

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

213th Sitting

2 p.m.

Monday, 14th April 1980

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., (Absent – on leave)
Prime Minister

Deputy Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid, O.E., (Absent)
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, (Absent)
Minister of Energy and Natural Resources

*Cde. F.E. Hope, (Absent)
Minister of Finance

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

*Cde. M. Shahabuddeen, O. R., S.C., (Absent)
Attorney General and Minister of Justice

*Cde. R.E. Jackson, (Absent – on leave)
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)

Minister of State (10)

Cde. F.U.A. Carmicheal,

Minister of State –Regional (Rupununi)

(Absent)

Cde. P. Duncan J.P.,

Minister of State - Regional (North West)

Cde. K.B. Bancroft,

Minister of State - Regional
(Mazaruni /Potaro)

Cde. J.P Chowritmootoo, J.P.,

Minister of State – Regional
(Essequibo Coast /West Demerara)

Cde. J.R. Thomas,

Minister of State, Ministry of Education,
Social Development and Culture.

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin,

Minister of State for Youth and Sport,
Ministry of National Development

Cde. S. Prashad,

Minister of State – Regional
(East Demerara /West Coast Berbice)

Cde. R.C Van Sluytman,

Minister of State,
Ministry of Agriculture

*Cde. F.U.A.Campbell,

Minister of State for Information,
Ministry of National Development

(Absent)

*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 – on leave)

Cde. E.M. Bynoe,

Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Trade
and Consumer Protection

Cde. C.E Wrights, J.P,

Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of
Economic Development and Co-operatives

Cde. J.G. Ramson,

Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Works and Transport

*Non-elected Ministers

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. P.A. Rayman
Cde. A. Salim, C.C.H.
Cde. E.M. Stoby, J.P. (Absent)
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S.
Cde. C. Sukul, J.P.
Cde. H.A. Taylor
Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P.
Cde. L.E. Willems.
Cde. M. Zaheeruddeen (Absent)

Members of the Opposition (16)

(i) People’s Progressive Party (14)

Leader of the Opposition (1)

Cde. C. Jagan, (Absent)
Leader of the Opposition

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram. Karran,
Deputy Speaker

Other Members (12)

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

(ii) Liberator Party (2)

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

OFFICERS

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

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKERLeave to Members

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to the Cde. Prime Minister from the 14th to the 29th April; to Cde. Kennard from 14th to 20th April; to Cde. Jackson for two weeks from today; to Cde. Corrica for one week from today; and to Cde. Collymore from 11th to 17th April.

PUBLIC BUSINESSMOTIONAPPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE 1980BUDGET DEBATE

Assembly resumed the 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: When the Suspension was taken at the last Sitting, Cde. Duncan was still speaking and had spoken for 15 minutes. He may now proceed.

The Minister of State-Regional (North West) (Cde. Duncan): When we took the Adjournment last Friday evening, I was making the point that the P.P.P. showed an interest in what the P.N.C. Government is doing throughout the country. In other words, the P.P.P. was supporting the P.N.C.'s self-reliance programme and perhaps without the P.N.C. we would not have that kind of mobilisation of people producing a lot of things, including handicraft which I mentioned last Friday, and in which people are involved. I want to quote just a part of what the Prime Minister told us in the early part of this year, January 1980, in a booklet which is entitled For those who Produce. I quote from page 9:

“I was heartened to read recently a statement made by the President of G.A.W.U. who is also the Deputy Leader of the Opposition calling on sugar workers to increase production and to better productivity. This to my mind indicates a most welcome and timely attitude and could only ensure the benefit of the national economy and the masses.”

It would be apposite for the Opposition to say that we are not doing anything as a Government. Throughout the country the P.N.C. has been doing a lot of things in which a lot of people are involved. Perhaps if we were not doing that, we were at least showing the way to self-reliance and productivity so that we would not feel the effects of economic recession in the world.

I was also adverting to what the Government has been doing for the Amerindians. I want to refer again to the education of Amerindians. The Amerindians like other sections of the Guyanese people enjoy scholarship programmes in many fields. There are nurses; we have medical officers; we have teachers; administrative officers, agricultural officers and so on. This year, for the first time, we are going to see an Amerindian from Paramakatoi, Rupununi, flying aeroplanes. He is the first Amerindian pilot who has returned from abroad. This happens because of the P.N.C.'s programme. Thanks to the P.N.C.

Counting from the time the P.N.C. Government assumed office in 1964 to this year, 1980, under the scholarship programme the Government has awarded 516 places to students and this number included Amerindians. That programme is only part of the national budget. When you look through the Estimates you will find \$368,000 provided for that.

Also the Amerindian languages have been given prominence. In fact, we have already been broadcasting over local radio stations in Amerindian languages. The languages have also been written at the University of Guyana and the P.N.C. Government has provided for the second year \$53,820 for the Amerindian languages project. As I said earlier, you cannot erase that by mere words. That is what is happening.

In the past no one could have spoken about allocations made for Amerindians. In fact, when you looked at the Budgets under the colonial administration you would have found about \$10,000 provided annually for Amerindians for development generally and that amount was perhaps used to take away Amerindian land and for bribery. In the past we were regarded as simple children of the forest and some Guyanese still want to prolong this attitude up to now but let me say that for the last fifteen years Amerindians have progressed under the leadership of the P.N.C. Government.

Throughout the Amerindian areas today we have can increased educational and health facilities. Their educational level is high and they can now manage their own affairs. Paternalism among Amerindians has been minimised but foreigners still pretend to speak for them. I remember very clearly that in 1969 after the ranchers' revolt in the Rupununi we had warned that there were many wolves in sheep's clothing and our policy since then has not changed because we still have wolves in sheep's clothing.

When the National Assembly resolved itself into a Constituent Assembly, Amerindians were part of the drafting of the new Socialist Constitution. It was the first time that Amerindians took part in the making of a national Constitution. This was possible because of the P.N.C. The Government could not go wrong with the participation of the Amerindians at this level. We had full and meaningful consultation throughout the country in the making of our new Socialist Constitution. Even before the drafting of the new Constitution the Halleluiah religion which is now regarded as an indigenous religion was recognised. In other words, it was officially recognised before the actual drafting of the new Constitution.

In the new Constitution the Amerindians have their rights guaranteed to worship God or not to worship God. This is most reasonable and non-discriminatory for it applies to all of us, not only to Amerindians, because we have to respect both the people who believe in God and those who do not. Of course, the right to become nuns, priests and bishops is now fully guaranteed in our Constitution and those who have a conscience must take note.

The pricing policy statement in the Budget Speech is most welcome at this time. In the Amerindian areas of the North West, Mazaruni – Potaro, Rupununi, Demerara, Berbice and Corentyne, the prices charged by private traders for goods are high. We will implement and adjust a reasonable mark-up for goods in all areas. We have already heard about the subsidy. A sum of nearly \$500,000 is being provided again in this Budget as part of Government's subsidy. Incidentally, again, what is happening in these remote areas, is that the hucksters purchase farm produce and then sell consumer goods from Georgetown at exorbitant prices. The prices sometimes work out to be several times higher than the prices paid for farmers' produce in those areas.

2.15 p.m.

In other areas of production such as minerals, timber and balata, the Amerindians have been producing with the assistance of the P.N.C. Government. Their produce, in all cases, has been contributing to the development of our national economy. In minerals, Amerindians were trained at the expense of the P.N.C Government to operate modern equipment for mining and thereafter the Government provided twelve dredges with half million dollars worth of supplies and fuel in order to start the scheme. While I do not have the figures of production here now, I am certain Cde. Bancroft who is near to them in the Mazaruni area, would have given you if he had much time to do that. I am proud to see that the Amerindians have moved away significantly from being mere labourers in the logging industry and they have been able to acquire tractors. I want to refer specifically to Orealla and Bethany --

The Speaker: Three minutes more.

Cde. Duncan: There, the Amerindians have been able to acquire tractors for logging purposes. Sawmills were established at Kwebanna and Papaya; portable sawmills were introduced at Kato and Kumu in the Rupununi. All these were possible because of the P.N.C. Government. In balata, the Amerindians have been producing thousands of pounds. I understand for last year they were able to produce over 330,000 pounds and the foreign exchange from that had amounted to \$1 million.

To conclude, Cde. Speaker, I just want to refer briefly to the statement made by the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives, that is, under the review of salaries structure in the Public Sector. Under that Head, the Amerindians will definitely benefit. They are those workers whose cost of living is higher than those on the coastlands. The review is most welcome at this time. Again, in the increase of old age pensions, the Amerindians will benefit. They could not be excluded from the National Policy. With these incentives to all workers, they will not lose. We, as a nation, will survive the economic repression which is now prevalent in the world. Likewise, the P.N.C Government is confident that our actions now will stand the test in time to come.

With these few words, Cde. Speaker, I commend the Budget 1980 to our people everywhere in Guyana. With the leadership that the P.N.C. provides, we will never lose.

The Speaker: Cde. Janet Jagan.

Cde. J. Jagan: Mr. Speaker, according to the Budget Speech of 1980, the Minister who read it told us,

“We also set our social goals and strove resolutely to attain them. We effectively destroyed the monopoly of education and culture by a privileged few...

We extended the network of ...”

those are intervening delusions;

We extended the network of health facilities to 47 locations throughout” --

The Speaker: Will you kindly indicate from which page you are reading.

Cde. J. Jagan: I said the Budget Speech.

The Speaker: Yes, but which page?

Cde. J. Jagan: Page 8.

“We ... increased the quality and numbers of trained personnel, and made the health services at public hospitals free.”

And I move down to the bottom of the page,

“In short, we had initiated the difficult process of transforming our society socially and economically.”

I wanted to deal mainly with the health and social aspects of the community in which we live and to challenge these statements that we have increased the quality of life, of our social life, and we have begun the social transformation of our country socially and economically, etc. I put forward the thesis that this is not true in the social context of our society, in the terms of the well being of our people. I would say that we have not moved forward, we have not even stood still. I think we have moved backwards. The state of our health facilities is in a constant state of deterioration which I will explain a little more. When we speak of the social well-being of people, we have to speak not only of medical services but the conditions of living, housing, water supply, sanitation, food supply, nutrition, etc., and I think that altogether, we are not in the position that we should be. Now, last year, I remember, I raised the question of malnutrition which I will and am

bound to raise again this year. I know that the other side of the House laughed at the figures, laughed at the factor of malnutrition in our community, sniggered at the facts and suggested that malnutrition is frequently the result of poor selection of foods, ignorance as to nutrition and dietary plans, etc. Let me quote from Health: Sector Policy Paper, World Bank, February, 1980, in which they are speaking generally of the developing countries, of which we are a part, and re-affirming that malnutrition is a dangerous condition, one which we must take seriously and not laugh at. The major killers of small children are gastro intestinal and respiratory infections, measles and malnutrition, conditions for which inexpensive, effective prevention or treatment is technically possible.

“A study of deaths among children of five years of age in selected areas of Latin America and the Caribbean reveals that over 70 per cent of the deaths beyond the perinatal period were due to fecally - related diseases, air borne diseases, or malnutrition.”

Widespread malnutrition is a characteristic of many low-income countries and it is a major contributing factor in infectious diseases and just as malnutrition can increase the susceptibility to disease so also can disease contribute to malnutrition. So that there is a cycle involving disease and malnutrition, and the environment and the protection of the environment and the protection of the people through preventative and curative medicine. I say this to emphasise the point that we must look seriously at malnutrition which exists in our country and which is growing for several reasons but I put the main reason at poverty. I think when I place the main reasons at poverty I have the backing of the major scientist of the world since it is generally agreed that that is the prime factor - the inability to buy the food required. In our case we have two impediments- the poverty factor, the low wage factor, and also the question of ability to find, in other words, the availability of goods required for good nutrition.

14.4.80

2.25 - 2:35 p.m.

2.25 p.m.

Today, I visited a line outside of Guyana Stores - I counted quite a number of people waiting in line - and in talking to some of the women, because most of the people waiting in line were women, it was pointed out that milk for children is almost impossible to find anywhere in the country. One of the women was telling me that we had some milk-evaporated milk, which in itself is hard to get - but she explained too that her child was not ready for evaporated milk and she has all sorts of problems resulting from the use of this type of milk, switching over from the normal powered milk for babies. This is a problem and I know many mothers of infants and small children who have these two problems. First, they cannot afford the amount of milk required to keep their children in reasonable health, and secondly, they cannot find the milk on the market even if they can raise the money.

I wanted to bring in by the way, an aspect of the Budget Speech which I am a little puzzled about but I suppose the Minister or someone will explain it when talking about the increase to pensioners and what they say is 25 per cent increase in social assistance. But a paragraph on page 53 is so confusing, and its confusion is multiplied by reading the Chronicle this morning in which they say that old-age pensioners are going to get an increase of 100 per cent and that there is an addition to the Budget Speech. I am a Member of this Parliament; I have not received anything, I have had no amendment or addition or anything to this speech, I do not know what its all about, but assuming that what I read here is correct, that the differential in social assistance will be removed and there will be a 25 per cent increase, I just want to make a point when talking about milk and children's nutrition.

A great number of persons receiving social assistance are in fact children, frequently children of mothers who have been abandoned and who are unable to earn any income and those, perhaps, with mothers who are crippled. Whatever it may be, they will get \$7.50 per month if we remove the differential and the other 25 per cent, which is \$1.87. This will make \$9.37 for each person in receipt of social assistance. Of course, the key word is "monthly", \$9.37 per month and this will be, I hope. I say, "I hope", because I spoke to someone at the Social Assistance Department who said there are variations but not necessarily with every person receiving \$7.50 per month. By that I think he meant that if a mother is destitute and she has eight children, they will not necessarily give each one of the eight children the \$9.37.

I hope I am wrong, but I did the simple mathematics of dividing \$9.37 by 82 cents which is the cost of one tin of evaporated milk and I came to the mathematical conclusion that each child in receipt of social assistance would be able to buy 2 ½ tins of evaporated milk per week or approximately 11 tins per month. That is it! So I wonder how those on social assistance are going to survive. Of course, that is not talking about food, other forms of foods, plantain flour, greens, fish; the percentage for rent, for clothing, for transportation. So it means that the 25 per cent which the Government is giving in increased social assistance is nothing.

The increase of \$1.87 per month. It is so infinitesimal, it is not even worth talking about. I bring that to the attention of members because we have this basic problem of cost and while I am at it, let me mention that when I walked through one of the Government stores today, I found, what I know, of course, and everyone knows, that the prices of everything have gone totally wild. Women were buying shoes for \$77.00. I do not know what our Minister of trade is talking about. There were shoes made in France. I do not know why we are importing shoes made in France, but I know they were costing the women \$77.00. When you look at the cost of household goods, \$5.15 just for one cup and saucer, one soup spoon of not very good quality \$2.85, one small pot with a lid \$28.95, and one medium-grade metal tea pot for \$18.95. How newly-weds, and those who have to furnish their homes, manage is one of the great mysteries of life and I suppose the answer to the mystery is that they do not manage.

Now what about our health service? Every year, we hear them talking on the other side of the House about preventive medicine, about the necessity to educate the people, that preventive medicine is the most urgent quality, etc., but I wonder what we are really doing in that direction. When we examine the Budget, we find that the larger percentage of those employed in the health services or employed in the curative division, not in the field of prevention. It is estimated that only 10 per cent of the health employees are working in the field of preventive medicine. I wanted to read something from the book on health by the World Bank, February, 1980 page 40.

“Curative care is emphasised, while prevention and early treatment are neglected”

Speaking of developing countries.

“The curative emphasis of health care can be attributed in part to the professional bias of physicians, but”

And I wish members to listen to this,

“It also reflects the mystique and popular appeal of hospital based health care. The neglect of prevention can also be attributed to the fact that public policy is formed by urban elite” – urban elite – “who often have already achieved adequate nutrition and sanitation, and whose needs now are for sophisticated curative care”

I have a sneaking suspicion that we are the victims of the urban elite who no longer are interested in the welfare and the health of those beyond the precincts of the capital city. The proof of that statement is in the reality of life. I will come back to life in the city which has its own terrible shortcomings. Fifty per cent of all the medical and nursing personnel is at the P.H.G leaving not enough for our rural communities. We have vacancies right now for 35 Government medical officers.

Let us look at our B.C.G programme. Our Estimates show that the Government has reduced the amount from \$20,000 last year to \$10,000 this year. And that is for prevention. The use of the vaccine, as we all know, is for the prevention of tuberculosis. Last year we did not have enough vaccine with \$20,000 and now we are slipping down to \$10,000.

2.35 p.m.

Let us take our health education, our mosquito control services. They are all being downgraded. These are important factors. Let us look at our interior services. We have just heard the representative from the P.N.C. who speaks for Amerindians. I did not hear what he said on Friday but in making enquires I did not gather that he expressed real concern for the fact that malaria is now on the increase in the interior areas, that medicated salt is not being distributed as it should be, that they are no services by a doctor or dispenser in the Pomeroon River where many Amerindians live, that in the Health centers at Kabakaburi, Hackney and Wakapau, there are shortages of drugs or no drugs at all. The Essequibo Coast and surrounding areas have not seen a dentist for the last four months. There are no school dental services; at Leguan Hospital there is no doctor; other diseases like measles, gastro-enteritis and tuberculosis - I mention malaria before - are on the up-swing in the interior areas and many of our children living in the interior are affected. The medical services in the interior areas are so poor that they do not reach out and touch those who live away from the centers and, as we know, many Guyanese live away from the centers of, say, Mabaruma, Lethem, Bartica, Leguan, etc. They live away from the centres and travelling to and fro is sometimes very difficult and, in some cases, even impossible.

We have had cases - I will give you an example of one that took place in February when an Amerindian woman was supposed to get an injection at the Wakapau clinic and it cost her \$107 to go from Wakapau to Suddie Hospital because the dispensary, medical and dental services no longer operate in the Pomeroon River. We have examples of patients who have to wait at points like Charity on the Pomeroon River. They cannot get to the hospital because the ambulance is not working. It has not been working for months. It was sent to Georgetown to be repaired but it has not been returned. The amount that people have to pay – in this case, from Charity to Suddie - \$80. A woman spent 12 hours waiting. In another case, a woman gave birth before she reached the Suddie Hospital – on the lawns of the Suddie Hospital - because she could not reach the hospital in time.

These are problems that the Speaker knows quite well, having lived in the interior. They are serious problems which Amerindians and other residents in the interior have to suffer from and the urban elite does not know about them, does not care about them. I do not know if the members of the Ministry of Health ever leave the city. I know that when – some will say it is old hat and I agree it is old hat when I was a Minister but I used to literally drag some of the city-bound personnel at the Ministry of Health but I used to literally drag them out of their chairs and carry them in boats so that they could see for themselves and when sitting at their desks they could have a personal and emotional commitment to people suffering in other areas of the country. And it worked. After a man has been sitting at a desk for five years, you take him to Fort Island, you take him down the Demerara River, you take him down the Canje River and the Berbice River and he sees how people live and the fact is that if you do not insist that the doctor and the dispenser and the dentist get there, then it is clear that he and his family and his children are going to suffer.

Now what is the problem? No one worries about the vehicle not working! No one worries if the motor boat, or whatever type of dispensary boat, there is, is sent for repairs. No one cracks his head to try to solve the problem and when they sit on it and pass the papers back and forth, the people in the bush suffer. And all this talk about development an increased agricultural production, not much is going to happen in the city, not much is going to happen on the coast. Your real development ultimately has to take place in the interior and the riverain areas and unless you give the people the services they need to keep them there, they will not stay there. I say this every year and I will continue saying it because this is the essence of economic and agricultural development in Guyana that you cannot send people into areas unless you are going to back them up and you have to back them up with health services, with education, mail services, communication. They must have all of these things and you are not paying attention to these things. This is one extra reason for the fact that there is the moaning and groaning about production and all of that. Of course, it is going to drop. You send your uncle and your cousin and your niece into the interior and they bloodily well will not stay there unless you give them support. No one is giving them any support; and no one is going to stay there.

Let us look at our medical services. As I said, there is not much attention paid to prevention. We give lip service to prevention, but not any real service. It is astonishing that at this stage, some of the programmes would be reduced, but let us look at the curative side. Let us look at the minimum requirements. I mentioned that we need 35 doctors to fill the vacancies. Let us look at page 133 of the Current Expenditure. Principal Medical Officer (Preventative). We do not have anyone there. How many Senior Physicians do we have? In 1980, we are supposed to have four. Perhaps the Minister will tell us how many there are now. Do we have a Medical Superintendent of the Mahaica Hospital? Do we have a Venereal and Dermatology Officer? Do we have a Principal Anesthetist? Do we have a Senior Anesthetist?

We should have two Senior Psychiatrists. There are so many mentally-ill people in Guyana because of various reasons. One is the increased tension caused by all the various social, economic and political stresses that exist in our community and, secondly, many cases keep deteriorating because there is no help. Every one of us – and it includes all of us here and our friends and neighbours – every one of us who has someone who is mentally ill must feel a terrible pang in his heart to know that that person cannot get help. There all allocation for the two Senior Psychiatrists, but I would venture to think that we need a lot more because the degree of mental ill-health is moving upward and as my colleague said, we do not have any. We need more than two.

14-4.80

2.45-2.55 p.m.

2.45 p.m.

We need a Health Engineer, Assistant Health Engineer, Nutrition Supervisor, Page 136. Principal Pathologist - no officer. Senior Pathologist - no officer. Medical Microbiologist – no one available, Bio-chemist. To go on to Page 137, Principal Radiologist, Senior Radiologist and on and on it goes. All of these posts are not filled. Respiratory Therapist, a Supervisor of Dietary Services. All these important posts are filled. Why? I think there has to be a complete self examination to find out why there are so many posts going unfulfilled and why it is that when we do fill the posts, the people do not stay here very long. It is only that the pay does not meet the desires or needs of the professionals, or are there other causes?

I have examined the position and I have found that there are other factors. There is the factor of working in an institution where conditions are bad, where Doctors are not allowed to fulfill the needs of the community or the patients as he pleases; he is not given the required drugs and equipment to carry on his work, and where frequently the surrounding conditions are unsatisfactory. Take a look at the Hospital. You walk in the Public Hospital, the environment – it is horrible, it stinks, in simple language, it's dirty. The linens have lost their whiteness for months and months. The toilets are atrocious, the conditions in the wards are unpleasant. Because of the general atmosphere, the personnel become unpleasant too. The nurses get irritable, the doctors get irritable. It all has to do with the fact that professional atmosphere does not exist. A professional attitude must be in the professionals themselves. Certain behaviour patterns are needed and when all these things are missing, you find that the professional doctors when we need so much are not willing to work under these conditions. You find that it is all part of other factors, the administration. I talk to many doctors. The administration is not satisfactory, no one is listening. We also have the question of the blood bank, for example. I cannot understand. Our estimates show that for 1980 we are providing only \$55,000. We had the provision of \$100,000. One of our major hospitals, the New Amsterdam Hospital, has no blood at all. Certainly, the blood bank needs assistance. Why is it that the Minister and the Ministry are reducing the amount which is being provided? We have to examine, too...

The Speaker: Time.

Cde. Ram Karran: I beg to move that Cde. Jagan be given an extra 15 minutes to continue her presentation.

Cde. N. Persaud: Seconded

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. J .Jagan: I come back to the question of shortage of doctors. What does it mean? What is the meaning in terms of the people who need attention? I was informed that one doctor at the out-patients' Department has to see as many as 200 to 300 persons per day. Do you know what that means? That means that he, as much as he wishes to, cannot give the patients the attention they need. He cannot look at the patient and diagnose and treat. I talked to many patients who go to the out-patients' Department and they the doctor, in many cases, never even touches their skin. He does not have time. It is not his fault. He looks at them and says "Well, you got this", writes, as fast as he can, the prescription, because he is under pressure. This is not good enough. People need more help than that. They need a thorough examination. They need the use of best equipment to help diagnose what is wrong with them and for this reason it is important that we have more doctors attached to the Hospital. I think that in order to attract more doctors and surgeons, the Ministry of Health has to start doing a very careful examination of what are the reasons for so many professionals walking out.

Now, the Minister, in his Budget Speech said that the health services at the hospital are free. I say that that is a lie! The public hospitals do not give everyone free services. I have no hesitation in saying it is a lie, an abdominal lie! I know of many cases. I know of one particular case, of a young man who was in an accident and suffered very serious injury to his leg requiring surgery. He could not have the surgery unless he paid the doctor \$200, and he could not raise the \$200. Is that an example of free medical services? And I would say this, since the Hon. Minister wants to raise a point, I have another case of a woman who had an accident and the doctor was refusing to operate on her because she did not pay. This is the second case and I made many efforts to reach the higher-ups to ask someone in a high position to simply look into the case and assist the woman to get the surgery. The answer I got was that they would not interfere in any case. It is the professional attitude. You might say, well, accept it as the truth. There may be a shortage, but will the government intervene? This is the point.

And again I have to refer to myself. I had certain experiences. I did intervene and I did fire a doctor because he insisted on taking money from a patient. Is our Ministry of Health, looking into the welfare of the patients and the people of this country and stopping the corruption and stopping the bleeding dry of patients? Are they doing it? I have not seen it. Maybe it is being done, but it can be done. I remember that you said medical services are free in the public hospitals. Got to the Suddie Hospital and see if patients there can get free medical services. Some do, but many do not, because the Ministry of Health will not intervene. Again I refer to myself where I personally intervene and stopped the system whereby patients had to pay to enter the Suddie Hospital and it worked, until the P.N.C got involved. [Applause.] Thank you for the applause, but it is a fact of life and right now the Suddie Hospital is semi-private and the public hospital is also semi-private. These are some of the aspects of life that we need to look at.

Now I want to raise another point which is a question of health statistics. Do we have a Watergate cover-up operation? What is happening here? I have the same book I referred to, February, 1980, World Bank Report on Health, in which there are figures and statistics from the developing countries. Here they have a map of childhood mortality in the world as they have various charts saying which country reported "figures not available." I see Guyana is one marked "not available". I kept looking for Guyana, where they refer to the population for position, the per capita calory supply of people, and the crude death rate of children, and this and that, but I could not find Guyana anywhere. Then I saw here that there are no available statistics.

Perhaps the Minister will be able to tell us what happened to the statistics because we on this side of the House are trying to make some. We have no statistics to work with because there are none available, not only in health, but in all fields. For instance what is the unemployment figure in Guyana? Who can tell us specifically what is the unemployment figure in Guyana? Who can tell us specifically what the mortality rate, exactly how many doctors per ten thousand population we have, how many dentists we have per ten thousand population? We guess. We take figures, we put them together, we try our best but why is it the figures are being hidden? Is it part of the general cover-up, like the cover up of Jonestown and like all the various things we do not know about? So here we have another big cover-up and I can get an idea why Government wants a cover-up. Because of malnutrition figures, I guarantee are very bad.

I heard the last speaker, though it is not my field of discussion but it still concerns us talking about wolves in sheep's clothing in relation to interior residents, mainly the Amerindians. I wondered when he talked about wolves in sheep's clothing if he was thinking in particular about resettlement plans for the North West District which is an area in which Amerindians live, and if the wolves in sheep's clothing are not the members of the Mung tribes who are being settled there.

I quote from the New York Times, Sunday, 30th March, in which they referred to General Van Pow who is the head of the same tribesmen who are specifically coming here. The New York Times said this: "that he commanded the army of his tribesmen that was equipped, supplied and directed by the United States of America Central Intelligence Agency..." Now here we have it, not the P.P.P. saying it, the New York Times saying it, that the Mung tribesmen were equipped, supplied, and directed, and fought under the guidance of the Central Intelligence Agency.

I think the last speaker should put his attention to that and guide the people he says he represents in the direction of firmly opposing such settlements in Guyana. This is very important, if we are to avoid another Jonestown, if we are to avoid another disaster in our country. I would also ask the last speaker to tell us, maybe Amerindian community, especially in regard to malaria, tuberculosis, measles and gastro enteritis.

I would say this in closing, that there is a need for a Ministry of Health which will pay attention to the real needs of the country, not only pay attention to, but achieve something in the

direction of improving the health services in this country, to stop lying about free medical health service and to see that a free system is implemented because the people of Guyana, the working people are so overburdened by the rising cost of living that they cannot afford to go to private hospitals and private practitioners and to pharmacies to purchase their drugs. Let us see Government fulfill its promise. It makes many promises; it makes many statements, but let us see it fulfill those promises or pass over its responsibility to others who can better do the job!

The Minister of Health, Housing and Labour (Cde. Green): May I first, Cde. Speaker, join in congratulating the team that worked with my colleague Minister in preparing and presenting this Budget which, to my mind, was a serious attempt to make a honest appraisal of the situation as it is. The Government through the Cde. Minister of Economic Development, did not attempt to follow the mould of some Budgets and to put up something in a sugar-coated form. We acknowledged the realities, we acknowledged our short-comings and finally prepared the ground work so that the people of this country working with the Government could not only surface from the existing difficulties, to which we are party, but bring this country to the position where we can look for progress and prosperity.

One previous speaker, Cde. Speaker, repeated almost to the last word her observation about health which we have heard here in this House for several years running. In fact, at one time, I thought I was listening to a replay of a tape. There was only one variation. On the last occasion, I believe a baby was born in a hospital and on this occasion a baby was born on its way to a hospital.

Cde. Speaker, the first point I wish to make is that without repeating anything said very well in the Budget, and by the Cde. Minister of Finance, we need in discussing this particular Budget to see the world neither in terms of Western Europe, North America nor the Soviet Bloc, but to see the world in terms of Guyana. I believe the first difficulty the Opposition has Cde. Speaker, is an inability or awareness, and I hope it is the latter, to recognise what we are attempting to do. It is not to model our country and society after anyone it is to construct a society based on our history, our past, our present difficulties, and the hopes of our people are our future. We do not have a particular set of people to be set up as a model. We do not have a particular country to hate, but one gets the impression sometimes that we have been to hate particular groups constantly. We have a people to love constantly; they are the people of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

[Applause. (Government).] And sometimes when a Government and a people set out against the background of love and concern to reconstruct the society, it is easy for others to criticise because the very nature of reconstruction these days, with the world as it is, is certainly not an easy task.

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3.05 -3.15 p.m.

3.05 p.m.

In fact, I like to make the allusion sometimes to parent dealing with children. Very often you are required to give tasks and even medicines that are unpleasant but those things are done out of love and out of a desire at the end of it all to produce something that is better. Therefore, we did not attempt, as I said earlier, to sugar-coat anything. We dealt with realism and I would urge, as we move forward this year, that we are not here to defend or to vilify any nation. Each nation has its own problems; certainly we have our problems.

We have in this country been attempting to virtually telescope development into a few years and the challenges, as was noted in the final paragraph of the Budget Speech by my colleague Cde. Hoyte is to win. The challenges must be met. Are we weak, or are we strong people? Are we going to succumb to the rising price of oil and the other difficulties, or are we going to put our genius to work co-operatively to survive? As I understand the Budget Speech, Cde. Speaker, the People's National Congress Government has elected the latter course.

I believe that we have the basic ingredients to survive. First – and the previous speaker was talking about doctors a moment ago – we have our national doctor, the Leader of the People's National Congress and the Prime Minister of the Co-operative Republic. [Applause.(Government).] Perhaps it is apposite to repeat, if you permit me, that prescription; it is very appropriate against the background of the Budget- careful management of our financial resources and revenues, greater production and productivity- I shall be talking about that a little later- intensive exploitation of our natural resources, strict discipline, a war on waste, the resolute pursuit of our socialist objectives, the intimate involvement of the people and courage never to submit to yield.

If our people are given the necessary leadership and encouragement, we will win. We have our natural resources and, finally, in spite of the newlings of the members of the Opposition, we have in this country, high quality leadership. [Applause. (Government).] What I believe we need to do is to harness those resources - including the Opposition - so that we will win.

I listened during the last day of the debate and my good friend opposite me injected an interesting position. He said that- these days the Leader of the Opposition is using all sorts of people to say the things that he wants to say because he gets up and rambles all over the world and avoids Guyana. My good friend said "Give the P.P.P. the production Ministries." I am not sure what those production Ministries are and what really was meant by that suggestion but if the Opposition is serious, it has a responsibility to first tell the truth and recognise what is happening

in the world and in Guyana. But I have a suspicion that behind that plea is the recognition that the remaining members of the People's Progressive Party want to help but some in the leadership cannot muster the courage to do this. I believe that all the people in this country today want to help and work together. They continue to indulge in petty political pin-pricking but I believe they need to act responsibly.

We heard the tape about health a moment ago. We have noted in this House earlier that as we approach the decade of the 80's we are committed to the declaration of alma mater and to make a serious effort in spite of the financial and economic difficulties to provide the basic health opportunities to all our people long before the end of this century. Health care is not merely hospitals. Health care has to deal with ensuring that people are physically and mentally equip to produce in the interest of society. And health is not merely the responsibility of a particular Ministry. It is the responsibility of the entire society and health never takes a holiday and therefore the control of diseases is something we need to look at every day.

Someone talked about malaria. The Guyana Government through its agency in the Ministry of Health achieved the complete eradication of malaria two years ago. The fact of the matter is that we have a problem on our borders where there is an easy and fairly free intercourse between the people on our western border, our southern and eastern borders and the machinery which we have, unless it is shored up and supported by the Government concerned, can in no way effectively prevent what has in fact happened, a return of this scourge to certain parts of our country. We have already initiated discussions with the agencies involved and we continue to do our best to ensure that malaria is once more completely removed from the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.

Before turning to dealing specifically with the emphasis we are placing on health, that is, on prevention and educating people, I just want to comment briefly on some remarks made. The last speaker very cleverly quoted from the World Bank in very general terms, and talked about Latin America and the Caribbean. Certainly Guyana is part of that region, certainly Guyana is part of a general effort to combat this problem but I say this: In comparison with all the other Latin American and Caribbean countries, we have done extremely well and our people both in the agricultural sector and the health sector should not sell themselves short in our effort to deal with this very serious problem.

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3.15 -3.25 p.m.

3.15 p.m.

Cde. Chairman, to deal specifically again with some of the observations, we have doubled old-age pensions as from the 1st January, 1980 and to set the records absolutely straight, what we also have done is to abolish the difference which existed in so far as social assistance was concerned between urban residents as rural residents. In addition to abolishing the difference, there will be an increase of just over 25 per cent of that higher figure for all persons receiving social assistance.

Cde. Chairman, I spoke earlier about co-operation. Hypocrisy seems to be a special virtue of some people. In the area of health delivery I believe some aspect of it should transcend political, religious and all other considerations because health really is a universal problem to be solved by the society as a whole. When a man needs blood neither the donor nor the recipient tags himself "P.P.P", "U.F" or "Liberator", "P.N.C." or what have you. Blood is Blood. I wonder, Cde. Chairman, those who mouth and mule and talk about health, how many members of the Opposition have come forward to offer one pint of blood to the blood bank either in Georgetown or New Amsterdam? [Interruption.] Three months after the last occasion when I made this offer, I checked the records and not a single member of the Opposition had turned up at the blood bank to offer blood. I personally checked the records after the last debate.

[Interruption.]

The Speaker: Cde. Minister, as there seems to be some doubt, how about us starting all over again. Let us see who will give? As there seems to be some doubt, what about making that suggestion?

Cde. Green: Cde. Chairman, in spite of the impact upon the Budget last year, we initiated a programme to rehabilitate many of our existing health facilities and to really turn the corner in so far as emphasising the preventative aspect of our health services. For this year we propose the following, and this is for the records, Cde. Chairman.

At Aishalton we will spend over a million dollars for a new hospital. At Georgetown, I think the country is aware that at long last we have completed the Accident and Emergency Unit and we plan to extend the Physiotherapy Department and the Intensive Care Unit and to renovate the hospital which has created some problems in the past. In addition, in collaboration with the Housing section of the Ministry, work has been started to rehabilitate the plumbing work at the Hospital. Here again, perhaps it is not out of order if an appeal is made both to the users and to the public because no matter what is done at the Hospital unless those involved use the facilities

with some care, the problem will continue to recur. Our polio Rehabilitation Centre- work will begin this year and within the next few months a decision will be taken either to move it from its present location or to rehabilitate the existing building. Of special interest to members of the Opposition, Cde. Chairman, is that this year will see the completion of a new mortuary in the cemetery.

[Interruption]

Cde .Chairman, what we are attempting is to do exactly what the Opposition said should be done, that is, to provide in the regions the sort of facilities that will permit people to get attention in the region and not have to gravitate to the centre whenever there is a problem. For example, at Eastern Mahaicony there will be a new health centre which will cost us over \$50,000 and all along the Coast the intention this year is to do some rehabilitation work.

Cde. Chairman, I listened very carefully sometimes when the Opposition speaks and they spoke particularly of Suddie Hospital. Suddie Hospital is one place where I am satisfied with the work of the resident surgeon and the reason why I believe he has been singled out for attack, unwarranted and justified attack, is that that particular government medical officer, unapologetically supports the Party and this Government. I know that is the reason why he was particularly singled out and I thought I should mention that in this House. Why did we not hear of the real charlatans who have been fleecing people in the society and who give part of their earnings, ill-gotten earnings, to that side of the House? And they are known. On the question, Cde. Chairman, of the shortage of professional staff, this is a problem every developing Third World country has. We have not sat idly by; we have put in place the mechanisms to provide not substitute but personnel that would provide a medium service to our people and at the same time we continue to seek, to recruit and to hold the top professional staff. In the field of dentistry, for example, we have put in place a training programme of dental auxiliaries who will concentrate initially, again dealing with prevention, on our school population so that by the time they are teenagers, our school children will know simple things and would have saved the adult teeth. We also have had a successful appraisal of the Medex Programme and the report we have is, that the Medex have already made a satisfactory impact particularly in the rural areas.

3.25 p.m.

As far as mental health is concerned, Cde. Chairman, we have psychiatrists. Some people do not listen, some people do not learn. We opened a few weeks ago two modern units at the Fort Canje Hospital, units that are on par with the best in this region. We were not neglecting any section of the community and if the concern of the members of the Opposition in relation to

mental health is very personal, I want to assure them that there will be no discrimination and that they can occupy those premises like any other member of the society.

Cde. Chairman, again in housing, in spite of the fact of the unusual increases in the cost of materials and therefore the cost of various sites and services, our achievement last year, even though no what we would have wanted, is something that we are not ashamed of. We completed 311 units last year. In addition, we did what we said we would do. We constructed roads in housing areas made of clay bricks. We can look with pride to the road of Golden Grove, 2,406 feet long, 40 feet wide, made of clay bricks and constructed by our own local engineers and technicians. The policy for the future is that wherever secondary roads are to be constructed we will be using our own indigenous clay bricks. The programme for this year, Cde. Chairman, is to be completed well over 300 units in several parts of the country, Belfield, Melanie Damishana, Clonbrook, Burma, Grove, New Amsterdam and Best Foreshore and in collaboration with the Finance Bank and weather permitting, we expect that these units will all be completed long before Christmas of 1980.

The Speaker: Time.

The Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Leader of House (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde, Speaker, I wish to move this House to enable the Minister to continue for another 15 minutes.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Green: In addition, Cde. Chairman, the programme in the Wisrock area and the Linden community continues a pace to correct what was a historical problem of really no housing in that community, to house the workers in that important location and industry in our country.

In relation to the other sector for which I have responsibility, Labour, I wish to deal with the budget as much. This year, we are going to press on to ensure that worker participation is a reality in every sector of working life in our country. The incentive scheme is really intended to be in an effective award system do that people who perform effectively will see that through the agencies where they work, they will be able to take home something extra. The fact of the matter is that like in every other society, some workers are more experienced, more productive, and more dedicated than others, and what we are in fact saying is that those workers, therefore, are worth more than other people and we must out in place a system which rewards those workers for the extra effort that they make and have been making. There are several aspects to this which

I will be dealing with over the next few months and which the opposition is invited to participate in since we are really talking about helping people to produce and to give them rewards.

On Friday, Cde. Chairman, and in this House specially, dealing with the sugar industry, the question of targets was raised and may I say this, Cde. Chairman, before I move on, though I believe I mentioned it in a radio interview some weeks ago. Last year, we saw a happy movement when the union and the workers in the sugar industry made an effort to turn away from the old destructive path that they were leading in the past, to one of construction and serious commitment to development of the industry and the country. I would like to congratulate the many workers who continued in the face of difficulties and intimidation in some cases to work towards certain targets.

On the question of targets, the Cde. Minister of Economic Development has had cause to write the T.U.C. since, based on the announcement made by the Cde. Leader and Prime Minister on New Year's Day and again by Cde. Hoyte in his Budget Speech, there seems to be some misunderstanding. I take this opportunity to set the issue straight and I did promise my good friend Cde. Ram Karran, the functional President of one of our Unions to set the record straight.

The targets announced in the Budget and by the Cde. Prime Minister, are the targets which the planners of our economy forecast that we must reach as a nation, if we are going to realise and achieve certain levels of growth in the economy, if we are to have certain things to export and, therefore, to earn foreign exchange and have earnings to sustain a projected level of expenditure on development. Those targets we consider ideal and optimum, those targets assumed that all conditions would be of the best and also against the background of the historical performance in the several areas. They are really projections and are not necessarily the targets that will follow as a result of discussions between union and, management in the particular industry.

I believe that the Cde. Minister of Economic Development was also attempting to express that if we do not achieve these targets, our overall programme, of necessity, will be affected and in fact will have to be cut back. We feel, however, Cde. Chairman, that these targets are not beyond the ability of workers. We have, of course, particularly in the bauxite and sugar industries, to take account of things over which we have no control, like the weather and the difficulty of getting equipment in, for example, if there is strike in a foreign port and fertilizers do not come, or particular machinery parts do not arrive. Those are aspects which neither the workers nor the management, nor the Government for that matter can really be held responsible.

14.4.80

3.35-3.45 p.m.

3.35 p.m.

In another effort to strengthen the labour scene, the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agency will this year shortly come up with a new and a revolutionary recruitment policy in the public sector. The details of this are to be discussed with the T.U.C. and the agencies involved and perhaps it will not be able to interest of those discussions for me to reveal the details at this point of time except to say that an attempt is being made to produce workers who understand in each area in which they operate the particular responsibilities they have and to attempt to sensitise new recruits in various aspects of Government work that they have a special role to play in the development of our society. For too long people who operate in certain sectors assume that they are not involved in production and improvement of the economy. It is our view that workers, whether they work in the so-called “production” areas or the so-called “social” areas, affect in one way or another the productive levels to which the country as a whole can reach.

This Budget is one of realism. This Budget is one that I believe the workers of this country can accept as act of faith by their Government and I believe – in fact I am confident – that the majority, if not all the workers, would respond in a mature and reasonable manner to the request of the People’s National Congress Government to produce and to make this year a genuine year of effort. There are some still around who are seeking to mislead workers. There are some, because other efforts so far to disrupt and to deviate this party’s Government have failed, who are attempting economic destruction. The workers must be vigilant. It is we who have all to lose. A few will attempt that sabotage for very selfish reasons.

In this honorable House I think I should say that I have reason to believe that the workers, particularly in the bauxite and sugar industries, want to achieve certain targets. I have reasons to believe that recent acts of sabotage were not committed by workers in the latter industry to which I referred the sugar industry. I believe it is the responsibility of every worker to help us to ferret out those saboteurs so that they can be effectively dealt with and leave the majority of the people of this country to work with this budget and turn around this country so that we can look to the end of this year with hope and with strength for the development of the co-operative Republic [Applause (Government.)]

The Speaker: Cde. Feroze Mohamed.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Speaker, it is said that practice is the criterion of truth. Today we are coming to grips with the truth concerning education. This year has particularly been a bad year for education, even a fatal one, as a critical assessment would show, not only because the Minister of Education was murdered but because, too, many failures have occurred at one level or another within our educational system. Indeed, one may well say: After 15 years and hundreds

of millions of dollars our educational achievements are not so splendid and spectacular after all.

I was amazed somewhat to read in the Budget Speech that the Government intends to continue to place accent on education. I ask: How is this accent being placed? How is it reflecting in the Budget? The answer is: By allocating a smaller portion of the total expenditure on education. Only about 12.5 per cent, according to my calculation, of the public largeness will be directed towards education during this year. In fact, since 1977 the vote for education has been continuously declining. From 14.6 per cent in 1977 it dipped to 14.5 per cent in 1978 when the responsibilities of this Ministry expanded. It was further reduced to 13.6 per cent in 1979 and now it is approximately 12.5 per cent.

It is worth underlining here what in all the years of the P.N.C. and for all their talk, the Government has yet to equal the 15.6 per cent spent by the P.P.P. Government in 1963 and the 16.2 per cent of the Budget spent in 1964 for education. *[Interruption.]* The retort will be, "Well, look at the quantum." By now it ought to be realised that quantitative description is a weak and also inadequate yardstick to determined progress in as much as it cannot be used or relied upon to explain the scope and diversity of education activities.

During recent debates in this House, attempts have been unscientifically made to compare what is presently being done in the field of education to the achievements made in the time of the P.P.P. but let me make this point unhesitatingly, that when we look dialectically, taking all the factors into consideration, the conditions of colonialism and the inflationary rises today, the work of the P.P.P. in the circumstances compares favorably. In fact, our contribution is distinguished by boldness, imagination and a commitment to the education of the Guyanese people, and that is a fact.

In passing, for those who would like to hark back to the past, let me say that it was the P.P.P. that conceived and brought into being the University of Guyana, a national pride, and it is under the regime of the P.N.C. that that institution has suffered from several afflictions and its doors were closed in the beginning of the current academic term. That is the record of the P.N.C. this year. But, Cde. Speaker, enough of the past. More important is the present. How are we doing?

To find out, I wish to begin by looking at our examinations, the Secondary School Entrance Examination, the S.S.E.E. In my view, the time has come for this examination to be phased out, because it does more harm to the children than good. When its fore-runner, the Common Entrance Examination was introduced, the intention was to eventually phase out the examination to allow for free movement from the primary to the secondary school. And this was

stated in the Education White Paper of 1962. But what has happened is that the name has only been changed. The S.S.E.E continues, and we think steps ought now to be taken by the Government to rid the children of the harmful effects of this examination.

Let us look at a little more at this exam on primary education. The minute the child begins primary school he is put through a grueling and pressurizing process in preparation for the SSEE at standard 4. It is instilled in him that his entire future is linked through and wrapped up in that exam, and it is from there he is tuned not to become a failure. He goes through a process where little interest is being paid to the range of subjects offered and concentrates mainly on those subjects relevant to his success at the SSEE. This process obviously means and leads to the stunted development of a child's personality, his horizons become narrow. When he has passed the examination, he would have learnt little to prepare him well for his future social roles. No wonder today's secondary school teachers complain often and too regularly about the poor quality of the student that they have to deal with at secondary level. If the child is successful, the experience, one can say, is in deed, a traumatic one and if he fails, think, Cde.Speaker, about the psychological effect steaming from the failure at the SSEE level exam on a ten to twelve year old child in this country.

Moreover, the exam, we think is discriminatory age wise, and many are prevented from access to secondary level education, should age prevent them from taking the SSEE. The chances are always certain that a child would have come to the end of educational career. There are new views expressed that the exam is no longer a selection exam but an allocation exam. Let me say immediately that that is a myth, simply because there are not enough secondary schools or community high schools to take care of all those who come from primary level. In fact, it is estimated that the involvement ratio at the secondary level of education is below fifty. Cde. Speaker, education experts today agree, even in the capitalist countries and more and more they are arguing for an end to sweep away the selective system to secondary education. They are opposed to the intensive specialization which is likely to be developed with exams like SSEE. That is what we are arguing for in calling for steps to be taken to get rid of that examination, and for the institution of a system and implementation of forms where children are given a broad general education with the mere elements of the curriculum being similar in all schools. With the SSEE, this is not done.

I look now at the SSEE, the Secondary School Proficiency Examination. Like the SSEE, the SSPE is also disadvantageous to the student and also discriminatory. A student, if he encounters this at every stage of his age, it is likely to affect his life. This examination can be taken at the top primary school. The theory of this examination is different from the practice, the

age factor operates here as a hidden device, a hidden mechanism that perpetuates automatic selection and streaming. There are approximately 29,000 students at the top of primary schools and for the vast majority of them, their school careers will come to an end after some woodwork classes, some home economics classes and on completing Form 1 to 3. Theoretically, they can go on to complete secondary school education, but that is theory. We all know that today that is a defective argument. Generally, very few are coming from the top of the primary school can find that accommodation or will be allowed to enter secondary education. He will have come to the end of his education career.

This examination is also taken at the Community High School level to cater for late developers and here again the age guillotine operates. But now it is compounded by accommodation and even if successful students from the Community High Schools can find places and can beat the age requirement, students are still put at a disadvantage but this time subject-wise. He who is moving into secondary education may find it difficult to cope with the work of the secondary school. Take maths for example, the Community High School Programme teaches traditional maths; if he is accepted in the secondary school or multilateral school, he must begin to do modern maths or a combination of modern and traditional maths. He cannot cope with those who have already begun in this direction and are being prepared already for the CXC exams. Very often, to help those children, they are placed in specially prepared forms where they are given intensive programmes, not only in maths but in other subjects. Very often they are regarded by their fellow students in the secondary and multilateral schools as below-standard students, regarded as outcasts of the educational system at the secondary level, and the general feeling is that they cannot make their exams, though in fact some do.

I want to make this point in looking at those exams, Cde. Speaker, and that is, we have found that the system is not in keeping with the principal of equality of educational opportunities for all. Moreover, as we go into it and deeply analyse it, we realise that it seeks only to perpetuate the social class divisions of our society, therefore, we must set our sights on a new system for broad general education. Here we advise that the Soviet system may prove useful.

Now let us turn to the CXC. When I brought this matter up last year, the last Minister told me that the test of the pudding is in the eating. Well, we have had our taste. Guyana has done badly and our poor performance is a living testimony to the decline which has crept into our overall education. In 1979 the late Minister boasted on "Face the Nation" that Guyana has set the record for the Caribbean with students passing five subjects at a single "O" level sitting and it seems as if we are excelling in science and maths.

14.4.80

3.55 - 4.05 p.m.

3.55 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Mohamed, the date and page of the newspaper?

Cde. Mohamed: Sunday, 26th March, 1979. New Nation said that last year. What are the results this year? Now we are trailing being our sister Caribbean countries as the C.X.C. examination indicated. What has happened in one year? We hope that things have not followed our late Minister. We have the CXC information. Very low percentages appear in terms of the subjects that Guyanese took, particularly in the crucial grades I and II and the poor performance at the CXC does not sit there because definitely it will have repercussion on other areas of learning in this country and particularly at the level of the University of Guyana.

Cde.Speaker, it is clear that we entered this exam ill prepared. The Government must take full responsibilities and blame because it knew well in advance of the out coming examination at the CXC level but serious efforts were not taken to prepare the stage for young people to take this exam and pass with good results. In May, students will again take this examination and I am afraid, Cde. Speaker, the results will not be better or vey much better if they are better that they were last year. It will not because the classes are for the poor performers.

It will be for the lack of adequately qualified and trained personnel, shortage of equipment and textbook, and a whole host of others. Literature and maths textbooks are in short supply in spite of the fact that I am sure the Minister knows the work load for literature will be heavier at the CXC than it was at the G.C.E level. Books were sent to some schools, but it was during the Easter Holidays when schools were already closed in some areas. I want to know this: what is really going on? Students will be taking exams in May but some schools were receiving books when they would have been closed already for the Ester term.

Many problems really surround this exam. Many things are yet not clear, for example, the policy regarding repeaters. We do not think the air is fully clear on that. The recognition of the grades at the general proficiency level, the purpose if the basic level, and to what extent it will be recognised in and out of Guyana and out of the Caribbean, we would like to know. Have we heard the last word in terms of science education or if experiments are still going on, because I think this is an area where more must be said. An entirely new range of problems have developed around the CXC and have been recognised by all who have to deal with that exam but at the same time do we really recognise those problems? It should not be interrupted that we do not recognise certain positive aspects to that examination but in the meantime, in the circumstances and conditions, the people who suffer the most are our students.

Moving away a little from exams, I would like to touch on the problem of overcrowding which has reached horrible proportions today. Last year, I dealt with overcrowding at the primary level. Now, I wish to draw attention, for instance, for overcrowding at the second level. The situation is chaotic at that level and often we have had the experience, pitiful experience, of parents fearfully pleading for their children to be enrolled in secondary schools. Often they are turned away because there are no places. You only succeed if you can afford to give some level of bribery. Things are overflowing. Classrooms are unruly. It is becoming normal for a child to be one of forty to sixty and over students. Some classrooms house two forms and here again we think that the Government must share the blame for the problems of overcrowding which begin from the primary and continue in our secondary schools. The effects I am sure are well known be those in the field of education; they are distressing and disturbing; ineffective teaching, poor results like the CXC, for example, indiscipline, overworked teachers.

Some years ago, ten secondary schools were identified for extension under the World Bank programme. My information is that only five schools are undergoing construction. We ask what has happened to the rest. It is clear from the overcrowding problems that more schools are urgent needed. Children must be assured of school places in this country and they must be provided, as far as we are concerned, with full accommodation in an environment that facilitates learning.

I look now to the question of transportation. Like overcrowding. I feel constrained to refer to transportation for school children. The problem has grown acute; every year it has become aggravated; apart from the exorbitant cost, consider the study hours lost due to the absence of needed transportation facilities to commute to and from school. A child can lose as much as 60 and 80 hours per term. A child can be called upon to pay as much as \$100 for transportation just getting to school and back home. Time lost in this way cannot be retrieved. It is lost and the child will suffer. They cannot make use of proper educational opportunities now offered and I am sure the members of this Government would like to know, that when they speak and boast about spending their huge million, their money is well spent. And if the money is going to be well spent in the field of education, then they will have to solve the transportation problem because it affects schools work, such as punctuality and regular attendance, and it is a main contributory factor in the high rate of school drop-outs affecting our secondary education system. In fact, I have known many cases where young people were given stipends for meals and have to use those stipends simply to pay for transportation. Very often, they do without meals.

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The way to deal with those problem, we would like to suggest , is for the Minster and the Ministry of Education to take a serious look at the allocation of schools places at the secondary school level and stop the erratic system where students have to pass several schools before reaching the one to which they are allocated. That, we think, may help to ease the problem but, of course, we look forward to the resolution of that problem.

Teacher training continues to be one of the pressing needs of the education system. It is estimated that we have approximately 48 per cent of the teachers at the secondary level of education untrained, 60 per cent at the primary level untrained, and 95 per cent at the nursery level untrained. The situation is obviously shocking at the nursery level of education. It is all the more alarm when one considers that special skills must be possessed by those who are taken at the nursery school level and more so, training is urgent for them since many who are teaching at the nursery level of education are politically, and only politically qualified.

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We think that systematic and scientific training programme are required urgently for those who function at the nursery level of education. I have been informed that problems seem to be affecting the Lillian Dewar Teaching Training College in this academic year. Only 37 teacher trainees have been recruited and that must be seen against 86 in 1977 and 69 in 1978. What is going on here? A large percentage of our teachers are untrained. We have the facilities but only 37 have been taken on. We would like to find out what is happening. Are there problems with the staff, as I suspect, or do we not have enough applicants? We ask the Ministry and the Minister to give attention to this area of our work so that our facilities can be fully utilised for the proper training of teachers.

The Speaker: Two minutes more.

Cde. Mohamed: Let us look at the filling of vacancies. The Official Gazette, 15th December, 1979, invited applications to fill posts at senior levels at the primary level of education. This is what it shows. They are asking for 133 Headmasters; 38 Deputy Headmasters; 58 Senior Masters or Mistresses. One does not appreciate the extent of this problem until it appears in the Official Gazette but one will agree now that it has appeared. It is a very shocking thing. One wonders how the entire educational system was functioning if there were not 133 Headmasters at this level. Now that the posts are advertised we hope that the appointments will be made and we hope too that the appointments will not be subjected to discriminatory action or to political sentiments.

The same problem exists for senior positions in the secondary level of education but there are no signs that the posts will be filled. I understand that appointments depend, at the secondary level, on the upgrading of schools. Why is this not being done? We suspect that the Ministry is dragging its feet at this level and we think that perhaps if the inner conflicts in the upper echelons of the Ministry of Education can come to an end, we may be able to see more efficiency and a serious attempt to erase the frustration and inefficiency that exist among the teachers at secondary schools.

The Speaker: Time!

Cde. Ram Karran: I beg to move that the member be allowed 15 minutes to continue his speech.

Cde Persaud seconded.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Mohamed: Dissatisfaction is also exists among Headmasters at the secondary schools over the salaries and anomalies which exist between Headmasters in primary schools and their counterparts who are better qualified at secondary schools. We think it should not be and we call upon the Ministry again to tackle this question of anomalies in salaries, a source of dissatisfaction which leads to poor performance, and to rectify this problem in a principled way.

I want to turn now to science education in this country. I raised this matter before in 1977 but the situation has since worsened and new voices are raised in concern. Dr. Irvine of the University of Guyana repeated his concern over this matter in his Annual Report for 1978/79. This is what he said in his Report for 1978/79:

“As can be seen the proportion of regular students in science and technology continues to be low, being less than 25 per cent of the total. Given the importance of science and technology to development this state of affairs cannot be allowed to continue any longer, and deliberate efforts will have to be made over the next few years to increase the level of intake in these fields.”

I agree with Dr. Irvine. If the U.G. is not to become a glorified Teacher Training Centre and is to really and effectively give assistance and make a contribution to the development of skills which are required in our economy, then we will have to place new emphasis on science and technology. But the question is deeper. That is only how it relates to the University. The

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Government policy in my view has been indicated when Dr. Irvine wrote in the said Report that;

“There are also implications for science education in the schools. The quality of students applying for admission into the Faculty of Natural Science has shown a marked decline in recent years.”

That also is true and that has been substantiated by the State Paper on National Science and Technology Policy and mentioned on page 33 which I do not intend to read. But it is clear that science education is suffering tremendously in this country at a time when we cannot afford it, not only at the University but at all the different levels of our system. School laboratories face perpetual shortages of equipment, chemicals and other essentials facilities. Industrial arts programs in many schools are not realised for want of raw materials, and machinery remains idle.

Failure to promote in a consistent way science and technology is not going to be beneficial to our country. The Budgets Speech refers in a big way to our development works in this country and we think that if the hopes and ideas mentioned by the Cde. Minister who present the Budget Speech are to be realised, then the Government will have to put emphasis on education at all levels of the education system in the fields of science and technology. If not, then we will not have the personnel for the economy, industry, and agricultural services, and moreover, if we are to do that, we must be able to see the importance and the connection of educational development in the field of science and technology and also the need for vibrant economy that will be able to absorb the yearly output from these institutions. If not, all we will be doing will be spending millions on educating Guyanese, this time for North America as has been the trend and is the trend at the moment.

If we consider the brain drain we will see that between 1965 and 1975 a total of 12,771 persons became landed immigrants in Canada. Of these 12.8 per cent were executive and professional workers, 46.8 were clerical and white collar workers, 31.7 were skilled and semi-skilled workers and only 2.5 were unskilled. In the United State, in 1977 alone, it is understood that 5,718 Guyanese were admitted as immigrants to that country. Our brain drain, of course, also has its roots in the social, political and purely economic question.

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Adult education, Cde. Speaker, is another area to which attention must be paid. So far, adult education has remained on the periphery of the education system but I wish to support the

views expressed in this paper on Science and Technology that it is time we begin to extend work in that field to provide proper and necessary education for our adults. Work-study programme. Now, if we are to make a judgment, one can safely say it has failed, it has failed miserably. I understand that whatever little is done in that direction is left to that teacher or the other who wants you take a child on an excursion. The man in charge- I wonder where he is but so far from the information we have, whilst we do not disagree with the principle of the idea and the objective and the intention, still we think the way the scheme has been implemented has led to the belief, and the wise belief that this aspect of our education is not working as originally we were told it would work.

And briefly, Cde. Speaker, I wish to say a few words about the policy of the Government, or the policy that guides the Government and the Ministry of Information. We think that that policy continues to be unwholesome. Largely, we think the policy which drives that Ministry is P.N.C oriented. It lacks objectivity though efforts have been made to correct it. Those efforts are operable only in so far as objectivity does not come into conflict with the P.N.C. interests. Socialist education. I notice, is no longer being promoted in our mass media. More inclined is the Ministry to prorogate capitalist views- even contrary to the intention of the new Constitution. The manifestation of the unwholesome approach in the Ministry of Information is expressed in the continuing problems faced by the Mirror in regard to being granted newsprint. And here it is worthwhile to note that refusing to give the Mirror newsprint is a further attempt to keep away from the people of this country, ideas on socialism, and to cut off objective criticism which is aimed at benefiting the people of this country. Here it is important to know that whilst they are doing this to our people of this to our paper, they promoted, defended and advocated the ideas of socialism. If you go to the G.N.T.C., new books are being imported, books, for example, like those written by... and anti-socialist books. They are swarming our Government- owned bookshops.

Cde. Speaker, I want to tell the Government that such policies which it has directed against the Mirror cannot work, they are doomed to failure, the pressures cannot work. Freedom of expression, yes, is being jeopardized. *[Interruption]*. But if ideas are not good, people themselves will reject them. You do not have to resort to decrees and imposition. If people do not want relevant socialist ideas, the people would not buy the Mirror. And this effort, therefore, is an expression, to my mind, that the Government is fearful of the people accruing ideas of socialism. It seems, to me, there is a change in direction and no longer has the Government seemed to be promoting socialist ideas. The undue interference in the work of this Ministry, Cde. Speaker, I dare say, can lead to what one doctor recently called hysterical blindness and I am not too sure that members of the Ministry or some member of this Ministry may not have been

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affected by that disease.

We call, Cde. Speaker, today for the Government to relax its pressures on the Mirror. The Mirror represents substantial and indeed majority views in this country. We say, stop denying the people the right to receive information and we say, not only end the discriminatory policies against the Mirror but end the discriminatory policies that are directed against all publications in this country. We think when that is done, the Ministry of Information may have taken one of the first steps in bettering that Ministry and avoiding some of the myriad of problems which affect the work of that Ministry.

Cde. Speaker: Cde, Thomas.

The Minister of State, Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture (Cde. Thomas): Cde. Speaker, this 1980 Budget will go down in the records of this House as one which is unable to attract criticism from the Opposition Benches. Indeed, because of the flawless presentation and well thought-out programme articulated by the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives, we are assured, and, indeed, the Guyanese masses are assured that despite the economic difficulties we are now faced with, our interests, indeed the interests of the working people, are reassured. As a member of this Party I see it as my bounden duty to congratulate the Minister and also to congratulate you too, Cde. Speaker, for allowing all manner of irrelevancies to pass for criticism and debate in this August chamber. I cannot do this without, of course, recognising that it is because of your humanistic nature.

Cde. Speaker, as you are aware, during the course of his presentation, the Cde. Leader of the Opposition mentioned racial and political discrimination. Those charges are not new charges. What is surprising, however, is the immediate echo it got from Cde. Narbada Persaud during the course of his so-called major presentation. Their fear is one which results from a period of insecurity. You will recall, Cde. Speaker, that India received her Independence in 1947. In 1945, there was the anti-malaria campaign. This campaign resulted in the reduction of that country's mortality rate. It forced Pandit Nehru to declared that Indian nationals living overseas must either decide on retaining their nationality or the nationality of the place in which they were domiciled. Cde. Speaker, I want to go to pains to point out that if there is any accusation which can be leveled about racial discrimination, it must be leveled at the P.P.P.

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You will recall, Cde. Speaker, in 1951, the British Guiana Constitution Commission, known as the Waddington Commission, in commenting on the racial situation in this country

stated in its report that: "Indian aloofness has now given place to realisation of their permanent place in the Guianese life and to demand for equal participation in it. This claim, reinforced by their growing literacy, leads them to compete for positions which they have not hitherto sought..." "We were, however, impressed", the committee went on, "by the amity with which peoples of all races live side by side in the villages, where mutual dependency is, of necessity, recognised."

Then came, Cde. Speaker, in 1954, the Constitution Report by Robertson. In his Report, Robertson pointed out that Guyanese of African extraction were not afraid to tell the Commission that many Indians in an Independent British Guiana would be part not of the British Commonwealth, but of the East Indian empire.

After being defeated at the polls, Cde. Speaker, in 1964 and, of course, after refusing to leave office, Dr. Jagan smeared the local lexicon with the term "racial imbalances" which he said existed in the Police and Public Service. He had the same British, whom he blamed and cursed for his defeat, appoint a Commission of Enquiry which, of course, the People's National Congress rejected. Instead, the P.N.C. invited the International Commission of Jurists to look into this alleged discrimination which they complained about. When the Commission arrived and began its work, Dr. Jagan called for a boycott of the work of the Commission and did not take part in the work of the Commission claiming then that the imbalance and discrimination he complained about were not racial but political.

The International Commission of Jurists said that they were satisfied that in the long run the solution to the problem in the Public Service, did not lie in removing one man of a particular racial origin and putting in another of a different origin. If, the Commission went on, an African policeman probably failed to protect an Indian citizen, then the answer to that problem was not to replace him with an Indian policeman, but to put a fair policeman in his place, be he Indian, African, or of any other racial origin. It was clear, the Report went on, that the manning of the Public Service so as to achieve a balance mathematically commensurate with race would almost inevitably lead to a conflict with the necessary standards of efficiency, fairness and equality.

All of us know, Cde. Speaker, what happened during the P.P.P's term of office and we also know of the roles of the P.P.P Ministers while they held office. In agriculture, for instance, we remember how people were selected for land. At Black Bush Polder, for instance, 98 per cent of the farmers receiving lands there were of one ethnic group. It was with this type of background that the People's National Congress assumed office. We can never forget the mushroom racially-segregated schools of the early sixties. That, Cde. Speaker, ends the first

lesson. Follow-up lessons for members of the Opposition, of course, can be had from any nursery school, for which our programme stretches throughout the length and breadth of our country, or the Adult Education Association to which the hon. Member, Cde. Feroze Mohamed referred.

Cde. Speaker, there is a call that a reply be made to some of the proposals. I do not propose during this presentation to rebut specific questions which I am sure will be asked during the Committee Stage of the debate but to give an idea of what underpins our education programme. The revolution in education about which I will now speak, Cde. Speaker, is also geared to take care of not only brilliant children, but slow and mentally – retarded children.

This year, Cde. Speaker, Government proposes to spend \$125 million on education. If one were to look at the quantitative aspect of education during the last three years of the P.P.P. Government, it would be discovered that it contrasts sharply with the last three years of this P.N.C Government. In 1962, they spent \$10.8 million on education; in 1963 they spent \$10 million on education, and in 1964, they spent \$11.7 million making a total of \$32.5 million over a three year period. This year alone, Cde. Speaker, our education budget is twelve times their 1962 budget, thirteen times their 1963 budget, and eleven times their 1964 budget. And if you were to add the expenditure on education during the years 1978, 1979 and 1980, it would be discovered that this P.N.C Government would have spent \$336.3 million. Surely, this, when viewed in relation to the \$32.5 million spent over a similar period, tells why there was virtually no qualitative and quantitative improvement or achievement during the P.P.P's term of office. Of course, we are reminded of the racially-segregated, bottom-house schools of that period and now the infamous all-age schools, the term given to the tops of primary schools. They left the system in chaos that yielded results that are detrimental, which, of course, we are now trying to correct.

Cde. Speaker, the Minister in his report of 1964 did point out that it could hardly be expected that untrained teachers of limited academic background working in appalling conditions would turn easily to the teaching of sense of figures and students were obtaining their secondary education in name only. Cde. Speaker, it is relevant that I made reference to the manifest view because the eight years of compulsory education introduced in this country in 1876 was interpreted to mean 18 years of compulsory education for P.P.P supporters.

Do you know, Cde. Speaker, that during the conduct of an investigation by the University of Guyana it was discovered at some of our all-age schools during the early sixties and, of course, during the time of the P.P.P., that there were students in school up to the age of twenty-five and when asked to explain how such students could be attending primary schools, which they were traditionally called, the then Minister of Education replied that they were all-age schools?

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Imagine the harmful effects on discipline and behaviour of having men and women aged 25 years grouped together with children five years old under the open class-room system which was in existence then. The argument, as I remarked, was that those were all-age schools and so they had no age limit, but it also caused comrades like Cde. Kathleen Drayton - do you remember? - to remark that "the education planning in Guyana is a neglected area both in the economic and educational sense and yet it is the educationalist who understands economics or the rather rare bird, the economist, who understands education, who holds the key to the future progress..."

It is also that very situation that caused Cde. Winifred Gaskin to present a memorandum on education policy in January 1968. The 1968 plan while pointing the way forward was primarily a corrective educational plan aimed at cleaning up the dirty practices which were presented to the nation as educational reform.

At the secondary level, for instance, only the traditional grammar school type of education was offered although it was well known that even in the developed world only about 30 per cent of the students of secondary school age were capable of absorbing, and a far smaller percentage of passing, a grammar school type of examination. The system was geared to help and develop the squeezing out of students from the system.

Faced with this difficulty, the then Government lowered the age of entry to the Teachers Training Institute from age 18 to 16 and reduced the entry qualification from four subjects at the G.C.E. to a pass, in some cases, and a statement, in others, at the College of Preceptors examination, an examination which obviously because of its irrelevance and retrograde nature we abolished.

That, in a nutshell, represents the history of education under the P.P.P and lest I forget, it was their blue-eyed Kathleen Drayton who said and published in an article in the Independence issue of the New World - and I quote:

"It is impossible not to conclude that attempts to implement all of these reforms were motivated more by political considerations rather than by educational considerations."

Cde. Feroze Mohamed keeps harping on the University, possibly because he is a member of the Council. Year after year he bores this House with what he calls the pressing matters affecting the smooth running of the University and what he sees as "lowering of standards." He acknowledge, however, that the voted provisions keep going up annually and he attempted to point out in this House this afternoon that in education it is a question of the money you spend in

relationship to the overall Budget that matters. That is not so. One would not expect that a comrade like Feroze Mohamed, who always speaks of the glorious revolution of the Cuban people, would come to this House to complain that the money spent on education represents a small portion of the overall sum spent. I want to remind him that in Cuba, prior to the revolutionary, 25 per cent of the Budget was spent on education. They had the highest illiteracy rate in the region. They had the most educated inspectors in the world per student when rated and you will also know that the lessons we learn do not necessarily reflect the success of the programme. That is the Cuban experience.

I attempted to point out that with 75 million pesos per year, mismanagement and waste resulted in woeful deficiencies in the system in both quality and quantity of education. Sixty per cent of the school-going children in that country, for instance, were uneducated. Only 3.5 per cent had a secondary education and scarcely more than one per cent had a university education. *[Interruption.]* For 18,000 class-rooms in Cuba there were 1,315 school inspectors, yet teachers employed substitutes while they were away on holiday in places like Miami.

With the dismissal by the Revolutionary Cuban Government of 915 school inspectors, teachers employed to teach taught and the other 400 remaining inspectors managed 25,000 classrooms as against 1,315 inspectors managing 18,000 classrooms. It is clear that while increases are necessary for developing educational infrastructure, equipment, materials, etc., success must be seen in terms of the relationship of the curricula to the national goals and targets. Boldness, innovations and revolutionary methods must underpin educational philosophy. *[Applause (Government).]*

But, if simply for my friends across there, I would say that education must be seen in terms of the qualitative and quantitative aspects before a judgment of its success can be made. Our socialist oriented educational policy has as one of its aims to raise the level of production and productivity. It is guided by Lenin's view that we have to first raise the educational and cultural levels of the working class by developing their urge towards enlightenment and initiative. A condition for revolutionary action and economic success will only come about by raising skills, discipline, efficiency etc. and by the intensification and organisation of labour.

Why, therefore, all that rubbish about the World Bank controlling the curriculum and children's minds? The answer is simple. Dr. Jagan does not know that the multilateral programme, an innovation of this Government, is not a World Bank idea and that the Community High School programme came after Cde. Cecilene Baird, the then Minister, did not

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accept the proposal for junior grammar schools to be established. Instead, she held firm that a Community High School programme best suited our needs. Needless to say, the curriculum of the Community High School has won the admiration of educationalists and Government throughout the region and, indeed, throughout the world. [Applause.]

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One cannot understand Dr. Jagan's argument that World Bank financing results in control of curriculum and children's minds. Who finances an educational programme is not important. What, however, is important is curriculum and whether it is conducted by scientific and revolutionary methods in conformity with the party's ideological thrust, thus promoting creativity and an understanding of the relationship between work and study, not in financing. What we are trying to do for our young people in this country, Cde. Speaker, particularly those in school, is not to be criticized, particularly when it is observed that the combination of knowledge gained from books and lectures on one hand and the revolutionary practice and work on the other, is taking place.

Successful attempts to have students comprehend all that they learn in school and develop at the same times an ability to apply that learning to practice have been witnessed. For us, it is important that we give productive training effectively to our students and thus expose them at an early age to the world of work, practices, and time. In this way, they can acquire some basic familiarity with the productive implements, machines and the work environment. They must be able to have a comprehensive appreciation of life and a love for work. This participation of students in the economic life of the country is a necessary prerequisite if we are to produce students who will not seek jobs in a non-productive sector, but will bring academic excellence and relate to the world of production. Cde. Speaker, the moulding of our youths is the responsibility of the community of which teacher is an important part. The teacher must be a leader in the community, responsible for moulding that child. He must have a love for children, a belief that every child can make a contribution, an intimate knowledge of the community, and all aspects of the subject he is expected to teach. He must be involved in community work, not as a social worker but as a community builder. In other words, Cde. Speaker, he must be involved in manual work since the community is no more than an extension of the school. Above all, it is his revolutionary duty to serve in any community because by only so doing can the distinction between urban and rustic, town and country be removed and the gap between them narrowed.

It is within this philosophical direction education must move and has been moving under the People's National Congress.

The Speaker: Time.

Cde. Ramsaroop: I beg to move that the hon. Minister be given 15 minutes to conclude his presentation.

Question put, and agreed to.

Cde. Thomas: I was making the point that it is within that philosophical direction that education must move and is moving under the People's National Congress. Take for example, the work of the Adult Education Association. I wish to point out that there has been a rise of 23 per cent in the enrolment of students while the number of classes rose by 15 per cent; the rural areas showed an increase by 25 per cent in this regard. By the end of last year, Cde. Speaker, Adult Education Association classes numbered: Georgetown - 435; Essequibo - 74; rural areas including riverain areas - 123; Berbice - 75, making a total of 707 classes - an enrolment of 19,796 students. There were five areas of studies - Functional literacy, Academics, Technical - an area which generated a tremendous amount of interest - Development and Culture.

At the beginning of this year a comprehensive course was launched to meet the needs of those who cannot, for one reason or another, attend classes. Five subjects were offered. They were: English Language with English Literature, modern and traditional maths, Biology, West Indian History, and Spanish. The need for a linkage with the formal system was recognised and already the G.T.I, the G.I.T.C., the Faculty of Technology of the University of Guyana, and the Adult Education Association have worked out a strategy to organize programmes aimed at assisting the mobility of students. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Housing and Labour, for instance, the Association has embarked on a programme to sensitize communities to their responsibilities of making heard their personal concern.

Cde. Speaker, I now wish to look at nursery education, where learning begins. You will recall, in 1964, there were no nursery schools. With nationalisation, we acquired 161 nursery schools. That numbers has been increased to 372. There were no nursery teachers in 1964. There were no nursery students recorded in 1964. In 1980 there are 27,380 nursery school children. In 1980, 1,926 nursery school teachers are now in service. Government policy to set up more nursery schools all over the country will continue. We expect during this year with the assistance of UNICEF to set up six nursery schools with day-care facilities. These will be similar to the one already constructed at Melanie Damishana. Consequently, working parents and guardians will be able to leave their pre-school age children in the competent hands of trained staff. We need to know that the Government still enjoys the facilities being offered by the Netherlands project.

The quality of nursery-school teachers is improving. More of them are attending workshops, field trips, seminars, orientation courses, etc. and with the introduction this year of a training programme for nursery-school teachers, we are confident that the little difficulty of the 1977 take-over will be resolved. But a word of warning, entry to this programme will not be based on the attainment of the General Certificate of Education in four subjects as in the case of Lilian Dewar or Cyril Potter Schools, but rather on maturity, love for children, love for teaching and a capacity for work and study. It is our view that if we are to ensure that our children are off

to a good start then we must make sure that those who teach are better than those thrown up by some unfair examination system, which is primarily academic in nature and too narrow a device for testing competence and overall ability. This programme will last for three years and will be starting with some 100 practicing nursery-school teachers.

For primary education, Cde. Speaker, during 1964, there were 358 primary schools. These included the racially-segregated schools. In 1980, there are 433. The number of pupils going to school in 1960 was 110,768. In 1980, the number is 133,073. The number of teachers employed in the primary schools was 3,184 and those included teachers like Barney Johnson and men of his ilk. In 1980, there were 4,482 teachers in our primary schools and the percentage in 1980 is 40 as against 37 in 1964.

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In so far as secondary education is concerned, the number of schools in 1964 was just 13. Today, it is 65. The number of students in 1964 was 7,962. Today, there are 23,568. The number of teachers in 1964 was 280; today, there are 1,700. Cde. Speaker, I do not really intend to bore this House with a lot of statistics, but I need to point out that there are a number of innovations within the system which never existed in 1964. We know of the inputs, and the number of programmes the University now offers. We also know, Cde. Speaker, that in the technical and vocational areas our students are doing better. I have a note sent to me by the Principal of the New Amsterdam Technical Institute, where he pointed out that a student was able to win a silver medal at the City and Guilds Exam, but time does not permit me.

So far as secondary education is concerned, I want to point out that I share Cde. Mohamed's views about the S.S.E.E exams, even though I do not accept his analysis. The idea was to have the S.S.E.E. results because they allow the students of secondary schools a means of gaining entry into that school system which has two stages. Now that we are sure that the 19,300 students who wrote the S.S.E.E. exam just a couple of days ago will all have places, we do not need a test-fail examination as the S.S.E.E. Our officers, therefore, must now look at the system with a view to coming up with a device which can place children along the national stage of their ability and scheme of their particular ability and capability.

Cde. Speaker, the remarks about the Caribbean Exams Council were really unfortunate. I want to point out that we cannot really make a comparative analysis. We ensured that of our children of the age and in the forms which took the exams, who were allowed to take it in other countries of the region, only the better students in the better schools were allowed to take the exams. Our exam results were not poor in figures. There were four basic factors, first, the demands of the new syllabus, we were accustomed to working for the London G.C.E. which was primarily an examination that tested one's ability to cram. The C.X.C. on the other hand is an exam which is a real exam. The London G.E.C. was one which was seen by the teachers as better than a regional exam after the problem of years of communication and people's psychological approach to things local and things foreign. Hence, one question that ought to be asked is whether or not teachers should not really be blamed to some extent. Cde. Speaker, I think that there is some difficulty in determining what ought to happen so far as the two levels of exam in the C.X C. are concerned but I cannot really go into all of that because I recognise that my time is fast coming to an end.

Cde. Speaker, the secondary education programme continues. The Community High School will provide 4,500 places. It is intended to extend existing secondary schools to provide 6,630 places and to provide one new Secondary School Teachers Training hostel to accommodate 460 Secondary School Teachers. The Caribbean animal health technicians training programme was allowed 72 graduates annually and agricultural training be increased.

I wish to say in conclusion that it is really difficult for us to hear that one passing comment about the Director of Culture and a criticism about the cultural existence. Let me say quickly that the Department of Culture has exchange programmes with the Soviet Union, Cuba, the G.D.R., none with imperialist countries. We are receiving assistance in our school of Dance, Music Department and in archaeology from comrades who are skilled in those areas, coming from a number of Socialist countries. You will recall Cde. Speaker that prior to the entry of the People's National Congress into Parliament, there was not a single cultural inter-relationship,

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4.55 - 5.03 p.m.

neither was there any attempt to organize culture. I wish to say that recognise that culture must be sought, it must be reached, and it can only grow as a result of production and productivity and the people's efforts.

Sitting suspended at 5.03 p.m.

On resumption - -

The Speaker: Cde. Corbin.

The Minister of State for Youth and Sport (Cde. Corbin): Cde. Speaker, the Minister of Economic Development a few days ago presented a Budget Speech to this Parliament, a Budget Speech which indeed shocked and surprised many people who had predicted that the reason for the delay of this Budget was that this country was bankrupt and that the P.N.C. Government was afraid to come to the masses of Guyanese people and present a Budget because there were no funds to run this country.

Once again this presentation of the 1980 Budget demonstrates not only the capacity of the People's National Congress to win elections but the capacity of the People's National Congress and its leader, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, to capably manage the economy of this country to ensure that it moves forward towards socialist development. Therefore, I would like to associate myself with the other speakers in this House who have congratulated the Minister of Economic Development for the presentation of this document and who surprised the many critics and, indeed, confounded the Opposition.

This Budget demonstrates that the P.N.C and Guyana have the capacity to overcome the economic situation which the country now faces. The Budget gave a detailed analysis of both the world and local economic situations. It gave an evaluation of the performance of this economy over the past year pointing out the weaknesses and the areas of improvement which could be effected. It outlined what can be done in Guyana if we are to overcome the economic problems which the country is faced with. What is more, the Budget Speech also points out what the P.N.C. Government had already done and what it will do in the future to ensure that Guyana continues to move forward.

This methodical presentation of the Budget so confused the Opposition that we found it extremely difficult in their contributions to find out what were their criticisms and their disagreements with this Budget. From the beginning, for example, the Leader of the Opposition in his normal lifestyle, though in this particular case he translated his lifestyle to words, proceeded on an excursion into the international arena and discussed a number of issues in an attempt to use peripheral matters to say that Guyana had diverted from its socialist course.

We had, for example, some other speakers taking drives on punctured buses by night. We had one other speaker going on confused walks on the working class because he felt that it was bourgeois to drive a motor car and that is contradictory to his class position and demonstrated that we were not moving socialist.

We had another presentation which told us and which indeed had a confession that there was a high degree of mental illness in Guyana. I do not know if the speaker at this time was looking at a mirror. Lastly, we had another contribution which spoke about education but spent a great deal of the time saying two things, that there were not sufficient funds to carry out this programme that the P.N.C. had begun, and that there was something wrong with one examination which was changed and also explaining that the P.P.P's record in education could be compared favorably. I do not know with what, but all these contributions demonstrate that this Budget is a Budget which took into account very objectively the conditions which are present in Guyana at this moment and represents a very serious attempt by this Government to face reality and develop programmes so that Guyana could move forward.

We have heard criticisms that Guyana is not moving towards socialist development and I think it is important to ask ourselves what yardstick we use to determine this position. If I am to be reminded of the presentation of the hon. Member on the other side, Cde. Feroze Mohamed, a few minutes ago he explained to this House that practice is the criterion of truth and he told me outside that this is an essential part of Marxist philosophy. I am happy that the hon. Member realises this because I think if we are to examine in detail the direction in which this country is going we cannot analyse it on statements but we need to put on our spectacles and examine what practically has been done in Guyana to ensure that we move forward and we construct socialism because it is vital to understand the stages of revolution and the tasks which have to be accomplished during these particular stages. When one hears the criticisms coming from an avowed Marxist party one gets the impression that like some Utopian they hold the view that we would be able to construct socialism in Guyana without any problems at all, without any contradictions, without any difficulty; that we will be able to wave a magic wand and build socialism in this country but I would like to point out that in no country that I know of, was socialism built and constructed in any short space of time. The shortest period I have heard some countries boast about is 20 years and therefore if one expects that the P.N.C. will perform miracles I think that would be expecting too much.

What we have to examine in Guyana, if we are to be sure that Guyana is not diverting from its socialist course, is to ensure that we look at some of the vital characteristics which dictate that we are moving in a socialist direction. What is the relationship between man and wealth in this society for wealth is an important concept in the construction of socialism. What is the relationship between man and man in the society because if we are to speak about the development of socialism we have to talk about the class struggle and the development of socialist democracy in our society. Therefore, if we are to look at Guyana today it is quite clear that if performance is to be used as this yardstick the P.N.C. has moved a very great deal forward in many programmes which have been practically accomplished in this country to say that Guyana is on a socialist road.

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In the economic sphere we have seen 80 per cent of the economy in the hands of the State, a very important area of controlling the wealth of this country, not in the hands of a few people, but in the hands of the masses, and we have seen that the wealth is not used for further exploitation of our people but rather we are seeing the social benefits for which this wealth is being used. This is demonstrated, for example, in free education which the comrade criticised not too long ago. Free education, text books, exercise books, etc. We have seen benefits in the improvement of social and medical facilities in and around the country. So, in essence, we have seen that the relationship between man and wealth has not been one which existed in the past but in fact the P.N.C. has tangibly demonstrated that this change of ownership is for the benefit of the working class of this country.

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We have also seen, Cde. Speaker, that these changes in the economic sphere not only remained physical in every sense of the word but in areas where we have moved to control the economy, we have seen serious efforts made to socialise production and get meaningful involvement of the workers in production and productivity, in decision making, and the development of socialised planning. We have seen serious efforts made in Guyana to develop class consciousness and to educate the working class of this country for that is the foundation on which development will take place. We have seen tangible efforts being made to remove the class differences which exist in the society and this again is evidenced by the equal opportunities being provided to all our people to develop in every area:- in technical training through the National Service, in practical skills, and in many other areas of Guyana.

If we are to examine what else has been done for the development of the working class, we can look at what has happened in the area of housing and this has been carefully pointed out by the Minister of Economic Development in his presentation, what has been done in agricultural diversification and in creating better conditions for the development of the peasantry and to ensure that there is greater production and productivity. Cde. Kennard spent a great deal of time giving some statistics in this area. We have seen programmes aimed at developing the spirit of self-reliance in our people in Guyana and our Hinterland Development Programme, pioneered and spearheaded by the Guyana National Service, is evidence, Cde. Speaker, that this People's National Congress Government can by practice, by actual evidence of its performance, claim to be vanguard of Socialist development not only in Guyana but in the whole of Latin America. And because of this progress, there is no real criticism of what the P.N.C. is doing.

We have heard the same old criticisms - corruption, discrimination, deviation from Socialist principles, State capitalism, no democracy. Those are the regular complaints we hear every time the Opposition opens its mouth but I would like to ask the Marxists on the other side of the House, in which Socialist country that they have studied or have visited, was socialism developed without these very problems, without problems of corruption, thievery, banditry, and discrimination? These are problems which are present in any society which has had a capitalist past and since we have not attained socialism - a state which the P.N.C. has not claimed we have achieved as yet - during this period of transition, it is obvious that we will have these problems but we hear that the P.N.C. is the author of these problems. Maybe, I would ask our Marxist friends on the other side why is it in the early stages of the revolution they established the Checkers? Why is it in the early stages of the revolution they established the Checker? Why is it there was need to set up the All Russia Extraordinary Commission for the suppression of counter revolution, sabotage, subversion, blackmarketing and profiteering if there were not these problems in the early stages of the development of socialism in these societies? But the presence of these problems do not demonstrate that a society is not moving forward. It is the approach of the vanguard party and the State to these problems which will determine whether the society is moving forward or not.

Maybe, our good friends on the other side should do a bit more home-work before coming to this House to, as they do on the outside, attempt to confuse people by pointing out that these problems which we face in this country are such new problems, problems which, if you are building socialism, you should not have, or they are problems which have just surfaced because of this P.N.C administration. It is because of the activities of an organisation like the Checker in the early stages of the revolution in the Soviet Union that they were able to deal with certain malpractices like blackmarketing, some of the very problems which we are experiencing in this country, and it was by that organisation that some of these problems were eradicated. Maybe I

should remind them of some of the penalties awarded by that organisation, like confiscation of property, deprivation of food rations and detention in forced-labour camps, and those were described then as lenient punishment for some of the crimes which were found operating in the society at the time. What they considered a little harsher was death by shooting without court trial during the period of the transition in the Soviet revolution.

The point I am attempting to make, Cde. Speaker, is that how we deal with problems in any society during this transition period is not determined by any fixed formula but by careful analysis of the objective conditions which operate in the society at the time. What this P.N.C. Government has demonstrated is that we are capable of making careful analysis of the objective conditions and applying the correct solutions so that development could take place in this country. That is how you prove whether you are Marxist or not, not by posturing, not by taking so-called principled positions which we hear constantly from the Opposition. Cde. Speaker, when we hear so often of this principled position of the Opposition, I am reminded of the best description of the Opposition and this principled position by one who is competent and qualified. I quote from a document, the speech by Cde. Ranji Chandisingh, "Education in the Revolution", at the last Biennial Congress of the People's National Congress and he had this to say about the P.P.P., "They turn hither and thither and know not where to go. Their so-called principled positions are absorptions of principles". And he continued a little later - about the P.P.P - "People who know better, matured socialists and progressives, can only laugh and wonder how such 'great Marxist revolutionaries' could arrive at such absurd conclusions. But unfortunately, in all parts of the World there are to be found gullible people, who can be garnered to lodge protests.

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I think, Cde. Speaker, that is the best description of the principled position which the Opposition has claimed to be using in its criticism of the P.N.C. programmes from time to time, but not withstanding these criticisms, the P.N.C Government recognises its responsibility to continue building socialism in this country and in this regard recognises also that the youth of Guyana have a very vital and integral part to play in this development process. It is in this context that Government's policy in relation to youth is not separate and apart from its overall policy of national development, for we recognise that if Guyana is to build socialism, if we are to prepare our young people to play meaningful parts in the economic, social, cultural, technical and scientific development of the society, it is necessary to prepare the type of programme so that they can be properly geared for responsibility now and in the years to come. That is why, as I said Government's policy for youth is not isolated, but is closely related to our overall development strategy and can be traced from the type of education system which has been developed by this P.N.C. Government - the recent re-organisation of the whole education system, the provision of free education from nursery to university, the restructuring of the schools curriculum, the introduction of the work-study programme.

All these are examples of how this Government has carefully applied its mind to the task ahead and has instituted programmes which could prepared our young people to deal with the task which they are expected to accomplish. It is this policy of the P.N.C Government which has ensure that institutions like the Guyana National Service, which was so severely criticized and still is criticized by the Opposition, can continue to provide the skills, the orientation and the proper preparation of our young people so that they can have the skills particularly at this time to cope with the great demands of a developing nation. It is this overall policy direction that has caused the Government through its Youth Division to institute a number of programmes like youth leadership training, F.C.H. training camps, special training for field staff, so that they can understand the problems with which our young people are faced, and help them to solve these problems very effectively and independently, the organisation of a special craft course and so on, so that by involvement of young people in these programme we can tangibly assist in this task of preparation.

It is out of the recognition of the task which is ahead that there was this recent merger of youth and sport, for though sport is not the exclusive preserve of youth, it is true to say that the large percentage of persons participating in sport are young people and because of this close inter-relationship, we will be able to maximise on the services of limited personnel in the field to bring about more co-ordination and a more dynamic approach towards the work in Guyana. Cde. Speaker, the programmes which we have developed for youth and sport in Guyana are numerous, but I think I would be failing in my duty if I did not remind our friends on the Opposition of the

tremendous success of the mass games demonstration which was held not so long ago in this country.

There were some who attempted to criticize this innovation, this natural development and extension of our youth programme, to help to build disciplined minds and disciplined bodies in our young people and who could not associate this programme with the development of our socialist objectives. So, there were some who set out to criticize the programme, but I am happy that notwithstanding these efforts, the mass games were a tremendous success. The young people who participated demonstrated by closing their ears to the stupid protest of others. They were reasonably young people, but they understood the direction in which this country is going, that remembered that it was the P.N.C. who provided free education for them, they remembered it was the P.N.C who enabled them to vote at eighteen, they remembered that it was the P.N.C that introduced free text books in the school system, they remembered that it was the P.N.C that enabled them to have work-study training while at school. And so, in the task of the mass games, they continued to recognise that under the P.N.C. Government, there is a great future for the youths of this land. I am certain by their demonstration in the mass games, they will continue to support the People's National Congress Government forever and ever.

The Speaker: Cde. Ally.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, some years ago, in this very Parliament Chamber, there were not enough seats to accommodate the people who came to listen to the debate and to sit here with us until midnight. Today, this House appears to be like a haunted house. The people have no confidence in the Government anymore, there is no sense prattling. The people themselves would not have been right here, even Members of this House are not interested any longer and some of our members while sitting there are sleeping because they are not interested any longer.

Today, Cde. Speaker, our Ministers are talking about production. I do not know what they are really talking about. Right here, this is the Guyana Co-operative Agricultural Industrial Development Bank Report 1978. Let us see the great production and why our economy is as it is today. What is responsible for these things? For instance, in 1976 there was corn production in the Pomeroon River. They planted 544 acres of corn and they harvested 544 pounds of corn. That is not possible, I do not think anybody is going to harvest one pond of corn from a whole acre of land. That one pound cost approximately \$175.00. Great production, we could feed the whole of the Caribbean with this production. Cde. Speaker, in 1977, they planted six acres, they harvested six pounds of corn. In 1976, they planted in the Berbice River, 824 acres of corn; they harvested 824 pounds of corn.

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The Speaker: Where are you reading from? Page 37? Of the Co-operative Bank Report? Of which year?

Cde. Ally: The year is 1978.

The Speaker: May I have a look at it, please?

Cde. Ally: You are taking up my time. You will have to give me additional time.

The Speaker: I am not taking up your time. I am to see that you do not mis-lead the House either. [Pause] Cde. Ally, if you look at page 37, it starts off with “Appendix Projected Output for Acreage Financed under the Crop Credit Sales Crops and Areas Acres”, then you will see three noughts at the top and then 1976 and 1977. So the quotation is not accurate. [Laughter.] All right, comrades. All of us can make that kind of mistake. Now it has been drawn to his attention he will not continue repeating that.

Cde. Ally: This is the figure that is here, the way I understand it. In 1979, at Black Bush Polder, 75 acres of black eye peas were planted, and they did not even harvest one grain. They brought a man from India, Dr. Sukha, who is a Chemist and a specialist in legumes. I do not know how much that costs us. This is the type of production they are talking about. We do not know where we are going and what sort of production the Government is talking about.

The Speaker: Cde. Ally, I drew your attention to the fact that the figures you were quoting were not correct.

Cde. Ally: But I quoted another from Black Bush Polder last year.

The Speaker: From which book?

Cde. Ally: I went there.

The Speaker: You are speaking from personal knowledge?

Cde. Ally: Let us move to the cattle industry. Some years ago we were in a position to export cattle. We were exporting cattle from this country to Suriname and many other countries. What has happened to the cattle industry? In those days when we were exporting cattle, we were selling beef in this country at 36 to 50 cents per pound, 50 cents for steak, boneless beef. We had

many butcheries along the coast. Today, all the butcheries are dwindling and if you want to buy beef you have to find the municipal markets. What is responsible for this. The Minister, Cde. Steve Naraine, will bear me out. In 1971, he went to Black Bush cattle pasture. When this pasture was established, there was a plan to build mounds and paddocks. When the members of the P.N.C. came into office, they abandoned that plan. Mr. Steve Naraine thought he could cut down irrigation from the Cattle Fork pumping water into the rice cultivation area. When we went there he said, "well to my God. I am surprised." He did not know. There was nothing left there. The whole thing was completely destroyed. [A Comrade: "who destroyed it?"] The P.N.C. Those were different days.

Milk we had milk all over. All the shops in the city had. We had trucks transporting milk competing with D'Aguiar's drinks all over the place. Then the Premier used to call the people to drink milk because it was cheaper than aerated drinks. Today, if they had maintained the cattle industry and encouraged the milk industry we would have had no cause to import milk into this country. It is because of the behavior of this Government.

Talking does not mean anything at all. Talking about production with the Local Government. This Government is afraid to hold local government elections. Since 1970 it has placed nominated members in village council and now we have members there illegally. They have no right to be there because the list of the P.N.C. candidates is already exhausted. Most of those people died; some tendered their resignation; some failed to attend three meeting. A new set of people, inexperienced people, are in there and as result the Local Government is inefficient and people are afraid to go to the fields because they spend their money and lose their crops.

All these things are responsible for the fall in production in this country and I hope that the P.N.C will not allow – four consecutive Local Government Elections have been postponed. This year will be the fifth. I only hope that they will not allow it. We must have free and fair local government elections if they really mean that we should have production so that as to have foreign exchange.

There are a lot of things wrong today. I listened to what Cde. Duncan was saying and he put it very nicely, that there are a lot of P.N.C members inside who are doing a lot of things. Fraud, corruption, nepotism, these are all over the place. For instance, at Black Bush Polder we have a man by the name of F.L George who is suppose to be the father-in-law of the Minister in this House. He was planting two fields of land, occupying these two fields from 1972 to 1976 without paying one cent as rent. And he was using all the GRB machines to cultivate those lands. In 1975, during the spring crop this gentleman received \$10 per acre in incentive bonus for 70 acres of land when he had no crop on that land and not one grain of rice. Corruption. No wonder the economy is in this mess today.

Right now everybody is saying - I went there myself and investigated. The Minister took over the land and he is planting the land. Minister Oscar Clarke, the Regional Minister. Two fields of land, a bulldozer, five bulldozers left Linden and travelled all the way up to Black Bush Polder to Sampson. This bulldozer went up there to bulldoze the land. They made the dams better than the road for those two particular fields. The bulldozer went into the field and bulldoze the whole field. Four G.R.B tractors. Four of them were GRB machines. One irrigator from the G.R.B is still there on the land. One Hymac from Land Development Department went there and cleaned all the trenches of weeds. At those expense? G.R.B's ..., a mechanical engineer, Layton Simon, who is suppose to be preparing agricultural machines to be set up in the fields for all the farmers to have the benefit of them, he was in charge of directing work in the field and all the G.R.B workers were involved there. G.R.B. vehicles were transporting workers to the field. G.R.B. vehicles were transporting materials to the field. Right now they have men with guns and these vehicles are transporting them to and fro all during the day and the night to protect the crop form the birds.

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These are some examples of the corruption that is going on and no rent is being paid for these lands. All these lands are running under heavy debt.

The Speaker: Cde. Ally, how do you know that no rent is being paid?

Cde. Ally: I went in to investigate and to check on it and the people who are responsible there, they know whether the rental is being paid, they told me so. That is how I got it.

The Minister – Regional (East Berbice/Corentyne) (Cde. Clarke): I think that since the hon. Member, Cde. Roshan Ally, chose to refer to me by name in this House, it is only right that I should indicate that the information given by Cde. Ally is not correct, that is, the information with respect to lands being occupied in the Black Bush Polder for which no rent is being paid.

The Speaker: That is not a point of order. What Cde. Clarke is saying is that you must be very accurate with information, you cannot make statements which you cannot justify.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, I would like to refer to one which I have seen there, notices posted since 1978, there is a Mr. McGowan --

The Speaker: Let's come to the Debate on the Budget, that it is not relevant to the Budget.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, this is not 1978, this now, only two weeks ago, the Foreman of Black Bush Polder had to go to put up a notice on this land and a copy of the notice has been served on Mr. McGowan. He owes \$2000 since 1978, now it has gone up to \$2,672.15 and he is not paying the rent. They had to serve a notice on him that he must pay up within three months or else he will lose the land.

The Speaker: If the law says that he does not pay the rent and they serve him a notice, what that has to do with the Debate? If you do not continue with the debate and stop calling people's names in matters which you cannot justify and prove---

Cde. Ally: I can prove it. Who says I cannot prove it? Cde. Speaker, there are a lot of these things in Black Bush Polder, and this is the reason why, this is what I am raising my point on, the economy is where it is today. This is the reason why they cannot pay their debts, this is the reason why they had to take large sums of money in writing of bad debts, but bad debts are written off for only certain sections of the people. This is what I am trying to prove to this House, corruption, Cde. Speaker, this is something that is going on, not only today but for some

years now.

I would like to say something about the Rice Marketing Board Bond at Springlands. Right now, I have proof here, notices, even one was sent to me. There is a lot of corruption, money reaching thousands of dollars that cannot be account for. They are sending notices to Harry right and Harry wrong all over the place, they do not mind who is who. This is an ordinary schoolboy, they gave him a notice and they made up the account with the belief that people would have never gone to the Rice Marketing Board because they never planted rice. So people--

The Speaker: Cde. Ally, if the schoolboy did not know, they cannot do him anything. I do not want to hear that.

Cde. Ally: But if they go to court.

The Speaker: But if they go to court, they will have a defence.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, I don't know what we may speak in this House because these things are very, very important and we cannot bring them to light, the papers will not take them, the radio will not take them, then the nation would just --

The Speaker: Then you want me to take them? Nobody will take them but I must take them.

Cde. Ally: I think I have the privilege to point out some of these things as a Parliamentarian in this area.

The Speaker: Cde. Ally, you have the right to talk within the rules of this House.

Cde. Ally: There is another one, I do not know if you will stop me again, and this is the Land Selection Committee in Black Bush Polder. When the P.N.C had its thirteen Anniversary Celebrations in Black Bush Polder, it made the announcement about the Land Selection Committee two long years ago. The intention of setting up that Land Selection Committee was to look into the question of those lands which were unoccupied and lands where one person was occupying more than one plot of land. Today, we can see that instead, the committee just simply pushed it aside. Big boys are responsible for the land; big boys hold the land, and some of them and some other people who occupy more than one plot of land, go it through bribery, so this Government cannot take away this land from them. As a result of that, there are going to people who are there legally on the land, who got the land through a Land Selection Committee that selected them and placed them on the land.

Our Minister has made a statement in Black Bush Polder boasting about giving leases to 43 people in Black Bush Polder who did not have leases before. This Land Selection Committee is made up of 12 members. One of them is a pensioner living in Georgetown, accepting his pension; he is receiving \$800 per month to be Chairman of the Committee, and \$500 for travelling. They take \$96 for meals at every meeting and they meet once a week. When we take into consideration that 43 leases have been given, the cost to give a person one lease is \$1,296.77. It cost that because the Hon. Minister is also a member of the Committee and he has been paid. Leon Dundas has been paid and all of them have been paid. On the other hand, what is going on there, Cde. Speaker, is a lot of harassment.

Cde. Clarke: Cde. Speaker, again I rise to a point of correction. The comrades cannot produce any evidence in this House to support that claim, there is no member of the Black Bush Polder Selection Committee that is paid as such.

The Speaker: Well, Cde. Ally you hear that now, you cannot mislead the House. You cannot come and give wrong information and make statements which are not correct.

Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, this is accurate.

The Speaker: Well, I do not know.

Cde. Ally: A man went up there, T.A. Earle, only a few days ago, on the 9th, Cde. Dalchand and Cde. Pariag were there. People came from Black Bush Polder, people who were there legally on the land but because of bribery and corruption, they removed a man from his land and placed somebody else. When Mr. Earle went up there, he is the Engineer of Lands and Surveys, he met the committee. He argued, put up a strong argument for his land because he knows what he has been involved. Mr. Earle threatened that he would end the life of that committee if it does not stop the corruption. Can we talk about these things, Cde. Speaker?

The Speaker: Yes, You have five minutes more in which to speak.

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Cde. Ally: Cde. Speaker, I would like to call on the members of this Government. Since they doubt it, let them set up a commission of inquiry, an impartial committee to go into the whole business of the Black Bush Polder and Rice Marketing Board. Now if they are honest and sincere in what they are talking. Let them set up a commission of inquiry now and we will see how many people are going to get jail for all these things. A lot of them over there, perhaps.

Cde. Speaker, I would like to go into a lot of things, I have witnessed even with the Police, all over the place. Five of them had to be dismissed at Springlands, four of them had to be transferred from the Hogstye outpost.

The Speaker: Next speaker, please.

Cde. Ally: I have name here, I have numbers here, Cde. Speaker, my time is not finished yet [Interruption.]

The Minister of State - Regional (Essequibo Coast/West Demerara) (Cde. Chowritmootoo): I deem it an obligation, a duty, to bring this House back into the realm of reality, accuracy and relevancy after the last contribution. In so doing, Cde. Speaker, I wish to join with the speakers who have the good sense and intelligence to read in to a master-piece of analytic, comprehensive and built-in-faith in the indomitable will and absolute resolve of the Guyanese people, its working classes, in congratulating the Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives, for the presentation of yet another Budget reflecting the concern of the Government of the People National Congress of the working class people of Guyana. Yet, Cde. Speaker, we have had the misfortune to listen to the Harangue and Diatribe, misled emphasis and miscarriages of truths emanating from the master conjurists of realities into hallucinations, gloom and prophecies of doom. The rhetoric of confrontation on the part of the Opposition has portrait adamancy, a stubbornness that that borders on idiocy, a sickness.

Cde. Speaker, the Budget 1980, has not only given, the much desired relief, which only a P.N.C Government is capable of giving, but this relief, time and again, has only been given by the P.N.C. in Government. The Guyanese workers have earned, not the superficial rights of meaningless and useless privileges, but the tangible things for better living. These tangible things are seen in the faces of our people, their standard of living, in their environment as a whole. We are debating a truly working class budget, a realistic economic strategy for the sustained efforts to survive in a hostile world in seemingly perpetual economic crisis. It is a fallacy to say, and to mislead this House that there is a section of the world in which there is no difficulty and that there is ever present a position of total serenity and economic stability. Even the most advanced

industrialised economies are today faced with the rising cost of living and the rising expectations of their various people.

I remember that Lenin, the great Soviet Leader, has sought most energetically to define the utopic and the realistic. Perhaps it will be good reading for the members of the Opposition to follow up a “Socialism - Scientific and Utopian”, by Engels from which they like Lenin, would draw their ideological strength, give them in direction and the understanding of what is taking place in society like Guyana. Good reading too, is the Immediate Task of the Soviet Government, in which the Soviet Government had understood the difficulties of a society in transition. Lenin the realist had the intelligence to discern and to act upon the circumstances and situation of the day, Lenin in his work On the Tactics in the 1917 Revolution selected Works Vol.VI said, and I quote, “Marxism demands an extremely precise and objectively verifiable analysis of the interrelation of classes and of the concrete peculiarities of each historical moment. We the Bolsheviks have always tried faithfully to fulfill this demand, since it is absolutely imperative for a scientific foundation of politics.” “Our teaching is not a dogma, but a guide to action” Marx and Engels used to say, and they ridiculed, and rightly ridiculed, the learning and repetition by rote of formulas which at best are capable of giving only an outline of general tasks that are necessarily liable to be modified by the concrete economic and political condition of each particular phase of the historical process.

What then, are the clearly established objective facts that must guide the party of the revolutionary proletariat at present in defining the tasks and forms of its activities? I define as the specific feature of the present situation “in Russia the fact that it is a period of transition from the first stage of the revolution to the second”. The Guyanese people are intelligent enough not to be taken in by the sterile archaic rhetoric of the Opposition. They know that if Guyana is to continue to develop then they must redouble their efforts in this the year of the effort, and ever after. The people of Guyana know that if the year of the effort, and ever after. The people of Guyana know that the only leadership capable of transforming the society is the Government of the People’s National Congress – the true representative of the interest of all the people of Guyana, and, no doubt, they will continue to demonstrate their faith in the government by their efforts to support and maintain the levels of production – nay, theirs is the resolved to increase and improve upon past performances, notwithstanding the People’s Progressive Party.

Cde. Speaker, the budget has given us the macro plan and firm intention, the forecasting of developmental target, and goals, and at the same time, sought to examine, and to scan the areas in which there is need to improve on our present performances and efficiency levels. If there is going to be more for all, there must necessarily be more to sell in order to earn foreign exchange, whereupon we can buy the things we do not produce or make. The Government of the People’s National Congress, as it always does, has constantly enthused and motivated the

workers who have entrusted the management of the country's economy, and towards this end, we have presented a Budget which must stimulate our people to new heights as it takes care of their ever-growing needs.

This Government does not claim divinity where upon omniscience and omnipotence are devolved. It is a human and humane Government with all the foibles of humanity. That we have set targets - that we have aspired to meet the targets - is a clear indication of our steadfast faith in the workers' ability, the Guyanese people as a whole. Our attempt, the attempt of the P.N.C. Government is to scientifically approach the whole developmental process. We will resolutely continue to follow the principles governing a planned economy. We are resolved against "ad hocism", we will not be fooled or cajoled into a dependent, appendage - type economy or that of a capitalist - type economy.

Nationalisation and the principle advocated for the control of our natural resources are irrevocable and irreversible. We are realists; we are the true Guyanese who see Guyana and the Guyanese situation first from our independent sovereign position, never to be puppets of anyone.

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Our people are convinced and need little or no prodding but they do fear wrath of the terrorists and those who would threaten to destroy their homes and their families once they do not succumb to their depraved desires for destruction and anti-production propensities. This fear the Government of the People's National Congress is resolved to destroy, as it seeks to destroy the perpetrators of fear. Ours is the duty to continue to foster confidence in our people, not fear.

What have we to show for our confidence and faith in the working class including our peasantry? How are we assured for the co-operation and oneness with our working class? We have tangible evidences of development, progress in train, in spite of the mounting difficulties now characteristic of developing poor economies. The evidence of development is so clearly manifested, that only the intellectually blind do not recognise its presence, for even the physically blind can feel and know. We on this side heartened by the reduced number in the category of the intellectually blind, but fail not to recognise the presence of a few on the other side. These tangible signs referred to are the results of the rural development strategy of the Governemnt of the People's National Congress.

Freedom from want, ignorance and diseases is the philosophical based upon which the development strategy is designed for rural Guyana. The policy for rural development is multifaceted but falls, unequivocally, under the ideological tenet "of bridging the gap between rural life and living and urban life, its standards and facilities". The Government of the People's National Congress has, as a constant, the policy of removing the discrimination and social maladies which had had a negative effect on past rural Guyana. Can anyone, without compunction, say that the landscape of rural Guyana is the same since the advent of the People's National Congress in Government? A most positive trend of development has dotted the entire surface of our beautiful, verdant and productive rural Guyana.

It is apposite to mention that the ideological principle of socialist development is now enshrined in the People's new Constitution, a Constitution which the opposition P.P.P. had refused to help to formulate but on whose virtues they now seek to invoke for acceleration action the question of agrarian reform. That the Government of the People's National Congress has successfully advocated and has now constitutionalised the socialist principle of bringing the gap between rural and urban living stands monumental as a tribute to its consistency and non-compromising principle positions.

The 1980 Budget exemplifies thoroughness - not "ad hocism" or "cas casism" or emotional verbiage - plan in the people generally and from which the rural people of Guyana have an important role to play as an integer of the whole. One is beginning to perceive the

working and influence of the nascent State Planning Commission. Easily perceptible is the planned policy for rural development based not upon idealism and utopian dreams but the realities of our situation. One asks: what are the indicators of rural development? And one comes up with the answer: the productive capacity of its people due to the increasing quality of life and living in the rural areas.

It is my belief that Guyana stands second to none in the developing world for its programme and policy of rural and urban development by the people's own effort including that Cde. Dalchand. Where else can one find the dynamism, the drive, the persistency of people doing so much for themselves? No doubt the people are fired by the quality of the leadership of its Government – the Government of the People's National Congress, whose advocacy for co-operativism is now renowned but more importantly has influenced and inspired the vast majority of the Guyanese people.

Rural Guyana has been transformed because of the conscious and deliberate policy of the Government to harness the energies of rural Guyana for developmental tasks. The practice of co-operativism is based upon the theory that people must necessarily conglomerate to exert and exemplify their individuality. It is only through the group that the talent and ability of the individual can truly flourish, blossom and bear fruit. It is worthwhile to remember that it was the co-operative which was identified as an instrument for distribution and as an agent for consolidating the political and economic alliance between town and country, between the working class and the peasantry in the early days of the Soviet Government.

The co-operative as a physical manifestation of oneness, of unity of purpose, affords the opportunity as it does, for people's self-reliance through self-help activities. Rural Guyana is replete with the evidence of the efforts of co-operatives, the spirit of co-operation, the spiritual force that energizes our people to perform for their own betterment, by depending on their own strength for their general upliftment. Of course, the community co-operative is but the microcosm of the national policy of self-reliance, the drive to be independent, to be nationally self-reliant, relying on no one for our economic salvation, but ever willing to co-operate with all for the mutual good of all mankind.

The most important facet of good Government is the evidence of partnership of the people and their Government. Co-operativism and its physical manifestation, self-help, are not the only areas of people's development in rural Guyana and the partnership of the people and Government but also the concerted efforts of central Government to bring to rural Guyana those facilities which are traditionally the prerogative of urban areas. Physical infrastructures upon which environmental changes are wrought are the order of the day in rural Guyana. Daily, new

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additions to the spectrum enhance the landscape. Our roads and highways are a delight - from the Corentyne to the Essequibo – from Georgetown to Linden and many miles of secondary and tertiary roads make the ever-growing network a remarkable feature of rural development in Guyana.

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Road transportation is only one of the features of physical infrastructural development of rural Guyana. Also we have the Demerara Harbour Bridge and the Canje Bridge, which are glowing manifestations of a policy for development which has people as its major concern. Cde. Speaker, I was indeed very saddened to have listened to one of the speakers of the Opposition P.P.P refer to the Demerara Harbour Bridge as useless, a guinea and a waste of taxpayers' money. I challenge that speaker to say that to the people who benefit most from the construction of the Demerara Harbour Bridge – the people of Region 2, the people of the Essequibo Coast, the Islands, the Pomeroon and the West Demerara. How utterly outrageous, how most sickeningly profane, how preposterous! Cde. Speaker, that is but an insult to the good judgment of the Guyanese people.

Cde. Speaker, roads are links of communication but not the only link. Water transportation plays an important role in facilitating the Guyanese commuters' but the members of the Opposition hate perhaps, but more deliberate than hate, I think, fail to mention the coming into being of M.V. Kumaka. He who looks for faults finds nothing else. What of telecommunications? Has not this development a most telling and positive effect upon the lives of rural Guyanese? Today the differences are swallowed up by the modern and expensive network of telecommunications. Time saved is time gained, and time gained in positive development of the expansion of this benefit to rural Guyana has, in fact, ensured that rural Guyana entered majority.

Cde. Speaker, electricity is most costly and yet it is a useful facility for development. It now a standard feature of rural living.

The Speaker: Four minutes more.

Cde. Chowritmootoo: How many poor countries like Guyana, Cde. Speaker, with its limited exploratory resources can boast of electricity to the majority of the rural people? Cde. Speaker, even the light of development, the physical light of electricity cannot be impacted upon the intellectually blind. Some have eyes and they see not.

Cde. Speaker, not to add to the ever growing list, the development of drainage and irrigation, empoldering, sea defences, would be inadmissible in formulating a catalogue of general developmental patterns in rural Guyana. The massiveness of the work now undertaken and those works completed can never be adequately visualized. One needs to visit to see and behold the changing landscapes on the Essequibo Coast, East Demerara, East Berbice, and elsewhere. It is time, Cde. Speaker that the members of the Opposition P.P.P. seek to reconcile themselves. Too much has happened, too much is taking place and to wish away all of that is outside the capability of the Opposition. /Interruption/

Cde. Speaker, as you are aware, rural development covers the entire spectrum of rural Guyana, its socio cultural, political and economic facets, and its importance is not just because rural areas hold the potential solution to this food crisis but more particularly, it has afforded a just and an able Government to portray a natural and characteristic feature, that is, that wherever people live, be it in the riverain, hinterland, or costal rural Guyana, the Government of the People's National Congress has an abiding interest and never-ceasing concern for all the people of Guyana wherever they may be.

Cde. Speaker, in conclusion I do not wish to warn the Opposition for its negativism but merely to advise that it should get out of the stupor of conversation, abandon its posture of false concern and self-righteousness, and rid itself of the attitude of destructiveness, and that it should join the People's National Congress in the challenging task of creating a new society, a society of abundance for all.

The Speaker: Mr. Abraham.

Mr. Abraham: Mr. Speaker, the 1980 Budget is a typical – /Interruption/

The Speaker: Comrades, please allow Mr. Abraham to speak.

Mr. Abraham: it is a typical vote-catching exercise. One thing is clear, sir, there will be elections. When? That remains a mystery. A rise in pay is promised to the public sector - pity that it was not the \$14 a day minimum wage that the P.N.C at its last May day rally said that the workers did not want - but behind all this facade, the façade of the increase in pay, tax relief, incentive schemes, allowances for children born out of wedlock, etc. the P.N.C Government in this its 1980 Budget, is striving manfully to hide its massive failure to keep the economy on an even keel. The language it employs to cloak its failures is very flamboyant, one must admit.

Surely, we do have a fantastic bridge across the Demerara River but we are not told what a millstone around the neck of the Government it is. That the Canje Bridge is breathtaking in its grandeur we do not doubt but are we told about the millions Government will collect from toll taxes on the roads? We learn with some comfort that the Bartica/Potaro road is being upgraded and maintained but are we told the similar stories of the Rupununi roads? These roads take a toll, sir, of vehicles that can easily be seen in the vehicular graveyards that dot Lethem and its environs. Surely we look with pride as we cruise down the East Coast highway but do we reflect on how much cheaper to commuters and to the economy as a whole, if we had the East Coast railway still going? Surely, sir, the need for oil, diesel, kerosene and gasoline would never have been as sharp as it is presently.

Mr. Speaker, the P.N.C. boasts that it has successfully moved in the direction of housing its people but has it really gone as far as it claims? When one compares the ratio of houses built by Government with the number of slums that mar our urban and rural areas of our country, the acute overcrowding, one wonders whether Government has begun to really tackle the housing problem.

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One begins to groan when one dwells on what the prospects will be like for the residents of the Interior, particularly the Amerindians. These far-flung areas are served mainly by Guyana Airways Corporation as we all know. The mind boggles at what figures will become when the new air fares come into force. One may ask, sir, does the rise in air fares automatically mean a rise in air freight? On the question of Guyana Airway, it must be noted that the public was informed that the Lethem airstrip was going to be closed for six weeks. Today, sir, the six weeks are up, but the airstrip is far from completed. My information is that it might not be completed until June. I stand subject to correction and if it is until June, it will be right in the middle of the rainy season. May I, on behalf of the residents of the Lethem community, and those villages served by the Lethem airstrip, plead the efforts be doubled so that the rains do not catch us with our pants down. So far, we are bearing the inconvenience of the Pirara service quite cheerfully, despite the breakdown in the bus service and the \$10 extra that people have to pay to get to

Lethem. Should the flood-gates be opened, I fear that the Pirara airstrip will no longer be serviceable as the airstrip will become soft.

Mr. Speaker, already the squeeze is on since the closure of the airstrip. The quota of flour calculated to last out the six weeks is now exhausted. In other words, there is no flour in Lethem. I was there Thursday last, so Rupununi residents like their Georgetown counterparts, are experiencing Guylines. With the re-opening of the airstrip, we trust these lines will banish quickly from the face of Lethem. I ask that the question of the acute flour shortage now prevailing in Lethem be looked into immediately and urgently. Yes, there are the Amerindians who will feel good with the cassava and farine but what about our coastal brothers? A charter by the smaller 748 aircraft should be dashed this week, if possible, to Lethem, to offset the very urgent need.

Mr. Speaker, how fare the Amerindians in Guyana today? I read with much interest the various articles in yesterday's Chronicle purporting to show that the Amerindians are in a much better position generally than they were many years ago. But, sir, are they? Are they the people who walk this land tall and strong and I under dignity and pride as their forefathers did? Are they better off economically and financially? I wonder. Admittedly, there have been some notable strides made by way of education for the Amerindians. At least two Amerindians sitting in this honorable House testify to this fact. I mean two are present here today. There have been a few University graduates, and as the Hon. Minister Duncan pointed out this afternoon, there is the first pilot who returned from training in Cuba recently but who, to my knowledge, has gone back to Paramakatoi to do farming until such time as he can get a plane to fly. Looking at the question objectively sir, must the credit for this go to the Government alone? I do not think so. But much credit should go to the early teachers, namely the church, especially in respect of the three Members of Parliament sitting in this House, and by the church I mean those Christian bodies such as the Anglican, the Roman Catholic, the Seventh Day Adventist and the host of other Christians bodies that have devoted their energies and efforts towards the education of Amerindians equally, sir, I gave the Government due credit for providing scholarships and taking charge of the Amerindians' secondary education. I appreciate this, I am grateful for this, but the public must be given a faithful and balanced picture of the bodies corporate who have by far been responsible for the coming of age of the Amerindians, namely, the church and State. On the subject of education sir, may I ask at this point what really is being done about the school in Apoteri? It is my information that there is just one teacher there in charge of about four classes and he is not trained.

It is against this background that I disagree most strongly with the article written by my friend and contemporary who sits on the other side, a person of no less caliber and standing than my Hon. Friend Minister Duncan. In an article entitled "Foreigners Pretend" in the Sunday

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Chronicle of March 30th, Minister Duncan writes: It may sound funny, but I have personally witnessed Amerindians who were punished in their schools for speaking and laughing in their mothers' tongue. I was not permitted to speak in my mothers' tongue or else I would have been victimised by the manager and the teachers of the Roman Catholic schools of that time." Sir, Minister Duncan tries to paint a picture that says what a terrible creature of colonialism the Roman Catholic Church is.

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I am surprised because Minister Duncan like myself --

The Speaker: Mr. Abraham, normally I do not like to interrupt you because you are always very constructive but Minister Duncan's statement to the Press has nothing to do with the debate. We are debating the Budget speech. As far as I recall he did not make that statement in this House. He went out of his way probably to write to the newspaper. You may reply in the Press.

Mr. Abraham: On Friday and today he spoke about Amerindians being made museum pieces by the colonial regime but I do not say that it was the colonial regime that has made Amerindians museum pieces. I maintained that it is the P.N.C I say this because this afternoon the lovely plate that we were eating from and is all beautifully decorated had a picture of an Amerindian semi-nude shooting with a bow and arrow. That is why I say it is the P.N.C members who are --

The Speaker: You are saying that the P.N.C. made the tea cups and plates?

Mr. Abraham: They allowed it to be used here, sir.

The Speaker: I must say this, Mr. Abraham. Your standard of debate is always very high. Please maintain it.

Mr. Abraham: Had it not been for the Church neither Mr. Duncan nor I would have been in a position today to be sitting in Parliament and making our respective contributions to this very important debate. Our new P.N.C Constitution on page 24 --

The Speaker: Mr. Abraham, it is not the P.N.C. Constitution. It is the Constitution of Guyana.

Mr. Abraham: Thank you, sir. It is the Constitution of Guyana article 53, page 24:

“... a person shall be qualified for election as a member of the National Assembly if, and shall not be qualified unless, he –

...

(b) is able to speak and... to read the English language with a degree of proficiency ---”

The Speaker: I do not want to stop you, but sometimes I wonder if some of us here are so qualified.

Mr. Abraham: I think some of- most of us.

The Speaker: I did not say all of us. Some.

Mr. Abraham: It continues –

“...to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the Assembly.”

Sir, if we were not taught English at school and rather depended on our ancestral tongues, how could Mr. Duncan or I --

The Speaker: The Constitution went on to say “proficiency”. That is why I was wondering.

Mr. Abraham: I beg your pardon. I did not hear you.

The Speaker: I am referring to what the Constitution said about proficiency in the English language and I am wondering whether some of us are really proficient in it. Merely reading and writing is not proficiency. You must understand.

Mr. Abraham: I want to publicly thank them for this achievement. I want to publicly thank all the missionary bodies that I named earlier on for their selfless labour in the field of education, specially towards educating the Amerindian. May I further take issue with Minister Duncan.

The Speaker: He is writing in the Chronicle.

Mr. Abraham: Something in the debate. On Friday he was giving a history of the achievements of the P.N.C. in relation to the Amerindians. The first that he listed was that

in 1964 the P.N.C. appointed its first Parliamentary Secretary. Sir, this is sheer poppycock because the record says it was the United Force, during the Coalition Government, that submitted the name of Stephen Campbell to fill the position of Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs. This was the period from 21st December 1964 to 13th May, 1966. It was the United Force's Stephen Campbell of revered memory who led the battle single handedly for rights and titles to land for the protection of his fellow Amerindians when he went to Lancaster House and presented a petition on behalf of the Amerindians of Guyana to Her Majesty the Queen.

There are a little over sixty members in this Hon. House this afternoon. Let us suppose for the sake of argument that the hon. Minister Hoyte in the course of his presentation said something utterly harmless such as, let us say, the Prime Minister must be a mad man to even contemplate sharing power with the P.P.P Let us say, that such harmless words came out of the mouth of the hon. Minister Hoyte. Now, let us continue and say, for the sake of argument, that unknowing to the others here, the hon. Member – shall we say the hon. Member Bynoe – takes it upon herself as goes to the Prime Minister and says “Cde. Leader, you know what, in the course of today's debate Cde. Hoyte called you a lunatic.’ Sir, how would the Prime Minister react? Would Minister Hoyte be please to hear his words distorted in such a manner. You and I know that simple elementary justice will be set in train. Very easily Mr. Hoyte will be vindicated. Sixty people here in these houses this afternoon could testify that what reached the Prime Minister's ear was not the truth. The Hon. Member Mrs. Bynoe –forgive me, hon. Member Mrs. Bynoe, for using your name - would be found to be at fault and wound with grace have to apologise profusely to Cde. Hoyte for doing him such disservice.

The point is that either the people in this house are lying and one has told the Prime Minister the truth or vice versa.

A parallel to the story I have just told this House took place, I understand, some time ago at Aishalton.

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The Speaker: Mr. Abraham, we are dealing with the Budget. The House cannot permit that type of thing. These are economic issues and political issues. I don't think that is relevant. Let us go on to something else.

Mr. Abraham: Cde. Speaker, I am told of a villager in the Pakarimas, whose farm was totally ravaged by wild hogs. This is not an isolated incident. I have personally seen a farm made desolate by agouti. You shoot one with a bow and arrow and the others scamper to maraud another person's farm. Hunting dogs are no match when a flock of wild hogs are on a rampage. They eat everything in their way, even the farmer if he does not scamper up a tree in time. Last year in Sand Creek a child was killed and eaten by a jaguar. I have known of a case in my home village where five children travelling alone in the forest were late for school because a puma refused to remove from the road until a passer-by with his dog gave chase. Hence, Mr. Speaker, the necessity for application for firearms in the interior to be processed with more speed and dispatch. This, coupled with the high incidence of acoushi ants, makes farming for the Rupununi farmers, especially the Amerindians, a frustrating undertaking.

During the last year's Budget Debate, I raised the question of the death of the late Humphrey Jonas, son of Captain Lambert Jonas of Monkey Mountain at the hands of a policeman. This year, I cite one more such case, the death of Ivor Smith, an Amerindian, who lived at the back of Ituni, I am informed that he was killed at the hands of a policeman, also. Is this case going to be abandoned? The incident of cattle resulting --

The Speaker: One minute more.

Mr. Abraham: The incidence of cattle rustling in the Rupununi is on the rise. What is being done about it? Malaria is one the rise. If no more personnel and vehicles are provided to reinforce the present valiant efforts to contain the diseases, we will have an epidemic on our hands. It is especially acute in the Yupukarri area. There is the prediction of another great flood in the Rupununi this year, with the attendant consequence of starvation. Not only the South will be affected, this time, but the North Rupununi as well. The cassava crop --

The Speaker: Half a minute more.

Mr. Abraham: The cassava crop will be ripe now. I ask that the situation be monitored closely. What, may I ask is the position with the new North-West Steamer?

The Speaker: Mr. Abraham, your time is up Cde. Rashid.

The Minister of State, Office of the Prime Minister (Cde. Rashid): Cde. Speaker, 16 years ago the People's National Congress after a protracted and arduous struggle, secured on behalf of the Guyanese working people the reins of political power. This was the victory for the poor over the rich, a victory for the oppressed over the oppressor. Ever since then, the People's National Congress Government has introduced measures and implemented programmes aimed at equating economic, social and cultural levels of the working people with their political status. In other words, the Government embarked on the destruction of the inherited capitalist order which guaranteed the exploitation of the broad masses of our people by a privileged group. Simultaneously, we introduced policies that would ensure the creation of just a socialist order that would liberate the energies of the working people for their collective good.

Cde. Speaker, beyond the shadow of a doubt we have moved a long way along the road to socialism. Look at some of the changes which we have brought about for the benefit of our people: the nationalisation of the commanding heights of the economy, free education, increased educational facilities for our young people, and the advances in agriculture which would ensure that the nation is self-sufficient. These and other achievements, Cde. Speaker, are sound indicators of what the working people hinted have achieved, and once remaining united in the future, can achieve.

This is not to say that we have not encountered difficulties on the way towards the building Socialism. We have had difficult periods. This is not to say that the People's National Congress Government has not made mistakes. We have made mistakes but, Cde. Speaker, we are not like the Pope, we are not infallible, we are human-beings and when we take cognizance of the fact that we operate in an environment that changes continuously, it is a little surprising to find decisions that are made today prove to be inappropriate sometime in the future and a scientific analysis on development and change must take into consideration not only the domestic situation but also external forces. At the domestic level we must consider the backwardness of our economy, the type of economy we inherited at the time of Independence, as an important constrain on revolutionary development. We must also examine the carry-over of the effects of the infrastructure on the super structure. Moreover, we must also address our minds to the counter revolutionary activities of the agents on imperialism. These are some of the local factors which any political student, any Parliament must consider in carrying out and in-depth analysis of the development of Guyana. The student must also examine the external forces. He must look in particular at the present world economic system which is hindering the development of countries that were formerly colonies.

The present world economic order as we know, is controlled and dominated by the capitalists. This is a fact, I think, which is recognised not only by ourselves, but by the main opposition party.

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But what the main Opposition party in Parliament refuses to recognise or to accept, either because of ignorance or an attempt to deceive the working people of this country, is the effect of this economic system on the developing countries and also on the socialist countries. The adverse effects of the present world economic order are ubiquitous. They are felt by communist countries, by socialist countries by non-aligned countries and also by capitalist countries. We know that capitalist economies are in difficulties. We know that the unemployment rate in the United States of America, and also in Great Britain, is on the increase. We also know that inflation is creating great havoc for the working class people in these countries.

It is important that I bring to the attention of our friends in the Opposition that these adverse effects, on the working people throughout the world are also felt by communist countries. Hungary has just completed a Congress and according to the Financial Times dated Wednesday, 26th March, 1980, Hungary has not succeeded in adapting to the world energy crisis and has failed to reach its economic targets. This source disclosed that the Prime Minister, Cde. Gyorgy Lazar, in his speech said that the economic and social changes that were necessary to cope with the difficult economic tasks were not taken by the Government. Mr. Lazar, who is an economist, admitted that current five-year plan targets for economic growth, productivity, real wages and other key indicators had not been fulfilled, and that the economy had not responded. This is a communist country, the targets of which have not been achieved because of the economic situation in the world and if I may go on to quote from the Financial Times on Tuesday January, 22nd, 1980, an interview given by Rural Castro, the Cuban Minister of Defence, he said that:-

“the spectre of economic disaster and bankruptcy , with its sequel of starving people and hundreds of thousands of unemployment.”

is a very real problem for Cuba. Castro went on to say –

“The world economic crisis, runaway inflation and low prices of Cuba’s sugar” have affected the Cuban economy severely. He hinted that the country might not be earning enough to cover the cost of production in the sugar industry. Castro described these objective factors.

He went on to speak of the local situation in Cuba –

“To the objective factors must be added; the presence of indiscipline, lack of control, irresponsibility, compliancy, negligence, and ‘buddyism’ which, in addition to aggravating many problems, prevent others from being solved and generated justified irritation on the part of broad sectors of the population. Particularly in agriculture, Sr. Castro charged, many people were working only four to six hours a day.”

These two examples, Cde. Speaker, I merely mention to bring to the attention of this House and to the working-class people of Guyana that the crisis facing the world today is universal and since the communist countries of this world trade with the capitalist countries they will of necessity be affected by the adverse consequences in the capitalist world.

We in Guyana have inherited a backward economy, one that depends on three main industries - sugar, rice and bauxite. A few years ago when the price of sugar was high in the world market we benefited and invested the returns. We ploughed this money back into our economy for the development of our people and for the benefit of the working class. Many people gained employment. Substantial sums were also spent on subsidizing basic consumer items.

Unfortunately, that period when sugar was king lasted for a very brief period and then suddenly the price plummeted. In fact, from about 42 cents U.S. it fell to 7 cents US per pound, and this affected our earning power. This affected our foreign exchange position. We were getting less as a result of the low prices of sugar on the world market. We were also getting less for the bauxite we exported. Consequently, our foreign exchange position was greatly reduced.

When we go on the other side of the picture to examine the imports, what do we see? We found that the price of oil has skyrocketed. We found that our oil bill, which in 1970 was \$23 million, went up, or is expected to go up, this year to \$390 million. This is a very difficult situation for a developing country to cope with. We find that the foreign exchange bill the money we had to pay to get the goods that were needed, was going up and up while, at the same time, we found that the revenue we were earning was going down and down.

The situation was the same with regard to the capital equipment. The price of a tractor in 1974 was in the vicinity of \$6,000. Today, the price of that same tractor is over \$24,000. The price of a combine in 1974 was around \$54,000. Today it is over \$150,000. For those basic consumer items that we still find it necessary to import at this time, consumers experience the reality of rising prices. They find that they have to pay more in the shop for flour, more for milk, more for cheese, more for split peas. This is not because the People's National Congress Government wants to inflict a penalty or a punishment on the working people but it is the direct result of the adverse international economic situation which dictates such measure. The alternative is to do without. So we have to make a choice either to pay more for the goods that we need or to look inwards and see what substitutes we can produce and make available to our people.

It is against this background that the 1980 Budget was prepared and presented to Parliament. In presenting the Budget the People's National Congress Government is always guided by the principal of the welfare of our people must be paramount and I am very happy but

not surprised to learn that the response of Guyanese whether in urban or rural areas, whether on the coastlands or in the hinterland, has been favorable. People all over the country are describing this Budget as a working-class Budget.

I indicated to this House some of the reasons why the economy is in difficulties and, as a result of these difficulties, we have had had to approach international lending agencies to secure loans that would ensure that within the shortest possible period we are able to recover. It was from this standpoint that we have had to approach the International Monetary Fund. I know the main Opposition in Parliament, the People's Progressive Party, has criticised us for going to the I.M.F. They say this is an ideological deviation. But I would like to point out that there are a number of communist countries and progressive countries in the world that are members of the I.M.F. Romania, Vietnam, Yugoslavia are communist countries and they are members of I.M.F.

Progressive countries like Tanzania, South Yemen, are also members of the I.M.F and then recently Grenada borrowed \$5 million, according to the Caribbean Contract, from the I.M.F. Moreover, Cde. Speaker, the Comecon Countries owe the Euro Bank, over \$45 billion and the Euro Bank is controlled by the capitalists. We in the P.N.C. Government have conducted our negotiations with the I.M.F. in a manner that would benefit the Guyanese people and we will never conclude any agreement that would compromise the long-term interest of the working class. In our negotiations with the I.M.F. one of the condition they were requesting us to accede to the abolition of free education and the institution of charges for medical services. We resisted and rejected these conditions, comrades, but we were nevertheless successful in securing aid to the value of \$48 million.

Now, Cde. Speaker, I wish to draw the House's attention to the People's Progressive Party's manifesto issued on December 7th, 1964 and in particular on its stand on the I.M.F. on page 10 of that manifesto, Cde. Speaker, under the heading, "Bank of Guyana", this is what the People's Progressive Party had to say: "In order to speed up economic growth and to employ fully the labour and productive resources of Guyana, the Party will use monetary policy together with fiscal policy as a means towards this. A sound monetary system designed to facilitate the internal flow of investments, investible funds for balanced economic growth will begin to come into being with the establishments of the Central Bank, the Bank Of Guyana. The bank will be concerned with making greater use of Guyana's financial resources". Then it goes on and this is of interest, "the present P.P.P government has received over the part two years, much advice from many sources overseas including the International Monetary Fund, membership of which will be taken up with Independence. The draft Bank of Guyana legislation is now in a very advanced stage awaiting only the resolution of a few points in consultation with the I.M.F".

This was the P.P.P's position in 1964 on the I.M.F. Now the members come to tell us that because we are members of the I.M.F. and secured benefits for our people from the I.M.F. this is deviating from our ideology of socialism. Cde. Speaker, we in the People's National Congress will never seek political power as an end in itself. We came to office because of our sincere desire to serve the working-class people. As a vanguard party we will never use our control of the State apparatus to rule this nation in an irresponsible manner. We have a duty to the working people. We owe our position to the toiling masses and will not fail them. As representative of the working class, we in the People's National Congress will continue to lead the revolution until final victory. The achievements of the revolution have really been the achievements of our people. We could not have achieved so much within such a short period without the active support of the working class. It is because of the enthusiasm, the commitment and dedication of the working class that we have done so much in a short time and it is because of the inspired leadership of Cde. Burnham that we have made such great strides along the roads to socialist construction despite the efforts by the counter revolutionaries to retard progress.

The revolution continues to be buoyant and this is a clear indication of the vitality of the workers. Our people will never allow themselves to be lured into a false sense of security. The enemies will continue to confuse and will attempt to reduce the confidence of the people in their ability to come out of these difficulties. Throughout the history of mankind no class has bowed out peacefully to the forces of progress, there has always been a struggle and in our case it will not be different. There will be struggles. The enemies will come under different guises - some will appear as men of God, some will appear as learned men but let us not forget they have one thing in common and that is a record of exploitation.

We are a bit surprised to hear from time to time the People' Progressive Party call for national unity. Whenever it comes to putting concrete measures into practice, there is always a gap, between pronouncement and reality. I say this to the members of the P.P.P. Are you really interested in uniting for constructing socialism? You have got to decide. The choice you have to make is now. Do not allow history to bury you or to cast you aside as the group that worked along with the reactionary forces to prevent the people from constructing socialism. You must make your decision now before it is too late. From time to time we hear you making sound theoretical arguments in favour of socialism and national unity but when we put these arguments under the political microscope, we find that they are only superficially attractive, lacking practical applicability. Indeed, you have gone so far as to end up in the camp of the extreme leftist and Lenin described the extreme leftist as being as dangerous and the rightist forces and both the extreme rightist and the extreme leftist must be crushed. The people will crush you if you do not join them in this duty of building socialism.

7.45 p.m.

What has happened to our Leader's call? He offered an honest hand to you, you have not responded. This has cast great doubts in the minds of our people on your real intentions. Will you work with the progressive forces or will you associate yourselves with the most reactionary groupings within the society? Decide now, comrades. You know the People's National Congress recognises the importance of national unity in building socialism. We have achieved some degree of National Unity but we want to strengthen the forces of National Unity, we want to cement the forces of the working people, the urban proletariat, the peasants, and the progressive intellectuals into a unit that could not be destroyed, not for a million years. We will continue to do this with or without the support of the People's Progressive Party.

You know we have done quite a lot to assist the workers in the sugar industry. It was the People's National Congress Government that gave the workers the opportunity to get the union of their choice. It was also the People's National Congress Government that ensured that the sugar workers could acquire house lots at \$1.00. It was the People's National Congress

Government that waged the campaign of destroying the logies and providing the sugar workers with adequate housing accommodation. We know that the battle has not ended; we know that there are difficulties; we know that the working people of this country have got a long way to go but we have made a start, comrades. We know that the working people together can overcome these difficulties and united behind the People's National Congress Government, they will overcome them within a matter of years. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Rasheed, may I congratulate you on your maiden speech and to say how very pleased I am at the high level of your contribution. May I also say that your entire contribution was devoid of any diatribe or abuse and one would expect that as a new-comer, older heads would emulate the level of your contribution.

Cde. Basir: Cde. Speaker, we have been spending some time in this Parliament here discussing the Budget Speech delivered by Cde. Desmond Hoyte. I think Cde. Hoyte put over this speech very well. His articulation was very good. I wish to congratulate him, but I find the form and the content of the speech questionable. So far, Cde. Speaker, the Budget Speech has not indicated any manifestation to stabilize the economy of this country.

If one looks at the Budget Speech, I think it should be something that makes a careful analysis of the past problems and difficulties, and what are the mistakes and what should really be done. I have not been convinced about some of these indications in the Budget. I too could have come here and shouted "Yes! Yes! Great Budget Speech" and I could have spoken like my colleagues and ended up with the flattering words "Great Cde. Leader, Prime Minister and his Government". None of that for me. We have to be realistic. In '1977 and '78 and '79, there seemed to be a similar approach and from what we have observed in the 1980 Budget Speech it seems to me as if there are some fringe benefits and promises which are mainly established and perhaps ambiguously disguised in the form of percentages and guidelines. I hope at a later stage they will be properly organized where people can follow what is intended because there are some people understanding that 25 per cent here, and then I hear the Cde. Minister saying 160 per cent and so fourth. I hope that will be established in due course.

The budget proposals as I said, have not given any concession to the masses, real concession. All over Guyana when a budget is to be presented, when the speech is to be made, people look forward to listen. It is a crucial moment in the history of the country and people ask some of us, sometimes on our way to Parliament or on the way home, what are the indications, what are the prospects and what are we going to do for this year. I have not seen in this budget proposal the necessary mechanism to energize, to motivate, to regenerate that patriotic call and to have an examination of both the objective and the subjective situation to bring this country to the point where I would like to see it. I have not seen this; I am a bit worried also.

14.4.80

7.45 - 7.55 p.m.

My good friend Cde. Desmond Hoyte, hon. Minister, in his speech, I want to believe, was not very scientific, with all due respect to him because his behavior is much better in the Parliament these days and there are some inaccuracies. If I may tarry a while, the inaccuracies are in page 17, 19, and 20, and if I may just look at page 54, here it says: "Comrade Speaker, our economy is basically sound." But this has not been consistent with pages 17, 19 and 20 and I wonder if, when the Minister was coming to the end of this book, he sort of forgot what was being said and therefore I said there is no practical approach in this document where we could enhance production. When we look at it, one can say it is a bit of a gaff for those who would like to be amused and perhaps I can say, it is facetious for those who are serious-thinking people.

Comrades, the main important thing is that this Budget Speech should be more realistic and as I have said, there are some inaccuracies. However, we are still at the beginning of a long process, much work has to be done in particular in the area of greater popular involvement in the work of the State Planning Commission, and more strenuous effort to this end would have to be undertaken in the course of this year. I would have liked to see, as the Minister said, that this was a consultation in the final arrangement of the State Planning Commission. Perhaps this would have put us in a better prospective to see where we are. Further, as I said, many of us do have some weaknesses and some of us do forget what we write on the front page and so the back page we need say something else. I think it was way back in 1958 when the Prime Minister - unfortunately he is not here - was in the Opposition that he said that if we are going to come to this Parliament continuously to pass a few bits of legislation within the already existing bankrupt economic framework, we will be wasting our time and the uneasiness of the masses will soon catch up with us and remove us from the political scene. That is what he said way back in 1958, I think it was, or before. Most of them were comrades. But that is not so. It did not come to pass because we still have in this Parliament bits of legislation coming here which never dealt with the entire economic framework to bring this country to a point where we would like to have it.

7.55 p.m.

This is what is worrying me and this is what is worrying people. People want to find an answer to the situation. And we have a number of pieces of legislation that are repressive. The Summary Jurisdiction Act and the new Constitution are really not relevant to the situation which is confronting this nation.

I have noticed here an attempt where some of my colleagues on the other side have tried very desperately to internationalize the national crisis and what they have said - and which I have agreed with - is that the world is in a crisis and I said that the world is in a crisis. I am going to perhaps make a criterion to say there is a serious oil problem which we have to confront us. The cost of oil is a big problem. We have to face it but then, comrades, if we have an international

crisis, an international crisis can only be solved by an international solution. Is the P.N.C. capable of finding that international solution? Can Guyana solve that international crisis by finding an international solution? We have to understand that because if you tried desperately to tie up an international situation and forget what is going on here, it is not very consistent. What we have here in Guyana and what the People's Progressive Party was trying to establish is that we have a national crisis, which is not a progeny of the international crisis but perhaps the national crisis - we can rather say it is a derivative of the P.N.C's way of doing things, their programme, their philosophy and so forth and therefore we have to deal with the national crisis.

I would like to ask a question: how has the international crisis affected production here when there is lack of motivation? How does the international crisis affect the brain drain? How does the international crisis affect medical services? Transport services? We do not agree to look at everything in isolation. What I want to focus our minds on is that we have a national crisis here and we have to find a national solution. Do not try to run away from this very important thing because you will be wasting the time of Parliament and wasting the time of this country and the people of this country, but let us examine the national crisis and let us think of this national solution. This is very important and there are many instances which we can look into and which I can mention to show you there is a national crisis which affects the entire political, economic, social life of the working-class people of this country.

I am in sympathy with some comrades who travel in isolation because if one travels all the period of this life from Bartica to Georgetown and thinks the whole world is like Bartica to Georgetown and travels from Essequibo to Georgetown and thinks that the whole world is like Essequibo to Georgetown and make analysis on this basis, it is unfortunate and some of us suffer from this type of isolation.

It is on this basis that the Trades Union Congress called for a political solution because they have recognised a national crisis and they have recognised what is to be done in this country. And let us be realistic. Let us understand. Let us examine this aspect, otherwise we are not going to go anywhere. I know the T.U.C. can do more than just calling.

I want to leave off at this point for my comrades to ponder this question. In the Budget Speech which Cde. Duncan has dealt with, he spoke of the development of life in the rural areas. This is not to say so very clearly because life in the rural areas is not up to expectation. Of course, we do not expect it to be as the developed countries but we expect that life should be at the point where people will feel happy to survive, to live, to work. But this is not so and if I can recall to your memories some time ago about a report that was given to this House by the ... and by that Report they mentioned the difficulties they experienced by not having certain basic commodities in the interior. When they go to the forests they do not have their fridges. They can exist for days in the forest and they have expressed very clearly about Government policies

and how they affected the ... this goes for the interior areas... this is because the full impact of the shortages, transportation and medical services has been seriously affecting these small farmers in these areas.

The small framers are the people on whom we are calling for production. There has been a desperate call for production in this Parliament from time to time. I have not seen it so forcibly in this speech but I want to reiterate that a call for production will be no call unless there are specific objectives and precise plans and a total participation for the working people. Otherwise you can call the whole year long for production.

Farmers in all remote areas are having some difficult times and the G.M.C. has not been paying. Perhaps they have changed their position now. They have not been seeing farmers in some areas for months and because of this the farms in many areas have depreciated. You cannot tell a worker "I am not going to pay you until two weeks when the produce depot pays me." This affects production.

Also, the G.M.C has developed an attitude by putting up a list and saying "we are going to pay you 'X' cents for plantains" and when the farmer organizes his farm and goes into production, lo and behold that price is not there. It puts the farmer into an economic strait-jacket.

I am going to ask that this matter be looked after and that we have a stability of prices. I have seen where the Hon. Minister, the specialist on agriculture, who is not here, has said that there will be \$121 million for agriculture and, out of that, \$22 million might be directly to deal with production. I cannot say at this moment how much will be for the subsidy which is very, very, important. I want to give you in this Parliament the cost of production which has risen tremendously from perhaps three to five hundred percent.

14.4.80

8.05 - 8.15 p.m.

8.05 p.m.

I wish to give a very rough breakdown here. Oranges are sold at perhaps \$3 to \$5 per hundred. Cassava is priced, I understand, at 8 cents per pound; plantains - 15 cents to 20 cents per pound; copra - 18 cents to 52 cents per pound, and if you look at coffee it is priced at \$1.50 to \$2.00 per pound. That is a ratio of prices for the period of ten to twelve years. But when you look within that ten to twelve year period, the cost of fuel has moved from 80 cents per gallon to \$7.00 per gallon; cutlasses - 72 cents to \$8.00 each; files - 64 cents to \$8.00 each, fertilizer - 15 cents to 52 cents per pound; outboard engines \$350 to \$2,200; nails - 78 cents per pound to \$2.50 per pound; brakes and piston from 28 cents to \$2.25 per foot; paper clips, tacks... to 14 cents per pack; lumber at 80 cents per foot, and, finally, canvas boots from \$2.50 to \$18.00 per pair.

What I want to tell you, Cde. Speaker, is that it is difficult for the small farmer to continue when the cost of production has risen tremendously. These areas in the interior are much better now. Guyanese have utilized this land of ... when I say the small farmers cannot survive to heed the call for production under the present circumstances and that is why a careful assessment must be made. Cde. Speaker, a lot has been said about the Amerindian population. We have Amerindian present here in this House. I have a lot of experience with Amerindian people. I worked among them, I lived among them. In 1958, we had a population of approximately 29,000 Amerindians and I think by 1964 we had about 36,000 Amerindians. It might be a clear view between expansion made and how the community increases.

This Government tried to compare the People's Progressive Party at that stage with the P.N.C in all its power. In that very difficult period when they had a debate to settle, when they had 90 per cent of the people to cover. People must learn to respect what was done in the period. I told the Prime Minister in the Parliament Chamber the other day exactly what I think of some of the things which were good, which were not properly executed. But it is the population of Amerindian communities which I cannot understand. I do not always speak here and I am certain I will be given time to complete and so I am wanting to know whether we can have the figure of the Amerindian population, whether it is 50,000 if it is under that number, what it is. I am glad to hear because I am wondering, I would like to hear that they are facing extinction. I remember back in the early 60's when we were elected. I remember way back in 1961 to 1964 when the United Force had a special ... and they voted a certain amount of money but when I divided that amount, it worked out at 2 cents per individual for development. I remember that story well and I was worried about that community. Cde. Speaker, the unemployment situation is very serious also in the Amerindian community and I have said that much has to be done to provide a supplement for these people.

I want to raise a question on the micro-project to be established in areas. There should be State planting, also planting materials, agricultural tools, give them real shotguns to get rid of those animals, away from their farms. The Government must not be worried about issuing firearms to these people to protect their farms, so, I want to ask the Government to look over this gun policy properly and that guns be given to the Amerindians people who are legitimate farmers. Cde. Speaker, many more things have to be done: medical facilities, the hostels at Charity and Riverston, ought to be looked after. In the Aranaputa area roads for transportation have to be properly looked after. In the North West area also, at Quebanna, they should have assistance. They harvest nuts, which, like citrus, are main products of that area but the farmers are not given the necessary equipment. This also goes for St. Edwards Mission in the Tapakuma area which has to produce a lot of cassava and pines. All these things have to be examined. In the Essequibo area, at Saxakalli, Windsor Castle, Wakapau, all these areas have Amerindians settlements. There is need for many things to keep them going.

I want to make a point on the sawmilling industry also. The Government-owned sawmilling industry has duty-free fuel concession. There is also need for a regular supply of things like nails, hammers, spades, and saws. There is also a need for import license for tractors, and Cde. Speaker, the by-product which they can have from saw-dust and can be examined. There is a lot of importation of tiles. I know that we can substitute for this and I would like to put forward some proposals, which are very important.

A lot has been said about socialism and I want to quote that socialism cannot develop without democracy and vice versa. The building of socialism must be the joint work of the people. In other words, organised political alliances must be drawn together to carry our national programmes. We can succeed in building socialism, naturally, not over night, but over a historic period of time that varies according to internal and external circumstances. It is unfortunate that I cannot speak further. I have some very good idea but you will tell me that I have to speak to the Minister outside. I am always available --

14.4.80

8.15 - 8.25 p.m.

8.15 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Basir, your time is up.

Cde. Basir: Thank you, Cde. Speaker.

Cde. Walcott: Cde. Speaker, I rise to support the 1980 Budget as presented to this House by Cde. Minister of Economic Development and Co-operatives.

In doing so it is important for me first of all to say thanks to the ruling People's National Congress Party and Government which have afforded me the opportunity by implementing as one of the objectives and I quote-

“to provide every Guyanese the opportunity to work for and share in the economic wealth of the country and to ensure that there is equality of opportunities in the political, economic and social life of this country.”

Tonight I am happy to have joined women in making a contribution to the Budget of the country. I do so with a difference in that I would like to go back to 1963. In 1963 when there was an attempt, a deliberate attempt, to mislead people in this country and to interrupt the peace that prevailed then, to some extent there was some success. During the period of 1963/64 disturbances, I lost some of my family. It is remarkable because out of evil cometh good because they died I, like many other in the Mahaicony District, lived on and we lived on to look and follow step by step the progress in the community and district from where I have come. I say this because, after the disturbances it was the People's National Congress that calls for peace in the country and that made it possible for that peace to prevail unto this day.

In that district there were no roads. I am not quite familiar with the exact figure but I know that there had been an experiment not too far where I live, on the busy part of the road, and that experiment stop there. It did not give people in the Mahaicony District the opportunity to build a good house and to paint it. Those of us who go through that district today can be proud to associate ourselves with what has been said in the Budget, with how much has already been spent on the construction of the major roads in this country and how much we realise, coming through the Mahaicony district.

I would like also to say that Health facilities in that district have been given attention and they have been given attention by the People's National Congress. I say this without fear and without challenge because I have been instrumental as a community worker in mobilizing self-help by people who belong to the ruling party to build some of those buildings which serve the entire community, be it the P.P.P or P.N.C. We all attend clinics without any discrimination

even though they discriminated against us at the time of building. They did not contribute one minute, one second, but they are still allowed to share those benefits there.

I would like to associate myself also with education, not because I have come a long way and I am a mother myself but because as a child going to school I never thought that I would have had the opportunity of attending secondary school. This was because my parents could not have afforded that kind of money. Like other community people, today, I associate myself and say thanks to the People's National Congress again for giving me free education to this country because I have, as a mother, children who are attending secondary schools.

I have moved back a bit to roads and I would like to attempt to go into the infrastructure work on roads, all-weather roads, and to go a bit further on dams and bridges, kokers, canals and trenches. As I said, I have been in a position to follow the developmental progress step by step as the community worker and I would be the first to say that these facilities are in these areas because there is dignity in labour. There is dignity in the sense that farmers today are unlike those when I was a child and had to trek through mud to my knees to take my father's lunch – he had a five acre rice field which I still have. I had to fetch water and to come back on the public road and to trek back with the lunch and with the dinner.

Today dignity in rice cultivation in that district has become such a thing that the farmers drives to his cane field. He drives to the plot that he was provided through the infrastructural works that were done through self-help in some cases and through mobilisation of the local authorities which gain help from the Central Government.

While I am on this - we are told that rice cultivation is done at a loss, but I would like to challenge that because as I look around the district from which I have come, I ask, who are the people who have combines and tractors in their yards? Who are the people that have their own trucks to transport their own farm produce, paddy, rice and that kind of thing? There are those people who are claiming that they are making a loss and that Government is doing nothing for rice cultivation. I would like to ask that this House take a closer look at this matter and that some investigation be done on some of the loans that have been given to some of these people because in this House we still hear of discrimination against one set of people and if there is discrimination I, belonging to the ruling party, should have owned a tractor because I have a rice field. I do not have a tractor because I cannot fulfill some of the requirements that are not being fulfilled properly. And we still hear these kinds of things. Who own, out of the rice money, the large homes in the district where I came from? People from the Opposition, Cde. Speaker, and I say this because as I sat here I was really not going to speak on this but I could not really let it pass me because it irks me to know, and when I look around, I go back to the saying that I learnt:

“ there are none so blind as those who have eyes and do not want to see.”

People do not want to recognise that some of these people are going into more land cultivation with respect to rice in the area from which I come, even though it is done at a loss. I think we should ask that a serious look to be taken to know what it is then that is giving so much more.

Cde. Speaker, I move on to look at water. Water supply, like everywhere else pumps break down, mechanical, dieseline and what have you, but when self-help work should have been done to send the pipelines for water to be supplied to the people in the Fairfield and De Kinderen areas, where the Opposition claims to have their stronghold, when that part of the exercise was to have been done, we did not get the co-operation of those people. But we did not discriminate against them and refuse to put down the pipeline ourselves. We did put them down and those people are having water supplies through the pure water system as laid down with the connection of wells, from De Hoop, which is another P.P.P. strong hold, through High Dam, which has a well for over some years, and Perseverance which has been given a new well. Therefore, we have not discriminated against these people that we are talking about. Water is free, education is free, health facilities have been free, and it is all as a result of hard and indicated services to the leadership of this party that has given the call for our supporters to come out hand in parcel to show what we can do. And we have done it.

Cde. Speaker, I wish to move on to other crops. As a child there was always a neighbor's yard that you could have run into from school and pick up dunks, a few cherries, or climb the mango tree except in circumstances where the old lady might have depended on that pittance – which was very rare - in which case there would be a shout of, “come down off the tree”, or cases where one walked over a guava, jамoon. Cde. Speaker, today Guyana has reached a stage where these things are known to have much nutritious value, knowledge that have had escaped people long ago but which has come to light through modern technology and science.

The People's National Congress has called for the use of local raw materials and I am talking about food substitutes. We, as women in the vanguard party, have sent out one more making wine, more jams and jellies. We were accustom to a little bit of this but today as we look around, we know that one's children cannot run over into a neighbor's yard and do the type of thing that I was accustomed to doing as a child simply because of the value, simply because of our looking forward, simply because as women in the vanguard party we have set ourselves the task to look into making use of our time and not sort of look around idly. We have set ourselves the task to do some experiment which have been successful and which have caught on. And Cde. Speaker, while we look at what the people in the vanguard part do, let us not forget, let us not allow it to escape us that today on the market, in the market places, these food items are put on

sale. But some people claim that we are wasting time - when they met a group of women who set themselves down to earn their own dollar to help to stretch their husbands' dollar which has sometimes to be divided in various ways, they are told they are wasting time and that they are going to poison some of these people with some of the things they make. But I want to say to this house that up to now, nobody had died from the experiments and nobody will die.

In fact and in truth, through these new experiments we have set ourselves the task to look a little bit farther away from just home industries and this Government saw fit to set up an agency to deal in a broader measure. That agency was established in 1976, on 26th May, and it is known as the Guyana Pharmaceutical Corporation. That agency, Cde. Speaker, has three main objectives and the objectives are to expand the national production growth, initially, - first of all to meet the needs of the people and the community and secondly, to expand the national production growth initially by the exploitation of available raw material resources and by the development of local technology bases for future development, and thirdly, to improve the national balance of payment by promoting the development of product which would have a peculiar advantage on the export market and substitute for imports.

Cde. Speaker, I remember hearing while travelling in a car one day that we could not get apples, we could not get grapes, we could not get figs, we could not get dates, and the man, Burnham, is no longer "Burnham" but "Ban Am". Cde. Speaker, tonight in this House, I would like to say that special praise should be given to this Government for establishing that corporation and to say thanks to the people who set about in thinking up this new idea because we have not only seen these three basic requirements filled but our people in every walk of life are satisfied. There is not enough on the market of items like breakfast cereal, pineapple-juices, chucks, crushed, jams, jellies - skim milk powder, instant cornmeal, and a cherry concentrate which is known as serola. Cde. Speaker, people are looking around for these food values because it is spelt out in no uncertain terms that they possess Vitamin "C", Vitamin "D" and all the Vitamins required to help to build a healthy nation, to help our young people to run away from some of these diseases they used to have. These food nutrients can have that kind of effect to help to slow down that measure. I have been told by the G.P.C. that the weaning food for babies has caught on the market in this country with Guyanese - both P.N.C and P.P.P. and any other Opposition group. Rice and sugar are the main nutrients. Cerex is another baby food and this baby food, we are told, has vitamin and iron. So, Cde. Speaker, all in all, we can see that we do not need to look at the things we cannot have, but to look at the things that we have and to appreciate the value of the things we have. Had it not been for the ban on ice apples while we have mangoes on the market, people would not have been able to appreciate mangoes as they do today. You can have them tinned as well as you can have them fresh from the trees and this has given a lot of people incentive.

8.35 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, I would like to move on to the export markets for some of the food products of the Pharmaceutical Corporation which has been established by this Government. In some measure, in small quantities, they have been exporting carambola to England, Barbados and Trinidad and I have been told that by the end of this month, twelve thousand packets will be going to East Germany. I think that this has given the farmer a greater sense in planting, a greater sense in that he is not wasting time, in that he, in some measure, is making a contribution to the economy of this country. This too can apply to the G.M.C. even though it is said that the G.M.C., which is part of this Government concern, is not paying on time, but these things happen. Cde. Speaker, I think that since we have this type of thing, it is good for all and sundry to appreciate that to some extent the small farmer is making a contribution to the development of this country and of women. G.P.C. had set a target for 1979. It was fulfilled and for 1980 there are new products namely, table sauce, which I personally have tried, casreep, guava jelly, jams, ground pine, pumpkin ketchup, barbecu sauce, pepper, and I can go on, Cde. Speaker, for another half an hour.

All in all, I would like to say that people in Guyana should not be misled. There are difficulties everywhere even in our homes there are difficulties and we should set ourselves the task of offering a reasonable and helpful solution because we are Guyanese and we are not infallible; we are not Africans and Indians, we are Guyanese people and if we sit in Parliament to look into things and to look at them and to speak for Guyanese people, we should as Members of this House, look at them realistically, place the targets as we see them, look at the shortcomings together and look at them with the reasoning that not because we cannot lead the house that we should want to see the house dismantled. The opportunity has presented itself in a small town of offering a hand of friendship and perhaps if we see the wisdom today and a little after now, there is still a little time, the opportunity may present itself for us to be together on the same side, providing you understand and providing you abide with and you work for Guyanese, as a Guyanese citizen.

Cde. Speaker, I would like to say in my closing remarks that out of 1963 there were children who had to sleep in swamps, in bushes and all sorts of things. In 1963, there were mothers who ran away and left some children and there were some who died. I would like to say, Cde. Speaker, that come sun or rain, woman in Guyana today will not run and leave their children. [Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Walcott, may I congratulate you also on your maiden speech and for contribution to the debate.

14.4.80

8.25 - 8.35 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, That this Assembly do now adjourn until Tuesday, 15th April, 1980.

Adjourned accordingly at 8.45 p.m.