done their live-in exercise, giving them an opportunity to spend a week in a community. The co-ordinator has reported to that community, that the Kuru Kuru College campus, that a special feature of the course is a live-in exercise which usually lasts for one week. For this course the participants lived and worked among the people at Kuru Kuru. The main objective of this exercise is to give participants the opportunity and experience of working with and living among people, other than those they have grown to understand, and to share their problems so that they may be better able to understand how other people live, thereby giving them some other experience which should make them perform better when they return to their communities. As a result of their involvement in the digging of the ditch for the laying of pipe lines some two miles long, the participants of this batch, the twenty-first batch, have agreed on a joint venture with the Kuru Kuru Co-operative College to identify themselves tangibly with the International Year of the Child. They have decided to raise funds by the way of a "buy a bucket of water" campaign, so that water could be provided for residents of the area. As they get out in the community, they learn to know people better and they contribute in a meaningful way to the development of the people of the community.

During 1978, 180 comrades drawn from the above organisations participated in the course. This programme is trying to do some of the things that have to be done to get us to understand ourselves and our country, and there is a long list of projects which are done during the period. They did painting in the Mocha-Arcadia community; they spent a week at Black Bush Polder painting the Mibicuri Government School; they surfaced the road from Barima to Moruka in the North West. They got a chance also to know the country. They have done some permanent projects because they too are in the task of cultivating rice and they are able to pay for these acres to a great measure by the production work they undertake, having not only rice lands but other crops: provision farms, livestock, like sheep, cows, poultry, pigs and ducks. They can learn

some of these activities that people do to make a living and get a practical appreciation of them all.

Because of what it means to make development genuine, there has been instituted in recent times the National Policy Education Programme so that citizens all over the country will develop pride and love for this nation, so that they will have the basis to discuss intelligently and debate the question of national unity. It is necessary to ensure through an organised mechanism that the masses understand the specific roles in the representative organisation. So there is this kind of progress which probably you will hear more about, which is taking root in the communities all over the country so that the struggles that we are going through today would not be repeated in the future. We might have new struggles, but not the old ones.

There is also education in the public offices and public concerns, in teachers' training institutions, nursing training institutions, industrial places and so on, for example, at the Guyana Radio and Electronics, known as GRECO. There are also opportunities for people from any part of the country, from any political persuasion, to get more formal education in political science and our own ideology. But all these would mean nothing if we do not pursue the development of our own culture. It is good to know that serious recognition has been given to this. One comrade in the People's Culture Corps – and it involves all sorts of organisation – different groups get together and organise what we now call the People's Culture Corps. Though suitable recording facilities are lacking, the level of musical expression has been promoted and maintained in spite of the lack of such facilities. In fact, because of the absence of some facilities, imaginative innovations have taken place. In the area of whipping up national awareness towards the socialist thrust, the versatility technique in getting the messages across has been an additional asset of the P.C.C., but their most candid idiom, aided and inspired by current and consistent facts and materials, has been in evidence.

3.55 p.m.

This is the strength of what we are trying to do in some areas. Despite all that is going on, sometimes there are deliberate machinations to let people believe that people are not interested.

The evidence is quite clear that people are more and more becoming involved in the development of this country.

Permit me, Cde. Speaker, to make some remarks about the People's Congress that I mentioned a while ago. The People's Congress was organised on keeping in step with Cde. Prime Minister's prescription. My friend does not really understand anything about the prescription. This prescription has been mentioned on page 33 of the Budget Speech. I want to spend a couple of minutes on this.

There was a preliminary first Assembly of the Congress delegates on Saturday, 16th December, at 5 p.m. at the Sophia Auditorium. Cde. Robert Corbin, First Vice-Chairman of the Party and Minister of State in the Ministry of National Development briefed the delegates on various important aspects of the Congress. Then that evening there was a film festival where films from the Third World were shown at the Cultural Centre. Then on Sunday, 17th at 8.30 a.m., there was another preliminary briefing session. Then at 9 a.m., the Party Chairman, Cde. Cammie Ramsaroop, officially opened the Congress. And there were present well over 4,000 Guyanese from every corner of the co-operative nation so that they could have meaningful discussion.

Cde. Speaker, that Congress was organised to have some 80 workshops and they dealt with ten meaningful questions. I want to mention them. The economy itself, production and productivity; national ideological training; national unity; socialism and the co-operatives; central planning; exploiting our resources; human resources mobilisation for community development; discipline and culture. It was an in-depth study and at the end there came the People's Rally when Cde. Leader who had listened all through the presentation of reports, made his presentation. And out of it all has come the Sophia Accord Resolution. Cde. Speaker, I would not burden you with the Resolution but I wish to say that the people agreed that this People's Congress should be institutionalised and come at least every two years. It is beginning to show results and we have seen from the discussions that went on that there was great urgency for the Guyana Investment Code that has now become a reality.

In this period, the P.N.C. in Government has been laying great emphasis on the improvement of our environment. Today, Volunteers all over this country, are trying to clean up and plant up that part of their environment that can be so treated, for man indeed is the product of his environment. How can he enjoy human rights if there is no hope, no concern for the improvement of his environment. There are now hundreds of environment improvement communities.

When there was no economic crisis in this country as we now experience, a Government many years ago was able to build only 12 houses in this country in an attempt to improve the environment of the people of Guyana. I wonder if that act alone – and that is the pre-December, 1964 period I am talking about – does not condemn them forever to sit where they are sitting. Those areas of disintegration and confusion and wondering are behind us. Guyanese people must allow themselves to fall in such decay never again.

At this stage, all Guyanese have a task to do. The Minister of Economic Development and Co-operative asked what comrades should do. A week or so ago I was in another part of this country and the question was raised “what should comrades do and persuade the workers to do to relieve some of the present hardship”? There is no doubt that in a real economic crisis, a poor developing country cannot escape the hardships of that crisis. But we must use our imagination at this time so that we can overcome, and the comrades faced that question very intelligently. These are some of their findings:

1. Produce more at the work place through better management to increase surpluses and prevent losses.
2. Use any available time outside of the work place to produce some commodity for use either at home or for sale.
3. Home gardening and... work can help.
4. Take unusual care of what we have at field, office, factory and home.
5. Use the maximum of locally- produced things even if it means using congopump or sweet broom and so on for tea.

16.3.79

National Assembly

3.55 – 4.05 p.m.

6. Find use for things you formerly threw away.
7. Use your imagination and skill to make maximum use of local fuel.
8. Prevent waste of any and every kind.
9. Practise seriously preventative medicine. Greater cleanliness and tidiness of environment can certainly help to prevent some types of illness.

And then they came with a little arithmetic at the end.

“Savings plus a little more earnings from individual or group effort equal increased minimum wage-plus X, that is even a little more than minimum wage.

Cde. Speaker, people are thinking; people are concerned how this country shall overcome its difficulties without being subservient, without being servile to any powerful nation.

In bringing this brief intervention to a close, I find no more relevant words to conclude than these lines from the Guyanese Poet, Ivan Forrester, commonly known as Farrow, whose commitment and concern stimulate his imagination in the fine arts. But before I read the lines, let me say this. Some rejoice in the sweetness of some words. Some are chagrined by the bitterness of other words. But there are some that remain serene regardless of the bitterness or sweetness of the word. These are the birds; those are the comrades that will marshal the development of this country. And so I say in closing with the words of Ivan Forrester:

“Arise now, and let thy lustre shine”

Those are words specially for my friends in the Opposition.

“Where darkness seeks the light
Perchance thy light in time will shine
To make such darkness bright”. [Applause]

4.05 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Corrica.

The Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture (Cde. Corrica): Cde. Speaker, in debating this Budget Speech so ably presented by the hon. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives, as usual, we were entertained by a lot of irrelevancies by the members of the Opposition. I wanted to know if they were vying for some prize being offered for the one who would be the greatest pessimist or humourist or whether they were trying to catch my eye for some act in a comedy skit in a cultural presentation. **[Applause]** Since I am to speak on culture, I have no long story to tell because coming after what the hon. Cde. Reid has just contributed, I think he has actually said all.

Cde. Speaker, in Guyana today, in spite of our limitations caused by our financial problems which prevented us from fully implementing programmes planned, this P.N.C. Government can still lift its head high and be proud of what it has achieved in the field of culture. Before I proceed to speak of our achievements in the cultural department, first I must draw your attention to pages 28 and 29 of the Budget presentation. On page 28, the Minister stated:

“Development strategy continues to be people-oriented and to be based squarely upon policies and programmes of people-involvement”.

Then, at the bottom of the same page he further stated:

“A major policy cornerstone continues to be the consolidation of national unity as the only sure basis for the nation’s pervasive well-being and continued development”.

He went on to say:

“During 1979, Government will continue to make significant outlays in Education and Culture (including Sports) and encourage activities which tend to promote and emphasise the unity and solidarity of the nation”.

Cde. Speaker, I read those few paragraphs to draw to the attention of this honourable, and especially to the attention of members on the opposite side, that whenever we speak about development, we always think about people, because there can be no development without people. And there can be no development without cultural development because cultural

development is an integral part of socialist development. When we speak of national unity and people -involvement, we speak of the kind of national unity that the members of the Opposition speak about: political bargaining or patronage by two political leaders. We think about the people getting together as the hon. Dr. Reid has said, working together, sharing experiences, economically, culturally and otherwise.

Cde. Speaker, in Guyana today, the facts are that since the P.N.C. Government has taken office, we fully recognise that culture is an instrument for building national identity and fostering national unity. We therefore embarked on programmes which brought recognition to all aspects of culture in Guyana, Amerindian, African, Indian, etc. And after giving recognition to these various cultures, we went on to popularise them by way of dance, music, song.

Now, Cde. Speaker, let me speak a little about culture. In Guyana today, we have political independence. We are striving for our economic independence but I believe that once the Guyanese people are not free culturally, we can never achieve our economic independence because as the hon. Deputy Prime Minister said, once you depend and believe that the food you eat must come from abroad, you are not free. Once you depend and believe that the styling of the clothes you wear must come from abroad, you are not free. **[Interruption]**

Cde. Speaker, I want to deviate just a little to tell Cde. Narbada Persaud that if he wants to make a statement, he must make it on his feet and if he wants to accuse any hon. Member on this side of performing any dishonourable act, let him do it on his feet and identify the member and not go around throwing hints like a little woman; he must be direct and say what he means.

Cde. Speaker, we are at this stage educating people as to what is their culture and we are being successful in this act because no one can deny that all cultures in Guyana today are being recognised and well respected. Today we can go to the National Cultural Centre and see Amerindians performing their thing. Up to the other day, at the Prime Minister's Birthday concert, we saw the Madrasede doing their thing. **[Applause]** Last Wednesday, we all celebrated Phagwah. All this was achieved through the People's National Congress Government. Cde.

16.3.79

National Assembly

4.05 – 4.15 p.m.

Speaker, by promoting culture and promoting our people culturally, we know we shall overcome our economic difficulties. It will make them stronger spiritually.

4.15 p.m.

Right now we are trying to free our people's minds because they still have the colonial mentality that the best things come from abroad. We are teaching them now to respect and appreciate their own culture. By doing this they will learn to respect and appreciate their own things. These are no empty words; we are dealing with truth from this side of the House. We are not dealing with propaganda, rumours, and we are not trying to distort the facts.

In the field of music, in terms of Guyanese performances overseas, in 1978, the financial position of the country, as we know, was not favourable because of the considerable cost involved in tours of this kind. However, the Chronicle Atlantic Symphony Steel Orchestra made a tour of Brazil. On this tour it was accompanied by dancers from the National School of Dance. What they did on this tour was purely Guyanese. There were also performances given for visitors from the People's Republic of China, the D.P.R.K., the G.D.R., the U.S.S.R. and Cuba, and a special performance was organised for a visiting television group from Yugoslavia.

Cde. Speaker, it shows that we are moving forward. We are bringing our people to a professional standard in the cultural department. The two classes in music are continuing and classes in drumming were also held during 1978. Assistance has also been given to groups especially, in the rural areas, by providing accompanying musicians who help local groups in arrangement and presentation of their material.

In dance, the teaching programme of the National School of Dance continues under Professor Lastra and I think we must once again say hearty congratulations to the Cuban Government for the good work that Cde. Lastra has been doing and is still doing at the National School of Dance. His services continue to be made available to the school by the Government of Cuba and in July 1978, thirty-six students graduated from the special training class in dance. This is free to the students. There was not a cent paid for education of any kind. Cde. Lastra is assisted by a staff of five, one of whom received instructions in dance in Cuba. The students also

provide items for many functions put on for overseas visitors. Dancing today is not like dancing in the old days when you had to be of a particular ethnic group or a particular class of society. Today, children from Albouystown, from Kingston and from any part of the country and from any walk of life are dancing shoulder to shoulder with even the daughter of the hon. Prime Minister on our National Cultural Centre stage and other places of entertainment.

We are proud of what we are achieving and what we have achieved so far in the field of culture, notwithstanding our financial difficulties. Folk research is something which is going on very quietly but we are waiting for the correct time to present it. This folk Research Department has been involved in collecting stories and accounts of the past but this area has been severely restricted once again by our financial difficulties. Nevertheless, a quantity of material has been collected and is being stored for use when the necessary resources can be made available. In our own little way, with our own limited financial resources, we are trying to do our best in the field of culture because, as I said before, without complete cultural development there could be no development at all and cultural development is an integral part of socialist development.

We have also assisted artistes and musicians who we know live by this art, to bring in certain instruments duty free because we know they depend on these things for their livelihood. We have even granted them foreign exchange to record their songs so that they could be played throughout the Caribbean and even in the metropolitan countries that they would be rewarded with some type of remuneration from the sale and other things which accrue from these activities. We are now seriously thinking about setting up some organisation to promote our artistes and musicians abroad once they have the proper discipline. At the last festival in Cuba, we sent among our representatives a cultural group which was warmly received by all who were present at that festival. All of that came by our involvement in the cultural activities of our comrades. I would like to say that for these achievements which I have just spoken about, I think the P.N.C. and Government should be applauded.

The Speaker: Cde Mohamed.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Speaker, the problems I referred to in education were dismissed as teething problem. Now that a year has elapsed I think I can safely claim that our education

policies no doubt suffer from a deficiency in calcium, the teeth have not strengthened. In fact, the year has served to show, as the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives pointed out, the weak, unstable foundations upon which our education system rests, which must naturally react on our educational superstructure. In the very year that the Minister of Education likened our education policy to a jewel in the crown of the P.N.C., some months after, that, as if in repudiation of that assumption, no less a person than the Vice Chancellor of the University of Guyana in his Annual Report to the University Council, 1977/1978, had this to say:

“We survived 1977/1978 as we survived 1976/77, but it is as yet too early to say at what cost. I do not wish to appear a prophet of doom, especially at this time in Guyana’s history when the need for institutions and individuals to make extra sacrifices is unquestionable. But the implications for University of not having adequate resources to perform its tasks effectively is far-reaching, stretching as it does into the future. Without an adequate stock of books and equipment, without proper accommodation, and without an essential supply of water and electricity on a regular basis, frustration ensues, the quality of instructions declines, and the standard of graduates falls. If research cannot be carried out problems relevant to national development simply remain problems. All these difficulties were present in 1977/78 in varying degrees of intensity”.

He continues:

“The problem was further compounded by the fact that there were emergency minor capital works that had to be undertaken in order to keep the University going. This reduced the recurrent subvention even further and not thinking it prudent to follow James Agate’s comic laconism, “to force myself to earn more money, I determined to spend more”, we were obliged to tighten our belts even more than in 1976/77. Curtailment of many overseas orders, restriction on attendance at conferences, and a freeze on funds for research were the order of the day”.

I want to continue because it is important. No less a person is contradicting our hon. Minister. With reference to the library, this is what the Vice-Chancellor of the University had to say:

“Currently there are only 314 in very cramped conditions. Lack of accommodation also has implications for the acquisition of stock. At moment the Library houses 45 – 50,000 volumes in excess of the number the building was designed to accommodate.

Work on the extension remained suspended during 1977/78 because of lack of funds. The Ministry of Overseas Development, which has always taken an

16.3.79

National Assembly

4.15 – 4.25 p.m.

interest in the Project and has already contributed some \$340,000, has agreed to earmark a further £50,000 or more, subject to government giving a guarantee to honour its commitment. To this end representation has been made to the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives.

The second restrictive factor on the work of the Library was money, and the effect on the ordering of books and purchase of equipment was even more serious than in 1976/77”.

4.25 p.m.

The faculty of Arts reflects the financial crisis, lack of accommodation and equipment, and shortage of staff. These are little claims of the Vice Chancellor of the University and I must particularly refer to them because they come in direct contradiction months after, to what the Minister of Education said last year during the Budget Debate.

If one looked throughout this Report made by the Vice Chancellor, one would find a very embarrassing report. The Vice Chancellor has taken the opportunity to speak about the grave problems which are affecting the University of Guyana. Obviously, sir, the zeal that was spoken about last year has lost its lustre. It is particularly painful for us primarily because the University of Guyana took shape and form at the time of the P.P.P. Government. It emerged as a result of tremendous battles against odds for its establishment. It arose out of the vision of the P.P.P. at that time that saw the need for an institution of higher learning, a pinnacle of our education system, so that it could serve our people and our needs.

Now, in 1979, we hear such a dismal report, such a heart-rending report from no other person than the Vice Chancellor of the University of Guyana. Not only is there a range of problems as mentioned by the Vice Chancellor but the University is still a place at the moment where not only these problem exist but these problems are compounded by financial accountability and scandals at the time of the graduation exercises or about that time last year. The scholarship Committee had a little problem about someone named McLean who was being put or purported to graduate although he did not complete his course, and he was proposed at one stage to be graduating as the best student.

16.3.79

National Assembly

4.25 – 4.35 p.m.

We still have the problem of Dr. Rodney, and the proposal to be introduced in the University, the ACAG the despised National Service Scheme. They all paint a gloomy picture about that pinnacle of the education system. Why? I must remind this House that last year the University ... fund increased and this report was given in spite of that increase. This year again there is an increase and I am sure as things stand at this moment that that increase is not going to stop the deterioration and the decline which have stepped into the University of Guyana.

Within recent times, particularly the latter part of last year and early this year, another more urgent issue has arisen which we are very concerned about. About two weeks ago this issue was discussed by the academic Board which did not pay much attention to it and the issue is this. There are presently proposals being discussed seriously by officials of the University of Guyana as a result of the problems afflicting that institutions , either in the 1979/1980 school year, to halt the recruitment of new students or , on the other hand, to seriously restrict the intake of students for the 1979/1980 school year.

4.35 p.m.

It is something that we are extremely worried about and we want to use this moment to express our opposition to that scheme, should it be implemented. And more than expressing our opposition, we wish to ask for assurance from the Minister that neither the Government nor the Ministry of Education is harbouring such intentions and that there is no intention of resorting to those measures that we heard about. The Academic Board, like I said, rejected it two weeks ago, refused to discuss it. But the problems which have given rise to the prospect that in the 1979/1980 school year the University will close its door to new recruits or seriously restrict the intake, cannot be shelved because the problems are there, real as ever and so long as the problems are there, then that possibility can very well come up. We would like the Minister to give assurance and to say that there is no intention of resorting to such action.

But sir, whilst today one can speak about the faltering steps the University of Guyana is taking, in another institution of third level education, the Cyril Potter College, there is also seething discontent. For the last two weeks, that institution was closed, a pedagogic institute for training teachers was closed because, we understand, there was a shortage of cooking gas but

someone told us that the shortage of gas was very opportune, because if there was not a shortage of gas, the institution would likely have had the very result, a closure, because of a shortage of food supplies. And that is not rare for this institution which is preparing students for serious responsibilities. Last year March, as soon as the Budget Debate ended, the institution was closed because of a shortage of food supplies. Clearly there is not a very serious interest being shown by the officials incharge of our educational system in the welfare of our students at that third level education institution.

But there is also in that institution, another ridiculous practice being carried out. I wonder if you know, sir, that in the Cyril Potter College of Education where student-teachers are being prepared, that on Sundays, a boy or girl living in that College cannot get lunch if that boy or girl does not appear in the dining room in his or her “Sunday best”. At an institution where our young people are being trained to take on responsibilities of teaching, students will not be able to receive a lunch on Sundays unless they appear in their “Sunday best”. The pages of Dickens are coming to life. That is passed off as Social Education. One meal per week on Sundays, you can only get if you appear well-dressed or in your “Sunday best”; otherwise, you do not get that meal. Is this what you are going to do to train teachers? They are to be prepared; they are to be trained, not starved. Okay, so for one meal they have to appear like that on Sundays, what happens to the twenty-two others that they are entitled to?

That Oliver Twist type of approach to education must be done away with. I cannot understand what social education that is. Before that lunch-hour period there is another social reality that those students will have to contend with which will provide a more profound education than that one hour will not provide. I am more surprised, sir, to know that the Ministry of Education condones that practice. That is not how it should be. Our young people must not, the teachers must not be denied the right to a meal if they do not appear properly attired. [Comrades: “Oh, properly attired!”] Not only in this third level education institution do you have that problem. When I say “properly attired” I mean in their “Sunday best”.

In addition to that, there is an aura of mystery surrounding this institution. For the second year now, one year after the opening of that institution, one month after the opening of the new

term, all of a sudden, a batch of young people appeared and occupied the benches. We heard about this last year. Okay, certain mistakes were made and one month later, certain new students appeared and they were taken. But again, it is happening this year but nobody seems to know where they are coming from. Nobody seems to know who these people are. They just come one month after the opening of a school term and occupy their places. What has happened? What is the mystery? More than that; some of those who go in that fashion are people who never applied to go into the institution. I know of examples of people who have applied for more than four years and they had to bide their time and wait their turn before they could have been accepted. There was one girl who received a letter that she was accepted to enter the Cyril Potter College. She said she did not even apply to go there. She is qualified. But something is going wrong there, something shady is going on, something fishy, and the Minister ought to give an explanation to this House.

Let us look at another area of third level education, the Lilian Dewar and the In-Service Training Programmes. A new subject called the National Policy is now being taught at the Lilian Dewar College and the In-Service Teachers Training Programme. Nine-tenths of the books distributed freely to those students who will be participating in National Policy are either useless or distorted but more important for us is, among those books that are given freely, is one by Mao Tse-Tung on Contradictions. We would like to know whether taxpayers' money has bought those books we would like to know why, under this subject, National Policy, Mao Tse-Tung's work on Contradiction has appeared and we would like to know whether that is an indication of the philosophy and the ideology of the Government.

It was a skilful choice of a place of introduction of this book, a key area, the Lilian Dewar Teachers; Training College, where young people are also trained to carry on teaching within the different educational institutions and schools and now they are being given freely, Mao Tse-Tung's work on Contradictions. I have had chance to read a critique of Mao Tse-Tung's work on Contradiction by a professor from the German Democratic Republic who ably pointed out the unscientific and anti-Marxist nature of this book.

16.3.79

National Assembly

4.45 – 4.55 p.m.

4.45 p.m.

But more than that, we want to also point out what Mao Tse-Tung represents today. Right now he symbolises the philosophy of great power of chauvinism. They have penetrated into Vietnam, a heroic people. Now we understand that they are going to re-group. We must also recognise that where this very Mao Tse-Tung book is given to our teacher - students it is also contradictory, to my mind, to the policies of the Government. I hope it is, because I cannot understand how it is that our Government given support to the M.P.L.A. in Angola at the same time that the Chinese leaders are aligning themselves with the C.I.A. and South Africa to support S... G... Roberto. How is it that when our Guyana Government has broken relations with fascist Chile, Mao Tse-Tung China is one of the fascist Pinochet's strongest allies? They have representatives in the World Peace Council and Maoism and those who practise Maoism are fanning the flames of war. Why should we then promote this type of literature to our teacher - students? We would like the Minister to tell us what the argument behind this is.

It is in this context also that I would like mention that last year six students returned from the Soviet Union. They studied at the Lumumba University there, but at this moment not one of them has been employed. They applied for work but they have not been employed. I remember when this policy use to be pursued in the early period the Minister used to express great consternation about this. He raised it in Parliament; he brought this up in congresses condemning the Government for refusing to employ people trained in the Soviet Union? I know also that those six young people who have been trained in the Soviet Union were people selected by the Minister himself when he was over here. He was Secretary of the Committee that selected them to go. Now they are here they cannot be employed at a time when there is a shortage, like everything else, of intellectual resources. We can find money to employ overseas educators but we cannot find the money to employ Guyanese. Is it because they got their education from the Soviet Union? We would like to know and we would like to express our vehement protest against this action.

I think the Minister has the responsibility also to see what is happening to our intellectual resources that are running away from our soil. Bourgeois Governments have a way of always

16.3.79

National Assembly

4.45 – 4.55 p.m.

pointing to budgetary increases as evidence of their commitment to and interest in education. It is an old practice and one which is regularly employed here in Guyana. We have witnesses, in absolute figures, from time to time increases in the Budget. But you see, sir, when incredibly low figures are increased, they appear huge. It is like this; if a beggar has three cents and you give him seven cents, his property increases to ten cents or by 333 per cent.

4.55 p.m.

Such increase does not tell everything about education. One will have to go unto it, one will have to see how the money is distributed; one will have to examine it and then one will have the real truth of how money and the budgetary increases are to be put to the service of education in this country.

On the closer examination of the budgetary increases from time to time, I have found some very revolutionary facts one does not normally reveal. First, I wish to look at the education expenditure, the total expenditure as against the total expenditure percentage-wise. In 1974, and I have chosen 1974 because apart from 1969 it was the year in which the Government spent about 14.56 per cent of the Budget on education. In 1975, the Government spent 9.24 per cent of the Budget but education declined, in 1977, 14.6 per cent of the Budget, in 1978, 14.5 per cent of the Budget, a drop, and in 1979 it is proposed to spend 13.6 per cent of the Budget, another drop. In 1978 and 1979, there is fluctuation and I mean there is a move downwards.

Of course, one can refer to the \$118 million, but as a percentage of the Budget, we see a different picture. Now, let us see the expenditure put on education as it relates to the public, how much we are spending on education per person in Guyana. In 1974, calculating on a population level of 775,000, we spent \$129 per week. In 1975 we spent \$1.31 per week on education per head. In 1976, we spent \$1.71 weekly per head. In 1977, we spent \$11.97 weekly or 28 cents a day per head. In 1978 we spent \$2.18 per week or 31 cents per day. In 1979, it is intended we will spend \$2.81 per week or 40 cents per day and again, the 1978 and 1979 calculations are based on the 1977 estimated population figure. And, further, it includes that amount of money that is allocated for culture.

Now let us see how the expenditure relates to the pupils and students of this country. In 1976, according to the Educational Digest put out by the Ministry of Education, we spent per student an average \$6.71 per week, 95 cents daily. In 1978, based on the figures given by the Minister of Education last year during the Budget Debate and recorded in the **Chronicle** of March 8, we spent \$6.91 per week or 99 cents daily per student in this country. In 1979, in spite of the increase in the Budget, the basic figures calculated against the background of an increased student body, especially in 1976 and 1978 will not significantly vary. These calculations refer to the pupils and students from nursery, primary, secondary, vocational, technical and University.

Textbooks, exercise books: This was a serious problem last year. Notwithstanding that, the Minister said that 2.5 million textbooks were distributed to students. Still, it was so serious that the Minister had to announce the formation of a Committee to look into that problem. When we look at the budgetary effects, the distribution of free exercise books cannot satisfy the needs of our young people in this country at this stage. It is because in 1978, for exercise books to be distributed to primary and secondary students, Government spent only 94 cents a month. For Primary and Secondary students, on exercise books alone, the Government spent less than a cent a day – 64 cents. On textbooks, it spent 74 cents a month or 2.4 cents a day. With such expenditure rate, are we ever going to resolve the textbook problem in this country? In 1979, it is expected that we will spend 88 cents per month on textbooks and we will spend less on exercise books. But with the population mounting, this year will not see the end of the textbook problem in this country.

Clearly, there is no end to this problem in sight. This will add to the decline of the education system. The quality of the students we will be putting out of our institutions, as already referred to by the Vice Chancellor of the University, and perhaps if we turn our minds a little to certain individual institutions like the New Amsterdam Technical Institute –

The Speaker: Before you go on, it is 5 o'clock. We will take the suspension until

16.3.79

National Assembly

4.55 - 5.00 p.m.

Sitting suspended at 5 p.m.

5.25 p.m.

On resumption –

The Speaker: When the suspension was taken, Cde. Mohamed was on the Floor and he had already spoken for 35 minutes. Cde. Mohamed, you have got 25 minutes more.

Cde. Mohamed: Before the suspension, I was trying to point out that the figures and statistics available when looked at differently and spread around, broken down, do not appear as impressive as when first looked at. Now I would like to just briefly touch on nursery school. In 1979, based on an increase in the number of children at nursery school, we will be spending \$23.45. If this is the amount of money we are going to spend on nursery education, then one can well understand why the majority of nursery schools still exist under very atrocious conditions. Teachers are being transformed into fund raisers. Parents are being bombarded with requests for toilet paper, with raffle sheets. Some are even sent notes asking for contributions for the upkeep of these nursery schools, many of which are still at the bottom-house stage.

There is one headmaster who went so far as to tell students that if they did not give assistance now, in three years' time they should not expect assistance. This does not happen in the schools alone but also at the Parent/Teachers Associations which are required to raise funds. That is all the P.T.A. meetings are about. When one looks at these figures and how the money is spent on textbooks, the percentage and our expenses on nursery education, then one wants to question the degree of sincerity when we speak about investment in the future. If that is all we are prepared to do at this stage, to invest in the figure, then perhaps, one could safely say at this stage that our future will be very bleak.

We understand that the problems facing our students and youth are primarily rooted in the social and economic system. We still have society and class distinction and sharpened class struggles, and our education system is not free from class. It must no longer reflect that class basis. But the recognition of that fact does not free the Ministry of Education from responsibility

and blame for what is happening with respect to education in this country. Not only must we see the society responsible directly, which is so, but the Ministry of Education and the policies of the Government must also be blamed and are responsible if growing numbers of our young people choose the streets rather than the classrooms or prefer to beg rather than sit in a class of Arithmetic. Something also must be radically wrong with our educational system and policies if growing numbers of our young people find it but a short and quick step from being a school leaver to a juvenile delinquent or a criminal.

Summary of School, 1977/1978, showed that whilst there was an enrolment for last school year of 166,847 in primary schools, there was an average attendance of 124,957 pupils. It means that some 25 per cent of our young people enrolled in primary schools were not in school last year. What has happened? Is the Ministry not going to pay attention to that reality? It is not a unique phenomenon. In 1976, virtually 28 per cent of those enrolled were not going to school. We must find out why? Is it because of the heavy cost of free education, transportation, uniform? Is it the economic problems in our country that are keeping away from our schools 25 per cent of the young people?

Two days ago over the radio, we understand it was said that the Ministry of Education will co-operate with the Ministry of Home Affairs to take the young people off the streets. So, we are going to ruthlessly stamp them out now with the Police. We are satisfied with using the Police at Linden; we are satisfied with using the Police against the working class; now we are going to direct them to the young people, to the children. Is that it? Are we going to cripple them morally and socially? It is a problem of finding the solution. We must look further into the educational policies. We must not co-operate with the Ministry of Home Affairs to solve the problems. What does that mean? We would like to ask the Minister what that means. It seems to my mind that there are reasons and then we must take the appropriate, persuasive measures to attract and to appeal to our young people to come into our institutions to make the best use of what is being offered at this stage.

I understand, sir, that there are Government officials with dip thongs and facile pens who will say “Well, you must try to understand because Guyana is poor and we are trying to do our

best for education”. We know that. I will assume too that dialectics will be appealed to understand the present problems. We heard it before. It is rather strange that Guyana is always poor – which we do not dispute – when it comes to giving more to education, solving textbooks problems, building schools, paying teachers, training them, building teachers’ houses, subsidising more transportation; problem which cripple and hinder the education process and learning; we are always poor. The Minister of Economic Development made that point well. But somehow we seem to be always rich when it comes to increasing Ministers’ salaries per month by one thousand dollars.

The latter part of last year the Minister of Education had an increase of \$1,000. We were not poor then. From \$2,500 to \$3,500 in the promotion from a junior Minister to a Senior Minister. Five Ministers, an amount of \$12,000 per year. Do you know how that can be utilised in terms of education? But somehow, we seem to be always poor when the money will have to be funnelled for education for the development of our youth.

We talk about teacher training. In the latter part of last year we were engaged busily with hatching and rolling the heads of teachers, snatching bread away from their mouths. An estimated 750 of them were supposed to go. I do not know how many of them finally did go but I do know that many went. But at the same time we are not paying the same amount of concentration in the training of our teachers. We do have our teachers’ training institutes but whilst our Budget has been going up, there seems to be also, on the other hand, a certain decline. That increase in the Budget does not automatically mean that all areas of education are increasing likewise.

Take for example, our primary schools. In 1976, the Statistical Digest pointed out to us that 47.5 per cent of the total amount of teachers in primary schools were trained but in the 1977/1978 summary of Schools prepared by the Planning Unit of the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture, a calculation points out that 47.1 per cent of our teachers were trained last year. There has been a drop between 1976 and 1979 if one used this year. How does that reflect in certain particular areas of this country? Essequibo, for example, in 1976 had 40.8 per cent of primary school teachers trained; in 1977/1978, it had 38 per cent. In the interior, 31.6

per cent of the teachers were trained; Mazaruni/Potaro, 27 per cent, Rupununi, 22 per cent. Why is it that there seems to be a concentration of depression in the Essequibo area? Last year we appealed to the Ministry of Education to seriously consider setting up a school, a training institute as we had planned when we were in Government, in Essequibo. Now, their own statistics point out that percentage-wise, there is a decrease of trained teachers in that area.

In 1976, there was one trained teacher to 59 students. Statistics did say that in 1977/1978, there was one trained teacher to 58 students. It was not much of a sparkling increase but a better development. But, in some areas like District 12, Essequibo and Pomeroun, we had one trained teacher to 72.2 pupils; District 13, North West, one trained teacher to 69.4 pupils; District 13, Mazaruni/Potaro, one trained teacher to 80 pupils and District 15, Rupununi, one trained teacher to 112.9 pupils. Why, sir, is Essequibo not being developed? Why is it that Essequibo, where our Amerindian population is mainly settled and a sector of our population that for centuries has been neglected and abused, continue to be bruised? This is an area where the majority of the people are the most oppressed of our oppressed people but it seems to be facing a decline, not an advance in spite of our increasing budgetary allocations. We say, sir, if these figures themselves cannot move the Minister to ensure the establishing of a school in Essequibo for the training of our teachers, then I am fearful that nothing will.

5.40 p.m.

We hope that more concentration will be placed on the Amerindian areas. This state of affairs is not something which we are particularly happy about. Those are depressed people, poor people, they are driven into the interior more and more. They are not getting work and still we see that not enough attention is being paid by the Ministry of Education to that forsaken section of our country. We would like to see that more attention is paid in that area.

At the same time, whilst we have increases in our Budget, we do not only want to show that there is a decline in certain fields. For example, at the Lilian Dewar College, in 1976, we were spending \$1, 219.50 yearly for students. In 1979 we will be spending about \$1,206, which

is another decline. When we get down into the actual spending of the money as it relates to education in this country, then we find that it is not always the case.

Another problem with which we are faced is the shortage of places. This is a serious problem. No less a person than M.T. Lowe spoke about the effects of this problem. His words were mentioned in a comment, “Smaller forms for better education”. It is a problem that needs urgent attention. But the Budget does not seem to be putting attention on the construction of schools. If we were to look at the very summary of schools for 1977/1978 and make an analysis of how we stand with respect to the shortage of school places, and what it means to the education of our young people, we will find that almost every educational district in this country has schools which are overcrowded and spin-off of that over-crowding is in our classrooms. In District 1, Corriverton, there are 723 pupils. In District 2, No. 59 Village, there are 135 pupils. In Port Mourant there are 454 pupils and there is overcrowding in many other areas.

We recognise the fact that it is not easy to solve all the problems immediately but we do emphasise, nevertheless, that there seems to be need for greater concentration on some of these elementary things, these smaller things which mean so much for the education of our young people. We do appreciate that some efforts have been made in the field of education but in addition to that I must also recognise that these things were done on a structure we had inherited from the colonial times. Whilst we have done certain things, they do not constitute change; they are embellishments to the education system. What we want is change, fundamental change to our education system. We realise that that change is not going to be easily brought about unless a change is first effected within our social system. But that is the goal we think our education must work towards. We must not just say free education. It is our duty, it is nothing big. It does not mean it is changing our educational system.

I have here a speech by the former Education Minister, Cecilene Baird, entitled “National Perspectives for Teacher Education”. She continues to show the goals of the nation and added “these can become objectives for the nation and institutions which serve it”. Of course, she was referring to the nation. This was made in 1973. To what extent have we fulfilled these goals? Have we changed these goals? Each one of these goals identified by the former Minister of

Education can be, by itself, debated. I want to know from the Minister of Education if these goals remain the goals of the industry of the Ministry of Education and to what extent we have succeeded in achievement of these goals.

The Speaker: Cde. Mohamed, you have five minutes more.

Cde. Mohamed: We may not necessarily agree with all the goals given by the former Minister of Education, but still we maintain that the Ministry of Education has not studied the education system. It has not fundamentally changed the content of education for the realisation of these goals identified was back in 1973. In 1979, we are still in a state where by we will not be able to achieve these ends. It is important, therefore, for us to look at education totally and from different angles and with respect to the achievements, with respect to how education has served that nation, with respect to these objectives that this Government has set itself in 1973. Then I would say that there is much to be desired in the field of education. There remains much to works towards, there remains quite a lot that those in charge of education, of the different categories of our student body must work towards. If one is to go into the specific areas of education, one would find several serious problems which perhaps may have missed the attention of those comrades who work in the Ministry of Education. When I was going through this summary of schools, one of the comical situations was –

The Speaker: Cde. Mohamed, when I look at the time you only have two minutes more.

Cde. Mohamed: At Brandwagt-Sari you have enrolled a total of one pupil and there is one trained teacher for that one pupil, and there are a few other cases like that. That is even beyond the ideal. But it goes to show that there are many things wrong with this education system and one must not take for granted that because we are having increases, we are increasing budgetary allocations for education, that we are moving upwards, we have really solved the problems of education or that that by itself constitutes progress. There are many things that need to be looked into, so that education can really become something worthwhile and really become something that will serve the nation and help to fulfil the goals we have before us.

5.50 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Teekah.

The Minister of Education, Social Development and Culture_(Cde. Teekah): Cde. Speaker, I rise first of all, to congratulate the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives for the fine speech which he delivered in presenting the National Budget for 1979 and also, to the State Planning Secretariat and the officials of the Ministry of Finance for preparing such a well thought-out and comprehensive Budget for our country.

In my intervention this afternoon I propose to be consistent with my usual approach not to be abusive nor to engage or indulge in acrimony or rancour but rather to bare the facts before this House and the nation.

Now dealing specifically with the areas of education, social development and culture of which my Ministry is in charge, I wish to say that I am very happy about the amount that has been provided in the Budget for these areas for the year 1979. The Estimates show that the sum of \$118.4 million is being provided for education this year. I wish to point out and emphasise that this is the largest sum ever allocated for education in the history of Guyana. a cursory glance at the statistics shows that from the time Guyana was given self-Government and was able to present its own Budget, education was never so highly appreciated in any Budget, in any year since 1962.

Now Guyana got internal self-Government in 1961. The first Budget which was presented by the elected Government was done in 1962. Dr. Jagan normally calls it the Kaldor Budget. As a Guyanese I would prefer to call it the Jacob Budget. In 1962, the sum of \$10.8 million was voted for education in 1963; it declined to \$10 million. In 1964, there was an increase, it went up to a total of \$11.7 million. That was the period during internal self-Government when Guyanese were able to prepare their own national Budget.

In 1976, this country through the present Government provided free education from nursery to University. I would not say the Government was generous in so doing, rather, as I

understand the policy of the People's National Congress, it is the fundamental right of the people to have free education.

Since that year, Cde. Speaker, I wish to draw the attention of this House to the allocations for education in Guyana. In 1976, the year when education was made free, when that right of the people was upheld by this Government, the sum of \$71.4 million was voted. In 1977, the sum of \$78.4 million was voted. In 1978, the sum of \$92.9 million was voted and this year \$118.4 million. It shows clearly the great emphasis that is being placed on education in Guyana.

Cde. Mohamed said that the percentage has been declining. He refuses to appreciate the steep increases in the education budget every year. But I wish to draw the attention of this House to the fact that there are several reasons why the percentage could decline even though there is more money being spent in the same field in the same area. I have been looking at some of the projects that are coming on stream now and which this Budget caters for, for example, the textile mill, the M.M.A. Scheme, the Tapakuma scheme, the glass factory, the shoe and leather factory, the Upper Demerara forestry project, the GDR repair shop. The Budget takes care of the wider public sector and, therefore, even though you increase in a particular area if you bring in larger number of projects, the larger areas in the same Budget, naturally the percentage must decline vis-a-vis the rest of the Budget even though you are spending more money every year. And that is the fact of the matter. I am sure if the Leader of the Opposition were present, someone who understands economics and who understands dialectics, he would appreciate that point.

That takes care of all the points which Cde. Mohamed raised about percentage of the Budget. He spoke about U.G. and referred to certain financial problems but for a moment I forget that Cde. Feroze Mohamed is a member, appointed by me, of the U.G. Council and he knows it, he is member of the U.G. Council appointed by the Minister of Education. He knows why those financial problems exists at U.G. he has access to the Council meetings and really he is coming with tongue in cheek here to say that nothing is being done when he knows in fact why we have taken steps to remedy those financial problems in the Bursary.

6 p.m.

Cde. Mohamed quoted the Vice Chancellor and the Vice Chancellor, he knows, has been raising the problems from time to time, and before the Vice Chancellor went on a Fellowship, he discussed with me the solving of those problems which he took to Council. Cde. Feroze Mohamed along with his colleague from the P.P.P., Clement Rohee, ought to know that and must know that.

Again, he raised the point of a student by the name of McLean who did not complete two courses and who was, according to him, proposed for graduation even though he did not complete those two courses. Cde. Speaker, as a person with higher education, you know, I am sure, like so many of us must know, I am sure, that no student could put himself up for graduation. McLean, the student he was talking about, was put up for graduation because of his excellent performance by his Faculty Board and the Academic Board said “No, we do not agree with that” and there was no problem. The student was compelled to agree with it. The university authorities took that decision and there was no storm about it; there was no protest; there was no howl. Nobody said a word about it because it is normal university internal business.

I cannot see how that came to the Parliament of Guyana when that is a normal matter. It is like a student stealing a book and somebody penalising him or a student asking to borrow one extra book and a librarian saying “no”; it is a normal university matter and again, as a member of Council, Cde. Mohamed knows these things. It was a normal thing: proposal from Faculty Board, Academic Committee said “no”, then everything went on normally and the student is now pursuing his other two courses. But I suppose, in order to obtain sensational headline, he brought that matter here so that the nation would want to believe that there is something wrong or immoral at U.G.

The other thing about restriction on intake: Cde. Speaker, this matter in terms of who should be going to U.G., as the nation is aware, there are many schemes which Government presently has to allow people from all walks of life to go to U.G. on very generous terms, for example, like public servants who go to U.G. on very general terms, for example, like public servants who go to U.G. on full pay. I recall when I was part of the Government team discussing

with the T.U.C., this matter was raised and I would say that some members of the T.U.C. were not disinclined to cutting back on those schemes. I wish to re-emphasise that point: some members of the T.U.C. executive were not disinclined in so far as cutting back on those schemes was concerned.

We have not taken any such decision yet; we are listening to the workers' representatives. If they think that they want us to cut back on free education at U.G. so that they could perhaps get a decrease in N.I.S. or something else, well, it is for them. We have to discuss with them but we have not proposed that to the Government, the Prime Minister and some Ministers who met them.

Now, concerning the Cyril Potter College of Education: a point was made that it was closed due to a shortage of cooking gas, propane gas and a shortage of foodstuff. Cde. Speaker, I would prefer to think that the member was misinformed because if he had known the truth, he would not have said that. The fact of the matter is that the students went on holiday. Every year the students go on a mid-year holiday and that was the period. Whether at that time something was short in the country or something was not available, I do not know. But it is normal practice at the teacher training institutions that students get a break. I think it is of a duration of ten days or fourteen days, something like that. It is a normal thing which happens every single year; last year, the year before, it happens all the time. I do not know but maybe he might have been misinformed and that is why he raised it here.

Now, concerning the accusation that people from socialist countries or socialist universities are not being employed, I have a list here with me and this list was made up as Cde. Mohamed was speaking. I just scribbled down some names that came to my mind immediately. Dr. Fred Sukhdeo; he is a graduate of Lumumbo University; he is a senior lecturer at U.G. now. He is employed by Government. Dr. Farouk Kassim is another graduate of Lumumbo University and he is a Government Medical Officer. We have Cde. Mohamed's good friend, former full-time employee of the People's Progressive Party, Cde. Jairam Karran; he was until recently employed by the Ministry of Economic Development. He is now with the Guyana Manufacturers' Association but people are free to change their jobs but he was at one time an

employee of the Ministry that presented this Budget. There is Cde. Jagdeo Gansham; he is an employee of the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources; he is a Geologist. And then there is Cde. Joshua Ledra who is an employee of the Guyana Electricity Corporation. Then there is Cde. Abin Persaud who is headmaster of Corentyne Comprehensive High School. There is Cde. M.K. Tulsi who is sitting right there, whom they all know very well. He is an employee of my own Ministry; he works with the Planning Unit of my Ministry. There is Cde. Joseph Olall, who works with the Hydro Project of Government – sensitive areas, Cde. Speaker.

Then I want to emphasis this one, Cde. Speaker, there is Cde. Sidnauth Singh who is the President of the Guyana – Soviet Friendship Society. He is the Acting Headmaster of Annandale Secondary School. He works in my Ministry. He came to me last year and asked me to assist him to go on one of the Peace Council's trips to Sri Lanka and I said "I Have no objections; apply normally in the ordinary way" and when I checked, the Chief Education Officer had given him leave to attend that meeting. If he were here he would accept that that is true, and they all know because he went on that trip. He got special leave, leave with pay. It did not come out of his annual leave; it did not come out of his sick leave. It was given to him as special leave with pay. And there are so many others. There is a long list of them but I would not burden the House.

6.10 p.m.

The other point he raised about text books and exercise books was that the vote is declining and he said that not enough money is being spent. There are reasons why the sums are not increasing as he would like. Before I tell you, Cde. Speaker, what we are doing, I want to say to this House that between 1974 and 1978, when Government decided to give free exercise books and free basic text books, the sum of \$13,001,263 was spent on such books. Looking into the statistics myself, indeed I see the highest amount spent and the year and I am dealing with the statistics as they are because there are explanations for them. The year 1976 was the year when the most money was spent in that area.

We have been able to cut down the expenditure on exercise books and text books because of something I learnt from the Cubans, and from Cde. Fernando Besino. Cde. Frank Campbell was then Ambassador to Cuba and he told me what they were doing. Cde. Fernando Besino told

me that what they tried to encourage was a re-cycling of these books and he was giving me a lot of ideas on how they were able to solve some of their problems. What we are doing now is trying to get the same books used by one student in a particular class used by another student when that student goes into that class. We are also producing our own books here. [Applause]

When I come to discuss Curriculum Development I will show you something that we are producing. I just have a sample because if I brought all of them we would not have the space for them. We are producing our own books and these books cost less than \$1 each. That is why the amount is not as much as before. Why must we increase the vote, just for the sake of an increase? If we are able to cut down cost, I am sure the Opposition would agree with us that we are right to cut down. Is the Comrade asking us to waste taxpayers' money? The slogan last year was "War on Waste" and that is what we are doing.

In so far as the exercise books are concerned, one of the problems we find is that when we started to give free exercise books to children there was one larger size, I think with about 70 to 80 pages, given to every child whether the child is in sixth form or Prep "A" or "B". We found that there was a high percentage of wastage because the term would finish and the child would not have used the whole book and then it would be destroyed. Another thing is that all the books were ruled. What we have done is to break them down into categories. For the younger children we give smaller books because after a survey we found that that size could last that young child throughout the term. Therefore, less is being spent on that book. The other thing is that we found that it is not necessary to line all the exercise books because for Prep "A" and "B", it is not necessary to line those books. The plain leaves are much better and when we provide for plain leaves, the printery charges us less. Those are the ways which we have been able to cut down the cost of exercise books.

The fact that the expenditure has gone down does not mean that there are fewer books in the country. We have the same number of books distributed but the cost to the country is less. I am sure the taxpayers of this country will be happy about the way in which we are spending their funds. That is what they want to see, that the money can stretch to give them all the necessities of life.

The Member criticised our expenditure on nursery education and went on to say that P.T.A.s are being asked to raise funds and so on. I am really surprised at that. Cde. Speaker, I am told that parents must not contribute to the raising of funds. Let him bring me that statement. I said there must not be compulsory levies made on students or parents, but voluntary contributions are welcomed by Government. What is wrong and why should not the P.T.A. raise funds? Why should not teachers raise funds? Why should not the parents make voluntary contributions to their children's education? Who will benefit?

I would like to enlighten Members of the House, especially members of the Opposition who have been to Cuba on several occasions, that in Cuba, I was told by the Minister of Higher Education, that at one time after the revolution they were very romantic about giving everything free; books, education, stipends and so on. But in the Cuba today for every child who is in nursery school, if the parents – mother and father – are earning between 90 to 250 pesos per month, they have to pay 6 per cent of their salaries for the up-keep of every child; from 251 pesos upwards, the parents are taxed 10 per cent of their salaries for the up keep of the every child in Cuba in a nursery school. The Minister of Higher Education told me he has to pay that. I would like to ask Cde. Feroze Mohamed what he prefers. Should we tax the parents who receive between \$90 and \$250, 6 per cent of their salaries and those who receive \$251 upwards, 10 per cent of their salaries for each child going to nursery school? Isn't it better to ask for voluntary contribution so that the parents could be able to mobilise resources so that their children would be able to get free education? I would like to ask him to stand up and put on record if Cuba is not giving free education. I am sure he would be ashamed for the Cuban Ambassador to hear that.

Another point he raised is about the percentage of children enrolled and not going to school. That is called truancy. I am very concerned about truancy in schools. I have set up a Committee to look at the problem of truancy, why children do not attend school. Non-attendance ranges from poverty right up to delinquency, lack of interest on the parents' part and on the children's part.

6.20 p.m.

I wish to say that tomorrow morning, I am meeting the Truancy Committee at 9.30 and we have in mind to make some proposals to Cabinet. We are thinking about the role the cinemas are playing and we have in mind, I am not saying that Government is going to do it tomorrow, that maybe it would be good thing to prevent children from going to the 1 o'clock shows on Monday to Friday every week, except on holidays, and also to prevent them from going to restaurants to find ways to escape from school. Those are some of the things we are tackling. We are thinking way ahead of what he is saying. These are things I have had on my agenda about eight months ago and the Committee is bringing its report tomorrow morning at 9.30 o'clock. I want to examine it and if it is a comprehensive report I will put it up to Cabinet on Tuesday morning and get Cabinet's approval for that.

We are worried because we have a problem existing and we are tackling it. One small point, Cde. Speaker, as a Lawyer you would appreciate the question of accuracy. It is an untruth for a Member of Parliament to say that Ministers' salaries were increased last year by \$1,000, when in fact Ministers who were made Senior Ministers had increases from \$1,500 to \$1,850. That was the increase in salary. I do not think he understands or appreciates the difference between a salary and an allowance. That is his problem. And the other thing is that he lumps things like chauffeur allowances which are paid through the Minister but the Minister does not get the chauffeur allowance because he has to pay every cent to his chauffeur. I will not worry with the rest of what he said because I think I have answered enough.

Now, as far as we are concerned, education is the corner stone in the development of Guyana. As far as we are concerned, this great emphasis that is being put on education is justified because without education there can be no industrial development; there can be no agricultural development; there can be no national development. As I said, \$118.4 million is being spent on education this year. Let us look at how the money is being spent. Let us look at the number of children attending schools today. At the end of December 1978, there were 29,000 children in nursery schools; 136,000 in primary schools; 90,000 in secondary departments of all-

age schools, in the community high schools and in the junior. Senior and multilateral schools totalled 259,000. These figures tell a very impressive story.

To fully appreciate and understand these figures, Cde. Speaker, I want us to look at our national population among the age groups which are being catered for in our schools. Let us look at this continuum from 3years 9months to 17years 9months which is 37,000. There are 29,000 children in schools which figure represents 78.4 per cent. It was only in September 1976, that free education was given to children in that age group. Between 6years and 12 years, the population is estimated at 148,500; in schools there are 136,000, 91.6 per cent. Between 13 and 17years 9months, under 18, the population is estimated at 112,500. Of that number, 90,000 are in school which number represents 80 per cent. The total estimated population between 3years 9months to 17years 9months is estimated at 298,000 and we have of that number 259,000 in schools which is 85 per cent.

Before free education was given in Guyana there was only 20 per cent of the children of nursery school. Today, we have 78.4 per cent. Before free education was given at the primary level, which was free for a long time according to the colonialists, only 75.13 per cent attended primary schools. Today, we have 91.6 per cent. At the secondary level, before free education was given, only 53.82 per cent of the children were attending secondary schools. Today, we have 80 per cent.

I asked the research unit of the Ministry of Education to do a survey, an examination, an analysis, a research on the other countries of the Third World and that result I am very proud to say, as a Guyanese, as a member of this Government, as a Minister, that Guyana has the greatest, the highest involvement ratio with only the exception of Cuba and the D.P.R.K. in the Continents of Asia, Africa and Latin America. We have even a higher involvement ratio than the People's Republic of China which is a socialist country. We are not yet socialist. We are on our way there but the only two countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America that have a higher involvement ratio than we have in the schools are Cuba and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. We have a higher involvement ratio than Vietnam. So let the facts speak for themselves.

16.3.79

National Assembly

6.20 – 6.30 p.m.

Now we go on to teacher training. In order to take proper care of our pupils and students, in order to have the correct official approach no pains have been spared to have our teachers trained. Teacher training is being continuously emphasised. I hear about so many cents being spent on a pupil, on teacher. But let us look at the realities of the situation.

6.30 p.m.

Last year when I came here, I brought to this House the information that 1,021 teacher-trainees were in the teacher-training institutions in Guyana. This year Cde. Speaker, on an occasion similar to that of last year, debating the national budget, I am happy to say that that number has been increased from 1,021 to 1,125, a rise of 9.24 per cent of teacher-trainees. **[Applause]** And I wish to say that this number is the highest number of teachers who have ever been trained at any one time in the history of Guyana. Never have so many teachers been undergoing training at any one time in Guyana, notwithstanding all the things about “Sunday best” and what have you.

The other thing about it is this, and this is the reason. Do you, Cde. Speaker, know why many teachers want to undergo training now, apart from the fact that we now have the Cyril Potter College of Education which has good facilities? It is – and this has happened in 1977 – that we have abolished the loan system. It was in April 1977 I think. Prior to April 1977, the teacher trainee was given \$100 per month as a loan which was repayable. Today, that has been abolished and the teachers are being given a grant. The non-resident teacher is given \$150 a month as a grant and the resident teacher is given a grant of \$100 a month which is not repayable. **[Applause]** Yet, it is amazing – and I am sure Cde. Mohamed must have known that – that having known these bits of information, someone would get up and say that we are not doing enough about the teachers who are being trained in Guyana.

He talks about “Sunday best”. I agree with the Principal! The Principal must say and I agree with her, that the teacher must be properly clad, they must be properly attired – and he has said that too. **[Applause]** I have no apologies for saying that the teachers must be properly clad when they go to have their meals. And let me say this too. I recall that one of my officers went to a secondary school, a well known secondary school and one teacher got up and said that the

Minster has been talking a lot of tidiness and so on and how the teachers must be clean. She said: “I wonder if you could therefore consider providing a clothing allowance?” I asked the officer: “What did you say?” The officer said: “I told them that we cannot provide everything like that”. I said “Yes, you have only a part of the answer; you did not give the whole answer”.

Cde. Speaker, whether you wear cotton, crimplene, terylene, gabardine, what have you, if the teacher wants to be dirty, the teacher will still be dirty. And you can take the cheapest of clothing and still be clean and you can take the most expensive clothing and be dirty and untidy. It has nothing to do with clothing allowance. The same clothing, once you wash it and press it, could be very clean and you can be very neat and that is what is being advocated and emphasised by the Principal and staff of the teacher-training institutions and it is part of decency, it is part of respect, it is part of general tidiness and so on which a teacher who is a leader in the community, a leader of the children must have at all times.

Cde. Speaker, the member started out by saying “Sunday best” and then he said “Why is the Principal emphasising that the teacher must be properly attired when coming to have meals?” Naturally, I could not see how any person who has the teacher’s interest at heart could advocate that the teacher should not be properly attired? Is this criticism for the sake of criticism? Cde. Speaker, I wonder if Cde. Feroze Mohamed would advocate that teachers must be properly attired were he to become Minister of Education tomorrow?

Now I want to say also, Cde. Speaker, that during this time, the teachers are being treated better at all levels. Not only are they given grants instead of loans; not only have their grants been increased to a larger amount than the loans they once had, but their salaries have also been increased. Let me give you an example. Before Government took the decision to give the people of Guyana free education, I am sure if the member has been following the Ministry of Education very well or if he has had his ears to the ground, he would have known that there were some teachers in nursery schools who were earning as little as \$25 a month and nobody can deny that. And, there were some teachers in privately owned Secondary Schools earning as low as \$50 a month. Do you know how much they earn now? The basic wage of a nursery school teacher is \$258 a month throughout Guyana. **[Applause]** Before Government provided free education for

16.3.79

National Assembly

6.30 – 6.40 p.m.

the Guyanese people, a graduate master was receiving \$388 per month; today, he receives \$560.44 per month. Before Guyana received free education, a non-graduate headmaster was earning \$420 a month; today, he earns \$853 a month, almost double. Before free education was given, graduate headmaster of an “A” school was earning \$560 a month; today he earns \$874 a month.

This shows clearly the solicitude the Government has for the teachers of this country and unlike the days when we had the denominational system, it has nothing to do with race, colour or creed – **[Applause]** – because every Guyanese knows that many headteachers were forced to join a religion not of his choice. **[Interruption]** How is Sidnauth Singh still teaching in a school while he is President of the Guyana-Soviet Friendship Society and a member of the P.P.P.? What of his brother, S.K. Singh, and so many others?

Cde. Speaker, I just want to turn our attention to the performance of the students at the various examinations. Because of our policy of free education, the children are able to move from nursery to primary to secondary to tertiary levels without obstacles of wealth or social status. Today, Cde. Speaker, wealth or social status does not determine how high or how far in the educational system a child will go. Ability and merit determine that and that is why we are able to have the kind of performance we are having at the various examinations. I will give you the statistics at the moment.

6.40 p.m.

Take, for instance, the Secondary School Entrance Examination. Two things have been revealed here. One, we find today a larger number of pupils are obtaining more than 75 per cent of the total marks obtainable. The second point about this examination has shown that because of free education at the nursery level, a greater percentage of children are coming out with the very highest marks and are getting into the so-called best schools like Queen’s College, Bishops, St. Rose’s, St. Joseph’s and St. Stanislaus College from the so-

called ordinary and poor parents. They are coming from the working class and the peasantry. Because of free education the children of the working class and peasantry in Guyana are able to flourish, develop and bloom in the Guyanese society. **[Applause]** I want to stress that no more will wealth or social status determine how far and how high a child will go in the educational system. But I want to add a caveat, that although there will be no discrimination against the child of a worker or peasant, at the same time there will be no discrimination against the child of a teacher or a doctor or a businessman. There will be no discrimination at all. This child will be placed in the educational system according to his ability. **[Applause]**

I move now to the G.C.E. results. Because of the better trained teachers, because a better crop of students are getting a chance to go up to the various levels of the educational systems, we have been performing better at the G.C.E. examinations. Let me give you some of the results. In 1975, at the “O” Level examination, Guyana got 51 per cent average passes. In 1976, the year of free education, it was reflected in the same way, we got again 51 per cent of the passes. In 1977 we moved to 56 per cent. In 1978, we moved up to 65 per cent. You can see Cde. Speaker, an increase from 51 per cent to 56 per cent, to 65 per cent. There is a progressive development.

At the Advanced Level, in 1975, that is before free education, Guyana had 41 per cent passes. In 1977, the passes went up to 65 per cent and in 1978 it went up to 76 per cent. This is progressive development all the time. Apart from that, we have been able last year, for the first time, to have passes in five subjects at the Advanced Level at one sitting. We set a West Indian record last year when two students – and this has nothing to do with political background, these are boys of poor or ordinary background – were able to achieve five subjects at the Advanced Level at one sitting. One received three A’s and the other received four A’s and a C at one sitting. **[Applause]** Just as a side, they were Indo-Guyanese. I say that because there is no discrimination at any level.

The Comrade spoke a lot about the Guyanese educational system not making fundamental changes. That is so wrong. It is just, indeed, like someone of the Rip Van Winkle ilk because with the transition taking place in the rest of the educational system, there have also

been fundamental changes in the Curriculum Development Centre which reflect themselves in the curricula of our various learning and training institutions of our country.

I do not want to burden Parliament very much, but I wish to very quickly read out the names of some of these books. For English, we have readers with our own Guyanese bias. This one is called “Working Together”. It is a Reader and it has a work book with it. We have another series called “The Happy Family” in this also has a work book. This is a Guyanese book produced by Guyanese. Then we have another series called “Our Flag”. This is also a Reader and it has a work book. Yet the Member says we are not making changes. He is talking about Mao Tse-Tung. I do not know how that came into it. Then we have “Animal Friends”, a Reader and work book. This is produced by the Curriculum Development Unit of our Ministry and it costs less than a dollar. Then we have “The Rampat Family”, a Reader and work book. If you notice there are Guyanese names. Then we have “Market Day”, a Reader and work book. Then we have “A Co-operative Poultry Farm”, a Reader.

Dealing with Mathematics, we have “Working with the Whole Numbers”. Then we have “Working with Fractional Numbers”. This is another set produced by the Curriculum Development section of the Ministry. Then we have the Teacher’s Manuals. This is produced by our Ministry based on local research and material. Then we have Teacher’s Manual for “Working with Whole Numbers.” We also have our own children’s dictionary. We have a picture dictionary level one and a picture dictionary level 2. Maybe in this generous mood I am in I will perhaps present Cde. Feroze Mohamed with these two.

6.50 p.m.

I have heard a lot about Mao Tse-Tung’s books and contradictions and so on, but I would like to discuss them on another occasion. These are the materials produced for Social-Studies. I can give Cde. Mohamed copies of these. We have from Prep A upwards along with the Teacher’s Guide and these show how we should mould the Guyanese child to respect the National Anthem, the Flag, right up to what socialism means to them. I want to say that from the work-shops carried out so far on the national policy Social-Studies programme, the greatest

interest, the greatest enthusiasm – and I say this without fear of contradiction – came from the Corentyne students and teachers.

Now, Cde. Speaker, I want to talk about work-study. We are trying to link work and study so that we can get the child, the young Guyanese, to learn to use hands together with brains. They must not only be tucked away in schoolrooms or little laboratories. We are trying now to make the work places real laboratories so that when they leave school they will understand what real life is. Therefore, real life situations will not be shocking or surprising to them. They will understand their work study. They will understand how the farmers produce the food they eat; they will understand how the books they use are produced; they will learn how the clothes they wear are produced. We have these children released to do work-study on farms, for example, at Belbay Co-operative Society where they are learning agriculture.

When I attended school the teacher made me bring a tin, put mould inside of it and put some paddy in it and said this is how paddy grows. This is how I was taught agriculture in school. Today, we send the children on the lands to see how paddy grows; rice is produced because rice is vital to Guyana. I can elaborate on the work-study concept but I have taken a long time to rebut some of the charges made by the hon. Member. Therefore, I will go on to discuss the hinterland areas which he said we are neglecting.

The Speaker: You have had an hour.

Cde. Teekah: I think in 15 minutes' time I should be able to wind up. I heard a great solicitude from the hon. Member Cde. Feroze Mohamed about Essequibo. I want to tell him that two persons sitting right here on the Government benches are from Essequibo. The Deputy Prime Minister and I came from Essequibo. If we discriminate against Essequibo we will be discriminating against ourselves. I am sure he does not know this but thanks to the Government of the Netherlands, we have been able to get \$2 million to be spent on projects in the field of education especially with great emphasis on the far-reaching areas of Guyana, the hinterland areas, the riverain areas.

I wish to announce to the nation that during this year, taking the North West Region, there will be a nursery school built at Morawhana which will cater for 50 pupils. In the Mazaruni/Potaro region there will be two nursery schools built, one at Kamarang which will cater for 100 pupils and the other at Mahdia which will cater for 50 pupils. In the Rupuni, four nursery schools will be built, one at Kato to cater for 50 pupils, one at Waipa catering for 50 pupils, one at Moco-Moco catering for 50 pupils and one at Aishalton catering for 50 pupils.

There will be ten primary schools built in the hinterland and rural areas. In the North West region, two primary schools will be built, one at Hotakuwai and the other at Wallaba, and we are expanding our educational facilities in that area. In the Essequibo Islands and West Demerara area, three primary schools will be built, one at Great Trootie Island, one at Lima Sands and the other at Kabakuburi.

In the West Berbice, East Coast and West Bank regions, two primary schools will be built, one at Silver Hill and the other at Great Falls. In the Mazaruni/Potaro area one will be built at Chinawying. In the Rupununi area one will be built at Surama. In the Georgetown region – and this is the only one in the urban area – one will be built at Ketley Street.

Now, houses for teachers. We also recognise the fact that teachers ought to have proper housing accommodation when they are posted to those areas and we are doing something positive for them. We are going to build five houses for teachers in the North West Region: One at Wallaba, catering for two teachers with two apartments, one at Baramita with three apartments one at Hotakwai with two apartments, one at Yarakita with two apartments and the other in another place with two apartments.

In the Essequibo Islands and West Demerara region, a teachers' house will be built at Kabakaburi with three apartments and another at the Great Trootie Island having two apartments. In the West Berbice, East Coast Demerara and East Bank Demerara regions one teachers' house with two apartments will be built at Silver Hill, one at Great Falls with two apartments, another at Thoyras with two apartments, and another at Dalgin with two apartments.

In the Mazaruni/Potaro region there will be one built at Chinawying with two apartments. In the Rupununi region there will be three houses built: one at Sawariwau with two apartments, one at Surama with two apartments and one at Konashen with three apartments.

Cde. Speaker, in the Georgetown region we will try to improve the sanitary facilities of the schools, by expanding the sanitary facilities at the St. Sidwell's School, at the St. James-the-less School, at the Carmel School, at the Queenstown School, at the St. Cyril's School, at the Smith's Congregational School and at the St. Ambrose School.

7 p.m.

These are some of the new projects being done this year costing something in the vicinity of \$2 million or a little more than that. But as could be seen, the great emphasis is on the hinterland areas. They are running from nursery schools to primary schools to teachers' houses and therefore, it nails the lie that we are not doing enough for the hinterland areas; it nails the lie that the Government has forgotten the hinterland areas and that the Government has turned its back on the Essequibo County and all those regions that exist in that county.

Quickly, I want to say something on Social Development because the comrade made a point about our dealing with truants with the Police. Let me make two points here about our work in Social Development. One, I would like to say that between last year when I last spoke during the Budget Debate and now, we have gazetted the Sophia Centre as a school and that is because we have transformed the Sophia Centre from being a school from being a school catering for young criminals or young prisoners into one catering for young people, students who have a wrong concept about life or who have walked unfortunately the wrong path in life. Rather than condemning those children to prison, unlike what the member was saying, we have been putting them through the Sophia Centre which is officially a school but a school for those persons who are young offenders with some problem with the law and who we think ought not to be sent to goal, ought not to be sent to prison, ought not to be dealt with in any coercive manner,

but rather in an educational manner so that he or she could get the proper perspective of the Guyanese society and also be able to be properly oriented.

The second thing I want to say on this area of social development, is that the Essequibo Boys' School during this year also will see a tremendous renovation taking place, because in the estimates it should be observed that we are going to spend \$150,00 to make that institution a more hospitable institution – **[Applause]** – so that the Essequibo Boys' School now could be home for those young comrades who unfortunately had to pass through the courts and who we think have a great future ahead because they are young and they could be transformed into becoming excellent Guyanese citizens.

I want to say also that in the field of Culture, we are making every effort to intensify the research into our cultural roots. We seek today to learn more and more about our cultural heritage, we seek to promote respect for our cultural heritage, we seek to develop a national culture that is definitely Guyanese yet, at the same time chauvinistic in outlook – and the word is not “chavinistic” but “chauvinistic”. **[Laughter]**

During this year too, Cde. Speaker, we want to rehabilitate Fort Island because Fort Island is an important part of the Guyanese history and during this year, with the help of UNESCO, we intend to rehabilitate Fort Island so that people would be able to learn more about their history, to see where they came from, to know about their ground. Therefore, we are putting emphasis on rehabilitating that Fort so that we can understand how the development of this country took place and we can appropriate where we are now, looking back from whence we came.

The fifth point about our cultural programme is that generally we are striving to lift the cultural levels of our people consistent with our socialist goals and objectives. We also want this year too, to improve the facilities at the Cultural Centre. For example, the sound facilities are not of the best and we want to make the sound facilities better because we know that Centre has tremendous potential for development and with a few little things here and there being fixed and

being done, I am sure we could have one of the best. Already I am told that it is one of the best in Latin America but we still see areas for improvement which we hope to carry out this year.

Also at the Burrowes School of Art: we have in mind to introduce some new subjects like, the graphic arts, textile designing and lapidary craft. That lapidary craft has to do with teaching Guyanese to appreciate semi-precious stones and how to use semi-precious stones to get the best out of such stones which, apart from helping to beautify our country, homes and offices, could be a foreign exchange earner also.

At the same time, we are working steadfastly and continuously and consistently towards getting a recording studio and a pressing plant so that we can have our Guyanese singers and artistes recording their own songs here and not having to go overseas. That will be a tremendous boost to the music industry. It would help to promote the Guyanese singers quite a lot and at the same time can bring foreign exchange into Guyana.

We also have in mind during this year too- we are trying to get the assistance of UNESCO – to have a school of music so that our teachers can blend culture with the teaching process so that the Guyanese child would not be seeing school as a dreary, dull life which he or she must go to every day, but must see it as a many-sided affair offering several activities which will all go to develop his or her personality.

During this year too, Cde. Speaker, we have in mind to have the Walter Roth Museum of Archaeology established. We have already identified a site and during this year we hope to exhibit in that museum the findings especially of the Rupununi area which have been done by Cde. Dennis Williams plus other archaeological exhibits. That will be done this year.

Also this year, we hope Cde. Speaker, consistent with our socialist thrust, to have work done on the Co-operative Youth Palace because as the comrades who belong to the Opposition benches and who have visited socialist countries know very well, one of the main areas where children enjoy themselves in socialist countries, is the Youth Palace. We will call ours perhaps – we are not settled on the name yet – a Co-operative Youth Palace, but it is to be just like the

Children's Palace in socialist countries. It is hoped that during May this year we will lay the corner stone and that will be done by the Cde. Prime Minister of Guyana.

In conclusion, Cde. Speaker, this is what we are doing in the field of Education, in the field of Social Development and in the Field of Culture. I must confess that although this Government is doing its best in the circumstances, everything is not perfect. Everything cannot be perfect. Perfection has not been reached in the area of education, in the area of culture in any country of the world. If one goes and talks to any Education Minister, and Culture Minister in any part of the world, he or she will tell you "Yes, we have problems". I would not for one moment say that we do not have to try to solve those problems.

7.10 p.m.

I recall the words of the great Cuban writer, poet, liberator, Jose Marti; in the last poem he wrote before he died, a poem which is now a popular song, which has very beautiful and patriotic words, a poem entitled "Guantanamera". In the last verse, when translated into English, it says:

"With the poor people of this earth I want to share my faith".

Those words help to inspire those policies of the People's National Congress Government in its goals and objectives in the field of Education, Social Development and Culture in order to transform Guyana into a better society, a socialist society. **[Applause]**

The Speaker: Cde. Campbell.

The Minister of State for Information (Cde. Campbell): Cde. Speaker, I wish to avail myself of this first opportunity to express to you my sincere gratitude for the words of welcome which you so kindly extended to me on the occasion of my entry into this honourable House. Shall I also, Cde. Speaker, express those sentiments to other Members of House on whose behalf you welcomed me and who, in many cases, have expressed similar sentiments on a bilateral basis. I should also like to congratulate the Minister of Economic Development and Co-

operatives and those officers who assisted him in the preparation of this Budget which the Minister presented to this House in a very complete, frank and forthright manner.

After listening to speakers from both sides of this honourable House during this debate and, particularly those who spoke this afternoon and whose words are therefore most fresh in my mind, I feel it is my duty to confess to a feeling of extreme pride to be a member of this Government. [Applause] One can only feel proud to be a member of the only Government in this hemisphere which has provided for its people free education from nursery to university. [Many people continue to believe that there were two countries in the hemisphere with that distinction but as one who lived in another Capital during a period of three years, I can substantiate the information given to this House by the Minister of Education, Social Development and Culture that indeed we are unique in this respect. In spite of that feeling of great pride, I must be careful not to forget that the intention is that my particular contribution to this debate should be in the area of information and sport and that my colleague, the Minister of Education has indicated and proven quite clearly that he needs no help from me in dealing with the criticisms and statements coming from the other side of this House.

I should like to begin that contribution by quoting from the Budget Speech as presented by the Minister of Economic Development where, very early in the document he made reference to the mass of information and the mass of people's involvement in the process of development. I quote from page 3. It states:

“ . . . the Guyanese people no longer accept the passive role of merely filling a crown scene in the drama of national life: they demand the right to be fully involved, as active participants and protagonists, at all stages and in all aspects of the process of national development. For the exercise of this right to have substance and meaning, they must be provided with clear and ample information about the performance and direction of the national economy”.

Having done that, of course, the Minister went on to give that ample information in an unusually frank manner. But the point I wish to make is that my colleagues in the press, my colleagues in the information services in this country are conscious of the fact that we have a role to provide that ample information on a constant basis, that we have a role on helping to motivate the people of this country to be involved in that development process.

Over the past few years attempts have been made to steer the work of the press and information media in Guyana in a direction that would allow and permit it to make that kind of contribution. In fact the hon. Member might be aware that Guyana has been one of the first and among the few countries in the Caribbean to undertake profound and meaning studies of the concept of development support communications which is a new concept, a new practice in information work, developed in Southeast Asia in the first place and adopted by the United Nations systems as an important contribution to development in countries such as ours.

7.20 p.m.

We have been among the first and among the few and it is our intention to pursue that path; it is our intention more and more to remodel and reconstruct and reorganise our work to make that kind of contribution and to implement that sort of spirit to the work of the Press. We cannot afford in our stage of development and in countries such as ours – and here again my experience of living and working in Havana during the past three years is very instructive and very helpful – to waste our scarce resources of newsprint, of air waves, etc. for the kind of triviality which has been characteristic of the Press which we inherited from Colonialism.

And so it is our intention to continue to reorganise our Ministry to be a kind of development support communication entity, giving full support to the Government as a whole in its development thrust; giving full support to individual projects and to individual Ministries, Corporations and agencies in this country.

Our work of public information, of course, continues and will be cast within that general mould. The work of the Press will continue and will also cast on that mould of development support. The radio stations also will fit into that pattern which should not be interpreted to mean that these media will cease to be interesting, will cease to provide services of entertainment, debate, etc. but merely that their overall objective must be geared towards development in all its aspects.

As is known the Government has recently acquired Radio Demerara as it is popularly known and while I am not in a position to inform this honourable House of the details of our

plans for the Radio Demerara at the present time, I can assure you that we are working to come up with a programme to ensure that Radio Demerara also plays its part in this exercise. It will mean as far as the new radio station is concerned, that its activities, its organisation, its structure must be rationalised in terms of the radio network in general. But however, it is our intention that the radio station will continue to have its independent news and programme arrangements.

Our film unit, which has the distinction of being perhaps the best in the English-speaking Caribbean and one of the best for a country such as ours, has been playing a significant role in informing the Guyanese people through the means of visual communications and it is our film centre to continue that role of informing and motivating the people of this country.

Our National Library is another institution which has an important role to play and which has played a particularly important role in relation to the small man who very often cannot afford to purchase books at the kind of prohibitive cost which we have to face in the world today. The National Library has played and will continue to play a very important role in spreading information and education not only in the urban areas but also in the rural areas. And I am very happy and very proud that as is reflected in the Estimates before this House, the extension of the National Library will be affected this year and it is our hope that this extension will be started within a very short time.

The role of the National Archives should also be very well known and indeed sometime listening to this debate and recognising faulty memories, one gets a greater appreciation of the importance of the National Archives, the role of the Archives in the identification and procurement of archival material both outside and inside the country. As we know, one of the inheritances of colonialism is that a significant part of our records is not available within our own borders and have to be procured from outside. Its role also includes the arrangement and description of archival material as means of facilitating its use by the people of this country, the preservation and restoration of archival material to ensure its effective custody and retention and also the research and utilisation of the archives so that their value might be disseminated to the people as a whole. In a nut shell, these are some of the important aspects of the work of the Archives.

16.3.79

National Assembly

7.20 – 7.30 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, the development in sports the past few years must inevitably be known to every Member of this House. Some of it has been manifested in terms of the greater democratisation, we may say, of sports facilities and sporting opportunities throughout the length and breadth of this country. Much of it has manifested itself in terms of the discovery and development of a new talent and much of it has manifested itself in terms of national glory and national pride which we as a people, have experienced very often in recent times. This is not to say that there is not much more which needs to be done in this area and the Estimates, to some extent, reflect our awareness, the awareness of the Government of some of the greater developments which must be made in sports so that our sportsmen in particular, and our people in general could make a greater contribution to national development and national pride.

We have in mind the continuation of work on the national sports hall, the work on the first phase on the syndotrack , the continued assistance which it is intended to give to the national sports organisations during the year and the collaboration between the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Education on sports training in schools and in communities. These are some of the areas that will receive emphasis during 1979.

Perhaps it would be useful to use this occasion to deal with a certain fundamental change in the structure, if one may say so, of the Ministry and that relates to the fact that the Ministry of Education is now in fact a part of the Ministry of National Development. this is a very significant development and to some people – but only to some people – a frightening development. This change, Cde. Speaker, to my mind manifests an awareness of that very importance to which I made reference earlier of the role of the Information Services in national development, as I said, in all its many aspects and manifestations. This change reflects an awareness that the role of Information Services is not merely to inform but to develop and involve.

7.30 p.m.

There is little assistance that I can give to the General Secretary of the People's National Congress and the Deputy Prime Minister of this Government in explaining the work of the

Ministry of National Development but I wish to pause to make reference to a little remark which slipped by earlier this afternoon on the question of mobilisation when someone in referring to the brilliant achievement of the Ministry and the Government and of the Party in mobilising people for the Republic Anniversary celebrations at the National Park, spoke of the use of TATA buses and trucks and jeeps. I find it very strange that people would find it strange that these buses are used to convey people to such important national activities.

I have seen the Revolutionary Plaza in Havana filled with people; estimates of half million people, three-quarters of million people, sometimes a million people. It would at best be strange and at worst foolish to believe that these people would have arrived at the Revolutionary Plaza by foot. When mobilisation is conducted in any country except perhaps a country of extremely wealthy people, it must obviously be necessary to make the necessary arrangements to get the people there. When mobilisation is done in a place like Havana, it is worked out in advance approximately how many people will go from factory “X” or factory “Y” or office “D” and the necessary transportation arrangements are laid on so that people can be taken to the centre, taken to the area to which they are mobilised and there is nothing wrong with that. There can be absolutely nothing wrong with providing TATA buses to mobilise people to take part in national activities. And so, to the extent that the Ministry of National Development is involved in mobilising people for development, for involvement, for participation, the work of information would be an important aspect of the work.

Some people, as I said, are afraid of this development and see this development in terms of Party control over information. Again, I am tempted to ask what is there in that development to surprise anybody? One would have taken it as a foregone conclusion that any Party in control of a Government would control the information mechanisms of that Government. So one sees nothing strange in the Party being directly involved in the work of Government information. Personally, I must confess that after three years in Cuba, I find it difficult to be afraid of this kind of development. In Cuba, there is not even a pretence of having a Ministry of Information. The work of Information is carried out by the Department of Revolutionary Orientation which is a department of the Central Committee of the Party.

So, there is not even a Government Ministry of Information and I therefore find it difficult to understand all this surprise and all this accusation of Party control of Government information by people who would be unlikely to operate in a different way if they were in the driving seat. **[Laughter]** And perhaps, I may be forgiven, Cde. Speaker, on the basis of what one colleague said to me yesterday with what must be an inevitable feeling of nostalgia, if I continued for just a while longer to crave your indulgence to make this kind of comparison with the Capital from which I have just returned.

I should like to compare this Budget, Cde. Speaker, and to compare some of our difficulties in Guyana at the present time, to compare the frankness with which this Budget was worded and present with the kind of frankness with which, especially today, the Cuban leadership talks to the Cuban people and to compare some of our difficulties with some of their difficulties. In making this comparison, I should like to make it very clear that I am not positing that the existence of difficulties in another place excuses or explains the existence of difficulties in our own country and in making this comparison, I want to make it very clear that the awareness of this kind of frankness and this kind of difficulty, far from representing a lack of awareness of the great and tremendous strides of the Cuban Revolution, indeed represents and mirrors an increased respect which I have experienced for the Cuban people.

Yesterday, a friend of ours, a hon. Member from the other side, closed his speech with quotation by His Excellency, the President of the Council of State, Cde. Fidel Castro. Though, in the hurry of concluding his remarks he forgot to make the necessary acknowledgements. **[A comrade:** “He forgot, or --] He forgot.

The Speaker: Cde. Campbell, they seem to forget that you have just come back as an Ambassador, full of tact and diplomacy. **[Laughter]**

Cde. Campbell: No, Cde. Speaker, it is my genuine feeling that that was what befell the hon. Member. That member was in fact quoting from a statement made by Cde. Castro on the occasion of the opening session of the National Assembly of the People’s Power in Havana when he said that it was once said that all roads lead to Rome but today, all roads lead to socialism. And the comrade made the necessary adaptation. But I should like to make reference to a speech

16.3.79

National Assembly

7.30 – 7.40 p.m.

which Cde. Castro made subsequently in that very Assembly. I think it was on the occasion of the First Ordinary Session of the Assembly in 1978. He said then, Cde. Speaker, that Cuba was experiencing difficulties of two types: those that has an objective basis and those that had a subjective basis, in other words, those who were uncertain about the difficulties in which the country found itself and which the people of the country could not really correct by themselves, at least in the short term the subjective being those resulting from in-efficiencies of planning and so on which could be corrected.

7.40 p.m.

That was an extremely frank statement for any leader to make. He spent some time dealing with the role of Members of Parliament in explaining to people the difference between these two kinds of difficulties. But he went on to say that having regard to the objective situation in Cuba, in thirty years' time, Cuba would continue to be a poor developing country, America blockade or no American blockade. He said, for example, that there is no point quarrelling about the absence of electricity in certain areas before it is possible to put in electricity in those areas, since introducing electricity prematurely in some areas would merely increase the blackouts which take place generally.

These are very frank statements for a leader to make to his people. In an earlier statement – I must confess, Cde. Speaker, I do not remember the exact occasion – he said the Cuban people must not expect any major improvements in the standard of living for a period of eight years since it was necessary to emphasise investment and development over consumption of surpluses. I do not want to give a lengthy report of that speech, but I want to indicate that is that kind of frankness which increases one' respect for leadership and it is that kind of frankness which is reflected in the Budget presented by the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives and which increases my respect for the Minister and my honour of being a Member of this Government.

Another member of the Cuban leadership, Cde. Umberto Perez, who is the President of the Cuban equivalent of our State Planning Commission, was recently interviewed by **Bohemia**. I would like to quote from **Bohemia** No. 7, February 16, 1979, an article entitled "Objective

problems of our Revolution, Things which the people must know”. He also went into a very interesting and full explanation of the difference between the objective and subjective problems facing the Cuban people and the Cuban revolution. I must confess that this article is written in Spanish and that the translation is unofficial. Even though I say so myself, I think it is reasonably reliable. It states:

“The fact, for example, that we do not have petroleum or large rivers to develop hydro electricity, or coal, is an objective problem which does not depend on us. The fact that the price of sugar has descended, as indeed it has; and the prices of those products which we import have increased as has been the result of inflationary process which takes place in capitalist societies, is an objective problem, it does not depend upon us. The existence of the economy blockade and its consequences is an objective problem which does not depend upon us. The fact that during a certain year it could rain more than normal and that in some moments could affect us and could affect the content of the sugar; the fact that grinding could be affected; the fact that production of ground provisions could be affected and the fact that, on the other hand, we can have extreme drought and be equally affected, is an objective problem that does not depend upon us. The fact that we have not achieved a sufficient grade of economy development; the fact that we have not been able to overcome economic backwardness, the heritage of under-development, at the time of the neo-colonial domination; the fact that we are still a poor country is an objective problem”.

Cde. Umberto Perez, then went on to deal with what he called an intermediary type of problem which is normally classified as subjective but which to some extent is objective. He includes in this category the fact that we might not have in our society a sufficient level of economic preparation to man the industries which we might undertake. It continues:

“But there is another group of problems, subjective problems which can beclearly because it refers to those which are in ourselves; in our greater or lesser capacity to organise work, in our methods, in our willingness to confront and resolve the problems, in our attitude in the face of the difficulties of our people; in

16.3.79

National Assembly

7.40 – 7.50 p.m.

our greater or lesser sensitivity in the face of these problems; in our greater or lesser diligence; in our capacity to gain the maximum from the resources available and in the existing circumstances; in our greater or lesser sense of responsibility that we must not lose or waste our resources”.

My contention is that in the Budget Speech, it sought to make precisely this kind of distinction. It sought to say to the people of Guyana that there are some problems which we cannot solve on our own and there are some problems which we can confront and which we must confront. If this honourable House could continue to bear with me, I should like to turn to Cde. Perez’s observations on the difficulties and sacrifices which inhere or are necessary in the Cuban society at the present time. He referred to some of the problems which most affect the population at the present time such as houses, transport, cleaning of the streets and so on, and pointed out that these problems exist even though they were able to over-fill some of their targets in other areas of the national economy.

In response to a question by the interviewer, Cde. Perez pointing out that where as last year Cuba constructed about 17,000 housing units, approximately 25,000 units were lost because there were no materials available to repair those units. So there was a negative growth of about 7,000 plus housing units in Cuba during 1978. And we need to put this against the declaration made by Cde. Castro some time ago that Cuba needs approximately 100,000 housing units per year to overcome the housing difficulties in that country.

7.50 p.m.

And the interviewer asked Cde. Perez:

“You have affirmed that the efforts of our country in the next twenty years will be concentrated in industrial development. Does this signify that the people will have during these twenty years the same restrictions in the level of life, in that standard of living?”

And his answer Cde. Speaker, is as follows:

He went on to point out that:

“Although it might appear a contradiction that in socialism production is for people and not for profit, it might appear a contradiction to say that it is necessary to hold back consumption so as to ensure further investment in the future. It is not really as contradictory and paradoxical as it might appear.”

Perhaps, one can go on to quote *ad infinitum* from this document to indicate two things, in the first place that we are not the only people undergoing this kind of difficulty and that there are other leaders in other parts of the world with the willingness and the capacity to speak to their people as frankly as this Government is doing at the present time.

Cde. Speaker, after saying all this, I suppose it is time to return and conclude in terms of our own situation and to say as I have said before that this Government recognises the difficulties but also the aspirations and the possibilities of our own people and our own situation. We are conscious of the fact that we need to grasp an understanding of the different kinds of problems and how to resolve them and it is my thesis, Cde. Speaker, that an important role of the Press of this country – and by the Press I include all the media, the **Chronicle**, the **NewNation**, the **Mirror**, Radio Demerara, G.B.S. – is to explain to the people in a very positive way the differences between those problems which are apparent and those problems which are real.

It is the role of the Press for example, to explain the problems of increased importation costs. It is the role of the Press, as I understand it, to explain the inefficiencies in Government agencies and to advocate for those inefficiencies to be corrected, even though some people are of the view that putting the Ministry of Information under the Ministry of National Development means that the Press will not be allowed to do this kind of work. Nothing could be further from the truth. And as I said one would expect publications like the **Mirror**, publications like the **New Nation**, to join in this exercise. And the fact, that the world is so short of the materials which we need for the work of the information services, is all the more reason why this task of development and of explaining the truth to the people must be central to the work of the Guyanese Press and the Guyanese information media in general. Cde. Speaker, I am very confident of the capacity of the Press to take on this responsibility in a bigger and bigger way and to be successful in this exercise. I am at the present time personally engaged in the process on consultation with my colleagues in the Press at different levels. I have with me right now a series of recommendations which have been worked out by my colleagues within the Ministry

itself giving their views as to how we should proceed with this task and not merely by agreeing with many of their recommendations but I am satisfied that the recommendations and the thinking behind those recommendations are of the standard of work produced by experts from international organisations on this matter. I am also in consultation with the Press generally through the Guyana Association of Journalists and also through visits to the areas, to the work places of my information colleagues.

It is hoped that hand in hand with assisting the people, assisting in the motivation of the people for development, our Press which has a reasonably high tradition will more and more increase its professionalism and increase in its professional pride, and to assist in that process it is our intention to intensify training at all levels and in a number of areas, training at home, training abroad in socialist countries, and training abroad in capitalist countries, where we find this to be helpful.

I am very happy at this time to have been given the honour by my Government and by my Party, to return not merely to Guyana but to return to the field of information, to work along with my colleagues in that field. And I think as I said earlier, that there is a very important task which we can perform in telling the people about development, in highlighting what the people are doing to develop, not merely to tell of the failure but the many success stories which exist in all parts of the country today, to highlight the many initiatives which people are taking in the Corporations and even in their homes to help with development, to explain to the people the significance and the importance of this very frank and realistic Budget, to help them to understand and to help them to see their role in development and to play that role. **[Applause]**

8 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Campbell, may I take this opportunity to congratulate you on the maiden intervention you have made in this House and particularly so very quickly after you entered it. And may I say how very pleased I am at the very instructive and informative contribution you have made. **[Applause]** Cde. Sukhu.

Cde. Sukhu: Cde. Speaker, I, like other colleagues, would like to congratulate the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives for the very able Budget he has put forward here within the last seventy-two hours and to say that I think it is an education to the Opposition colleagues because the presentations from the Government benches have quite rightly shown that the Budget, which was described by the last speaker as being that of a Budget of recovery and a realistic Budget, would be able to bring to this country a measure of improvement. But I think that in a Budget like this, you will agree, it is necessary that we should put in the necessary important element and that is, we should support this Budget with the framework of national unity which is the important pre-requisite for the construction of a socialist society in this country of ours.

I would like to take this opportunity tonight to read from the **New Nation** a very important paragraph and this quotation was presented by no other than the present Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives who was addressing one of our District Conferences on the theme “Strengthening of National Unity”. I would like to stress here tonight that these paragraphs which I have to reiterate here are important for the development of this country and its people and at the same time to strengthen all us. At the same time we solicit the united support of all the people irrespective of the type of vicious opposition that we have had in this country and we hope that the intelligent masses of this country will still continue to follow the P.N.C. in every direction. **[Applause]**

The referendum in this country, as you know, was a resounding victory and we will continue having resounding victories in all the elections. You will agree that there will be more referendums and we will continue to win them accordingly. Tonight, I take this opportunity to just quote these few words for the benefit of this House and particularly of our Opposition members who, I believe, will continue to be educated by the members of this side of the House, to let them understand that we are here not to castrate them – **[Laughter]** – but to orient and to re-orient them in every direction.

“Today the Party confronts many complex and challenging tasks. The grand objective for which the Party labours so strenuously is to transform Guyana into a just and human society where

privilege and vested interest are destroyed and where all the people by reason of their work can share equitably in the material prosperity of the country, live decently and have a creative life. In short, the Party seeks to create a socialist society. The function of a socialist society is national unity. At this junction of our development the promotion of national unity is the immediate and urgent and most important task of the Party and each and every one of us, its members”.

I think that has not only been a clarion call to the members of the People’s National Congress but to all intelligent Guyanese including the Opposition because they have been the people who have been saying for quite a while that they are interested in national unity though at every level they have not been contributing to this level of national unity at any time.

I remember in a very important area in 1973, there was a very useful paper presented by no other than Cde. Zaheeruddeen in which he said these words, “From self-destruction to self-reliance”. There are some very important parts in this paper and I want to quote from page 4. This paragraph states very clearly:

“Self destruction at the political level begins with the People’s Progressive Party and has now ended with the death of the People’s Progressive Party”.

May I say also that whatever following that Party has now is purely racial or sentimental.

As you know, in this country, the intelligent masses have been watching the situation and I can say this quite clearly that you will appreciate that the entire intelligentsia of this country supports the only institutional organisation, the People’s National Congress, because it has brought to the people of this country that standard and quality of living which is very important and near and dear to their aspirations. **[Applause]**

A while ago so many things were said with regard to discrimination but I would like to say that the record of the People’s National Congress politically, socially and culturally, has shown what we have and that we have blazed the trail in this country. We would like to look at some of the important achievements of this country and it is not necessary for me to mirror these. We have two important monuments and landmarks, the bridging of the Abary River and the

Demerara River. It was not a matter of putting bridges as a matter of Party patronage but it was a way of bringing people together and you would see exactly that we have done that. [Applause]

The Government was accused of not being interested in the agricultural development of this country. I would say, comrades, you do not want me again to reiterate for your education how this Government has spent millions and hundreds of millions of dollars on drainage and irrigation works in this country. There is the greater Black Bush Project which is going to be a reality under this Government; there is the Mahaica/Mahaicony Agricultural Development project which is under operation; there is the Essequibo Development and that has already been mentioned by the Minister of State for Agriculture. These are some of the schemes. This is the break through and this is where we are moving towards people's development and this is going into the areas which are not traditional P.N.C. areas. That is because we believe, this Party believes, in the development of people and people for the development of a Government. We are putting these investments on drainage and irrigation, on which, as you know, the metropolitan countries which had been governing this country had not put so much emphasis. This is for the benefit of the agricultural peasants of this country who have toiled within the last 100 years of this country under colonial rule.

8.10 p.m.

This is the Government that has stood up although we have constraints in this country. I would just like to give you an idea of some of the schemes in agriculture which are going to be engaging the attention of the Ministry of Agriculture for 1979. First, there is the \$500 million investment in drainage and irrigation for the M.M.A. scheme. Then we have the upgrading of the export facilities and strengthening of the management of the Guyana Rice Marketing Board, establishing the framework for the expansion of the production of oil extracted from palm grown locally, and the production of other crops generally. Then we have the up-grading of the dairy industry.

This Government is not in any way concerned with any manner of accusations that have been levelled. This Government is concerned with national unity in the sense of embracing all

the people, their habits, their culture, bringing them together. At the same time, we are willing as a Government to listen and to put forward things to the people. I would like to make a very brief comment here because it is important. There was a time when the P.P.P. Opposition raised the point of a National Patriotic Front Government. All you heard was that they were interested but they never went into any formal negotiations. All they did was to hold a press conference.

If the members of the P.P.P. are really interested in national unity, it is time that they should think in terms of replying to these things. One of the political analysts, Kester Alves, made the point that instead of responding to suggestions for an inter-party commission, the P.P.P. in the latter part of 1976 took to the street corners with a demand for a National Patriotic Front Government. Seriousness, as the Prime Minister observed, would be indicated in a direct approach to the leadership of the P.N.C. If the P.P.P. were serious, were they going to start with a press conference? It just shows the type of irresponsible leadership on the other side. They are saying the Shah is gone, Gairy is gone, and who is next. But I can say this, I can get more votes than Mr. Feilden Singh – individually. He cannot stand up in this country. I have stood up and I can stand up on any platform. I can tell you, whenever you are finished, you do not have any following in this country. I have more following than you. So you would appreciate that it is important at this stage that we try to play an important part.

The P.N.C. was accused of not being a socialist Party. But I would like to say quite clearly that the Prime Minister, in a speech delivered at the People's Congress at Sophia on December 16, 1977, made some very important points. We will have a Constituent Assembly to draft a new Constitution for us. My advice to the Leader of the Opposition is that he should go before the Constituent Assembly to show respect for the aspirations of that little piece of support he has, so that it can go down in history that he made his last contribution before he went underneath. There is the U.F. Leader in the ranks of the Opposition and he cannot say anything. I happen to be an ordinary backbencher and I have more to say than that Leader of the Opposition. I would like to quote this for your information so that I would educate you and at the same time put you in line with the socialist thrust. And this is what the statement of the leader, the Leader of the People's National Congress, has said. There are many areas **[Interruption]** Education

does not mean that because you are a liar – There are many little things you have got to be educated by.

8.20 p.m.

The Speaker: Please advise yourselves not to have cross talk. Let us continue because we have only seven minutes more before we finish.

Cde. Sukhu: I would like to bring to the notice of this Assembly that socialism cannot be constructed without national unity. Unity of the people is needed so that we can own and control our natural resources in the truest sense of ownership and control. I need not reiterate for your information but as you know it is this progressive Government that controls 80 per cent of the public resources of this country. It is a gigantic step and the P.N.C. must be complimented for this. **[Applause]**

We hear many in the past who have talked about nationalisation but they never got the courage to take the action or the steps necessary to implement these reforms, to exploit fully our resources so that surpluses could be generated, to increase our opportunities to raise the standard of living. You do not want me to tell you about our forest resources. We are now trying to develop our hydro-electricity and as you know every effort is being made to improve and to exploit areas in this direction.

We also would like to let you know that we would like to defeat our enemies who attempt to interfere with our socialist development and when we have got an obstructionist Opposition and a destructive Opposition at least you should know that this Government is as firm as the rock of Gibraltar and it will stand firm at every level. I can assure every Guyanese that this Government is capable and efficient and you would not see what has happened in Grenada or what has happened with the Shah in this country. Many of them would like to see it. Already it is on the board outside “What has happened to the Shah and Gairy, who next?” But I say that no next could happen in this country. We have got the capacity; we have got the resourcefulness and we have got the support internally and externally to combat against the irresponsible elements of

this society.

It is important also to say that those socialists who are ganging up with the rightist elements of this country, if ever it is their intention to overthrow this Government, they will be trying to overthrow the socialism which is in the making in this country.

It is important that racial and all other forms of discrimination must be dealt with firmly by the Party. The Party has been taking steps to rectify matters and as you know, the Government is presently in an economic straitjacket. And you do not want what was reiterated by the Minister of Education here this afternoon, that \$118 million has been earmarked for education, the social advancement of the people of this country who are going to be educated - all the people, whether they be P.P.P. or P.N.C.

The P.N.C. Government has made and will continue to make the efforts to ensure that here is equality of opportunity regardless of race, colour and creed in all the spheres of life in Guyana. The P.N.C. as the vanguard of the revolution has a very important role to play to ensure that the people remain united in the cause of socialism. Reactionary elements spread malicious propaganda, and attempts to destroy the people's unity will have to be exposed and dealt with. My comrade has dealt with it efficiently – the Minister of State for Information. And I say this, that the **Mirror** which tries to sow that seed of disunity will perish when that day comes.

It is important now for me to wind up this debate for tonight. I would like to give my humble projection at this present moment. I would like to make an appeal in and out of this Chamber. If you look at this Budget you will see it is important and if you give it an in-depth thought, you would be able to see that it has dealt comprehensively with the economic realities of Guyana. I want to appeal to all Members of this House, irrespective of whether they are P.N.C. or P.P.P. members, in the interest of social justice, in the interest of socialism, in the interest of the development of people, let us unite for the benefit of the people of this country.

I think this is important at this juncture in the history of Guyana. It is by our united efforts to put all our energies together that we would be able to see the 1979 Budget become a reality. It has been a departure from the Colonial-oriented Budget, it is a Budget that has been

16.3.79

National Assembly

8.20 – 8.30 p.m.

presented by our Planning Unit in collaboration with the Minister of Economic Development and the progressive Government of the P.N.C. Let it become a reality, that in 1980 we will be able to see at least 10 per cent rise in our national income, so that we will have that production and productivity, so that we will be able to raise the national minimum wage of the working-class people of this country. We are all working towards this to help improve their environment so that they will be able to have that important peace which is for their benefit. Once again, I would like to appeal to all members, let us unite and fight this economic stagnation that we are in for the benefit of all Guyanese. **[Applause]**

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved “That this Assembly do now adjourn until Monday, 19th March, 1979, at 2 p.m.
[The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House]

Adjourned accordingly at 8.30 p.m.
