

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.

212th Sitting	14:00 hrs	Friday, 1980-04-11
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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)
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Deputy Prime Minister (1)

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

Senior Ministers (11)

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives	
Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A., Minister of Works and Transport	
Cde. B. Ramsaroop, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House	
Cde. C. V. Mingo, Minister of Home Affairs	
*Cde. H. Green, Minister of Health, Housing and Labour	
*Cde. H.O. Jack, Minister of Energy and Natural Resources	
*Cde. F.E. Hope, Minister of Finance	
*Cde. G. B. Kennard, C.C.H., Minister of Agriculture	
*Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, C.C.H., S.C., Attorney General and Minister of Justice	(Absent)
*Cde. R.E. Jackson, Minister of Foreign Affairs	
*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection	

*Non-elected Ministers

Ministers (2)

- Cde. O.E. Clarke,
Minister – Regional
(East Berbice/Corentyne)
- Cde. C.A. Nascimento,
Minister, Office of the Prime Minister (Absent – on leave)

Ministers of State (10)

- Cde. F.U.A Carmichael
Minister of State – Regional (Rupununi) (Absent)
- Cde. P. Duncan, J.P.,
Minister of State, Ministry of
Economic Development and Co-operatives
- Cde. K.B. Bancroft, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Mazaruni/Potaro)
- Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P.,
Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast/West Demerara)
- Cde. J.R. Thomas,
Minister of State, Ministry of Education,
Social Development and Culture
- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,
Minister of State for Youth and Sport,
Ministry of National Development
- Cde. S. Prashad,
Minister of State - Regional
(East Demerara/West Coast Berbice)
- Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, M.P.,
Minister of State,
Ministry of Agriculture
- *Cde. F.U.A. Campbell, M.P.,
Minister of State for Information,
Ministry of National Development
- *Cde. H. Rashid,
Minister of State,
Office of the Prime Minister

Parliamentary Secretaries (6)

- Cde. M.M. John, C.C.H.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the
Prime Minister, and Government Chief Whip (Absent)
- Cde. E.L. Ambrose,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. M. Corrica,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture (Absent)
- Cde. E.M. Bynoe,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade and
Consumer Protection.
- Cde. C.E. Wright, J.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Economic
Development and Co-operatives

Cde. J.G. Ramson,
Parliamentary Secretary,
Ministry of Works and Transport

Other Members (15)

Cde. W.G. Carrington, C.C.H. (Absent – on leave)
Cde. S.M. Field-Ridley
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler
Cde. J. Gill
Cde. W. Hussain
Cde. K.M.E. Jonas
Cde. A. Salim
Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P. (Absent)
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S.
Cde. H.A. Taylor
Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P.
Cde. L.E. Williams
Cde. M. Zaheerruddeen

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People's Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. Jagan,
Leader of the Opposition

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran,
Deputy Speaker

Other Members (12)

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

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

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

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. F.A. Narain, A.A.
Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly – Cde. M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:05 hrs

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKERLEAVE TO MEMBERS

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the hon. Member Mr. Abraham for today.

HOURS OF SITTINGS

It has also been agreed that the House will sit from 2 to 5 o'clock and from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

PUBLIC BUSINESSWITHDRAWAL OF NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

Cde. Ram Karran: (The Deputy Speaker) Your honour, arising out of a ruling made against Mr. Persaud, the hon. Member sitting on my left, I had moved a motion of No Confidence which, after discussion with my colleagues, seemed to stand in the way of normalcy. I wish to withdraw that Motion in order to return to a state of normalcy as far as my friend's participation in the House is concerned.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, I made it distinctly clear that that was not a condition for my acceptance of the apology. If that is the way it is going to be put, I am not going to agree. Yes, Dr. Jagan.

BROADCAST

The Leader of the Opposition (Cde. C. Jagan): Mr. Speaker, on the occasion before the last Sitting I took the opportunity to raise with you, by telephone and by conversation with you personally, the question of privileges pertaining to the broadcasting of debates of this Parliament. You recall this matter was raised some time ago during another debate.

The Speaker: Are you moving a Motion of privileges?

Cde. C. Jagan: I am raising a matter under that Head.

The Speaker: There is no question here. The only thing I would permit you as if you want to raise a Motion of privilege.

Cde. C. Jagan: That is what I am raising. As I said, I spoke to you and I enquired before the debate last Tuesday whether you had given permission for the broadcast of the debate and the Budget and you replied that you had done so. I ask you whether the speech which will be made by the mover of the Motion, that is, the Minister of Economic Development, will be included in the calculation of the total time allotted to the Government Benches. I told you that, according to my interpretation of the Rules, there would be a Motion before the House and like all Motions or Bills the mover generally initiates the debate. Consequently, what we had to say on the Budget Speech is obviously part and parcel of the total; debate. This is what the Standing Rule says on Estimates and Expenditure. This is on page 56, Standing Rule No. 61:

“(2) After the motion has been proposed the debate thereon shall be adjourned for not less than two clear days, after which five further days shall be allotted for the debate on the motion. The debate, when resumed, shall be confined to the financial and economic state of the country and the general principles of Government policy and administration as indicated by the budget speech and the Estimates. After Members have spoken and the Minister has replied, or at the end of the sitting on the last day (whichever is earlier), the debate in the Assembly shall be concluded, but the question on the motion shall not be put at this stage.”

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Rules are clear on this point and that is why I was very surprised about your ruling that the Budget speech by the hon. Minister of Economic Development will not form part of the

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total debate and thus will not be included in the allocation of time. To my surprise, when I came here today I saw that there is no recording equipment for broadcast of this debate live, which was permitted by the Speaker of the House.

It is my view that this is a violation of the privileges of this House. I think the Speaker should protect the rights of all Members and, in this case, the Opposition in this Chamber. I seriously protest the way this matter is being handled in a very impartial way.

The Speaker: Well, I am very pleased to hear it is impartial.

Cde. C. Jagan: Partial, sorry, in a very partial way. Further I indicated to you, and this arose out of the experience of the last debate, last Tuesday, that in addition to the live broadcast being carried out from this House, loudspeaker equipment was out outside there in all of the compound of this building, and for the whole of that debate last Tuesday a similar procedure was adopted. I am asking and I asked you today whether this was going to be the same today. You told me that you did not know whether that existed on the last occasion, last Tuesday, and you were enquiring whether any facility like that will be provided today.

Mr. Speaker, sometimes we are told you have no authority because the Rules do not give you power, like putting Motions and Questions on the Order Paper. On this occasion, the Rules are clear and we hope that the rights and privileges of Members of this House will be respected and the business of the House will be carried on in a proper manner, not only in a proper manner but in such a manner that the public of Guyana will have the opportunity to hear both sides of what is taking place here. The Government is out to shut up the Opposition and the Parliament – [Interruption]

[A Comrade: “With all that noise you are making?”] With all that noise? Don’t worry with that. They use their administrative methods through the Ministry of trade to deny newsprint, as you are well aware, to the Opposition paper and now attempts are being made to misuse, as they misuse so many things, the privileges and rights of Members of this House. I therefore ask you to reconsider your Ruling on this matter and to ensure that such things do not take place. I also ask that that time which was allotted to the Minister of Economic Development to read his Budget Speech should be calculated for a total allocation of time and the Opposition should be given its proportionate share, as you have agreed, so that the public can know what is taking place in this country.

Cde. Ram Karran: Your Honour - -

The Speaker: I am not allowing anything further on that.

Cde. Ram Karran: I am not speaking on that, sir. I am - -

The Speaker: Well, let me have my say now on that matter. Dr. Jagan you will recall when you raised this matter I gave you what was my view. You said whether I would reconsider the matter and I agreed to do that. I invited you to come at 4 o’clock or whenever the business of the House was completed. You did not find it convenient to come but you sent Cde. Ram Karran. The matter ventilated and the Ruling stood. I thought you were raising a Motion of Privilege which mean that you would raise a Motion that this matter be sent to the Committee of Privileges and that Committee would then decide if it did not accept my Ruling. I am not going to reconsider this matter over and over. I think my Ruling is correct and so it stands.

Cde. Ram Karran: Sir, I sought your attention to move in this direction on the Motion of No Confidence.

The Speaker: Thank you, Cde. Ram Karran.

MOTIONAPPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1980BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed debate on the Motion moved by the Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives for the approval of the estimates of expenditure for the financial year 1980.

The Speaker: Well, it seems nobody wants to speak. Yes, Dr. Jagan. Normally I am afforded the courtesy of being given the list of names and an indication of how they will speak. Today, I have had no such opportunity.

Cde. C. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, Budget Day is one of the most important days in the life of this Assembly and there is need on such an occasion for a scientific and serious analysis. This is what one would expect from the side of the Government but what did we have? Sweeping generalizations have been presented and what has been offered is a distorted view of the world situation and the relationship between the ailing, crisis-ridden world capitalist economy at the centre and at the periphery dependent capitalism in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

Consequently, Cde. Chairman, the Minister of Economic Development, like a conjurer, absolved the Government of responsibility for the mess in which this country today finds itself his line, more or less, was that the world is in crisis, the economy was in crisis in the world, that is having repercussions on our economy, and we should be glad that we are alive we are doing, in fact, better than others. This seems to be the line which he tries to put out in this House. Clearly, this is an attempt to turn black into white and to project a disastrous situation into one of hope – hope for the future. But we know from the days when the Deputy Prime Minister was Finance Minister, when Past Finance Ministers used to present the Budget, that we are in the same position despite all the rosy promises which had been made. And every day, things are getting worse. Instead of going forward, everyone knows that we are going back-wards: this country is going backwards. Everyone knows that. They are only fooling themselves and for every five dollars they rob the working people of this country, they hand out this year, one dollar.

No doubt, this is election year and they have to sweeten the pill. But going is a man's house, holding him up, robbing him, putting him out of his house, and then afterwards saying "O.K. you can come back, take the house" – after you have pillaged it – "and here is a little bit, a little bed left for you", is the kind of generosity, that is the kind of perspective which is being given to the people of the country. Yes, I say pittance are being shared out today on the eve of elections.

It is like the good old plantation days when at Christmas time the Manager's wife used to sit on the balcony on the second floor and threw pennies to the children of the sugar workers who, all year long, had been exploited. On the last day before the day ended, the exploiters would call all the people to go to church and pray for a happy and prosperous new year, which never came. This seems to be the practice of the new slave owners who sit on the Benches over there.

14:25 hrs

Mr. Speaker, without any integrated and intersectoral scientifically planned programme, targets which are set at random are not going to be achieved and every year we are going to come back and put blame on the workers. Yes, there are places where there is such a scientific approach, where there is balanced integrated development, where all the sectors of the economy are considered and integrated. Here we only hear about Planning Commission, but you might as well save the taxpayers' money instead of wasting it, because it is a waste of time. Nothing is being done to make a balanced approach, an overall approach to the economy of the country. They cannot do that in any case because of the direction they have decided to now take. Workers are deemed irresponsible by the bureaucratic State capitalists for resorting to strikes. The public is told about man days, how many, man-days are lost by strikes. What they do not tell us is how many man-days are lost from underemployment and unemployment. How much more time, how many, manifold man-hours and man days are lost as a result of that. What is being done about that? The only answer they seem to have to that is to let the people leave the country who can get visas, and who cannot get visas to go illegally.

Mr. Speaker, in the meantime, with moves to the right definitely, there are pleas for greater effort, for more production and productivity but to get out of the tangled web, as one senior public servant put it, it will need more than pleas, much more. As long as the root causes remain, by that I mean, lack of democracy, corruption, racial and political discrimination, pre-imperialist domestic and foreign policies, there will be no solution, we will be sinking deeper and deeper into the mire. That is inevitable. What did the Minister of Economic Development say in the speech? He started out as follows:

“This 16th Annual Budget of the People's National Congress Government is being presented against a background of disquieting international developments. The decade of the 70's has ended amidst the wreckage of the high hopes with which it began for a more stable and just world and for vastly ameliorated conditions of life for the 'wretched of the earth'.

Détente between the super-powers has now been metamorphosed into confrontation and a variation on the Cold War theme and the promise of a regime of peace which it had engendered has now been displayed by widespread fears of a major armed conflict. The enormous increase in the price of oil products has jeopardized the viability of non-oil-producing developing countries, regardless of social system. And, in the developed industrialized countries, high inflation rates of nearly 20%, interest rates of over 20% and unemployment rates as high as 7.5% (and predicted to rise even higher) – all evidence the serious plight of the world economy. The world is in crisis!”

That is the beginning, and he went on, I quote again:

“The 1970's turned out to be a decade of global economic upheavals. . .

Inflation rates in the industrialized countries reached and dreaded double digit figure. The average annual growth rate of World output fell steadily from levels achieved in the 1960's; and the volume growth of world trade diminished from about 9% a year in the early 70's to about 4% towards the end . . . And recessions of varying degrees of intensity plagued the industrialized countries.”

Mr. Speaker, what do we have here? No distinction has been made between the capitalist developed industrialized countries and the socialist developed industrialized countries. We hear of a general world crisis, but clearly, those who call themselves socialist - - Incidentally, I saw no word at any place in the budget about socialism. [Interruption.]

Let us come to the presentation. It is a dishonest and distorted presentation to say that the whole world is in crisis. Mr. Speaker, let me take some few minutes to give some figures to show Cde. Chowritmootoo, who has had only a limited education. First of all, compare the rate of growth of the two giants, the U.S.A and the U.S.S.R., and this is not Jagan speaking, this is Gonda Myrdal, the world-renowned social democrat, not Communist, not Marxist, economist and development planner in his book The Challenge of the Affluent. This is what he wrote,

“It is enough to take as established that the present rate of economic growth is considerably higher in the Soviet Union than in the United States, at least double or perhaps more. The magic of compound interest is such that if the U.S. should fail to overcome its relative stagnation very soon, the Soviet Union would, within a not too distant future, approach, reach and eventually surpass the United States in important fields.”

14:35 hrs

This was a few years ago, but let us tell those, who want to confuse the Guyanese public, that the capitalist crisis did not begin a few years ago in the seventies only, in the late sixties the first development decade of the United Nations was an admitted failure. Not only the second.

14:35 hrs

And the U.S. economy got into trouble by the end of that first U.S. Development Decade. But let us come to more modern times. Mr. Myrdal was writing seven/eight years ago and talking about the Soviet rate being about double the rate of the U.S. economic growth. Let us take the present-day position, the CMEA countries, that is, of Europe only, comparing 1950 with 1977, as far as European economic potential is concerned. In 1950, the CMEA had 31 percent and it increased to 53 percent in 1977. As far as national origin energy resources are concerned, they increased from 46 percent in 1950 to 76 percent in 1977. As far as capital investments are concerned the CMEA countries' share increased from 32 percent in 1970 to 56 percent in 1977. From 1971 to 1975 the CMEA countries' industries developed four times as fast as those of the developed capitalist countries. From 1970 to 1977, the CMEA countries' investments in the economy went up by 60 percent as compared with 18 percent in the developed capitalist countries.

When the CMEA was first set up, its members accounted for about one-fifth of world industrial output. By the end of 1978 it was more than one-third. Inflation and unemployment plague the working people in the capitalist world. From 1971 to 1975, real wages per worker in the CMEA countries increased at 2.5 to 4.3 percent a year for the different countries in the CMEA bloc. That is the reality.

Why are they trying not to show this reality? Because they went to explain, to rationalize, the position here: that we are not so badly off, all countries, including socialist countries, are in serious trouble. The whole world is in crisis, therefore, if we are punishing a little bit, do not worry. Grin and bear it. They talked about the cold war and confrontation, but these so-called "socialists", one-time Marxists, do not tell us who is resurrecting the cold war for what reason. Why is there no analysis? We do not think they are ignorant. They have a lot of people who have been to school, who read. They had the figures, but they choose to hide them, in order to build up their case for the rationalization which is to be presented to create a certain line for the masses of Guyana.

Why is the detente in peril? Who is doing it? It is clear that because of the crisis of world capitalism and the intensification of the class struggle, the decline in living standards, there are more strikes. More people are unemployed and the standard of living is falling for more people all over the capitalist world, therefore there are more strikes and consequently some of these struggles spill over from the industrial into the political as in Iran, as in Dominica and we have political explosions taking place.

In the last five years of the last decade we have seen a tremendous shift in the balance of forces away from imperialism. In Southern Africa we saw Portuguese colonies liberated. The latest one is Rhodesia. In the last five years we have seen in Nicaragua, in Grenada, in Iran and elsewhere, political upheavals which are a reflection of the intensification of the international class struggle. This is what is the reality and it is for this reason that the imperialists are becoming hysterical today. In the same way as after the last war, when the Soviet Union helped to liberate the countries of Eastern Europe, when socialism was becoming a world system, that the imperialists Churchill and Truman declared the cold war, similarly, today, they want to start it all up again.

Surely, Mr. Jackson, the Foreign Minister, and others know this, but pressure is on them and therefore they rationalize. They come and talk in generalities. They do not want to pin blame; they do not want to say where the fault is, where the blame is. They are afraid, afraid that their masters will cut off the aid which they so much need now. This is what is the reality of the Guyana situation.

Where do the members of the Government stand? Why does the Government not give us an analysis like that? As I said, they are aware of the facts. They would like, however, not to do that. At one time, beginning from 1970, they propagated the lie of two super-powers, two imperialisms, attacking not only U.S. imperialism but attacking the Soviet Union and calling it an imperialist nation. They were forced to move away from the position around 1975/1976, but

what are they talking about now? In essence, they are back to the position. They take now a position that countries like Guyana, countries in the Third World, should take equidistant positions from the two super powers. That is the line. That is why they do not come out with a proper presentation in the Budget of the world situation. It does not suit their situation.

The Speaker: Two minutes more, Cde. Jagan.

Cde. C. Jagan: So far, Mr. Speaker, as the position of the Government is concerned, we saw this issue was fought out at the Summit of the last Non-Aligned Conference. We saw it there, where two lines were being propagated. It was personified so to speak, in Mr. Tito and Mr. Fidel Castro, one being Tito's line, Yugoslavia's line that we must be equidistant from the two super powers, and the other that the U.S.S.R. and socialist countries were the friends of the Third World Countries. Natural allies. And so the Conference – I think the Foreign Minister will tell us – agreed by the large - -

14:45 hrs

The Speaker: Dr. Jagan, time.

Cde. Ram Karran: Your Honour, I beg to move that the Leader of the Opposition be permitted 15 minutes more to continue.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. C. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, the Foreign Minister was there at that Conference and he will probably verify that the line projected by Feidel Castro gained great support at that Conference, because not only was that point made, but it was pit in a proper framework, that the development of Third World Countries has also to do with the whole question with disarmament, détente, etc. What of the developing countries? The Minister in his budget statement said the following:

“Indeed, the volume growth of volume commodity exports of developing countries stagnated, since the early years of the decade, and the prices of these commodities behaved erratically and were generally unfavourable to the to the developing countries. Global food supply failed to measure up to demand and famine ravaged many a developing country.”

And how did the P.N.C. meet the crisis of the 1970 – 78 decade? According to the Minister, and I quote

“It was in such a decade of uncertainty that the Guyanese people perceived their goals with certainty and pursued them with determination and vigour. We enunciated our basic policy position; namely, that we intended to be masters in our own land and moulders of our own destiny. We opted for political independence and economic self-reliance. We declined to be pawns of any country. And on the basis of overwhelming national consensus, we chose to build our society on foundation of social justice and equity.

In the translation of this policy into action, we domesticated our economy by bringing under Guyanese ownership and control the dominant and strategic sectors. Thus, today, not only is the economy fully, legally and effectively under Guyanese dominion, but the major enterprises are owned by the Guyanese people as a whole and operated for their benefit.”

Yes, Guyanese to be masters in our own land and moulders of our own destiny. The

Government boldly announced in the Sophia Declaration of December 1974 the following:

- (1) That there will be land reform; land will go to the tiller. Up to now, we have not seen that.
- (2) The State will own and control all natural resources.
- (3) State control of all foreign trade.
- (4) The banks will be miniaturized.
- (5) Private foreign capital could come to Guyana only in partnership with the State and the co-operatives with the State and the Co-operatives having a dominant share and control.

Surely those are brave words. They implemented some. U.S. imperialism immediately attacked them. Dr. Ralph Gonsalves a St. Vincent academic, who was expelled from Barbados, who could not get back to his teaching post at U.W.I. at Cave Hill, wrote a paper on the imperialism in the Caribbean. This is what he says, “Whereas in 1969 when Guyana was in the bosom of imperialism” [Interruption.] Those were not his exact words, but this is what he said. These are my own words but I want to correct that. [Interruption.] These are his words. “Guyana received over percent of U.S. Aid commitments in the entire Caribbean and 93.4 percent of those in the English-speaking Caribbean.” That was the first period of your puppetry 1960 and 1970 but in 1971 after the nationalization of Demba, aid commitments had fallen to 3.2 percent of the aid for the Caribbean as a whole and 5.6 of the total for the Anglo-fold Caribbean. Those are facts. Imperialist stress caused the Government to vacillate. Reynolds was to be nationalized within a few months but this only occurred in the 1975 – 76 period with the move to take over Bookers and the Reynolds monopoly and to positive positions in foreign policy. By that time, of course, the objective situation was such in the country, apart from subjective considerations, the bureaucratic elite saw that it was to their advantage. Positive positions were taken also, in the U.N. for instance, in a vote on Zionism and racism, break in diplomatic relations with Israel, support for the M.P.L.A. in Angola. This, of course, led the Finance Minister to speak mildly about the difference of views between the Guyana Government and the U.S. Administration. Remember these words, Cde. Hope? A difference of views – mildly.

But the U.S. Administration put the screws on them. This is what Kissinger said in his directive in January, 1976, and I quote:

“The hostility of some of the Third World spokesmen and block voting have made constructive discussions in the U.N. forums between the industrialized and developing countries almost impossible. I have instructed each U.S. Embassy that the factors by which we will measure the value which that Government attaches to its relations with us will be its statements and its votes on that fairly limited number of issues which we indicate are of importance to us in the international forum.”

That was his master’s voice through its embassies after the P.N.C. had brought the economy to ruin. In early 1977, there was a closing of the gap of views. For them there was unanimity of interests between the new bourgeoisies. The new P.N.C. elite, and the foreign bourgeoisie. They saw that they had to come together and so the Government reversed itself as was manifested in the I.M.F. accord of 1978 and the new investment code of 1979.

Where is the political independence that the Minister spoke about in his Budget Statement? Examine these issues, China, Vietnam, Campuchea. What was the line? China must withdraw

from Vietnam and Vietnam must withdraw from Campuchea. What is wrong with that? Long before Campuchea, Vietnam was involved in Campuchea. Everybody knows. The capitalist world was talking about it. The Pol Pot regime was killing millions and millions of people.

[Cde. C. Jagan continues]

14:55 hrs.

Mr. Speaker, the line that they took was the U.S. line on that particular issue; in the same way they followed the U.S. line when the U.S. was carrying out its aggression against Vietnam when the whole world was calling for American troops to withdraw from Vietnam, the Americans said that North Vietnamese must withdraw from the South must also withdraw. That was the line they then carried. What about Afghanistan? Where did they vote? They voted on the side of the imperialists? [Cde. Jackson: "We voted on the side of Guyana."] Where did they vote on the issue of Angola? When Barbados refused to allow the Cuban planes to pass and refuel in Bridgetown, Burnham agreed to allow them to pass in Guyana. Burnham told me that he was under a lot of pressure from the Americans. At that time this Government was taking an anti-imperialist position. Barbados at least is consistent. It did not allow Cuban planes to pass then and on the issue of Afghanistan it voted on the side of imperialism. What did the Government do? In keeping with the reversal of its policies to pro-imperialist policies, the Government somersaulted. This is how everything fits into place.

Let us take another issue. They allow planning to bring to Guyana a tribe from Laos. We have here two clippings from the New York Times. I remember a meeting which was held in the Sophia auditorium when the M.P.L.A. delegation came here. I spoke from the floor and read a statement from the New York Times showing that Holden Roberto was a C.I.A. agent since 1961 and the Chinese were backing them. And when I said that, the Chinese walked out of the hall. The New York Times of March 20th has now said that this tribe which was fighting against the revolution in Indo China was counter-revolutionary, was reactionary, was involved with the C.I.A. When I came to Guyana on the same plane from Grenada, one of the team was sitting next to me. He did not know who I was. A conversation started. He said he was coming to Guyana about this refugee question. I asked: "This refugee question is it tied up with the U.N. refugee committee?" He said, "No. They are involved in a very minor way. Private enterprise, Church groups and the State Department." The C.I.A. Now, the New York Times brings out the facts about the C.I.A. connections.

Cde. Speaker, an interesting tale was told to me yesterday.

The Speaker: You have to get 15 minutes more. Your time is up. Let someone move the motion. If you take your seat, I think Cde. Ram Karran will move it.

Cde. Ram Karran: I move that the hon. Member be granted 15 minutes more to conclude his contribution.

Cde. N. Persaud seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. C. Jagan: When the Europeans first came here they tried to enslave the Amerindian people, but they failed. Then they brought black slaves from Africa and they used the Amerindians to police and catch the run-way slaves. When slavery was abolished and the slaves began demanding wages, they brought indentured immigrants from India, China and Portugal to undercut the wages which were demanded. Those were the methods by which the imperialists divided and ruled.

Today the modern-day slave owners, when the Guyanese people are becoming united, after having been divided by the C.I.A. and reactionaries of this country, they are bringing a new set of people to become the reactionary ram to be used against the revolutionary forces in this country. This is an interesting point which I thought I should make reference to.

It is clear. We examine not only those things. We see I made a remark that no mention is made now of socialism anywhere in the Budget Speech. We see a deliberate, nevertheless clear attempt to keep those

who are fighting at bay. We understand that the fishing fleet of the Cuban has withdrawn. Tell us whether it is true that the imperialists, the Japanese, the South Korean and Americans, can trawl anywhere in the Atlantic and the Caribbean but the Cubans can only trawl in a certain particular place and others from Socialist countries -- /Interruption/ Tell us whether your masters are giving you orders now how to behave. Tell us why it is true that the prime Minister was not in Grenada for the first anniversary celebrations. If it was, as he said, that he was not invited – my understanding is that the Government of Guyana was invited in the same way that the P.P.P. was invited and the P.P.P. decided to send Jagan. If the Government of Guyana was invited, how is it, if Burnham the Prime Minister cannot go, why Jackson the Foreign Minister cannot go or why Reid cannot go? Why is it a little boy named Kester Alves must go?

/Interruption/

It is clear. Add together all the points which I mentioned – China, Vietnam, Campuchea, Afghanistan, the Mong tribe, isolation of Cuba, a low key delegation to Grenada, add it all up, plus the domestic policies, the I.M.P., the new Investment Code, and you see where they are heading, if it is not reversal to the '71, '73 position and with pressures to go back to the first period, '64 to '70. Before he became Ambassador to the U.N. there was Mr. Ted Braithwaite. When he retired, this is what he said:

“Time and time again I was forced to realize that while I was at the U.N. pursuing what I considered to be my country’s right to intervene in certain political issues, back in Guyana other presences were dealing with these same issues”, resulting in his being told what the American Secretary of State would wish him to do or what posture he would wish him to assume. /Interruption./ Who told him that?

15:05 hrs

Mr. Speaker, instead of self reliance, the foreign State monopoly capitalists in alliance with the State bureaucratic capitalists will be the moulders of our destiny. Why haven’t they got the guts to do what Manley has done now in Jamaica? Mr. Speaker, in 1977, in February, Manley lined up two sets of economists. On one side, McIntyre, Clive Thomas and other progressives, agreed with them, and not with the right wingers, not to accept the I.M.F. However, there was the pressure from the right both in the Government and the Party and, no doubt, from imperialism, which is carrying out economic aggression against that Government. In April, he succumbed, but what has happened now? Two weeks ago I was in Jamaica, and now he has come to the definite conclusion, his Government, his Party, that the I.M.F. is a road to hell and he is asking – /Interruption./ You do not know it. You said you have to go to it, it is the best thing in the world -- /Interruption./ You said so.

Mr. Speaker, the I.M.F. is an instrument of world capitalism and so is the World Bank which is now backing them, financing them, so is the Inter American Development Bank. The World Bank, incidentally, is largely in charge of curriculum planning which will be in control of the minds of our children, youths and teachers. They talk about cultural revolution. If you want to have transition to socialism, you not only must have the working class in power but you must have a cultural revolution. How are we going to have a cultural revolution when the State paper, every day and every other day, carries out featured stories by Gemini News Features, an imperialist – controlled agency. The man who heads it was working with the Daily Mail of London, one of the most reactionary papers in the United Kingdom. Cuban Prensa Latina Agency had to close up and leave because these people who talk about non alignment, who talk about socialism, they refuse to carry any features or even any news items from the Prensa Latina. As to that one over there, when he was in Cuba as Ambassador, it is the opinion in Cuba today that he is a big socialist.

Now he is reported to be a defender of imperialism.

/Interruption./

I have known you long. Too much. You were in P.P.P. at one time. You know that. Okay, I have got five minutes more. /Interruption./

The Speaker: Well, comrades, the Leader of the Opposition has five minutes more. Give him an opportunity now.

Cde. C. Jagan: You have to give me time for the time when they interrupted me.

The Speaker: I am not giving you more time. Five minutes more.

Cde. C. Jagan: The major enterprises may be owned by the Guyanese people but they are certainly not operated for their sole benefit, as the Minister said in his Budget statement. Our society is certainly not built on foundation of social justice and equity. A substantial portion of the surplus extracted from the working people is appropriated for the benefit of the local and foreign elite. Our donkey-cart and dray-cart economy is providing Daimler and Cadillac-style living for the P.N.C. petty bourgeoisie and bourgeoisie. The cost of living is rising, the figures are given. Rampant inflation. But the wages are not commensurate with those increases in the cost of living. They are always talking about New International Economic Order or about indexation of prices. Talk about indexation of wages with the cost of living.

Why is it they do not want to propose that?

The 1980 Budget is a sham. As in the past, production targets will not be attained, deficit financing will continue to plague the working people and the country will sink deeper and deeper in the mire of despondency and despair. With the old padded voters' list becoming the new voters' list, the coming elections will be as fraudulent as in the past. *[Interruption.]* If they claim there is no fraud, how is it they object to a U.N. Commission coming here? Why did they not invite the Commonwealth team which went to Rhodesia? They would not, because they know that fraud is the means by which they sit in those Chairs over there. The Guyanese people cannot expect any solutions from the P.N.C. Government. Instead, more and more of the people's money will be spent, actually, over \$100 million this year for the coercive apparatus, the Police, the military, and the para military and there will be more harassment. We see attempts now being made to jail people -- *[Interruption.]*

The Speaker: Comrades, may I have some order, please.

Cde. C. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, they do not. Do they say that there are not detainees in Guyana, there are no political people held in detention? What they want to do is to so distort the judicial process, so manipulate it so that they can jail their political opponents and that is what is intended, but no matter what they do, that is not going to save them. The Guyanese people will have to find their own solutions and they have to take their destiny in their own hands. I have no doubt that they will do like their brothers elsewhere and deliver themselves from this band of bandits who are oppressing and suppressing them.

15:15 hrs

The Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Kennard): Cde. Speaker, I wish to apologize for not being able to continue entertaining yourself and all present in this House. Dr. Jagan has certainly provided us with ample entertainment this afternoon, but I am about to speak in support of the Minister of Economic Developments presentation of the Budget. It would seem to me that in Dr. Jagan's endeavors to reply to the Minister's presentation, he referred to a crisis, but, it would seem that he is in a crisis of great confusion. Dr. Jagan has asked for a scientific approach to the examination of the Budget and I rise to do so being an eminent scientist in my own right.

Cde. Speaker, I will not wander into the field irrelevancy and I will deal with the subject under the debate, that is, the 1980 Budget. As I said before in this House, with respect to my own portfolio of agriculture, our agricultural sector is making a very notable contribution to the development of our nation. In fact, farmers and fishermen are in the vanguard of the revolutionary drive to transform the economy. Indeed, the annual budget gives us an opportunity to pay tribute to these indomitable stalwarts.

As Minister of Agriculture, I am pleased to serve these people, pleased to serve our hard-working and humble farmers and fishermen, and it is my great honour always in this House to set the lead among members to shower praise and appreciation for these loyal and hard-working citizens for their magnificent performance in the past years and, indeed, at present. Secondly, I wish to use this opportunity in support of the Minister of Economic Development to inform Parliament of the massive and comprehensive assistance which this government, the P.N.C. government, is giving our farmers and fishermen to support and sustain their efforts.

Let me emphasize again that the strength of our nation springs from the very muscle of its agriculture and fisheries. Yes, indeed, the agriculture and fisheries Sectors represent the very pillars of our economy. Evidence of this is pellucid.

For example, the contribution made by agriculture and fisheries to the economy exceeds 50 percent of the gross domestic product when one considers the value of primary production and the intersectoral linkages, for example, in transportation, servicing and processing. Secondly, in our country wherever you go, in any part of Guyana, agriculture is practised and some form of fishing is practised, giving our people their very lives through the food they produce and providing themselves with a means of livelihood. Agriculture and fisheries provide more employment directly and indirectly than any other sector of economy. There are examples. My friend, a while ago, asked for examples of the achievements of our agriculture. I will come to that in respect of assistance which has made their achievements possible.

Their main achievement is that they are in the forefront of the attainment of self sufficiency of this nation. We are in the forefront. Our fishermen are in the forefront in supplying the nation with fish. We are self sufficient in that as indeed we are self sufficient in so many other items which I have enumerated before in this House. Poultry, eggs, meat, vegetables, just name the items, we are self sufficient in those items. Cde. Speaker, more than 50 percent of our export earnings come from agriculture and fisheries.

Now let us consider how we performed in 1979. In 1979, our food sector did remarkably well and, as a result, Guyanese were better fed out of their own efforts, out of their own food production. How lucky we were in Guyana when that happened last year and how lucky we are today that we are so well fed. Now, the Minister spoke of the world crisis. Dr. Jagan was at pains to say that there was really no world crisis of food. Had we not done so well in our production last year, and if we were not doing as well at present as we should, we would be short of food.

In 1979, last year, as evidence of this world crisis, the food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, in reviewing the world food situation spoke of the very dismal situation and the more dismal prospects. Last year and even today, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, some twenty countries were affected by abnormal food shortages. Some were in serious crisis, the crisis of starvation like Campuchea. In terms of dealing with the economy, I will not divide the world into two hemispheres the capitalist or Socialist, I will deal with the world food production in terms of where food is produced.

15:25 hrs

Last year, among the developed countries of the world including the USSR and Eastern Europe, food production declined. The Food and Agriculture Organization stated that the decline was 4 percent and in fact, in some parts of the developed world, namely, the USSR and Eastern Europe, there was a very steep decline particularly in the production of grain.

In the Soviet Union alone, production declined by 22 percent. A shortage of some 50 million tons of wheat was registered and this urged the U.S.S.R. to seek supplies of wheat from the United States of America, which request, as you know, has since been frustrated because of political developments, the U.S.A. refusing to supply wheat to the U.S.S.R. in order to meet its deficit.

So that is comparing systems, comparing imperialist and socialist systems, economic systems, we must avoid broad generalizations for it is a fact that within the Soviet camp, though much might have been achieved in other respects in terms of food production, there was this pitiable fall in Eastern Europe, notably in the U.S.S.R.

Nearer home, in the Caricom region, there were serious food situations. Food production declined in Caricom countries. In Trinidad and Tobago alone the food import bill last year, 1979 was \$400 million (T.T.) but in Guyana, we fed ourselves. In Guyana we imported no sugar; in Guyana we imported no rice; in Guyana we imported no root crops or vegetables, no fruit, no poultry, no meat, no fish. We produced these for ourselves; we were self-sufficient in these commodities. Very few countries can attest to such an achievement. This is a tremendous tribute and great credit must be paid again to our farmers and our fishermen with the assistance that they are receiving from the P.N.C. Government. [Applause]

But not only did we feed ourselves last year: we produced enough to export. We exported large supplies of both sugar and rice, \$226 million worth of sugar and \$81 million worth of rice. True enough, those exports did not reach our expectations but they were indeed substantial and far above in terms of sugar, the exports made by any other Caricom nation. We fed the world with other food commodities, surpluses of fish and shrimp. Exports of shrimp and fish rose to \$18.2 million last year as against \$12.7 million in the previous year. Guyanese everywhere were better fed, in so much as fish is concerned, than ever before.

These indices of achievements, these high production figures, high exports, are a demonstration of the policy that this Government adopts towards agriculture and fisheries. And what is this poultry? We are often assailed that there is no agricultural policy. But there is. What are the main features of this policy? The first policy is to protect the local producer, to protect local production against imports. Thus this Government has banned imports of unnecessary goods. We have goods that are being produced by our farmers such as fruit and fish and meat and vegetables in many forms, processed or unprocessed. We have banned imports of such goods.

The second aspect of our policy is to provide the farmers with imported inputs such as fertilizers which we do not produce, for example pesticides which we do not produce. These imported inputs enter the country without payment of duty – duty free. At the same time, these are only minimal rates of duty on capital goods such as machines which are imported for agriculture and fisheries.

Thirdly, the policy is one of large-scale distribution of land to the tillers of the soil. Land to the tiller. This is done by first distributing State land. Only 3 percent of the cultivated area of Guyana is developed. Ninety-seven percent of the cultivatable area is in the realm of the State, so, of that large acreage, the State distributes land to the tiller and where the State finds that land issued to the tiller is being used for the exploitation of man by man, that lease is cancelled and a new lease issued to the genuine tiller of the soil. We have been assailed about not having a land reform policy. This is the very sheet anchor, the very basis of our land reform policy: that the land in the possession of the State must be given to the tillers of the soil at a low cost.

A second feature of land reform, historical feature, is the fact that we removed from the ownership of the expatriate, land that he possessed, Guyanese land that he possessed. This was done in the nationalization of the Jessel interests and the Bookers interests and we must never forget that. It was a

sweeping measure of land reform without parallel in this hemisphere. I would hazard a guess that today no land used in agriculture is owned by any foreigner. All such land is owned by Guyanese.

In reviewing landlordism – /Interruption./ I own no land for agriculture. The only land I own is land upon which my only house rests. In reviewing the question on landlordism, less than 10 percent of the average of land on the coast of Guyana is in the hands of landlords. Ninety percent is in the hands of the owners of the soil who till the soil and we have had pressures about taking away that 10 percent for redistribution. This is what we mean by land reform. They do not consider that most of the land in Guyana is already possessed by the tillers of the soil. Nevertheless, we have the appropriate legislation – now that the Constitution has been adopted by this house for moving into such areas and where there is evidence of exploitation, ensuring that ownership of that land passes from the landlord to the tenant.

Another aspect of our agriculture policy is that we not merely give out land at little or no cost to the landless and to the tillers of the soil, but we ensure that they put that land to good use by providing access roads to those lands, by providing basic infrastructure, such as drainage and irrigation facilities, so as to make the cultivation of that land possible. Another feature of our policy is to ensure that our farmers are paid remunerative prices for what they produce, and I will deal with some of our recent price increases a bit later. We train them for farming; we provide them with all the necessary extension and research services, we provide them with credit to buy their inputs and services for agriculture, and we take all other necessary measures for the improvement of their agricultural practices.

Cde. Ram Karran asked: What are we doing for agriculture? We are doing those things. More than that. As this is a Budget Debate, he has merely to turn the pages of the Budget to find that agriculture has been given the greatest slice of the sums provided in the capital estimates. In fact, if you add both Capital and Current Estimates you will find that in the year 1980 this Budget that we are considering provides a total of \$121 million for agriculture, \$99 million for Capital expenditure and \$21 million for Current Expenditure.

15:35 hrs

Those sums are large indeed representing not merely the highest provision to any Ministry of the Government or to any sector of the economy. But they do not tell the whole story. In fact, where the G.D.F. is concerned, there is a substantial provision in the G.D.F. vote, which we shall pass, for agricultural pursuits. The G.D.F. is engaged in feeding itself.

The G.D.F. is engaged in agriculture at Garden of Eden on the East Bank, where vegetables and poultry and pigs are produced. They are engaged at Onverwagt in rice production to feed themselves; they are engaged at other locations in the production of other foods and vegetables.

You will find also, Cde. Speaker, in other parts of the Budget, other sums provided for agriculture as in the Guyana National Service, which feeds itself, and also supplies the rest of the population. The G.N.S. is engaged in big production of cotton, black-eyed peas, poultry and pigs and vegetables and fruits at Kimbia, and at Papaya, and at Tumatumari and at other locations. Large sums are voted there for agriculture to be engaged in by the Guyana National Service. Even in the votes for the Police and the Prisons – I know the opposition is particularly interested in the Prisons and in the Police – one will find within those votes substantial provisions also for agriculture. But that is not all. There are State agencies, whose budgets are not being considered by this Parliament, such as the Guyana Sugar Corporation, the Guyana Rice Board, Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation, Guyana Distilleries Corporation, where millions of dollars are provided for the pursuit of agricultural activities.

Cde. Speaker, the nation's Government is placing tremendous emphasis upon agriculture, looking to agriculture to give the economy the boost which is necessary, the boost to take us out of the mire of such economic stagnation, as the Opposition imagines is being experienced, the boost that will earn through exports of agricultural goods, the necessary foreign exchange for reinvestment and for the purchase of goods and services which are not being produced in Guyana.

The highlights in this Budget of the expenditure assigned for agriculture are first in the drainage and irrigation projects where a sum of \$79,820,000 has been provided. The bulk of these funds will go to the Tapakuma Project, the first phase of which will be completed by the middle of this year. In fact, in Tapakuma, the lands are already benefiting from the drainage and irrigation work, and from the pumping stations that have been installed, thereby increasing our production there and increasing the yields per acre. Today, the Essequibo area stands as the leading rice-farming district in so far as high yields are concerned and high production is concerned. Thanks to the Tapakuma Project though yet incomplete. Work has already begun on the Mahaica-Mahaicony-Abary Project within the \$79 million fund provided. In that project recently, we inaugurated the sluice that will dam the Abary River, the largest seven-door sluice, the largest hydraulic structure ever established in this country. Shortly, the foreign contractors will begin on that project. The initial work to commence in August will, of course, benefit the whole of western Berbice and the drainage problems of the area, as traditionally experienced, will be solved once and for all.

The Black Bush extension is shortly to be started. Within the drainage and irrigation vote, we have provision also for improving drainage and irrigation in our coastal villages, the establishment of a proper water control scheme at Onverwagt with some help from the People's Democratic Republic of Korea, and installing a pump to drain the Trafalgar area on the Corentyne Coast. In our budget this year, we have provided \$9.1 million to be spent on sea and river defences, notably on the Essequibo Coast. In the course of this debate more information will be given on these matters by Cde. Ralph Van Sluytman, the Minister of State for Agriculture.

Another highlight of the Budget this year affects food crop farmers, those who produce provisions and vegetables, peas and beans and the like. You will see in the Budget that we have provided \$4 million for this project, which is only part of a \$22 million scheme jointly financed by the Inter American Development Bank and the Government of Guyana. The scheme will provide marketing centres where farmers can sell their produce, have their produce graded and properly packaged for shipment to the terminal markets in Georgetown and for export. Also extension centres where they can go and get inputs,

fertilizers, pesticides and implements and free technical advice from our agricultural officers. Those centres are in the course of establishment. In addition to this Cde. Speaker, the scheme will provide a new type of credit for our food crop farmers on a rather similar basis as the very generous credit already given to our rice farmers.

Another highlight of this year's budget is the provision of \$3.5 million to establish a major repair and rehabilitation workshop at Burma for tractors, combines and other agricultural equipment. This centre is already being constructed and I am pleased to say that we are receiving aid in the form of equipment and technicians from the People's Democratic Republic of Korea. The Budget will reveal as well as that the sum of \$1 ¾ million will be provided to establish a veterinary diagnostic laboratory at Mon Repos to deal with the identification, diagnostic and treatment of diseases of livestock and to prevent new ones, such as the African swine fever which is now present in Cuba and in Brazil, from entering this country, a disease which can destroy our entire swine population. This project is being financed jointly by C.I.D.A of Canada and the Guyana Government. With the help of U.S.A.I.D. , we are financing a scheme to produce our own vegetable seeds and to establish better storage facilities and better facilities for farmers.

The rest of our Budget will reveal substantial sums provided for fisheries, for improving the coconut industry and improving research, to improve our dairy industry, to improve our own planning and operational capabilities within the Ministry of Agriculture – a very sizable investment and a response to the world food crisis. This is Guyana' answer to the world food crisis – to invest more in agriculture in order that the worst effects of that crisis would not reach Guyana. In fact, we hope to help the world in alleviating the problem of the food crisis by increasing our exports of food to the starving, the undernourished - - /Interruption./

15:45 hrs

I have spoken about investment in agriculture but this is not the end of the story, the story of the Government's substantial financial and other assistance to our farmers and to our fishermen. They get further encouragement by way of price increases. The highlights of our recent price increases have been first, rice - -

The Speaker: Time:

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of the House (Cde. Ramsaroop):

I move that the Minister be given 15 minutes more to continue his speech.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Kennard:

Thank you for that vote of confidence in the agricultural sector. I have spoken of those very formidable investments in agriculture, the highest in our history but, as I said, these are not all. We help farmers by way of a number of other measures. First, price increases. Rice – the aggregate price increases over the last six months, and at no time in our history did farmers get three price increases in six months, amount to \$5 per bag of white rice and \$9 per bag for parboiled rice. We have received congratulations, country-wide, from the rice farmers, all of whom, as we know so well, support the P.N.C.

We have given our cane farmers increased prices as well. Largely because of higher world market prices, this year, cane farmers will be receiving higher prices for their sugar cane. And, as the Minister announced in his speech, the levy which farmers have been paying into the Price Stabilization Fund of \$2.60 per ton will now be returned to them in the form of a Fund which the National Cane Farming Committee, on which there is a majority of farmers as members and of which a farmer is the Chairman, that Committee will administer the returned funds for the benefit of our cane farmers.

[Cde. Ram Karran: "How were they elected?"] By the cane farmers.

During the past few months too, the coffee industry has shown great resurgence and we are now back in the export trade, exporting coffee to the CARICOM countries and coffee to the U.S.A. really to be processed there into instant coffee to be returned to Guyana until such time as we establish our own processing plant, the funding for which, and the design for which have now been received. The coffee price was doubled last year from \$1.50 to \$3. In fact, we are looking into the possibility of increasing it even further. When the farmers respond by higher production, they always receive a higher price and this has been the case with rice, sugar cane and coffee.

In recent times also, the prices of ground provisions, vegetables, corn and black-eyed peas have been increased and when we hear of consumers complaining about those prices, they do not really have my sympathy as Minister of Agriculture because the farmer is entitled to a fair return to meet his increasing costs.

Where our livestock farmers are concerned, I am shortly to introduce an increased price for milk produced by our farmers along the coast, an increased price of five cents per pint for milk which will become effective from the 1st of May.

Generally speaking, Cde. Speaker, you will see that the total agricultural sector has benefited – higher capital investment, higher prices, more services, free inputs. They have benefited from all these things. They have benefited from subsidies paid by the Government, paid out of the tax-payer's money, subsidies on fertilizers, pesticides, seed and bags, in the case of the G.R.B., from ploughing and combined harvesting services, from subsidized drainage and irrigation rates, and land development rents. Perhaps you might say, Cde. Speaker, that we are pampering our farmers. We are not pampering our farmers. They justly deserve what they are receiving. It is money well spent on those who deserve it, those in the agricultural sector, our farmers, who produce food for our sustenance, those who, in producing the food fertilize the soil with their sweat and who bear the burning sun on their backs and the blows of the pelting

rain.

We have to treat our fishermen well, also, those gallant men and women who go down to the rivers and streams and the sea in their ships, risking their very lives in treacherous waters to bring us food. These worthy sons and daughters of Guyana deserve what this generous Government is providing for them. It is the food that they produce that gives us life and, indeed, the very energy to be present in Parliament today and to contribute to this debate. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud.

Cde. N. Persaud: Cde. Speaker, as was said by the leader of my party, Budget time is a very important time for the nation. Nowadays, however, Budget Speeches, and Budget Debates have lost that significance. Years ago when I was a little boy I know at budget time we were told to await all the increases, all the hand-outs, whatever they were, etc. Today, however, we have been having increases in prices, cost of services going up, taxation going up, throughout the year and so that long-awaited Budget Day has nowadays lost that type of importance.

The Budget Speech as presented by the Minister of Economic Development, when one looks at it and strips it of all its deceptive and sugar-coated verbiage, and when the wee bits of crumbs and hand-outs are examined, what picture does it present of the economy?

[Cde. Narbada Persaud continues]

What would be the lot of the workers, the producers of wealth? What, may I ask, Cde .Speaker, are the realities of the present situation in the country? There has been a further decline in the living standards, undoubtedly; there has been a steep increase in the cost of living; there has been an increase in unemployment, crime, prostitution and all the ills that go along with a capitalist society. Indeed, life has become a real burden for the small man who, incidentally, we were told some time ago, would become the real man.

3.55 p.m

The cost of living rose, Cde. Speaker, during 1979 by 19.42 percent in the urban area and 14.62 percent in the rural area while wages and salaries were frozen. The measures announced in the 1980 Budget will obviously not relieve the workers of this burden but will indeed help to strangle the workers faster. What were we told, Cde. Speaker, during the last three or four years, by the Budget Speeches? A few sentences from each one of them. In the Budget Speech of 1977, we were told that the Guyana economy was in temporary recession. That was based on the performance of the economy during the year 1976 but the forecast suggested 1977 would see an improvement.

When we came here for the Budget Speech in 1978, what were we told? Instead of that improvement which was forecast in 1977, we were told in 1978 that the economy was facing economic crisis. We were again told that all indications suggested that with the correct developmental policies and thrust, Guyana's problems could not be anything else but temporary. But that was not to be, again, Cde. Speaker. Came 1979, we were told that the stark and inescapable fact was that the expectations for growth in the economy during 1978 did not materialise. Production remained static and in no significant sector of economic activity was production higher than in 1977. The result has been that far from achieving the projected 5 percent growth, there was absolutely no real growth in the economy in 1978. We were however promised, again promised, that under the leadership and guidance of the P.N.C we would recover from this temporary economic setback and move forward to greater victory. Again, Cde. Speaker, that was not to be.

Now, the 1980 Budget has been presented in this House. We are told now that the performance of the economy in 1979 was disappointing and fell short of the target which had been set. The economy could not and did not grow. In fact, it suffered an estimated decline of over 2 percent from the 1978 level. We were further told that the Guyanese are made of tough normal fibre, we have never been known o be losers and we dare not lose now.

These were the statements made, Budget Speeches in this House since the year 1977. It meant, Cde. Speaker, that the economy of this country as been moving downwards since the year 1976. This year, last year 1979, the economy having failed to reach the 1978 targets, in 1978 having failed to reach the 1977 targets, in 1977 having failed to reach the 1976 targets, in 1976 having failed to reach the 1975 targets, it means, Cde. Speaker, that the results of 1979 were worse than those of 1975. The economy has been grinding downhill over the last four years. These are all written in the Budget Estimates which, for the sake of convenience, I have walked with this afternoon. The national economy has progressively deteriorated during the last four years. In 1976, the growth rate of the economy was 7.2 percent below the 1975 level. In 1977, there was a growth rate of minus .4 percent. In 1978, the economy, according to the Budget Speech, remained static. In 1979, we were told that the economy recorded growth rate of minus .2 percent. Yet despite all these negative performances of the economy, ambitious as this Government is, it has projected that the economy will grow in the year 1980 by eight percent.

Cde. Speaker, as the years went by, we were told that the co-operative sector was going to be the dominant sector of the economy, that the co-operative sector was going to overcome the difficulties. All the bubbles blown up into the air about co-operative sector have now been shattered as admitted in the Budget Speech. Not that the co-operatives are not something good, Cde. Speaker, but they fail and will continue to fail because of the manner in which they have been established and the way in which they are being administered. The Government is more concerned of keeping itself in office than satisfying the people's needs. Towards this objective, the military is rapidly being expanded. A Government which has become so unpopular, obviously, to keep itself propped up in office, has to satisfy the military by giving it more and more and more, so that in the time when the people would have arisen against that very Government it would be able to call on the military to save it.

I want to warn this Government at this particular point in time that if it has made that mistake up to now, it should examine itself and see really whether, when the time comes, for the people to rise up against this undemocratic Government, whether it can really look forward to the support of the army. Cde. Speaker, the 1980 Estimates disclose that the sum of \$105.4 million or 10.4 percent of total expenditure for the year 1980 has been allocated to the G.D.F., Police, and National Service, while only \$47.8 million or 4.8 percent is allocated to Health and a total of \$7.7 million or .7 percent is allocated to Housing.

We have been told that we are going to house, feed and clothe the nation by 1976. Cde. Speaker, sitting over there, stated some years ago, that that was too ambitious a plan for them to say they were going to put up 65,000 housing units within that plan period. What is the reality? We are being told that increased production and productivity are the only things to take this country out of the problems, the economic mess into which this Government has thrown it. Yet for all, 4.8 percent is allocated for Health – the very people on whom this Government is calling to produce more and produce more and produce more. The high oil bill is given as the main excuse but can this shift the blame for mismanagement of the economy? Is the price of oil responsible, Cde. Speaker, for the collapse of the water, electricity, sewerage and transportation systems in this country? Obviously not, but everything is being blamed on the high oil bill.

Cde. N. Persaud contd

and while this call is going about the high oil bill, the masses are catching tail in the streets. The workers are suffering.

4.05 p.m.

The members of this Government ought to remember that it is through the strength, the blood and the tears of the workers that they can draw the fat salaries and allowances which they are presently drawing. We must really examine what has been taking place in the country over the past years. The fact is that there has been no sound corresponding plan to develop the 80 percent of the economy which is now under State control. Yes, we have nationalized. But, Cde. Speaker, nationalization means nothing. It means only that we have taken over the means of production. But what about the productive relationship between workers and the bosses who govern the corporations which we have nationalized? Nothing has been changed from the days when the expatriates owned these industries and enterprises. The only thing which has happened is that the means of production have been nationalized and are now owned by the Guyanese. Life has not been easier. Surpluses are not there.

We used to quarrel with the expatriates that millions of dollars were being taken out of this country year after year. We were told that these very hundreds of millions of dollars would remain in this country. But let us ask ourselves what is the position of the social services of the country today. I just spoke about water, electricity, sewerage and transportation.

The 1966 – 71 Development Plan collapsed prematurely. The 1972 – 76 Development Plan failed to feed, clothe and house the Nation by 1976. The 1978 – 81 Development Plan is now in shambles. Two years have passed, 1978 and 1979. No growth.

What were we told? In 1978, when we were given the Budget Speech, which had stated all the lofty plans which were included in this four-year programme, we were told that the means by which the economy would have recovered was that four-year plan. The economy was given a target to grow by a total of 17 percent in real terms in the four years 1978 to 1981. Two years have passed and according to the 1979 Speech, in the year 1978, the economy remained static. In the 1980 Speech, in the year 1979 there was minus 2 percent growth, but we were told that the economy would have grown by 17 percent. From that time, it means that we have to climb to 19 percent instead of that 17 percent, the economy having gone backwards by 2 percent last year.

Several thousands, we were told, would get employment with the implementation of the capital programme 1978 – 81. Instead, unemployment has now reached 30 percent, there are about 100,000 persons who want work, who are able to work and cannot find work. Isn't this Government concerned about what is going to happen to those thousands of children who leave school year after year? No. it is not concerned at all about that.

The savings rate was projected to be \$169 million in 1980, but the 1980 Budget Speech states that this figure will now have to be increased to \$305 million. We have taught that when budget time comes the Government is to be serious and put forward a realistic and scientific analysis of what was the performance of the economy during the past year as a realistic and scientific estimate and a prognosis of the expectations for the next year. Year after year we are told that we are going to jump forward, yet when the year comes to an end, we have jumped backwards. That is what has been happening in this country year after year.

A target was set for Government Corporations to contribute \$230 million to the national treasury in 1980, but this figure has now been slashed to \$142 million. Where were they when they were getting these figures to put into the 1978 Budget which contained the programme for the present four-year plan

19878- 1981? They were in no situation to say what was going to be the position in 1978, 1979, and 1980 and onwards, thus they have just confused themselves and they have run into serious problems at the moment.

In 1978 we were told that the Current Expenditure for 1980 would be \$532 million, but now we are told that Current Expenditure would amount to \$638 million. Why have they put such fictitious figures in the document? They continue to throw dust in the eyes of the workers. Year after year they come here and fool the Guyanese nation – things are going to get better, hold on, things are going to change. Change when, change how? That is the question. The deficit on the current accounts was anticipated to be reduced to \$52.7 million in 1980 but the 1980 Budget Speech states that the deficit would now be \$161 million instead. These are only some of the projected targets which have had to be changed, but there are many, many more.

Cde. Speaker, the 1978 Budget Speech in outlining the 1978 – 1981 programme stated that the textile mill would have been completed early in 1979. We are now quarter way in 1980 but the textile mill has not yet been completed. The bicycle plant, leather tannery and the shoe factory we were told would have been completed by the end of 1978. Here we are in April, 1980. Where is the bicycle plant? Where is the leather tannery? Where is the shoe factory? The glass factory, we were told in 1978, would be producing bottles in 1979. Where are the bottles that are supposed to be produced by the glass factory?

We have been promised, Cde. Speaker, that hydro power would be here by 1982. We are here now in 1980 and may I mention that there can be no hydro power in 1982. Rural electrification was to be completed by 1979. Now we are being told that by May this year and by year end we are going to get electricity here, we are going to get electricity there, and so on and so forth. What about the word which they have changed to “outages”, the blackouts, which we are facing here in Georgetown?

A new 400-bed hospital was to be constructed in New Amsterdam. May I ask whether any work has been started on the construction of that new 400-bed hospital. No! What about the Upper Demerara Forestry Project which was to start in early 1979 and completed by 1981? The agreement has just been signed. Continuing to fool the nation, year after year, day after day. In the newspapers, on the radio, and from this honourable House, this Government continues to fool the people.

4.15 p.m.

The Budget Speech discloses without any doubt whatsoever that the economy is in shambles.

/Cde. N. Persaud continues/

There has been a deficit in the balance of payments of \$184 million - \$84 million more than that which was planned for the year 1979. There was a shortfall of public sector contribution to national treasury by \$24 million. Borrowing from the banking system for the public sector exceeded the projected figure by \$56 million. Instead of a plus 4.5 percent growth in the economy, there has been a minus 2 percent growth. There have been deficits of both current and capital account to the tune of \$207 million and heavy shortfall in production targets. Some products failed even to reach 1978 levels.

We have just been told by the Ministry of Agriculture, Cde. Gavin Kennard, about the wonderful things which have been taking place in the economy as far as agriculture is concerned. He said that the strength of our nation springs from the bosom of agriculture. "We have done well in the production last year. Farmers are paid remunerative prices for their produce." Every year we hear all these lofty things being stated over and over, yet the economy has failed to grow over the past couple of years. Let us examine some of the production figures.

Sugar production fell short of targets by 62,000 tons; rice production fell short by 68,000 tons; bauxite/alumina production fell short by target 374,000 tons. Edible oil fell short of 1978 production by 85,000 gallons; timber fell short of 1978 production by 1.1 million cubic feet; gold fell short of 1978 production by 4,000 ounces; diamonds fell short of 1978 production by 2,000 carats; flour fell short of 1978 production by 12,000 tons, cigarettes fell short of 1978 production by 77,000 packets, citrus fell short of 1978 production by 1.2 million pounds.

Cde. Gavin Kennard was outlining a little earlier. I want to throw out a challenge now to this Government: give the P.P.P. the productive ministries and we will see if the production will not increase in this country and then we will know behind whom are the people. There has been negative growth in the economy over the past four years. Production has been going down year after year for the last four years. I put that challenge now over to them. Give the P.P.P. the productive Ministries and we shall see what production will do in this country and then we will be convinced behind whom are the people of the country.

Indeed, these revelations have proved without any doubt that the country is in great trouble. The Guyana economy faces a gloomy prospect again this year – bankruptcy, worsening in dependence and disarray. This huge debt burden entailed by the numerous loans by the minority regime has reached enormous proportions. The \$310 million to be borrowed this year will further accelerate the bankruptcy and further ruin the national economy.

Cde. Speaker, here I have the estimates for the year. I just want to draw to attention that under the public debt, the same two lines with the same figures appear this year as appeared last year. Once again fooling the Guyanese people. According to the 1979 estimates, the public debt at the end of 1978 stood at \$974.9 million. The 1979 projected borrowing was \$267.3 million, making it \$1,242.2 million. Payment was \$100.6 million, leaving \$1,141.6 million at the end of 1979 as the public debt.

We are told here in the estimates for the year 1980 that at 31st December 1979 the Public Debt was estimated to be \$974.9 million of which the sum of \$661.9 million was derived from external borrowing and \$313 million from internal borrowing. These are the very two lines and the very figures in the 1978 estimates. Is it not another attempt to fool the nation about debt position or is it a genuine mistake? Do they mean to tell the nation that they have borrowed no money in 1979 and that they have paid no money in 1979, that the figures remain the same in

these estimates as they were in 1978? Truth never fails to come to light. The Government continues to fool the people. The national public debt is never given to the nation in order that they can know what is going on in this country.

Cde. Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ram Karran: I beg to move that the hon. Member be given 15 minutes more to conclude his speech.

Cde. Ally seconDED.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. N. Persaud: an amount of 37 percent of the current expenditure, or 50 percent of current revenue, or 21 percent of export value, has to go towards debt payments during 1980. In this course, the socio-economic factors of economic stagnation and bankruptcy will grow and become even more deep-rooted. Today, the Guyana economy is wholly under the impact of the economic crisis in capitalist countries, because it has been reduced completely to an economy dependent on foreign countries and international loans and aids.

Cde. Speaker, I will quickly give some figures as far as the public debt is concerned. External and internal, long term and short term, treasury bills, bank advances, debentures and savings bonds – the public debt now stands at about \$2.5 billion dollars. Putting the population at the one million persons, it means that every inhabitant has a debt of \$2,500 and putting the work force at 400,000, it means that on an average, every worker has a debt of \$6,250 on his back. It is only clear that we the workers of this country have to contribute towards the repayment of this huge debt which this Government has put the country into, money which it has squandered away. I wonder, Cde. Speaker, if I can call from this forum for a public enquiry into all this money that this Government has borrowed and for which it had not accounted.

In 1978, the Government entered a stand-by arrangement with the I.M.F. for \$45 million. In 1979, there was an extended arrangement for \$204 million. In order to qualify for the loans, the Government agreed to certain conditions which have had, have and will continue to have, severe impact on the standard of living of the Guyanese people. Subsidies were removed; wages and salaries were frozen; prices of consumer goods were increased; cost of services increased; restrictions were placed on imports which resulted in severe shortages of essential food and other items.

While here, Cde. Speaker, I want to refer to the present position as far as the distribution of foodstuff is concerned. The majority of the Guyanese population, particularly the poor people, continue to suffer under the Government's import, pricing and distribution policy. Long lines continue to be the order of the day as unavailability and shortages of essential items of foodstuff, hoarding, discrimination in obtaining whatever is available, discrimination in the distribution system, high mark-ups and blackmarket prices also continue without any sign of relief. Shortage of foreign exchange and I.M.F. demands to reduce the balance of payments deficit have forced the Government to limit and restrict importation into the country.

Due to the limited number of items and the limited quantity of items imported, the Government is forced to discriminate in its distribution policy. This starts at the Ministry of Trade, where the persons in charge of making allocations ensure that foodstuff is so distributed

and sold whereby P.N.C. members and supporters can have their needs satisfied or at least more satisfied than non-supporters of the P.N.C. Political and racial discrimination have forced many knowledgeable persons in the importation, pricing and distribution system to leave Guyana.

There has been a rapid transfer of Government outlets and Co-op Shops to P.N.C. Knowledge Sharing Institutes which, I understand, Cde. Speaker, are privately owned by a top-ranking member of the P.N.C. Now the Community Shops have been replaced and these Knowledge Sharing Institutes have taken over under the wings of the P.N.C., run and managed by a top-ranking P.N.C. member. Under these conditions the Guyanese people have to live in this country.

It is clear that the I.M.F. brought a lot of problems to this nation. Day after day we see long lines all over the country. These conditions of the I.M.F. caused the workers to protest. Eighty workers lost their jobs. Many were assaulted, others harassed, while some were hauled in front of the courts on framed up and petty charges. The right to strike has been jeopardized. The right to assemble has been violated. Government workers who attend Opposition meetings are either dismissed or transferred. Some who do not go along with the Government are prevented from leaving the country, while others face income tax charges. The right to communicate ideas and information has been violated.

I have only to mention the case of the Mirror, whereby that company is denied newsprint. The reason given was that there was a shortage. When application was made for an import licence we were told that there was no foreign exchange. An application was then made for 40 tons of newsprint without any foreign exchange, but this was also denied. The C.P.B.A. donated 5 tons of newsprint, but here again we were told that cannot come into the country. My friend over there said that if the newsprint was allowed to come in, the C.P.B.A. would be interfering with the policies of Guyana. I ask him now to say what are the policies of the P.N.C. towards the Mirror. Lies: Shortage: No foreign exchange! Cde. Speaker, it is clear that time is no longer than twine.

This year we are told that because production in 1979 has not been increased over the 1978 level, they had to withdraw temporarily from the Extended Fund Facility – and, of course, have less access to the financial resources which it had guaranteed.

I have here with me a copy of a document presented to the Parliament of Jamaica by no less a person than the Prime Minister, Mr. Michael Manley, where he clearly outlined the reasons why they had to conclude the arrangement with the I.M.F. I just want to read the last two paragraphs, since my time is coming to an end.

“The fact is that a major part of our concern about the I.M.F. path was the I.M.F. conditions have mainly been in opposition of our goals and objectives. It is clear that we cannot arrive at economic development to serve the social and material needs of the people on the I.M.F. road.

[Cde. N. Persaud contd.]

Without the IMF we will be able to pursue our goal of national self reliance and economic independence. As a wide range of voices agree – Edward Heath, former Conservative Prime Minister of Britain; Willy Brandt, former West German Chancellor, the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington; President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania and various other individuals and institutions – IMF conditions are not geared to serve the interest and development of the people in countries such as ours”.

Cde. Speaker, that was said by Mr. Michael Manley, who has twice taken money from that Organisation.

4.25 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, what is there in the 1980 Budget? According to the 1978 Budget Speech, the Guyana Transport Service Ltd. should have made a surplus of \$1.6 million in 1979. We are now told that the Corporation as operated at a loss and is in a parlous position financially. Fares are to go up by 2¢ per mile.

The 1978 Budget Speech stated that in 1979 the Guyana Airways Corporation would yield a surplus of \$1.5 million. Instead of a surplus, we are now told that the G.A.C. had a loss of \$2 million for 1979. Fares are to go up by 33 percent.

We are also told that the Transport and Harbours Department operated at a loss of \$8 million during 1979. Fares are to go up by 33 percent. The Guyana Electricity Corporation is suffering a loss of \$2 million per month. Charges are to go up by 33 percent on a quarterly-phased basis. Additional taxation to the tune of \$15 million. This includes an excise tax on cigarettes, which has already gone up by 20 percent and an 8 percent ad valorem consumption tax on all imports into Guyana. The prices of flour are also likely to go up, according to the Budget Speech. The price of soft drinks recently was increased by 31 percent. The price of beer was recently increased by 15 percent.

All these are to go up on the backs of the workers, then we are told about wage and salary increases. What a shame to tell the workers of this country, who had to put up with a cost of living increase of over 19 percent during 1979, that increases in salaries of over 5 percent would not be permitted for 1980 in relation to the Public Service and that the ceiling of increase would not be permitted over 7 percent to those in the sugar and bauxite industries. How ridiculous it is to hear that increases will be permitted to the remaining public sector employees up to a ceiling of 5 percent subject to guidelines. And the guidelines have to be worked out and nobody knows what the guidelines are going to be, yet they are forcing the workers to accept a pig in a poke. In other cases, increment procedures will apply, but will not be given automatically. Increments will be given in accordance with proper appraisal norms and practices and subjects to guidelines. All Public Sector Corporations and agencies would be bound by the salaries and wages guidelines. What are the guidelines? Where are the guidelines? No manager or other person will have the authority to breach or ignore them directly or indirectly. This is what they are doing to the workers of this country. Yet they are calling on the very workers for increased production and increased productivity.

Discrimination in the granting of licences exists at the Ministry of Trade. Lack of democracy, etc. led to lower production. Lower production led to lower exports. Lower exports led to lower foreign exchange. Lower foreign exchange led to lower imports. Lower imports led to shortages. Shortages led to discrimination in the distribution system from the top. Discrimination in the distribution system led to hoarding, blackmarketing, discrimination at the lower level. These all lead to further hardship, frustration, drop in morale, etc., and these also lead to further lower production. So it is a vicious circle. Harassment, lack of democracy, etc., lead to loss of production.

Cde. Speaker, I want to use this last minute to deal briefly with the question of public accountability. When the Budget comes to the House, we must not only take stock of what the economy

has done. We would be asked later to pass the Estimates of income and expenditure. Having proposed the Estimates of Income and Expenditure, it is only right, Cde. Speaker, that whatever has been approved by this House ought to come back to this House for ratification. You know as I do that the Public Accounts Committee is now in the process of examining the 1970 Report. That has been the last report produced in this country. Ten years, and when Accounting Officers come before the Public Accounts Committee and they are asked why is this so, and so, they say, “Comrade, I was not there in 1970, I cannot give an explanation” and so many, many queries go unanswered.

Passing the Budget Speech and the Estimates of Income and Expenditure is not all; steps must be taken to ensure that what is approved by the House is properly spent. The last audit report, as I said, was for the year 1970. Examinations carried out by the Public Accounts Committee disclose a lot of weaknesses in the financial administration. Recommendations have been made in all the reports of the Public Accounts Committee since 1962, but to date no recommendation have been brought to the Minister of Finance to the Parliament for examination and implementation. In other words, the Public Accounts Committee is wasting its time since recommendations made about the loopholes and weaknesses in the financial administration since 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965, 1966 have not been implemented, and the rascality continues.

Cde. Speaker, as I said when I opened, the Budget Speech has admitted that 1979 has been a year of failure. The Government has again called for increased production and productivity, but I want to close by letting the Government know, as I always do in this House, that so long as it continues to harass the workers, so long as it continues to victimize the workers, so long as it continues to violate the rights of the workers, there will not be increased production and productivity as has been during the last four years. Thus, the economy will not have the 8 percent growth as projected in the Budget Speech. [Applause.]

4.35 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Hope.

The Minister of Finance (Cde. Hope): Cde. Speaker, we have had a Budget which recognizes that the country has problems and which has put in place a number of measures designed to tackle those problems. Guyana is not a country in the world which can escape the trends which have affected practically all countries of the world, irrespective of ideology, irrespective of whether the country is developed or developing, even though they affected mostly those that are developing. What we have to realize is that economic trends affect all countries and whatever we say, whatever the Opposition says, these trends will inevitably affect us. We have had, as the Budget Speech frankly points out, a couple of years with no growth. We have had instances where targets are planned but have not been achieved. It is clear that Guyana is not unique in this situation. If I read an excerpt from an article in the Economist of December 1979, page 42, that article says as follows:

“This year 1979 will go down as the year of Russia’s worst peacetime economic performance. An industrial slow down has combined with bad harvests to reduce the growth of national income to less than 3 percent.”

This is very significant. It is now claimed that the targets of the current Five-Year Plan will not be met. The fact that Guyana, a small developing country, subject to all the vicissitudes of the world’s economic trends, has not met all its targets is not unique, as I said before. Here is an industrialized country, here is a Socialist highly industrialized country which has not met and will not be able to meet its planned targets in the year 1976 to 1980. Production is growing more slowly and is lagging behind all targets.

This is the story of a number of other countries. We find the same thing in India, which is a large developing country, with a very large economy, very industrialized, but we find the same prediction of a gloomy economic forecast for India. And when we turn to the United States we find the same thing. Productivity has dropped under 1 percent; growth rate is practically down to zero and even West Germany, which has been one country in Europe which has been making substantial economic progress, growth rate have again fallen. In deed and in fact, that country which has been having a surplus in its balance of payments for years has now gone into deficit and will have to borrow. Japan- you can see these trends again. In the case of Japan which over the years had substantial economic advancement, there again, a balance of payments problem has arisen and their gap is likely to be \$1.5 billion.

The point at issue is this: We should not come to this Parliament and speak as if we are totally oblivious of the fact. This country is not the only country which has suffered the effects of economic decline. Small developing countries, industrialized large countries, have had a similar experience and, as I said earlier, there was the U.S.S.R. with many years of central planning that will not in the period 1976 to 1980 meet its development targets.

We have said before, the Minister in his Budget Speech has pointed to the central role which oil has played. Indeed, all of the problems, most of the problems which are facing developing countries today rise largely from the large bills which these countries have to meet for their petroleum products. It is no accident that the period in which the growth in this country has been the least – 1977, '78, '79 - has been the period of the highest increases in the price of petroleum. The figures have shown that in 1972 our import bill was just over \$30 million in oil and in 1980 we are now forecasting something like \$390 million. Clearly that extra money must come from the economy. That extra money represents a drain from the economy and when that money is paid, clearly there cannot be the resources to purchase the imports and to push production as should be done.

We must not be oblivious of the fact that the difficulties, the prices of petroleum has been the greatest shackle around not only the efforts of Guyana, but the efforts of all developing countries without an exception, once they are not an oil surplus country. The Budget has sought to deal with this problem. It has sought to deal with that problem in this way: to have an investment programme that will seek to diversify the economy, that will seek to relieve the country from its reliance on three major exports and that will give the country the best chance not only of diversifying exports but of increasing exports in the future.

4.45 p.m.

This is the real reason why we have such projects as the glass factory which will in fact come on stream very shortly. And we must recognize that the delays that these projects encounter from time to time have their explanations in the fact of international trade where orders are not always kept, where delivery times are extended because the countries themselves face economic problems. Not so long ago we read about a strike of the steel industry in Britain. Now, clearly anyone who, or any country which was relying on Britain for delivery of steel products would have found that their projects had to be delayed because delivery times could not be kept. We have the same problem with rising inflation. Projects which start at “X” dollars at one period go to “XX” within a few years before the project is completed because of rising inflation, rapid inflation, which itself in many countries has its roots in the oil situation.

The Ministry of Agriculture has also pointed out the emphasis which the Government has placed on agriculture. This was another effort on the part of the Government not only to diversify its export potentials, not only to give the country the best chance of increasing its volume of exports but also of ensuring that the country can rely on itself for these important items of consumption. Cde. Speaker, the Government is in fact concentrating its efforts essentially on projects which are quick yielding, projects which are economically viable, projects will lead to exports in the near future.

That, Cde Speaker, is the Government’s answer for the time being to the oil problem. Indeed, if and when we increase the volume of our exports, that could insulate us to some extent against the worse effects of the oil crisis. But while the Government is seeking to ensure a diversification of its production, a diversification and increase in its exports through specific and well-selected projects, the Government has not lost sight of other projects which within the social sector. And so, contrary to what the Leader of the Opposition implied earlier, there has been and there is a clear indication of a balanced sectoral investment leading to a balanced sectoral growth within the economy.

The social sectors have been given significant attention even though the investment programme emphasizes the immediately productive projects. Cde. Speaker, when one looks at the financial performance over the last year, one observes that the Government has been able, over 1979, to achieve its targets, of spending well its targets of revenue. Indeed, these achievements did not come by accident. They came by a very careful and judicious administration of the Government budget. Indeed, as the Budget points out, the expenditure particularly for recurrent services was kept well within planned targets and the revenue collection exceeded planned targets. This, in my view, Cde. Speaker, not only demonstrates the care with which the Government has approached the whole question of the budget administration but it also indicates an improvement in the administration of the tax. This year’s Budget puts expenditure level to just over \$1 billion. It is true that our revenue as estimated by the Budget would be something in the region of \$812 million but, Cde. Speaker, what I would like to emphasize is that within that revenue target of \$812 million, there is a substantial effort by the people of this country to finance their own development and this has relevance to the issue raised by the previous speaker on the question of borrowing.

I am satisfied that no country that is really planning its development can today avoid external borrowing. I have said before that external borrowing represents one means by which the surpluses accumulated by the oil surplus countries can be recycled back into various areas that need funds for development. This is important to observe. And if one looks at where the investment is going, one observes that the funds borrowed are going into projects, projects which have good economic yields, which have potential for substantial employment creation. Our external borrowing in 1980 is projected

about \$200 million. Most of this, as I said before, is going to be attached to projects.

Cde. Nabada Persaud raised the question of the servicing of these debts. When one looks at the figures, one finds that our debt service ratio, that is, the ratio of the funds we have to pay for servicing our external debts against our import earnings, is just about 15 percent. At that level, just about 15 percent – 15.5 percent or 15.6 percent - - [Interruption.] But, Cde. Speaker, when one examines other countries, our neighbours for instance, one finds they have ratios which rise up to 20, 29, 30 percent and this is so because the important issue is how and where the money is applied. In our case the funds are applied to developmental projects which would yield employment and, in fact, yield surpluses to repay the loan itself. So to merely say that we are borrowing is not quite relevant; it is not the whole story, and the question of the public debt is also Cde. Speaker, a misleading issue. The real issue is: what is our debt to the external sources and do we have the capacity to service that debt out of production? And we have shown, Cde. Speaker, that we have the capacity to service the debt out of our own production.

4.55 p.m.

Indeed when one looks at the figures again, one observes that the ratio of our debt service to G.N.P., our production, is between 6 and 7 percent, in other words, Cde. Speaker, it takes somewhere between 6 and 7 percent of our production to pay for them. I remember the Leader of the Opposition coming to the Office one day and asking and expressing surprise that our obligation to pay was so low. The reason for that was simple. He had the concept that if we borrow \$5 million today, that we have to start repaying next year. In fact, this is not the case. Whenever the country has been able to borrow, it has been able to borrow on terms which give a maximum repayment period and which provide for moratorium.

I think he was able to learn at that stage that the main reasons why we can borrow and not have a crippling debt burden, as he would have liked to believe, was due to two facts, first, the repayment was over long periods, in some cases the repayment is made over forty years, in other cases twenty-five years, and in some cases fifteen years. The moratoriums extend over long periods of years.

The point was raised on the question on the financial administration. Cde. Speaker, the Director of Audit has reports up to 1974. Our report for 1975 will reach him, I am advised, within the next couple of weeks. In any case the accounts for 1979 and even for 1980 are even now available. My recent advice indicates that already we have monthly accounts for March, 1980. I should like to explain. I should like to repeat, Cde. Speaker, that auditing is not a mere annual exercise, and this is a point which is inevitably missed by my friend across there. There is a constant daily audit going on. There is a constant flow of queries flowing from the Auditor General's Department to the Ministries and, therefore, it is misleading to challenge the financial administration merely by pointing to the fact that the report has not reached the Public Accounts Committee. Indeed, many of the reports, at least four, are with the Auditor and a number of others will reach him shortly.

If one would then refer to the measures which have been taken in the Budget, one would recognize the fact that despite the unfortunate performance within the economy, despite the fact that the economy has not grown in the way that was predicted, the Government has, nevertheless, sought to bring an ease to the workers. Basically, this is how the Government's measures need to be examined. What the Government is seeking to do is to bring an ease to the workers. Clearly, Cde. Speaker, our standard of living can only rise out of production. If anybody says differently he is talking nonsense. In the long run, our standard of living can only rise with increased production and increased productivity, and this is why the Government - -

The Speaker: Cde. Hope, do you have much longer to continue?

Cde. Hope: Yes, sir.

The Speaker: It is time now. We will take the suspension.

Sitting suspended at 5 p.m.

5.30 p.m.

On resumption - -

The Speaker: Cde. Hope, when we took the Suspension, you were speaking. You have five minutes more.

Cde. Hope: Cde. Speaker, when we broke for the Suspension, I was saying that the Government has made some proposals for a pay package deal, the objective of which was to bring a measure of ease to the worker. I was saying also that clearly there could be no question of an increase in the nation's standard of living in the long run except through an increase in production and an increase in productivity, or both. It is for this reason that Government has been urging the workers of this country to increase production and to increase productivity and the measures proposed have taken that into consideration because, apart from the across-the-board increase in wages and salaries that the Government is proposing, one must not forget that the Government is seeking in co-operation with the unions to put in place incentive schemes and it is through these incentive schemes that the workers can earn further sums. These further sums earned by the workers will be based on real output, real goods, because they will be production-related. They will be incentive payments. So it would be wrong in looking at the Government's proposals to overlook the fact of these incentive payments. They represent an integral part of the Government's package for the workers.

Similarly, the Government has made proposals for income tax relief. All of us, Cde. Speaker, would like to see, no doubt, larger pay packets and larger take-home pay through tax relief, but the facts are clear. As I said before, the economy can only afford to pay increasing sums if the production is increasing. I think it must go down as a credit to the Government that despite the failure of production, the Government has nevertheless sought, on top of the minimum wage increases over the last two years, to give the workers further ease both in terms of across-the-board pay, production incentives as well as income tax relief.

The Opposition also sought to charge the present difficulties that the economy faces - -

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ramsaroop: I beg to move that the Minister of Finance be given an additional 15 minutes to continue his presentation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Hope: Cde. Speaker, as I was saying, the Opposition sought to account for the difficulties that the economy is facing by charging mismanagement on the part of the Government. Also, the Leader of Opposition declared that the Minister in his Budget presentation spoke essentially of the Western countries and did not make reference to the C.M.E.A. countries. I would like to read a paragraph or two from a document issued worldwide by Chase Manhattan Bank, a bank which, whatever its connections as charged by the Opposition, also operates in Eastern bloc countries, including Moscow. This is what is said, and we will see from these whether in these countries, C.M.E.A. countries, it is a question of mismanagement:

“After having succeeded in steadily paring the combined hard currency trade deficit from \$12 billion (U.S.) in 1975 to \$7 billion (U.S.) in 1977 the Soviet Union and its Eastern European partners in the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance, saw their hard currency trade balance worsen last year. Despite continued efforts to bring trade with the West into balance and combined deficit of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc countries grew”-

that in their balance of payment deficit-

“by \$1.8 billion to \$8.8 billion in 1978. The Soviet Union suffered the worse setback with a \$1.9 billion (U.S.) rise in its hard currency trade gap bringing it to \$3.4 billion. Hungary's deficit widened by \$460 million (U.S.), Romania's increased by \$250 billion. . .”

and so the story goes.

The question is asked, Why are they trading with the U.S.? And is it mismanagement that their balance of payment deficit is increasing at this level? Not only that, Cde. Speaker. The larger part of the overall C.M.E.A. debt in 1978, about 58 percent, was owed to Western banks.

The statement also goes forward to point out – and this is interesting, because there are some statistics here on the external debt of these countries and it is pointed out that in the Soviet Union the external public debt is \$17 billion (U.S.) and in Eastern Europe \$40 billion (U.S.)

Indeed, it is pointed out here as well that the debt service ratio is well above 30 percent in many of the Eastern bloc countries. Ours is 15 percent. Our balance of payments – and we do have a balance of payment deficit – is about \$100 million. In the case of the Eastern bloc, do the figures I read out represent mismanagement and if they do not represent mismanagement why is it in the case of Guyana it is mismanagement if in fact we do have a balance of payment deficit and a debt burden which in our case is 15 percent, not 30 percent?

The article also goes forward to say – and they are talking now about energy. Remember that when we say the problem in Guyana is the question of energy, the price of energy, the members of the Opposition say it is not so. Here it is:

“For the Eastern European countries the rising cost of energy imports is a pressing problem. The burden of escalating cost of Soviet oil and natural gas deliveries under the new pricing formula introduced in 1975 will limit their ability to divert available resources to boost exports.”

5.40 p.m.

That is precisely the position. If you have to pay more for your oil you cannot divert resources to improve your exports and this is happening with the C.M.E.A. countries whose sources of oil is the Soviet Union, not even the Western countries. Cde. Speaker, it goes on to say the adoption of the new pricing formula designed to bring inter- C.M.E.A. prices closer to world level over the period of five years, terms of trade of six Eastern European countries versus the Soviet Union have been deteriorating and this, I would remind the House, is in the context of the Opposition that constantly tells the Government, “trade with the East and your oil problems would be reduced”. Here we find that in the case of the C.M.E.A. countries, they have got to pay a price for oil and gas which is following the same trend and is rising with the same level as in the case of the Western countries for oil. [Cde. Ram Karran: “We are one world here.”] Well, I am glad to hear that we are now recognized as one world, I am very glad to hear. I am now glad to hear that Cde. Ram Karran’s eyes are at least opening and like Rip Van Winkle he has ceased to sleep. [Interruption.] Cde. Speaker, I don’t think I need to go further because I think Cde. Ram Karran and the Opposition now understand the truth of the matter.

The Leader of the Opposition, in referring to the fact of the Investment Code, said that the fact that we have issued an Investment Code represents a move to the West. Cde. Chairman, we have seen in the Document that I have before me that countries like Hungary and Romania have issued similar codes for investment. Indeed the Hungarian Government is guaranteeing investments by West Germany in Hungary. Indeed, Cde. Chairman, we are living in one world and the facts of economic life are clear. Capital must be used from whichever source it can be got, it must be got on the best terms as possible and in the process of utilizing that capital we must ensure that our development paths are not affected and we do not veer away from our development and social objectives.

And that brings me, Cde. Speaker, to the question of the International Monetary Fund. We did have a programme with the Fund. Because certain targets had not been met, we did choose to forego the agreement and we are indeed seeking to renegotiate an agreement to replace that arrangement but this one

thing is very clear. Despite what may have been said by any leader in the Caribbean, the facts of life are these. We are members of the International Monetary Fund; the fund was established albeit by the capitalist countries to help members who are facing balance of payment problems. The fact is that the oil surplus countries are preferring to put their funds in the I.M.F. for on-lending to other countries. Therefore, as members of the Fund, as members of a Fund whose function is to help where there is a balance of payment problem, we must seek to utilize the resources available in that Fund.

Cde. Speaker, the point I want to stress is that there is no difficulty in utilizing those resources so long our paths for economic development, so long as our economic and social goals are not compromised. And nowhere since we have had programmes with the Fund – and we have been having programmes with the Fund since 1966 – anyone can with accuracy charge that we have veered away from our social goals because of our membership of the Fund or because we have in fact utilized the resources of the Fund. I think that is basically the problem. We must use the funds which are available there but we must ensure that the utilization of those funds does not lead to a compromise of our goals. It can never be at the expense of the workers, Cde. Speaker, and anyone who says it is at the expense of the workers, misunderstands the true situation. If the Government seeks by various measures to solve its balance of payments problems, it must be, in the long run, to the advantage of the workers, and that is precisely what the Government is doing. It is not only utilizing or entering into programmes with the Fund but the Government has taken other measures with the objective of solving some of our balance of payments problems. Once those balance of payments problems are solved, that must be top the advantage of the workers. I argue, Cde. Speaker, that one can utilize the resources of the Fund without compromising one's goals and in doing so it must work to the advantage of the workers, so long as it leads to the solution of some of our balance of payments problems.

Cde. Speaker, I feel that the Budget has taken a very realistic attitude to the present problems. It has called on the nation to produce because production is the key. It has maintained the level of social services, we have expanded our investment programme – the proposal is to expand the investment programme. When that investment programme is expanded it must lead to higher employment levels within the nation. It is true we have taken the position that we have to borrow but I think – because every loan agreement is placed before the House – the evidence of our borrowing will indicate that at all times we seek to get the maximum favourable conditions. Basically, that is what the Government is proposing.

There is a gap, there is a large gap, there is a large financial gap which will be met from borrowing. Cde. Speaker, the absence of that gap in our present circumstances could only mean high level of employment and contrary to what the Opposition would like us to believe, unemployment is nowhere near 30 percent. The members have not got statistics to prove that. In fact, the evidence is clear that such employment statistics as exist point to a level of unemployment near to half that figure and, Cde. Speaker, when speaking of unemployment it is very glib to speak of unemployment below this but one has to look at the nature of that unemployment and recognize that in it – and that is how the statistics are compiled – would be included a large number of young people who are seeking their first jobs.

[Cde. Frank Hope contd.]

5.50 p.m.

I feel, Cde. Speaker, that any reasonable person analyzing and examining Government's proposals, recognizing that these proposals are made within the context of certain world economic trends, will recognize that the Government is doing the maximum that is possible in order to promote growth within the country, to solve our balance of payments problems, and to protect and increase the worker's living standards.

The Speaker: Cde. Sukhai.

Cde. Sukhai: Cde. Speaker, you have in this House the revenue and expenditure for the financial year 1980 and it seems to break all records of the previous fifteen Budgets of the P.N.C. Government. The latest one is like a midnight bus rolling in on punctured wheels. The Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives went through severe pains in trying to absolve the P.N.C. Government and it has tried and seriously tried to find a scapegoat to blame for the poor economic performance not only during 1979 but also the previous years. As usual, it has come around with empty promises of a bright future. I must say that it is due to incorrect economic planning strategy. The P.N.C. Government has brought the country into a state of severe and mounting economic financial, social and political crisis and a position of near bankruptcy.

The crisis began to hit Guyana long before the oil crisis manifested itself in early 1974, but the economy was saved from collapse by increase of the world price of sugar in the period from mid-1974 to mid-1976. In 1973, Guyana exported sugar at an average price of \$337.50 per ton, whereas in 1974-76 the price of sugar went from \$942 to \$1,452 per ton. As millions of dollars flowed in, that actually save the whole economy from collapse, yet the Government did not utilize the money properly for the benefit of the nation and the country.

Now I must say the Government is trying to blame external factors. If time permits, I want to say that not only external factors have contributed greatly to the socio-economic problem. For instance, the sharp increase in the import bill for the fuels and lubricants from \$48.2 million in 1972 to \$270 million in 1979 is not due only to the increased price charged by the OPEC countries. It is also due to the closing of the East Coast railway particularly from Georgetown to Mahaica, contrary to the advice of the United Nations Consultant on communications. As a result of this, there had to be a link – more buses, more vehicles and more consumption of fuels. Government is trying to blame external forces, but had they acted on the advice of the consultant, the situation would not have been as bad as it was before.

Secondly, there was also failure on the part of the P.N.C. Government to undertake the hydro-electric project in the Demerara River in the 1960s. According to the advice of the Consultant, P.C. &R., this project was intended to link up with the Guyana Electricity Corporation's plant in Georgetown and would have resulted in the consumption of a lesser amount of imported fuels. That project was estimated by the Consultant at \$20 million in the first ten years \$40 million in the second ten years. Due to the failure to undertake this project, there has been a rising cost in the electricity bill for consumers.

I will go on to say that the P.N.C. regime in 1968 was trapped in economic integration with the imperialist-dominated Caribbean Free Trade Area – CARIFTA now known as CARICOM. Under the CARICOM treaty, Guyana was excluded from buying goods from outside the region so long as they are available within the region. I will give an example. Texaco, a U.S. transnational giant, practically monopolizes oil refineries that are established in Trinidad and Tobago. As a result, between September 1973 and April 1974, the price of gasoline imported from Trinidad increased 147% as compared with only 28% in the United States of America during the said period. Although fuel could have been bought

elsewhere at cheaper prices this Government was tied to Caricom so that it had to buy fuel at higher prices and must blame itself for the present position. Now the P.N.C. regime has blamed the foreign trade policy. As a special importer it has not been either a world-wide problem or an equal among all countries.

I hear my friend today talking about world crisis, and all those countries involved, capitalist and socialist. A way of avoiding the local conflict of these big countries would be to diversify the whole structure so that our purchases are concentrated among those countries whose internal structures cannot be frozen by price rises. But although the Government assumed total control of all imports, only a negligible amount of trade is done with Socialist countries. For instance, in 1977, imports from Socialist countries totaled \$8.1 million only out of a total of \$849 million. In the circumstances, Guyana pays not only high inflated prices to the capitalist world but even higher prices to the CARICOM countries and generally for inferior goods. Take the case of Urea. Urea was sold by federation . . . , the parent company in the U.S.A. for \$106 Trinidad per ton but the same Urea was sold to Guyana at \$330 per ton. The same also applied to ammonia.

6 p.m.

Not very long ago, the Government complained that soap being made in Trinidad was costing more than if it had come from the parent body in England, but we were compelled to buy from the Caricom countries according to the Caricom Treaty, although it was available elsewhere at a cheaper price.

All the problems we have here come from incorrect economic planning strategies. Here Guyana is reaping the first dividend as a result of the Western model of economic planning strategy imposed during the mid-1960's. The priorities established by the P.P.P. Government were changed from agriculture and industry infrastructure and very little has been achieved by industrialization, and agriculture and drainage and irrigation have been down-graded for many years. Only now we are hearing that moves are being made to improve drainage and irrigation.

The P.P.P. Government in its Development Plan, 1960 – 1964, had put 39 percent for drainage and irrigation, but under the P.N.C. Government's first Development Plan, 1966-1972, based on the pro-imperialist Puerto Rican model, about 75 percent of \$300 million was devoted to infrastructure with an allocation of only 17 percent, but actual expenditure was 5 percent on drainage and irrigation. The plan collapsed, immaturely, towards the end of 1969.

If we go to the second plan, 1972-1976, in this Development Plan the P.N.C. Government had set up a target to house, feed and clothe the nation by 1976. With respect to the programme for agriculture, to feed the nation by 1976, the Government had hoped to bring about 18,000 acres under cultivation with coconut, ground provision, plantain, corn and so on. What happened? Let us take one of the years within the Development Plan, 1975, to give you an example of how much devotion they had to agriculture, how they intended to feed the nation. This is the practice all along.

In 1975, the capital budget for agriculture, which included not only drainage and irrigation and land development, but also the very extensive sea defenses, was just 18.44 percent as compared with 55.5 percent in 1964. The result of the second P.N.C. Development Plan was indeed very awful at the end of 1976. There was failure. For instance, ground provision output was nine million pounds below the targets; food production was 14 million pounds below target; vegetable production, nearly 2 million pounds below target; citrus and nut production, 6 million pounds below target; oil, mainly coconuts, 5 million pounds. The total shortfall was nearly 36 million pounds. They failed in that Plan.

Right now, in 1980, we still hear “Feed the Nation”. Then we have the third plan, the 1978-1981 Development Plan. This plan has also failed. For instance, in the first year, 1978, there was no growth. It was minus 1 percent, and if we look at the second year of the Development Plan, 1979, there was a shortfall in rice, sugar, bauxite, etc. for instance, rice production fell from projected target of 200,000 tons to 138,000 and about 30 percent below target.

In 1964, the rice crop year, that is, the last year of our development plan, production was 164,000 tons. In 1979, the autumn crop productions of 71,800 tons was almost at the level of production 26 years ago when 71,400 tons of rice were produced during the 1953 autumn crop.

During the 1978/79 crop year, 21,900 acres of rice were not harvested. A large amount of rice was left in the fields to decay. According to report of the G.R.B., the average number of bags per acres was estimated at 17, and if we take 21,000 by 17 bags, that would amount to over 372,000 bags of paddy. If you can manufacture that into rice it would be over 200,000 bags. If you value that at \$15 per bag, it would mean that over \$10 million in rice was left to decay in the field. The Government says: “Produce!” The farmers are trying; they are working. The Government does not have the capacity to cope.

With respect to bauxite, the Chairman of the Guyana Mining Enterprise, Mr. Parris, said that 1979 was a bloody awful year in terms of industrial relations, vis-à-vis production and less than commendable in terms of profitability. Incorrect planning strategy is the main obstacle that is leading to decreased production.

About other food crops. Other essential food items have also shown the same downward trend. If you take the coconut industry – after sugar and rice, the coconut industry is another one of vital importance to the agricultural sector – the majority of the 34,500 acres of coconut trees were planted as far back as 1964 with a portion planted before that year, which are now aging trees yielding less and less year after year. The death rate of coconut trees is outstripping the replant programme. In the absence of any established coconut technology such as you have in some Asian countries, nothing tangible is being done to develop hybrid programmes so as to develop high-yielding varieties of coconut. Nothing is done for utilization of coconut by-products. If you go all over Guyana, sir, you will find that many coconut trees or coconut farms are left unattended. Nothing is being done. Incentives given by the P.P.P. have been withdrawn. Prices are lower than in some Caribbean countries. For instance, Caribbean farmers are paid \$53.7 per pound for copra, whereas in Guyana our farmers are paid 42.5 and 41.5 cents per pound for copra, A and B grades respectively.

The coconut industry has reached a very low level of production. For instance, copra production total 8,000 tons; in 1978, production total 2,000 tons; it declined by 75 percent below the 1972 production. Edible oil also went down. In 1969, they produced 699,000 gallons; in 1968 they produced 310,000 gallons.

6.10 p.m.

Pork. There was a decline in the pig production in 1977 and the decline continued in 1978 and 1979. The report of the Co-operative Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank states:

“Preliminary data on national output referring to pork production has declined to 27%. In fact, meat production in general declined from forty-three million pounds in 1976 to thirty-four million pounds in 1978. Farmers are really suffering, pig farmers are really suffering. There is a shortage of boars. For every ten sows, there is need for one boar, but the Government is not in a position to breed boars in order to satisfy the needs of the farmers. Not only that. There is a severe set back in the pig feed scheme. There was a reduction in the amount in the credit scheme from \$1.8 million in 1977 to \$0.8 million in 1978. This shock has dealt a severe blow to the pig industry”

Low prices also affected the pig farmers. I must say, sir, the highest price was \$2 up to last year, just before the announcement by the Minister that there will be an increase, but when you run down the whole pig industry, even on the West Bank where one member lives, all the farmers groan. Lack of democracy, lack of working people, lack of working people’s meaningful involvement of the political, social and economic levels are some of the main things causing the country not to go forward. We are now witnessing erosion and undermining of the democratic institutions in this country by the P.N.C. Government – since it took power in December, 1964.

I want to give some references. Take the cane farmers who have no say in the whole and in the moulding in the industry in which they are engaged. The P.N.C. Government, which has a notorious record of rigging central and Local Government Elections, has extending that fraud to the cane farmers as well. Only a few months ago there was an election, in fact, it was a fraudulent one during which the National Cane Farming Committee was alleged to have been elected. The Minister referred to this. That fraud was given a whitewashing, whereby an adjustment was made to accommodate only about two representatives who have the interest of the farmers at heart but who are the very tiny minority. In the circumstances, the cane farmers are prohibited from influencing any decision or from using any programme in increasing production and productivity.

Around the various estates where sugar cane farmers are living, it is not strange to find undemocratic, nominated liaison committees foisted on the farmers by the Government and which muzzle and suppress the creativeness of these cane farmers. Not only cane farmers. What about the land settlement committees? In the case of the land development schemes I remember during the time of the P.P.P. Government, land settlement committees were established through the process of genuine democratic principles. These people were properly elected by their fellow farmers and these committees had the privilege of sitting with the Administrators. They were in a position to make decisions in managing these schemes, to develop schemes, and that is one of the factors which cause the rice production during the time of the P.P.P. Government to increase by 24 percent. What is happening today with those democratically - elected committees? This Government is shouting all over the roof tops about socialism and involvement of the people and democracy and so on. All those committees now have been wrecked. Sir, go to anyone of those land settlement schemes and find one, if you can. Not one exists and then they are talking about socialism and democracy. Production must fail so long as the people are not involved in decision making.

What about the other farmers? The other farmers engage in the production of food crops and livestock are also being debarred from any democratic process. The P.N.C. Government has failed so far to make any provision for the involvement of food-crop and livestock-producing farmers in management

and decision-making in the various agencies which are entrusted with the responsibility of managing the affairs of these sectors of agriculture. For instance, the Guyana Marketing Corporation is supposed to buy all the farmers' produce all over the country. I want to ask: Do you have any farmers' representative on this body? /Interruption./Who is this one? You? Cde. Speaker, this is, indeed, an insult to the farmers. They are not allowed to sit or to have a say in the G.M.C., a body which is buying all the produce from the farmers but on which they do not sit with the administrators to fix prices. What you have is a situation where prices are fixed upstairs without taking into consideration the problems.

The Speaker: Two minutes more.

Cde. Sukhai: Now what about the Guyana Co-op Agricultural Industrial Development Bank. This is the bank which is supposed to make loans to farmers to help them to buy tools and carry on their farms. Here again there is a bureaucratic administration, people who do not have the interest of farmers. I think farmers should be allowed to sit there so that they can make proper recommendations as regards the bona fide of farmers who should be given loans and so on, but in this case it does not happen this way. This financial house is so controlled as to punish the farmers and to bring in a number of people who are baptized to be farmers.

6.20 p.m.

The Drainage and Irrigation Board is a vital agency for the development of agriculture. What do we have? Only bureaucrats technocrats. There are technocrats over there. You have technocrats sitting over that side to decide how a drain must be dug, and when they dig these drains, they dig them in the wrong places and the drains cannot serve the interest of the farmers. That is why the whole thing is on the rocks.

In closing I must say that I have not been convinced by the presentation of this Budget and I am sure that the Government will fail. It has failed in the previous year. The P.N.C. will never be able to bring Guyana out of the crisis in which it is. The same thing is happening to the rice farmers. During the time of the P.P.P. Government –

The Speaker: Cde. Sukhai, I will have to stop you. Your time is up.

Cde. Sukhai: One minute more.

The Speaker: I will give you one minute more. Go ahead. [Interruption.] Comrades, do not heckle him for the one minute please.

Cde. Sukhai: They gave the farmers new prices but, if they take into consideration the cost of production, the prices still cannot pay. When they gave these increases, the Minister of Agriculture and the agents of the Rice Board had to go all over the rice belt trying to get the farmers to go back to the land. They have still failed because for this crop 32,000 acres of land were left wild. In the previous autumn 1979 crop, 125,000 acres of land were left wild. You are talking about production. If the prices were paid –

The Speaker: if you continue further you may leave me wild. Your time is up. Cde. Seeram Prashad. [Interruption.] Comrades, you don't wish to carry on the debate?

The Minister of State – Regional (East Demerara/West Coast Berbice) (Cde. Prashad): Cde. Speaker, as Members of this House are aware, the present decade has been designated by the United Nations as the Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (1980 – 1990), following the United Nations Water Conference held in Argentina in 1977, and will be devoted to the provision of safe water supply and sanitation services for all peoples by 1990, giving priority to the poor, the less-privileged and water-scarce areas with a view to putting into effect Recommendation 6.12 of HABITAT: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements.

The Government, through the Guyana Water Authority, has already taken positive steps towards the achievement of these goals. In keeping with the Resolution WHA 30.33 of the World Health Assembly, a “Rapid Assessment Report” has been prepared. The rapid assessment is intended to determine –

the country's preparedness to proceed with accelerated sector development;

the constraints which are likely to hamper such development;

the actions required for preparing, during the period up to 1980, national plans (including investment plans) for 1981 to 1990; and the need for international co-operation in preparing development plans for the Decade.

Water supply and sanitation plans to be implemented during the Decade are now being finalized. The targets set up to 1990 are, in so far as possible, in line with the world targets adopted as specified in the Conference Plan of Action of the United Nations Water Conference. The information compiled during the preparatory period to 1980 was presented at the 32nd period of sessions of the United Nations General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council.

During the year, seven new wells were completed at a cost of approximately \$2 million. Included in this number are those at No. 7 on the West Coast of Berbice, and Calcutta, Mahaicony and Haslington on

the East Coast of Demerara. In these operations, it remains one of the main objectives of this Government in its programme for the improvement of water supply throughout the country, not only to plan for increased domestic consumption but also to meet the demands of industry whenever the need arises. Consequently, four new wells were completed for other organizations at the following locations:

Industrial Domestic and Electrical Supplies Factory at Kuru-Kuru, Linden/Soesdyke Highway;
Guyana Liquor Corporation, Diamond, East Bank Demerara;
Banks (D.I.H.) Ltd., Meadow Bank, East Bank Demerara;
Yarrowcabra, Linden/Soesdyke Highway.

In addition, drilling operations on new wells are in progress at Land of Plenty on the Essequibo Coast; Belle View on the West Bank Demerara; Guyana Timbers Ltd. compound at McDoom on the East Bank of Demerara (to supply Guyana Fisheries Ltd and the Fishport Complex as well); Better Hope on the East Coast of Demerara; Bush Lot on the West Coast of Berbice and Adventure on the Corentyne, Berbice.

For 1980, new wells are scheduled for Airy Hall Sands, Perseverance Sands, and a replacement well at Huis't Dieren on the Essequibo Coast; Best and Hubu on the West Demerara; Mocha and St.Cuthbert's Mission in East Demerara; Ithaca and Seafield in West Berbice; No. 69, Letter Kenny, and Springlands, East Berbice, all at a cost of \$2.1 million.

The considerable cost for the construction of wells reflects the ever-escalating cost of high-grade material which must be used to counteract the deteriorating action of the corrosive water produced from the aquifers in our coastal areas.

During the year one pump station was completed at Haslington on the East Coast of Demerara and two others were under construction at Walton Hall on the Essequibo Coast and Albion on the Corentyne, costing \$45,000. In 1980, pump stations will be constructed at Huis't Dieren on the Essequibo Coast, Best, Hubu and Belle Vue on the West Demerara; Mocha in East Demerara; Ithaca, Seafield, No. 7 and Calcutta in West Berbice; No. 69, Letter Kenny and Springlands in East Berbice, at an outlay cost of \$180,000.

6.30 p.m.

During 1979, pipelines were laid in the following areas:- 1,920 feet at Essequibo, 10,075 feet at West Demerara, 11,300 feet at East Demerara, 1,300 feet at East Berbice. During 1980, it is proposed to lay at a total of 70,300 feet of pipelines in the following areas at a total cost of \$647,000:- 13,000 feet in East Berbice, 18,000 feet in Essequibo, 13,000 feet in West Demerara, 26,300 feet in West Berbice. In addition to the works referred to, a new aerator was constructed at Onderneeming Water Treatment Plant in Essequibo; a new submersible pump and motor were installed at the L'Oratoire Well in West Demerara; a new engine was installed at Land of Canaan Pump Station in East Demerara; new engines were installed at De Hoop Pump Station, East Demerara and at Ithaca Pump Station in West Berbice; a new pump and engine were installed at Crabwood Creek Pump Station and a new engine at Gibraltar, Rose Hall, and No. 53 Pump Station in East Berbice, all at a total cost of \$110,000.

In 1980 new pumps and engines will be installed at No. 69, Letter Kenny, Springlands in East Berbice, Huist L'Dieren, Airy Hall Sands, Perseverance Sands, Better Success, Danielstown in Essequibo, Best, Hubu, Hyde Park in West Demerara, Mocha in East Demerara, Ithaca, Seafield, Mortice in West Berbice, all at the capital outlay at \$1.2 million.

During the early part of 1979 approximately 7,000 feet of four-inch pipelines were installed at Burma, Good Faith, and Chance in the Mahaicony area, with the assistance of a grant of \$50,000 Guyana, from the United States Agency for International Development. Following the successful completion of this project which was accomplished by means of self help labour, U.S.A.I.D. has promised further assistance along similar lines and this is now being actively pursued.

In October, 1979, an agreement was signed between the Government of Guyana and the European Economic Commission for the following works to be carried out in connections with the laying of pipelines:- 10,200 feet at Essequibo, 5,200 feet at West Demerara, 14,000 feet at East Demerara, 9,350 feet at East Berbice. [Interruption.] Well, I do not repeat, comrade, go and check it. The contribution by the European Economic Commission towards the cost of projects will be \$320,000 while the proportion of the expenditure to be met by Government will be \$260,000. Self-help labour will be an integral part of the project which is expected to be completed by the middle of the current year.

Further progress was made during 1979 on the Linden Water Supply Project which is being partially funded by a loan of \$5.5 million (Guyana) from the Government of Canada through the Canadian International Development Agency. Local cost, estimated at \$5 million (Guyana), for the project will be met by the Government of Guyana. Tenders for the procurement of the Treatment Plant and ancillary equipment were received in June, 1979, and the contract was awarded to the Canadian firm, Equideine Corporation. In this respect a Guyanese technical team had visited Canada and was involved in the review of the tenders before the award was made. At West Watooka, a water treatment plant of capacity 1.5 million gallons per day will be constructed. Provision has been made for an expansion in production to 4.5 million gallons daily.

At Rockstone the water is pumped from the Dakara Creek and then chlorinated before being distributed to the consumers. At this location, a water treatment plant of one million gallons per day capacity will be installed. The site for the plant has already been grubbed and leveled and the access road has been completed. An iron removal plant of .5 million gallons per day capacity will be installed at Wismar to supplement the production from the existing Treatment Plant which has a surface water source. During 1979, fencing of the site for the plant was completed and design of other local inputs, such as an aerator was in progress. At Amelia's Ward an iron removal plant of one million gallons per day capacity per day will be installed. The well to be harnessed and which had been drilled several years previously

but never used was found to be obstructed. After a tedious process of washing out, the well was finally made free and it subsequently produced water of good quality. The site for the plant was grubbed and leveled and the access road was also completed in 1979. Late in 1979 tenders for the supply of pumping equipment for the project were invited from interested Canadian manufacturers. Specifications for pipelines and appurtenances were also finalized and submitted to C.I.D.A. in 1979. The year 1980 is expected to be a year in which significant development will be made in this project as installation of the package treatment plant is scheduled to commence.

Improvements to the water supply system in the Rupununi are being undertaken with financial assistance of \$1.7 million (Guyana) from the Government of the Netherlands. Cde. Speaker, during the 1979 Budget Debate I had outlined in detail the progress for improving water supply for the Rupununi including the construction of 46 wells, installation of 39 hand pumps, four windmill-driven pumps, six electrically-driven pumps and the erection of four overhead tanks. The objectives of the projects are to promote better health conditions and the expansion of agricultural activities in the area.

6.40 p.m.

During 1979, the following wells were drilled and completed in Yakarinta – these wells; at Annai – four wells; at Aranaputa Valley – two wells at Massara – two wells; at Kamao – two wells. At the end of the year, drilling of wells was in progress at Toka and St. Ignatius. To date, eighteen lead pumps have been procured, thirteen of which have been installed. An order for 30 force and lift pumps have been placed while quotations have been received for four windmills and four overhead tanks. At Bartica, the existing system consists of raw water pumped directly from the Mazaruni River to a storage tank on the hill where the water flows by gravity to consumers. The water is of high organic colour, but at present chlorination of water is the only treatment applied. A treatment plant of one million gallons per day capacity is to be constructed at an estimated cost of \$.8 million primarily for the removal of the colour from the water and to render it potable. During 1979, field and soil surveys of the plant site were completed and a lay-out plan was prepared. In addition to the above, a total of 1,600 feet of four-inch pipeline has been laid and another amount of 5,000 feet has been purchased and will be installed early this year involving a total estimated cost of \$33,000.

Since the completion in 1973 of the improved water supply system between Buxton, East Coast and Soesdyke, East Bank Demerara, certain rehabilitation works have become necessary arising mainly from depreciation over the years. Discussions were held on this matter with the local representatives of U.S.A.I.D., resulting from which it has been decided that \$1 million (Guyana) from the funds generated under the PL480 programme will be devoted towards the acquisition of materials to rehabilitate and improve the facilities so as to restore them to their designed capacity. The rehabilitation works are expected to commence before the middle of 1980.

One of the priority projects listed in the Rapid Assessment Report to which I referred earlier concerns the rehabilitation of the Georgetown rehabilitation system. This system was built over 50 years ago and the time has arrived for rehabilitation works to be carried out. Feasibility studies for the improvement for both the water supply and sewerage for Georgetown were completed in 1975 with the assistance of the Pan American Health Organization – World Health Organization. However, because of the difficulty in obtaining the necessary funding, the Government has decided as a matter of high priority to embark on a programme of rehabilitation of the existing system, while still pursuing the acquisition of funding the international lending Agencies.

In many developing countries, Guyana included, pollution of the environment takes places unabated. The developing world has a special opportunity in this respect for it can avoid the worse environmental and mistake that the affluent nations have made. Until recently, however, these countries have seen anti-pollution efforts as an obstacle to development, but international experts agree that for many of these nations environmental control has already become a matter of considerable concern and urgency. As the United Nations Environmental Programme Biologists puts it, and I quote,

“We must not forget that through water which circulates about the earth, our fates, no matter which part of the earth shelters us, are inseparable linked. This planet is a globe whose beginning is its end. The wide expanses and lengthy channels of water which connect the land masses ensure a continuity which is in the final binds inseparable all nations and established a collective responsibility especially for water resources on which depend the growth policy of planetary life, the overall development of nations toward a better standard of living, and the assurance of a life commensurate with human dignity.”

It will be observed, Cde. Speaker, from the activities of last year and plans for the years ahead, that Guyana is well on its way to meeting the target set for the water supply and sanitation decade. However, the Guyana Water Authority is not alone in the endeavor. Of equal importance is the contribution which is required from other health agencies and all the citizens of this country, if we are to achieve the improvement in the quality of life which will result once the objectives referred to has been attained.

The Speaker: Cde. Nokta.

Cde. Nokta: Mr. Speaker, my colleague, Cde. Pariage Sukhai described this Budget as an old midnight bus rolling in on punctured wheels. This is typical of the Guyana Transport Services. However, I would like to give a different description. To my mind, this is a concoction, something like a Jim Jones brew and it does not have malation. What you have here for the working class is 95 percent strong glover salts and 5 percent sugar; when you poke this down the throats of the working class, for the whole of 1980, the Guyanese people have trouble. This is what you have. Fifteen years of P.N.C. misruled, has brought us to a state of bankruptcy and still the Government is trying to whitewash the situation. Let me quote page 54.

“Cde. Speaker, our economy is basically sound. We have the resources to feed ourselves and the infrastructural capacity to meet our production and exports target.”

Somebody is fooling somebody. What does page 11 say?

6.50 p.m.

“We were not paying our debts, and we were becoming uncreditworthy as a nation. To put it bluntly, having regard to our levels of production of production, we were living beyond our means.”

What a disgrace! Having run this country you are now going to tell us bluntly that we were living beyond our means. The Day Clean newssheet once had an article which said that when dishonest Governments want to fool the population they give them circuses. A lot of circuses are now given to the people but what are you having? A revelation of the fact that the nation has been living beyond its means. A country with a bicycle economy living in Cadillac style! So we are in debt from head to toe and this is why in Guyana today the working people are paying the cost of Government's extravagance.

There is a lot of ballyhoo about the oil bill. Everybody has been crying about the oil bill. My colleagues said that you cannot use the oil bill as an excuse for incompetence and waste. Do not blame the oil bill for that. The Minister in his presentation lamented the fact that we have to meet an exorbitant oil bill. In 1970 it was \$23 million: in 1979, \$230 million. That is a fact. I am quoting from the Budget Speech. In 1980 it will be \$380 million. I want to ask one question: What will he come back to tell us about the oil bill next year? [Cde. Hoyte: “You will not be here!”]

Who is responsible for this? Apart from the fuel which has to keep the wheels of industry going, a large amount of the fuel which we import goes to transport and if this Government, sensibly, seven or eight years ago had had a proper transport policy we would not have been in this dilemma today. In 1978 the oil bill was \$23 million. Those were the days when you scrapped the train. Why is the oil bill going up? Because a train is more economical to run. Historically we had railways on the East Coast and West Coast Demerara – even in the colonial days. Developed countries in Europe are today extending train lines and even running this underground. In Guyana we were so sensible that we scrapped the lines we had and now the members of the Government come crying about the oil bill. Where is the policy?

I should like to explain to the Minister some of the mistakes. I want to point them out to him. It seems as if they do not know their faults, so we have to educate them. Let us take one example – land transportation. A train can carry 1,000 passengers. If you have to transport those 1,000 persons in hire cars you will need 200 hire cars and 200 chauffeurs. What about the railway? Why did the Government scrap the railways and now come crying?

This oil bill is of their own making. They have not learnt. After scrapping the train what were we to do? We were told that Tata buses were going to solve the problem; the bus service will solve it. But what happened? Where are the Tata buses? Every day as we travel on the East Coast or West Coast Demerara, as we see hundreds of people standing by waiting for transportation: people are arriving late at school; they are arriving late at their work places; school children are arriving late for school.

The Minister has been telling us that because of strikes so many thousands man hours were lost. Why did the Minister not tell us in this Speech that because of lack of proper transport services so many hundred thousand hours and man-days are lost every year? Surely production is affected? But they are not telling us that; they are lamenting the strikes. This is of their own making. Buses and motor cars call for spares, for tyres and gasolene. How are they going to pay the bill now?

I have here a clipping from the Sunday Chronicle of February 3rd, 1980. What does it say? “The problems at the G.T.S. need tackling” and I quote:

“But the present situation is that there are only about 132 to 140 buses in operation out of a total of 252 buses.”

This article went on to say that unless Guyana gets immediately a certain number of buses, the whole transport service will collapse. That is why the Minister had to rush over to India. And we are told in the

newspaper that 20 buses are coming. Coming when? When the transport services collapse?

One of the questions I have to ask the Minister: When the 20 Tata buses arrive here, if they do arrive, and because of accidents or whatever else and they start to go bad, what will happen? Does the Government have the spares? Does it have the necessary facilities to repair and put them back on the road? Already we have many hundreds of buses and we cannot put them back on the road. The Guyana Government has a master in America. The Government has to do what he tells it to do. America is producing cars. We have to buy them here and so we have to scrap our trains to buy American cars and tyres and spare parts. So foreign currency is going out. Where is the transport policy?

I shall not be dealing with administration. In the past when I spoke here I dealt with administration. I want to deal with the policy and I want to show the Minister who is responsible for transport some of the gross mistakes made in the past which mistakes are causing Guyana to be where it is at the moment. The Government no doubt is conscious of it now, but what is it going to do?

7 p.m.

In the field of land transportation, when you are supposed to transport people by rail, you scrap the rail, you scrap the rail and you are now using buses and hire cars. More expensive. What about river transport? As a school boy, my teacher told me keels are cheaper than wheels. Minister, please take note of that. Keels are cheaper than wheels. If we were adhering to that quotation today, we would not have been crying. Look at the West Coast Demerara and the ferry. Historically and traditionally, the people coming from West Demerara cross on a ferry. All we needed were better ferry boats adequate enough to carry the people and to maintain the stelling. But what did we do? We want to make a big show, we want

to tell the world that we have the largest and the longest river, the longest bridge so we spend \$38 million to build a bridge. A lot of ballyhoo about a bridge but today the bridge is like a millstone around the necks of the Guyanese people and both the bridge and the ferry services are Government-operated, one competing against the other and both are running at a loss.

According to the 1980 estimates, the Demerara Bridge is supposed to earn \$3 million in revenue but according to these same estimates the Government will spend \$1.4 million in maintenance. But if you have to borrow \$38 million and have to pay interest on that loan, how many millions of dollars are we paying every year on that loan, and when we take out the installments and take out our expenses, what is the revenue from the bridge? This is lopsided economies, Mr. Speaker, and we are paying for it. Now let us examine them again. Expose them. All the thousands of passengers who cross on the ferry now, you say, go around the bridge by cars. If you have to collect \$3 million per year in toll fees, how much money do you spend on gasoline for the cars to make two trips? And when you take local money to buy gasoline, you have to convert it into foreign currency. So where do you stand? This is what I was telling them about. Policy. Where is the transport policy? And they keep trying about fuels and oils bills going up. One ferry load will take a hundred or more cars, cars which contribute to oil bills.

Mr. Speaker, this is another problem. At the Vreed-en-Hoop Stelling in the past there used to be a pontoon, that shipped rice across from Vreed-en-Hoop to the Rice Marketing Board. West Demerara is a big producer of rice. We are boasting about rice. On West Demerara, they produce thousands of bags of rice every year and when the pontoon used to transport rice from the ferry to Rice Marketing Board it used to take less fuel, fewer losses but all those thousands of bags of rice have to be now transported by trucks and trailers across the bridge to the Rice Marketing Board. Where are our brains? What are we thinking about? Mr. Speaker, I hope that those responsible will learn that what is happening now is that Guyana is sinking.

Now let us look at Essequibo, the Pomeroon Steamer Service. Charity Stelling is right now in the river, the steamer service which used to be operated once a week is hardly operated once a fortnight and as a result of a poor steamer service, all produce from the Pomeroon has to be transported to Georgetown on trucks and vans. For every hundred trucks that come to town, how much gasoline is used? This is lopsided policy. One steamer will bring as many as fifty trucks will bring. Fifty trucks, fifty chauffeurs and fifty times the amount of gasoline. Where is your policy? What about tyres, spare parts and all the things that go with vehicles? Mr. Speaker, the Demerara ferry now shows you that what used to be transported by water, keels is now being transported by wheels.

Let us look at the air services. Policy again. Right now the Bartica/ Potaro road reveals that the Transport Advisory Council - - /Interruption./ I am a member, I sit there, I put questions which the Minister cannot answer. That roadway, consisting of 126 miles, is now overtaken by hanging bushes and ditches all over the place. As a result, Guyana Transport Services which once had eight trucks operating up to last February, has only two limping along. Limping along like the old bus my comrade talked about. Many times people leave Bartica on the Guyana Transport bus and cannot reach their destinations; trucks break down. What is the position? The Minister now has to instruct the Guyana Airways Corporation to use the "Sky Van" the new aeroplane we have, to carry goods from Bartica to the Upper Mazaruni. Goods used to be transported by trucks, today you are using "Sky Van" at heavy costs.

That is not all. Now that the trucks are broken down, the chauffeurs and assistants are idling about having no trucks to drive but they have to collect their pay. The Government is wasting the money too. The roads are not being repaired, the trucks are not being repaired, and people have to pay more for their freight to go up to the Upper Mazaruni. Mr. Speaker they want to solve fuel bills, well, then, have a proper transport policy because we know that in Guyana, a large portion of our fuel goes to transportation.

Let us look now to the Interior, Rupununi. Today, when you go to Rupununi, every Amerindian is saying: Comrade, we are in the forgotten land. Right now, because of economic depression and poverty, of every family, two have already migrated across the border to Brazil. If you go to Sawariwau or to Potariwau, Shulinab, you will see. Malaria is chasing them, cost of living, no foodstuff, lack of transportation. What is the position now?

7.10 p.m.

The Government has closed down senselessly the airstrips. Those which were not closed down and which used to be operated once a week are now made to operate twice a week much to the disgust of the people. Repairs which should have been started in December at the Lethem airstrip were started in March. Planes have to go to Perara. The Government told the people “We are going to bring you free to Lethem by bus.” The bus was operated for two days and then it broke down. Mr. Abraham had to ride a bicycle from Perara to Lethem. Private people were now cashing in. It is costing the people who have to travel to Lethem and who land at Perara a minimum of \$10 to get to Lethem when they need transportation. The airfares to the interior are already creating havoc. The cost of goods going up there is so high that people can hardly buy them. I was in Lethem last year October and on 11th October, 1979, I went to Lethem Guyana Stores. I have a bill for two Banks beer - \$5.80. This is what is killing the people in the interior today.

The Minister in his Budget Speech said that air fares will be increased by 33 percent. If two Banks beer now cost \$5.80, when the air fares are increased by 33 percent what are they going to cost? What about flour? What about sugar? What about kerosene oil? When I was there in October one gallon of gasolene cost \$15 and you had to pay that if you wanted to move around.

This Government does not know what it is doing and while the members of the Government are twisting around constructing figures and shifting the tax on the poor people, they are telling us how glorious Guyana is at the moment, the economy is sound. On the other hand, they are saying bluntly that we are living beyond our means. A lot of people need to be examined and that is why we are saying that this Government is on a collision course and, unless the members of the Government take a serious look at what they are doing, I am afraid that Guyana will go down the precipice and those over there will either have to run or to face the music.

Let us look at what is happening.

The Speaker: Three minutes more, Cde. Nokta. [Interruption.] May I have some order, please.

Cde. Nokta: What will it cost the people in the interior to come out of the Rupununi with the new increase in fares? At the moment a return ticket to Lethem is \$120. With an increase of 33 percent, that fare will go up to \$180. And if you have to travel from Lethem to Perara, that will cost another \$20. That will bring it to \$200 for a person to travel out from Rupununi to Georgetown.

Are these people really concerned about the poor people? What they are doing today in increasing the fare is not solving the problem. It is only shifting the burden on to the small man and taxing him more too, to meet the expense of incompetence and lack of proper policy. I have been reading this Speech for two nights but I cannot find a solution. There is not even an idea.

What is the Government telling us in relation to fuel crisis? We must go back to firewood, we must buy coal pots; we must make tula; we must go back to the jacksass cart; we must go back to the bull cart. At the moment we have in the city what I have to call a thing. It is like a bus fastened to a dray cart and pulled by a horse. I should like the Minister to tell us, under the Traffic Ordinance - -

The Speaker: Cde. Nokta, you will have to ask him those questions the next time you speak. Cde. Bancroft.

The Minister of State – Regional (Mazaruni/Potaro) (Cde. Bancroft): Cde. Speaker, listening to the debate this afternoon and what has come from the Benches on the other side - -

The Speaker: Excuse me, Cde. Bancroft. Cde. Leader of the House, when the time is ready and nobody is speaking, I will call on the Minister to wind up the debate. I just notify you for information. Please proceed. Cde. Bancroft.

Cde. Bancroft: Listening to the contributions made, I was reminded of a tune by one of my favourite singers, Nat King Cole, and the time is “Rambling Rose”. The only thing is that what you have on the other side is not a rose, but faded roses.

What one finds is that my friends on the opposite side skillfully evaded, or try to evade, what is pertinent, that is, that question that the Cde. Minister of Economic Development gave in the introduction of the Budget Speech, that the world is facing an economic crisis. That s a reality of life. Whether it is East or West, developed or developing, the world is faced with a serious economic crisis. It is within this crisis situation that the Minister of Economic Development spelt out how the Government managed the affairs of State, how it operated, how it is able at this point of time, despite the economic crisis we face, successfully to manage the economy of this country to the extent that during this year workers will be paid incentive increases and, in fact, the consumers will have a relief from some of the high prices.

It is as simple as this and what we are saying is that if you listen on the radio to any station in the world, whether the country is developed or developing, you will hear the leaders are saying the same thing – Margaret Thatcher, Castro, Brezhnev – call whomsoever you wish, they are saying the same thing. If we are to survive as a nation, we have to increase our production and productivity. In the Soviet Union and the eastern bloc countries, developed and developing, they are saying the same thing. In simple terms: “out of nothing cometh nothing.” You take out as much as you put in.

While I listened to some of the criticisms made, one of the things that I am sure that my friends on the opposite side will agree with is that socialism, based as it is on a planned economy and, the socialist countries, who have put up their five-year development programmes, have not achieved, none of the development programmes in any of these countries has achieved the set targets within those programmes. Name me one. The fact is that only last year management in the Soviet Union received a severe tongue-lashing from Brezhnev for failing to achieve targets and name me one year that the Soviet Union has been able to achieve its targets. It is always falling short. This has been happening all over the world. And so, Cde. Speaker, what we are saying is that the Cde. Minister of Economic Development, has given a true picture of the global situation in economic terms as we are faced with in the world of today. But coming home, Cde. Speaker, I would like to clarify a few points.

7.20 p.m.

I listened to my good friend, Cde. Harry Persaud Nokta, and he was lamenting the fact that we abandoned the rail and what would have been saved by the rail. It was not this Government who took over the Demerara Electric Company. In fact when the Demerara Electric Company was taken over, it was taken over with steam boilers. In those days there were over 800 employees engaged in the Wood Company Industry, not to mention the craft that had to convey the wood to the Demerara Electric Company. Who changed those wood boilers from using Guyana woods to crude oil from foreign sources? It was not the P.N.C., I can assure you. And what was the logic that was used for that? I remember that clearly. The logic that was used then was that crude oil was cheaper than wood. As a representative of the Forest Workers’ Union, I pointed out and said, “What sense does it make if it even costs us a bit more for wood here that we should import oil from Point-A-Pierre in Trinidad to give Trinidadian workers employment when we are going to put our own people here out of employment? We are going to put out the light in over 800 families’ homes to keep the light burning in the oilfield workers’ homes in Trinidad and Tobago.” [Cde. Ram Karran: “What year was that?”]

As I was saying, Cde. Speaker, my friend on the opposite side would also agree, I agree, I have been very frank, we needed the Demerara Harbor Bridge. I remember, Cde. Speaker, reading and in fact going through some of the Hansard Reports of speeches of the old Members in this Legislative Assembly in the old days and I remember a man named J.P. Coghlan who advocated, over the years, that to release the pressures on the poor people on the West Bank, they should bridge the Demerara River. We all know, Cde. Speaker, the sufferings that those people endured over the years after the ferry ceased its operations in the night, when the Fire Brigade launch had to be crossing the river at all hours of the night to bring the sick and suffering over here. And those people, I would dare Cde. Nokta Persaud to go to the West Bank or the Essequibo and talk what he said here today.

The Comrade spoke of the Bartica/Potaro Road- I agree that until quite recently the road was in a very bad condition. I can assure the member that work is now proceeding on that road to upgrade the road and weeding is going on. I would also like to inform the hon. Member that one new truck has arrived and is in operation and another new truck is on the wharf on its way to Bartica. I remember that very member there criticizing us here, up to last year during a debate, of the poor river transportation in the North West. This year he doesn't say anything about the North West run because there is now a new boat running between Georgetown and the North West. [Interruption.]

Now, I also listened to the hon. Member speaking about Amerindians vacating and going across the border. If my hon. Friend knew the position, culture and customs of the Amerindians along the border, he would know that there are times when Amerindians migrate freely across the borders to visit families and that many times of the year many of the villages are deserted. This is nothing new. This is custom, position and part of their culture. They come from one side freely and they go back whenever they wish. [Interruption.]

If my hon. Friend is serious about what he is saying with respect to Amerindians, let me give a little incident. Only last month I was on my way to Kamarang and aboard the plane were two persons who I presumed, were North Americans – a man and his wife – and I was curious to know why they were going to Kamarang. I eventually found out that the man, an American, was a teacher at a university in the United States, his wife was a Venezuelan. They were both teachers. I saw them with a map in their hands and I asked one of the fellows to enquire what it was all about. He was told eventually, very nicely, that this American teacher, this university teacher had come across a book written in 1957 by somebody portraying the life of the Amerindians in the Mazaruni. It portrayed Amerindians in their usual custom and style of that day – nude and semi nude, head dress and that sort of thing – and he was coming now in March of 1980 with his map in his hands to go to those villages to see the Amerindians in that same condition. Of course, we had a hearty laugh because when he touched down at Kamarang, he saw a number of Amerindians there and I took the point of introducing him to the Captains of the villages to which he was going and he was most surprised. He said no, we were putting on something. I said no, I will give you, in front of the captains, transportation to go these villages. And so, the Captains began to ask him, “What did you really come to see?” He left amazed, you know, he walked around the Kamarang compound from the Saturday until he was ready to depart. He did not go to the villages because he saw more and more Amerindians coming from the villages to do their shopping and what have you. He saw them better dressed than many of us city folk, he saw them spending money, enjoying themselves, radios and all sorts of things.

One Amerindian Captain asked him a question. He said, “Since you became Independent in North America, have your Amerindians there developed to this stage?” Well, of course we hemmed and hawed,

he sensed the fact but then he said, “How have you come from 1957 to this development in such a short time?” The Captain replied, he said, “You see, in 1957 we were still a Colony, we were still administered by the British. We achieved independence in 1966, we are now an Independent country and under the People’s National Congress the Amerindians have progressed so that you yourself cannot even imagine the change between 1957 and 1980 which no country has.” And instead of decimation of the Amerindian population, because of improved health standards, marriages by our Amerindian population are on the increase, three times the average time.

Cde. Speaker, we understand about life in the hinterland and we must appreciate that the journey from Georgetown to Lethem is equal to the journey from Timehri to Piarco. It is a long way! With the increase in the prices of aviation fuel and the things that go to the maintenance of aircraft to keep them airworthy, it means, therefore, that if the aircraft are to be kept flying, well then, we have got to meet the bill. And if I understand it correctly, it is not the whole cost that is being passed on to the passengers, it is still being subsidized to some extent by Government. The cost of foodstuff to consumers, it is still subsidized by Government, the freight charges are still subsidized by Government to keep them within reasonable proportions.

7.30 p.m.

As one peruses the entire Budget Speech as presented by Cde. Minister of Economic Development, one cannot help but be amazed that as we look around us we see the economies of those countries, especially in the developing world, who have the privilege of having oil, falling all over our heads. But, yet, because of the brains and ability of those who manage our affairs, and the wisdom of the Prime Minister, we are able not only to survive but to pass on social benefits out of good planning and management of our resources. One has seen right across the whole spectrum everybody stands to benefit because of the socialist policies of this Government.

I heard a Comrade of the other side saying he did not see the word “socialism” in the presentation of the Cde. Minister of Economic Development. I would like to say, Cde. Speaker, that action speaks louder than voice and we don’t have to stand up at every opportunity, at every street corner to shout to the world that we are a socialist party and a Government which is seeking to establish socialism in Guyana. Any school child looking around, who knows the basic concept of socialism can understand that we are moving towards socialism. We just overlook the fact that even the old ones, the very old ones can stand to benefit. As a Socialist Government, we are moving to make sure that both urban and rural people are on the same level and there is no discrimination against either urban or rural people. Let us be quite frank about it. Of course, there are a number of things that could have been done but with the best planning in the world, there are things that the planners cannot foresee. All good planners hope that with all things being equal, they would achieve the stated objective, but it never works out that way.

From time to time, the Opposition has asked that there should be income tax relief. Income tax relief has been given to the men, the women, the children. All. Look at all the benefits all of us enjoy. Free education, comrades. You know you no longer have to bother about paying school fees and buying school books. The social benefits that accrue out of the policies and programmes of the P.N.C., in Government are shared by the entire nation of Guyana, and we ask for an increase in production and productivity in every sector of the economy. We are not asking that the benefits should go to a simple group. The benefits that will accrue will go to the entire group, the entire nation, and so it is no sense that we go around telling the farmers not to produce for the People’s National Congress government. We must now speak in terms of a nation.

I would like to make this point, Cde. Chairman, for it sometimes bothers me when I hear my friends on the opposite side speak about racialism and political discrimination. They should know that no socialist party can permit you to talk about racialism. In the communist party you talk about class and not race. What we are speaking about is the removal of the privileged class. What we are speaking about is the working class, the people, the nation. That is what we are speaking about and the fact of the matter is, Cde. Speaker, that in the elimination of the elite class which inherited the capitalist system, we have to bring about certain reforms.

I heard the Leader of the Opposition on land reform. Of course, we say land must go to the tiller. He who tills the land must own the land. That is what we are saying, and although he says this, although he believes in these socialist principles, Cde. Speaker, although he speaks of Marxism and Leninism, when we set about to draft a new Constitution based on socialist principles, they elected to stay out of it. When they should have come and given of their ideas and support, they elected to stay away. Sometimes it bothers me when they blow hot and cold. They must be consistent in what they say if they believe in the principles of the ideology. Despite the fact that we may differ on the implementation, we ought to agree on the board principles of the whole idea, and that is where they should have been to express their disagreement on the implementation but not on the objective. They should have been giving us their

support. But where were they? Cde. Speaker, in fact, the pledges of support came from the leader of the U.F. My friends on the opposite side have not criticized the contents of the Budget that the Cde. Minister of Economic Development presented. They went into generalities rather than directing their attention to any specific point. That is what I said, they were just rambling on and on.

Now, Cde. Speaker, the Cde. Minister of the Economic Development said in his concluding paragraph of his Budget Speech that Guyanese are made of tough moral fibre and it is this toughness of moral fibre of the Guyanese people which motivated by the People's National Congress to achieve self-reliance, to make sure that we utilize the resources at our disposal with appropriate technology. The fact of life is that the situation with respect to the oil crisis is not going to get any better and from the projections that we have we have been listening to and seeing in the press, and hearing on the radio, it is going to get even worse as the years go by. Hence, the most sensible thing is to utilize our own indigenous resources, using appropriate technology in ensuring that our energy derived from these resources will be beneficially used. I refer especially to wood of which we have an abundance in this country. Nothing is wrong with a coalpot. The fact of the matter is that when one looks around and sees the ingenuity of our Guyanese craftsman – one sees places like GUYNEC producing some very beautiful stoves that can be adapted to use charcoal or wood without dirtying the house. /Interruption./

7.40 p.m.

As we look around we begin to realize that we have additional materials for example, clay bricks and kaolin – light, durable and very cool. And there is the fact that we still import aluminium and zinc sheets when we have forests from which we are now encouraging greater use of shingles. We have an abundance of wood. If we were to utilize the resources at our disposal, as we have begun to do, there is absolutely no doubt about our survival.

We are blessed to be a land with 83,000 square miles, with almost unlimited resources and a very small population as compared with our land mass. One of the strange things that has happened and that has escaped the attention of many persons in that the development that has taken place here with so small a population has exceeded anything that has happened in any part of this western hemisphere with populations five and ten times larger than ours. Looking around us, let us be honest, let us be frank. Starting from Crabwood Creek, Corentyne, to Charity on the Pomeroon, to Linden up the Demerara River, to the North West, to Rupununi, wherever one goes one sees signs of improvement and development. It may not be what everybody wants at the same time, but everybody has a little bit of a cake.

The Speaker: Cde. Bancroft, three minutes more.

Cde. Bancroft: Health centres, schools, roads, improved airstrips in remote areas, new airstrips where none existed, all of this has been happening right across the whole of Guyana, not to mention the coastal area where, as all of us know, development of housing and roads has taken place and the Demerara Harbour Bridge and the Canje Bridge have been built. All of these are signs of development.

Therefore, one has to complement this Government and the managers of this economy for having managed it so efficiently and well that we have not only been able to survive but we have been able, like other nations, to give something to our people by way of relief and everybody, our farmers, the people who receive social assistance, the public servants, stand to benefit.

I would like in conclusion paraphrase what the Cde. Minister of Economic Development said in his concluding sentence but which originally, I understand, was the motto within the region served by me. I think that echoes the sentiments of us all, the sentiments of this entire nation of Guyana, that made a moral fibre and toughness as we are, we are bound to survive and under the leadership of the People's National Congress and the Prime minister of Guyana we cannot and will not lose. [Applause (Government).]

The Speaker: Who else wishes to contribute to the debate?

Cde. Belgrave: Cde. Speaker, in opening my contribution to this debate, I would like to leave a thought live until I get down to the bottom and it is that the Prime Minister in wooing workers in this country to produce more always makes a statement. He speaks it in French. I have no authority; I cannot speak French. He has his own relation but what he says is: "Out of nothing cometh nothing." [Interruption.] All right. You have been to a Latin school. I was not so privileged. During the period of time of my contribution I would like to leave with the members on that side: "Out of nothing cometh nothing." I am talking English; let them keep talking Latin.

The Minister of Economic Development stood up for a very long time in this House and in his contribution there was a general assault on the workers, the hard-working people of this country, castigating them, attacking them and saying what the members of the P.N.C. continually say, namely, that they are lazy and they eat too much. They are lazy people, they do not work hard enough so that we could achieve our targets. He showed clearly where the 1977/78/79 the targets that were expected were not

achieved so that the economy could not perform. He went further to show that last year, 1979, there was a 2 percent decrease. The members of the Government should ask themselves the questions: “Why?” They talk about the oil bill, tommy rot! They should ask one question: “Why did the workers not perform?” The workers did not perform because there is grave dissatisfaction and this ought to be a keynote to the People’s National Congress – that they have been trying with great effort to get the workers in this country to perform and they have resisted them, which means that they should take a note and do the alternative, that is, resign peacefully from office.

If you are wooing workers for three years to perform and you have been saying time and time again that you are the true working-class party, you are the vanguard of the working class, and over this period of time you were in no way able to get the workers to perform to develop this economy, it shows that they have absolutely no confidence in the Government in power and it can only mean one thing – that you should decently walk out of office. Do not allow yourselves, to be pushed out, to be bullied out, and to be flogged out. Leave the office to those who have the ability, the capacity, and the capability of serving the workers and of making sure that the economy in this country performs.

7.50 p.m.

I think this is the ideal thing but what they continue to do is to ram down the throats of the Guyanese people their pressure and as they continuously ram the pressures, the resistance becomes greater, and as the resistance becomes greater, the economy becomes cancerous. We have a cancerous economy. There is absolutely no doubt. Every day they visit the doctor, the Prime Minister's prescriptions are passed, the economy is taking the Prime Minister's prescriptions. But more than all – Dr. Burnham, he got a doctorate a couple years ago – the situation is getting worse. So what is the solution? It is said that he workers must increase productivity once more.

Let us ask one question. Have not the workers in this country been producing? Is it the workers' fault that the sugar industry fell short of its targets? In the Minister's own utterances in this Book, he said that there was a strike, he said so, there were several strikes in the industry. What causes the strike? The stoppage in the industry is caused because – I have been saying this in Parliament, I have been speaking to the Prime Minister himself in several forums – of bad management. There are managers in the industries, who have no working-class disorientation. There are managers who over a number of years have been studying the capitalist masters, they are the ones who are supposed to be carving the destiny of this country. They are still capitalist employees as far as their jobs go. They are the ones who have been creating the stoppages by way of their inability to properly understand the worker's problems; they wait until a stoppage is created despite they understand that areas in the sugar industry need to be reconsidered, particular areas where obstacles exist in the cutting of cane. They wait until the workers decide "Well, come and see for yourself." Only then, after a day or two or hours lost, then the decision is given, "Yes, we will agree to pay for the obstacles." That is the problem.

There are managers who have very little interest in working-class problem. Let us take the bauxite industry, how the Government talks about the four stoppages in the bauxite industry and about the number of man-days lost and the million of dollars in wages. Am I to understand that in the bauxite industry, where over a number of years the Government claimed strong support, there were in three months, three stoppages. In Mackenzie, Linden, the Government has supporters who voted for it despite there are no houses there, it was from tree tops that they voted. This is the Government's area – fourteen days, millions of dollars. The strike in the bauxite industry, it must be understood, was caused by the stubbornness of management when agreement existed for the benefit of the workers. They resisted until finally you had to agree that the workers were within their rights to make claim for what was due to them. Am I to understand that you are going to castigate the workers for the inability of management to properly function?

Yes, I am saying clearly, it is most ridiculous for the Minister of Economic Development to attack workers in this respect. The workers in this country have been performing and have performing amicably. It is not the workers' fault that the economy stinks. It is the administration that created this problem within this country. It must examine itself, the dictation which has been passed from one department to another giving instructions, exactly what is to be done and how it is to be done. Managers in some areas are told from the very top that they must take this action and that action against the workers. These are problems that the Government must accept to overcome if it wants to have a smooth-running economy in this country. These are problems that exist. For this reason I use the term that the economy is cancerous because when these measures are forced upon the workers, they have no other alternative but to resist. When they do resist, the Government takes the appropriate action – they robs them of the \$14 per day.

Cde. Speaker, a word about that. I can remember my agreement about the waterfront expired after J. T. Clarke had given a recommendation as an arbitrator. It expired late in 1977; it would have been

negotiated in 1978 but because the Government and the T.U.C. met and had a package deal in relation to an increase of \$8.40 and consequently increases going up to 1979 from 1977, in 1978 my union was tied hand and foot, unable to make further bargaining for wages and conditions for workers. The understanding to all workers in this country was that the trade union had not the right to further bargain for other increase in wages because there was a progressive field up to 1979, which was to be reviewed in 1979 for the years to come. Come 1979 – wage freeze. The economy did not perform. If you want to run an economy, a bicycle economy, in a Cadillac style, how do you expect it to perform?

The Ministers of this Government have had over a number of years from 1971, new motor cars – big Plymouths, after the Plymouths, they got Rovers, after the Rovers some of them got Toyotas – big heavy cars. Now, look what has happened! Feilden, did you get one, boy? Datsun now is the order of the day – big press-button Datsun, window folding up in the air. Do you want to have that type of economy in a condition in a country where the working class has to accept a wage freeze, has to suffer? The Ministers of this Government are driving about the city in style. This is what they talk about sacrifices! [Cde. Field-Ridley: “What about the car you got?”] Shirley, it is an old, old thing. It hardly goes. I can’t even get parts for it. [Interruption.] As I was saying, Cde. Speaker, how is it the Government can ask this sacrifice of the workers? You ask the workers to bear with you, to make sacrifices in these perilous days and you are showing that you are not willing to contribute to these sacrifices. You are driving in fine style. They cannot even get tyres from their bikes, they cannot even get parts for their push-bikes. There are several motor-cycles, which is the small man’s motor-car, laid up under houses and you know, parts are not available, and you are driving in Cadillac style while telling the poor working class that they must make the sacrifice. Sacrifice for whom? Sacrifice for the members of the elite class who sit on the benches of the P.N.C.?

I referred to it during the last time I spoke here, I referred to your turning to the right and the Budget is evidence that you are undoubtedly bowing to pressure from the rightest element in the People’s National Congress. Pressure is being wielded, real pressure and you are bowing to it, and you are undoubtedly pushing the pressure back upon the backs of the working class.

8 p.m.

The Minister took some time off and he told us all about the 100 percent increase in wages over 1976 to now. What the Minister failed to mention, which is very important, is how much the cost of living increased over the period of time during which the wages are alleged to have been increased by 100 percent. Every day when you look in the papers, some Tyndall has signed some Order, in every Official Gazette the Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection has signed a new Order increasing the prices of commodities that have to be purchased by the working class. Every day one can hear from one quarter or another of unfair distribution from the Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection. According to the Bank of Guyana, the oil consumer index went up by 19.4 percent. Food went up by 17.2 percent, Cde. Speaker, clothing went up by 21.3 percent. These figures are figures given not only in the Official Gazette but by the Bank of Guyana. This is the other index. It is also the ruling list and it went up even higher in some instances.

Now if you are telling me at this time when the workers have gone into their reserves – and not one of you will deny that over the past eighteen months, the workers’ savings, that have been accumulated by virtue by hard sweat and toil, have deteriorated. I do not think there is one member of the working class who can show what he has earned in terms of savings. He has gone into them. I am in the same predicament. I speak from what it is. I am going to fight for the working class. I am not like you, Corbin.

You can depend on your allowance.

The Speaker: Cde. Belgrave, under the Rules, when you are speaking, you are addressing me. When you sit, I allow you to make a lot of statements. I do not interrupt you because I am not supposed to hear you.

Cde. Belgrave: Every worker can tell you that he has gone into his petty reserves because of the economic squeeze, because of the economic pressure that is bracing him. At this time, this crucial moment when the Government is talking about increased production and increased productivity after robbing the workers of \$14 a day in 1979, we have a 5 percent Minister in this House. He is going to tell the worker that this is what he is entitled to, 5 percent. And the temerity of the Minister, he does not even have the decency to say: “Well, look, I will compromise and let it be from 1979.” It is 5 percent from 1st January, 1980. Do you know how this went down to the workers of this country? Did you notice how you were picketing outside? The minute the rain started, they ran back under the shelter. Nobody is going to picket in the rain for 5 percent. It went down as being ridiculous in the minds of the workers of this country, and I will warn you that because of those acts, production will further sink, nobody will work.

As far as I am concerned, you are stopping the machinery of work with your ridiculous utterance in this Parliament. It is not for you to tell the workers you cannot make it; how are you going to do it? You are going to tell the workers 5 percent when you robbed them out of their wages last year? Do you recognize what you have done? You have placed a nail in your coffin.

Cde. Speaker, the Minister has made mention in this House about international crisis. I would like the Minister to take some time off and try to understand how these crises are being solved in the Socialist countries by the workers. The Socialist countries do not rob the workers; the Socialist countries first look into the interests of the workers. It is out of satisfaction of the working class that your development comes; it is the working class that puts its shoulders to the wheel after recognizing the efforts put in in terms of giving it an opportunity to survive. This is what gives the working class the incentive, the initiative to work, to struggle.

What the Minister and the Government are trying to doing this Budget is to supplement the workers’ wages by hard work incentive schemes. The members of the State Planning Commission seem to be mad in this respect. You do not use incentive schemes as a base for workers’ wages. Incentive comes out of extra effort. He works for the wages he collects, but what you do is offer incentive schemes for his extra effort. Skillfully, this Government has used the incentive concept for the purpose of the worker supplementing his own take-home pay to use the Minister’s own words. This is ridiculous because in some areas you will be telling the workers that today you perform to kill yourselves, tomorrow, I will give an incentive. For example, there are some areas where workers work by way of the length of the work value, in other words, the work value may work for two days or three days, ten there may be stop-off for another day or two. With the Government’s incentive programme, they are telling the workers, for four dollars more, they must put enough to kill themselves for two days which would bring the work value to an end. Cde. Speaker, it is like the Islander who refused to work for fifty-two weeks’ pay but he worked for twelve months’ pay; they are calling upon the workers to be penny-wise and pound foolish.

I regard myself as a member of the working class; it cannot be denied. I toil physically. We will not allow ourselves to be robbed in the respect with the fancy talk that will mean in turn cutting our faces to patch someone else. Cde. Speaker, it is quite clear that the Budget speech has not in any way brought about any relief to the working class. No part of it indicates that the working class will be satisfied. They talk in terms of lowering the cost of items, creating areas where there will be cheaper items by a decrease

of 20, 15, and 10 percent. I wonder whether these prices will be lowered in the P.N.C. shops, like the Knowledge Sharing Institute. Let me tell you what items are going to be lowered in price. I went today – because I am the father of a little baby, I am still producing, more than some, some are gone, they are finished – I went around this town and visited not more than fourteen shops including the Government concerns to get a tin of baby's milk food. It is off the shelves,

because people are expected that good gentleman over there, by Saturday, to sign an Order, which will eventually happen, for the increase in the price of milk to feed her baby. Milk is off the shelves. All powdered milk is off, all evaporated milk is off. The Government agency, Guyana Stores, is even worse off.

8.10 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, I speak of distribution. You go around the various concerns, even the Knowledge Sharing Institutes. Every day you will see the long lines for four pounds of flour. Good Lord! What kind of human beings runs the Government? Husband and wife are in lines for four pounds of flour and the line starts at one corner and ends at the other corner. And they talk about production and increased productivity.

How are they to think about it? It is a loss of man hours because women have to leave their work places, husbands have to leave their work places, to see if they can get that important commodity to keep their lives going.

The Speaker: Three minutes more, Cde. Belgrave.

Cde. Belgrave: The members of the Government speak about their interest in the working class. Do you know what I heard about you? That you are socialist mercenaries. You are hired to kill socialism in this country and you are succeeding because when you carry out this sinister task against the working class, the working class will say,; if this is socialism we do not want it. This is what is being done to the working class in this country. The members of the Government are mercenaries, hired killers. They are running this country in the name of socialism, which does not exist in their thoughts or in their minds. They are like the elite. They sit there and like sycophants, they are sucking the blood of the working-class people in this country. I am warning you. I did it before and I will do it again.

The Speaker: Cde. Belgrave, you have to make that warning very quickly.

Cde. Belgrave: I have two more minutes. I am checking the time, Cde. Speaker. The tide is turning; the wind of change is blowing not only in terms of the East but in the West. Your friends in other countries like the one who came over here, Arron, have found their Waterloo. Your Waterloo is fast approaching. You may not be as fortunate as Arron. He is under house arrest.

I am asking you. There is still time for you to solve it yourself. Time is left. I am asking you to retract this ridiculous 5 percent that you intend to foist on the working-class people. Give them their \$14 entitlement and let us think in terms of what you will do for 1980 because I will tell you clearly: “out of nothing you ent gon get nothing.” [Applause (Opposition).]

The Speaker: Cde. Duncan.

The Ministry of State – Regional (North West) (Cde. Duncan): Cde. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives for having presented this very comprehensive Budget for 1980.

In supporting this 16th Budget, I wish to reflect on some of our achievements with special reference to Amerindian development in Guyana. I support this Budget because it takes into consideration the economic situation of our people as well as the economic situation of the world. We have already heard some stories about Amerindians and Europeans, slavery and indentured labour. We have already heard about water supplies in the Amerindian areas, in the Rupununi. We have heard about the Amerindians going to Brazil, Venezuela and Suriname. This is natural; it will help us to continue our good relationship with the foreign countries, our neighbouring countries.

Anyone who uses his commonsense can see that the actions that the Government of the People’s

National Congress has taken in the past and now takes will lead us to eventual economic emancipation. It is relevant, therefore, to say that from the beginning, the People's National Congress Government stated that our policy is based on self-help, self-reliance and development by our own productive efforts. It was recognized that self-help and co-operativism are the ways of life for our indigenous people of Guyana, the Amerindians, and therefore it is quite fitting for us in this National Assembly to witness this relevant symbols of our people, the Amerindians.

If you look around here you will see the Coat-of –Arms bearing the Amerindian symbol, the Cacique, and there is the Mace which also bears the Amerindian symbol. Of course, we know that “Guyana” is not an imported name. The word “Guyana” came from one of the Amerindian languages. And when we think about celebrations of our republican status annually we speak of Mashramani. This is also a word which derives from one of the Amerindian languages in this country.

For national awards, we have the Cacique Crown of Honour. This also relates to Amerindians. And we have the Golden Arrow of Achievement. That, too, relates to Amerindians. We have the Cacique Crown of Valour and the Golden Arrow of Courage. One hears about other things like Umana Yana, benab, and so forth. These things do not happen by accident. It is the deliberate policy of the People's National Congress to give prominence to the contribution that the indigenous people of this country, the Amerindians, made to the life of this nation.

8:20 p.m.

It must be recalled also, Cde. Speaker, that it was under the P.N.C. Government, on taking office after the 1964 Elections, that the first Amerindian Parliamentary Secretary was appointed. Again, when we had the Independence Constitutional Conference in London, an Amerindian was involved because of the P.N.C. leadership. I want to remind this House that in 1969, for the first time, Amerindian leaders from all over this country met in this very Chamber as well as at Queen's College in order to brief the P.N.C. Government on their problems throughout the country. That was a meaningful consultation and our policy has not changed from that, that is, consultation directly with the people and not through those who pretend to speak for the Amerindians.

Around that time we discovered that the Amerindian Leaders were given \$5 per month as a stipend. Since then, from 1969, Amerindian Captains received \$50 and \$150 per month and those figures were subject to review according to the increasing responsibilities in the respective Amerindian villages. That has been done, the revision has been done according to the circumstances in some of the Amerindian villages.

Again, Cde. Speaker, the P.N.C. government recognized that there was this vexed question of ownership of land which Amerindians had owned before the Europeans came. This is why we often attack this baseless argument. The historians said that Christopher Columbus was the first explorer to find this land, the North and the South Americas, they say, but he found people there when he arrived. Now, having recognized that, we in the P.N.C. Government considered seriously the question of freehold titles to Amerindian lands throughout this country. As a result, we appointed the Amerindian Lands Commission, which was headed by Cde. Pat Forte, who eventually died, and arising out of the recommendations of the Lands Commission, 3,407 square miles of land have been given back to the Amerindians. The P.N.C. had kept its promise that if we got into office as a Government we would give back the lands which were taken away by the Europeans and other people who came after the Amerindians. And that promise was fulfilled in 1976 when the freehold title certificates were handed to

the Amerindians, again in this very Chamber in 1976. The appointment of the Commission also gave us meaningful consultation throughout the country with the Amerindians. The Commission visited throughout the length and breadth of this country. In fact, the members visited about 114 villages and settlements of Amerindians. That cannot be erased. It is part of our history now and no amount of talk can erase that.

That development also, Cde. Speaker ended a system of representatives. The reservations system, as all of us understood it, was a system whereby the Amerindian people of this country were kept as showpieces, museum pieces, in reservations where you had to, in some cases, pay your way to go to see them. We heard about one example recently, as explained by Cde. Bancroft, at Kamarang. That system of reservations where you keep people like museum pieces has ended. The management of Amerindian lands is now in the hands of Amerindian Village and District Councils. Those, of course, the leaders, the Chairman of the Councils and Councillors, were elected by the Amerindians themselves.

I want to briefly refer to agriculture and that is where the Amerindians have been making a contribution as well. The Amerindians have been making a contribution as well. The Amerindians have been producing annually in the North West, in the Mazaruni/Potaro, in the Rupununi, in Demerara, in Berbice, in the Corentyne areas and we made sure that we transport their produce by public transport, that is, Guyana Airways Corporation and the Transport and Harbour Department. Where there is a problem – naturally problems of people create additional problems when you attempt to solve the problems. It is natural, it is human to create additional problems. Now, while this P.N.C. Government has created a condition whereby the Amerindians' produce can be bought on the spot, and transported to the markets, we still have the problem of hucksters going into Morawhanna, Kumaka, Mabaruma, Wauna, the middle-man you call them. They go to Rupununi, they go to Mazaruni/Potaro and those purchase those goods at low prices and when they get to Georgetown they exploit the consumers of the Coast, that is, putting sometime seven times above what they paid to the farmers. We still have the parasites, the middle-men, we have to solve the problem as early as possible.

And then, again we also find this in Amerindian handicraft. Throughout the country we had mobilized the Amerindians to produce handicraft and they did that, they responded well, but again, we found that the hucksters would get in there, buy their produce and then blackmarket to the consumers here and abroad. The P.P.P.'s Gimpex is also guilty of this practice. We found Gimpex agents robbing the people there, and then here and the customers abroad. In other words, the policy of the P.N.C. Government had attracted the P.P.P. and they put their mouths where the soup is dropping.

The Speaker: Cde. Duncan, it is half past eight now and I will take the adjournment. Cde. Leader of the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Cde. Ramsaroop: Cde. Speaker, I move the Adjournment of this House to Monday, the 14th day of April, 1980, at the hour of 2 p.m.

The Speaker: The Sitting of the House is adjourned to Monday, 14th April at 2 p.m.

Adjourned accordingly at 8.30 p.m.