

T H E
P A R L I A M E N T A R Y D E B A T E S
O F F I C I A L R E P O R T S

VOLUME 10

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE THIRD SESSION (1983) OF THE NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF
THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

21st Sitting

14:00 hrs

Tuesday, 1984-02-07

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

- * Cde. Sase Narain, O.R., J.P., M.P.,
Speaker of the National Assembly

Members of the Government - People's National Congress (58)

Prime Minister (1)

- Cde. Dr. P.A. Reid, O.E., M.P.,
Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents (4)

- Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,
Vice-President, Production
- Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
Vice-President, Social Infrastructure
- Cde. B. Ramsaroop, M.P.,
Vice-President, Party and State Matters
- * Cde. Dr. M. Shahabuddeen, O.R., S.C., M.P.,
Vice-President and Attorney General

Senior Ministers (6)

- Cde. R. Chandisingh, M.P.,
Minister of Education, Social Development and Culture
- Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.,
Minister of National Mobilisation
- * Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,
Minister of Foreign Affairs
- * Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs
- * Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister of Energy and Mines
- * Cde. C.B. Greenidge, M.P.,
Minister of Finance and Economic Planning - (Absent)

- * Non-elected Member

Ministers (7)

- Cde. U.E. Johnson, M.P.,
Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister
- Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,
Minister within the Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of Youth and Sport within the Ministry
of Education, Social Development and Culture - (Absent-on-leave)
- Cde. S. Prashad, M.P.,
Minister of Transport within the Vice-Presidency
of Social Infrastructure
- * Cde. Y.V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister of Information and Public Service
- * Cde. Dr. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,
Minister of Health and Public Welfare
- * Cde. K.W.E. Denny, M.P.,
Minister of Manpower and Co-operatives

Ministers of State (2)

- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State within the Ministry of Internal
Trade and Consumer Protection
- Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.S., M.P.,
Minister of State within the Ministry of Regional
Development - (Absent-on-leave)

Parliamentary Secretaries (4)

- Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Housing, within the
Ministry of Health and Public Welfare
- Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of
Education, Social Development and Culture
- Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary in the Office of the
Prime Minister
- Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary within the Ministry of
Agriculture

* Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
Cde. M. Armogan, M.S., J.P., M.P.
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.
Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.
Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.
Cde. E.B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
Cde. E. Melville, M.P. - (Absent-on-leave)
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.
Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.
Cde. R.E. Williams, M.P. - (Absent)

Members from the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs (2)

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P.
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (9)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No. 1 - Barima/Waini)
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No. 2 - Pomeroon/Supenaam)
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No. 3 - Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)
Cde. W. Bipat, J.P., M.P. (Region No. 4 - Demerara/Mahaica)
Cde. H.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No. 5 - Mahaica/Berbice)
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6 - East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No. 7 - Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 - Potaro/Siparuni) - (Absent)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 - Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan, M.P.,
Minority Leader

Deputy Speaker (1)

Cde. Ram Karran, M.P.,
Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P. - (Absent)

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P.,
Minority Chief Whip

Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.

Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.

Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.

Cde. I. Basir, M.P. - (Absent-on-leave)

Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.

Cde. H. Nokta M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F. Singh, C.C.H., J.P., M.P.

Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P.

OFFICERS

Clerk of the National Assembly - Cde. F.A. Narain, A.A.

Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly - Cde. M.B. Henry

PRAYERS

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

14:05 hrs

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Leave

The Speaker: Leave has been granted to Cde. Basir from today, 1984-02-07 to 1984-02-10.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS – FIRST READING

The following Bill was introduced and read the First time:

Tax (Amendment) Bill 1984 – Bill No 3/1984. /The Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, on behalf of the Government./

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1984

The Assembly resumed the debate on the motion for approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1984.

The Speaker: Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh: Mr. Speaker, it is trite knowledge that history is a record of the past. We can only ignore history at our peril. The past informs us, it enables us to live in the present so that we can plan for the future. My experience in this Assembly, however, convinces me that the People's National Congress as a national administration and as it would wish to be known – the Majority Party in Government – is incapable of absorbing the lessons of history, of learning from its own past inefficiencies and mistakes, and of planning for Guyana's future. After 19 years of People's National Congress misrule and incompetency, its Finance Minister in his Party's 20th year of governing and guiding – rather misguiding – this country tells us that: "I can offer no comforting solution which will allow us to survive and prosper." This is a shame. Our people, the Guyanese man in the street, the same man that the People's National Congress had promised to feed, clothe and house by 1976 to make the small man a real man, deserves better and demands better.

Mr. Speaker, let me say straight away, however, that I congratulate the now Minister of Finance and I sympathize with him. I congratulate him because I believe he has newly returned from his 'sabbatical,' and his new-found enthusiasm, and he has sought to present to this Assembly with a very erudite epitome of undergraduate economics. He

deserves our profound sympathy, however, because he was not a party to the appalling situation and he has been courageous enough to admit that 1984 appear very daunting. Mr. Speaker, what is the state of the economy, or rather what remains of it? What is the general picture?

I would now like to deal with the country's debt position. The country's debt position is stated nowhere. We are told however that the external public debt as at September 1983 stood at \$2.625 billion or 118 percent above the comparable figure for 1981. That is on page 62 of the Budget Speech. We are being told this when at \$1.2 billion, this had itself doubled the external public debt in 1977. The outstanding element of this external debt is likely to rise by approximately 8.5 percent above the 1983 figure. Cde. Speaker, that is given in table 3 of the 1984 Estimates – from \$1.615 billion to \$1.752 billion. Equally alarming is the Government's guarantee on table 4 page 22a of the Estimates – the Government's guarantee to the tune of \$679 million for outstanding loans and credits to various Public Sector Agencies. 63 percent of this sum is due to foreign creditors.

Mr. Speaker, I concede it might reflect erudition to quote from pages 60 and 61 of the Budget Speech; that is where he quoted the IADB's President, Ortiz Mena as saying:

"The legal concept of commercial bankruptcy resulting from economic and financial insolvency of an enterprise is not pertinent to a nation state."

And I quote again:

"It reflects accurately, also, the correct perspective from which Guyana's external debt should be viewed."

I cannot, however, say that I am persuaded by that kind of simplistic logic. Both President Ortiz Mena and the Guyana Government are interested parties and they have positions to defend. Positions which I would say are indeed indefensible. The concept of bankruptcy involves an inability to meet one's financial obligations on the due dates and an inability to fulfill those obligations even if all one's assets are realized. The argument that a country's external debt cannot be said to exceed the value of its human and natural resources is to my mind preposterous. To suggest that our country cannot be bankrupt because its people are realizable assets to be sold like slaves of yore is a proposition to be dismissed with the contempt it deserves. The stark reality is that we cannot meet our external indebtedness as this falls due, and since we cannot, the international community will write us off as a bad debtor whose account remains closed until the debt can be liquidated. Our credit rating falls to minus zero. This is the simple reason why Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of

Finance speaks on page 62 of the Budget Speech of the situation being unsustainable and must be resolved by methods including rescheduling of our external debt. This would be only because we are indeed bankrupt.

I will now deal with devaluation. In January this year, the Government devalued the Guyana dollar by 25 percent in relation to the U.S. Dollar, but carefully avoided quantifying the implications of this for the foreign debt burdens of the respective Government, agencies and corporations. Significantly, however, the Budget Speech on page 28 does make the point that such a device changes relative prices through increases in the prices of all imports and that these price changes benefit the economy only if they stimulate increased production for export or if domestic consumption is significantly switched from imports to locally produced commodities. Mr. Speaker, what is the reality of the situation? In the context of Guyana's recent import patterns, we know that milk has not been available until recently and so on. In the context of that import pattern, there is little domestic consumption which remains to be switched from imports in Guyana. Moreover, we are told that for some time yet Bauxite will continue to be a net user of foreign exchange. Both sugar and rice are admitted to require substantial foreign inputs if they are to be viable and efficient. Equally critical and disturbing in the projection on page 70 of the Budget Speech that sugar exports will total only 247,000 tons against a 1983 production of 252,000 tons. No export projections have been set out for rice. Against this picture of dismal export performance for the three pivotal industries coupled with the substantial foreign inputs for their rehabilitation, where is the devaluation benefit? I cannot see it Mr. Speaker, perhaps somebody else can.

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(Mr. M. F. Singh continue)

Small wonder, too, that the Budget gap between expenditures and revenues is unbridgeable. And, as if all is not enough, the hon. Finance Minister has hinted at a further does and doses of devaluation in the near future. Says he on page 31:

"...we may well need to be more flexible in our use of the exchange rate instrument. We need to avoid the trauma of sharp changes followed by long periods of rigidity."

So we appear headed exorably down Argentine way! Triple figures inflation rates.

Mr. Speaker, before I leave the subject of devaluation, I must invite attention to what is perhaps the most devastating impact of this measure, its effect on prices and wages of the Guyanese people. The hon. Finance Minister admits the following on page 32. It states:

"...the exchange rate policy will lead to various price increases. Accordingly, an individual's current money wage will buy him less of the goods and services which he habitually purchased."

Yet, no positive or concrete hope is held out to the Guyanese worker that would be insulted or cushioned against this inequality. For years now I have been searching in vain to find a Budget Speech which gives any indications of the rise in the cost-of-living. The official cost-of-living index or urban and rural consumer prices of a typical householder's rice basket – yes, not bread basket – which used to be published in the Official Gazette has disappeared, so has any reference to the subject by successive Finance Ministers. The Guyanese worker no longer lives, he survives. That, Mr. Speaker, is the P.N.C. Government's conception of worth and the needs of the Guyanese worker.

Meanwhile, let me briefly indicate the order of magnitude of the problem by reference to selected increases already in places or about to be introduced.

Sugar: To move from approximately 25¢ to 35¢ per pound or 40 percent in the first instance. Further increase will follow on Ministerial orders after a formula has been 'sanctified'. I had all along thought that the cost of production to a "reasonably efficient producer" had already been determined because that is the formula used in negotiations between the EEC and ACP countries to establish the price to be paid for our quota sugar entering the EEC.

I can only hope that organizations like the Consumers' Association of Guyana will be involved in discussions about prices setting in order to ensure that losses in the Other Crops Division of Guysuco are not taken into consideration in pricing policy formulation.

Milk: This is already raised, 52.4 percent, from \$21 for 2 kg tin to \$32. Petrol is already increased by more than the 25 percent devaluation. Whatever committees might be sitting, the fact is that workers are already paying much more than 25 percent increase in commuter fares by taxis. To adopt a holier than thou attitude and say such increase are not authorized and should not be paid is both senseless and unreasonable. Senseless, because commuters will not then get to work and they can always engineer medical certificates to authenticate illness. Unreasonable, because taxi drivers are already paying higher petrol prices.

Cooking gas is already from \$19.75 for a 20 lb cylinder to \$23.10, approximately 25 percent. The logic of going back to the coalpot always deludes me. Long ago we embarked on a programme of rural electrification and urbanization. People's home are not constructed to use coal fire. Now we want to change habits and revert to the days of slavery. Perhaps we did make a mistake in encouraging too high a degree of sophistication in the Guyanese people. If we did we cannot now undo it. The Guyanese worker will not accept it and I see no reason why he should.

Rice is already available on the open market because we are awaiting the price increases to come soon and to be "subject to periodic review" according to page 50 of the Budget Speech. Today's newspapers have G.L.U complaining bitterly about shortages.

Medical Supplies and Attention at Government Institutions: The charges for these will now be what the open market fetches, but there are promises of concession for pensioners. I need hardly say anymore on this subject.

Mr. Speaker, I shall now deal very briefly with the agricultural thrust. Until the nationalization of Bookers in 1976, the Guyana Sugar Industry was acceptably efficient, if one ignores the penal sugar export levy the industry was required to bear. Indeed, it was the most efficient in the Caribbean. According to the U.W.I's publication "Social and Economic Studies", volume 13, No. 1 of March 1964, pages 14 and 16, the tons cane per ton sugar averaged 10.3 and 11.0 during the periods 1940 to 1949 and 1950 to 1959,

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respectively. Tons sugar per acre during the same periods averaged 2.73 and 3.26 respectively. By 1960, tons sugar per acre had risen to 3.45. My investigations suggest that these figures remained virtually constant until about 1976 to 1977 when the rot set in. What ails the industry under Guyanese management for it today to approximately 15 to 16 tons of cane to produce one ton of sugar, yield only approximately 2.0 tons of sugar per acre, and to drop from a 1960 production figure of 325,000 tons sugar to approximately 252,000 tons in 1983?

In past years the Government had been quick to blame wild-cat strikes and politically inspired industrial unrest for shortcomings in the industry and shortfalls in production. What excuse is there for 1983 or for 1984? My impression is that the industry was seen as a milch cow, that the very high level of management expertise was being denuded by migration due to dissatisfaction regarding Government policies, and that such expertise as remained was being dissipated through involvement in non-sugar activities. Perhaps I am wrong. What is certain is that we now have a seriously ailing industry and the ailment must be cured. The reason is simple that the industry's survival transcends all political considerations. Too many lives depend on it for survival. The prescription, I submit, lies in Government's hands.

What about rice? In so far as rice is concerned, the inefficiencies run the gamut of the structural organization, from the farmer to the Government. There is far too much dependence on mechanical methods of planting and reaping. The result, invariably, except on new lands, is unacceptable low paddy yields. The administrative bureaucracy thereafter is a nightmare that has to be experienced to be believed. If there are no bags there can be no reaping. If the farmer is not paid for his paddy on time paid under an equitable grading system then he must among other things renege on his own financial obligations. Time does not permit me to elaborate, but I doubt whether the new bureaucratic control to be exercised through three authorities is a step in the right direction. All concerned with or interested in the rice industry can, I believe, benefit from reading the Report to the Government of British Guiana by Professor Rene Demont in 1963. I believe he ran against Mitterrand in France. This F.A.O study contains a recommendation on page 96 which states that the returns from timber would increase even more quickly if large scale Caribbean Pine Plantations set along navigable or floatable rivers were to supply the

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paper-pulp factories. Interestingly enough, the P.N.C's Development Programme Chapter XIV, paragraphs 38 and 39 had this to say: "It is planned to establish and tend 5,600 acres (about 10 square miles) of pine plantations during the period 1966 – 1972." Both the F.A.O team and Doyle recommended that consideration be given to the introduction of bamboo to be grown in plantations with a view to the use of this species as a source of pulp material.

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(Mr. M. F. Singh continues)

A total allocation of \$3.347 m to cover the cost of plantations of fast growing species and of bamboo has been made. That is in this book there, British Guiana, Guyana Development Programme 1966 – 1977. It is all here for anyone to see Mr. Speaker, unless I am mistaken, I suspect that the quotation I have just read was the last ever heard of the Caribbean Pine or bamboo or paper-pulp factory. It would probably hear enquiry as to what happened to the allocation of \$3.347 m.

What about the Guystac Group – the restructuring of the Guystac Group of Companies. Not all of the expert assistance which has been obtained, not all the white-washing can erase the appalling catastrophe of the Government's ventures into the realm of ordinary private enterprise. A glance at Table 4 of the Estimates as presented – table 4 here tells a story which no words can adequately describe. This shows the outstanding liabilities of some of the corporations as follows: The Glass Works – \$4.0 m internal and \$7.7 m external. Electricity Corporation \$37.3 m. GPC – \$6.3 m and GRB \$ 81.7 m.

Moreover, none of these is specifically listed in Table 8 of the Estimates as contributing any revenues at all to the central coffers. Indeed, the budget speech on page 77 admits that the Public Corporations as a whole will contribute nothing to the cash resources available to Government. I suggest and in all honesty I make this – I suggest, transfer these entities back into the hands of those who will make them pay. Let me quote Mr. Speaker, on page 51 of the budget speech it is admitted that "expatriate management involvement" would be chosen for the bauxite industry. Okay, we commend that – we have said expatriate management involvement, you know why? – Because the expatriates used to make it pay and Government used to collect taxes from it. Revenues used to come from it when the expatriates had it. So they are bringing back the expatriates according to the budget speech so that perhaps we can start getting some revenue for it. I say, let's go a step further. All these industries which have all these outstanding liabilities with Government guarantees, let's pass them over to private enterprise – to the private sector, so that they can make them pay, because if the private sector is handed them back then Government would not have the burden of all the debt servicing that they have had to do.

Incidentally, Mr. Speaker, I note that apart from the outstanding liability of more than \$11.7 m, there was earmarked in the 1976 budget speech – that is pages 26 and 27 of the 1976 budget speech, there was earmarked there in the capital expenditure programme a sum of \$1.0 m for the Glass Factory, 0.7 m for a Paper -Re-cycling Plant and this is as far back as 1976, \$1.0 m for a Cement Plant \$0.5 m for a leather Tannery. The Glass Factory was expected to cost \$14.7 m and to be capable of producing 11 m sq feet of sheet glass and all the bottles this country requires. Perhaps the honorable Minister of somebody will tell this House when each of these projects is completed and production began. Let me go further. What has become of UMDA? The Upper Mazaruni Development Project. What has become of all these East German vehicles lying on the road to nowhere? What has become of the Interior Self Help Project on which millions of dollars were spent to give former Guyanese, and Guyanese expensive excursion trips? And let me go back to the glass factory- it is there a white elephant and I understand that the standby generators, even those have now been removed and have gone to help out in other areas. So the glass factory stands there a memorial to the inefficiency of the present Government.

Mr. Speaker, the PNC speaks of a revolution in progress. They ignore the rebellion which is making refugees out of ordinary men and women. People are fleeing their own country in the thousands to escape the PNC's economic anarchy. No population statistics are available. But Table 8 of the Estimates here bears adequate testimony, eloquent testimony indeed to the immigration syndrome. The Travel voucher tax which was increased by 20% from January 15 last year that has been recently revised to yield \$39.3 m or double in the 1982 revenue – not 20% more but double the 1982 revenue level. 1984 projection is a yield \$35.0 m. the Travel tax now, that is the other one, the \$25.00, \$50.00 one. That Travel tax at a 1983 latest estimates of \$2.678 m and a 1984 estimate of \$5.0. What does this suggest? It suggests that for the twelve month period, 1984, 100, 000 individuals at \$50.00 each over 16 years are leaving Guyana. Some will return certainly, but the others will seek "political refugee" status abroad. That is what is happening. A lot of us who have recently come from abroad know that this is the position. Why? Are you saying that 100,000 people will go and all will come back? You and I know Mr. Speaker, that that is not true.

I want to deal with another aspect Mr. Speaker. We hear all this talk about eat what you produce. Suppose the EEC tells the farmers. You plant beet, you produce beet, you eat what you produce, you be self sufficient in beet, eat what you produce, plant beet. Who then will buy our sugar? At the moment they are paying for our cane sugar above the world market price. At the present moment we are trying to persuade them not to plant more beet sugar.

The Speaker: Three minutes more Mr. Singh.

Mr. M. F. Singh continues: What is the compulsion for them to stop planting. They can say the same things too. Mr. Speaker, let me conclude by reading from an article by Carl Blackman – a PNC stalwart and one time Editor in Chief of the Government's mouthpiece the Chronicle. It is no point for Government only to hand down... The political directorate must lead the way to production, productivity, hard work and sacrifice. Is this a bag in your pants revolution, then for it to succeed the ordinary people must be satisfied that bureaucratic and politicians are also sweating it out in baggy pants. Corporation must be lean and mean. Delegations going overseas must be small and tight and less frequent. General life styles must bear relation to our straightened circumstances. This is the road to cooperation at all levels. This is the only road to salvation – any other would lead to further devaluation and deepening crisis.

Mr. Speaker, if the Government is saying on the last page of budget speech that the future appears very daunting and that they can offer no comforting solution to survive and prosper – then in all fairness the Government should resign.

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(Mr. Feilden Singh continues)

If the Government is saying on the last page of the Budget Speech that the future appears very daunting and that it "can offer no comforting solution" to survive and prosper, then, in all fairness, the Government should resign.

The Speaker: Cde. Ramsaroop.

The Vice-President, Party and State Matter: (Cde. Ramsaroop): Cde. Speaker, when the Cde. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning was presenting his Budget, he made the very pertinent remark that –

"Ours is the challenge to reorient our attitudes and our efforts to realise the potential with which our country is endowed..."

In my presentation to this Assembly during this Budget Debate, I wish to emphasise some of the psychological and attitudinal underpinnings of nation building. We all by now must fully realise that we are in a crisis of serious dimensions for, after all, we are part of a world economy which itself is enveloped in deep crisis.

At a Summit Meeting of the European Community, according to the issue of the 19th December, 1983, French President, Francois Metterand, said:

"Europe knows, in all clarity, that it is in crisis."

In another issue of that magazine of the 23rd January, 1984, we learnt that President Reagan's Task Force on Food Assistance admitted that "hunger does persist" in America.

On the other side of the ideological divide, in the socialist community of nations, labour productivity and aggregations of national produce declined last year in many countries within that bloc.

It is a very understandable, and indeed a tempting, exercise, to go into the genesis of the crisis and to try to apportion blame for it. Such an exercise is, however, at this time, meaningless and arid, for we are all in it, and our immediate and long-term problem is to extricate ourselves as quickly as we can. And the best, quickest and most successful way

this can be done is by our united efforts as Guyanese. We are all involved, and we can all be consumed, except we take correct action. This, the People's National Congress is prepared to do. This, the People's National Congress has done in the past. /Applause./ We know that our people have the potential and the capacity to beat this crisis and to emerge a stronger, more prosperous and happier people under the People's National Congress.

Cde. Speaker, we should try to avoid talk which leads nowhere and only goes to pamper our egos and our exercise in polemics and theatrics. Let this debate show the light we can shed rather than the heat we can generate. I remember an incident in the life of the Buddha which may help us to see the virtue of constructive action rather than constructive talk. Once, someone went to the Buddha and asked him to answer scores of metaphysical questions as to whether there were God and no God, whether there was life after death, whether there was heaven or hell, and so on. The Buddha smiled politely and quietly replied that if a man was wounded with an arrow and in great suffering, he does not ask metaphysical questions as to who shot the arrow, how long or short it was, what was its colour or its velocity, whether it was poisoned, and so on. What the wounded man does is to remove the arrow as quickly as possible and to staunch the... In the same way, it would serve us well if we strove to be as realistic as the wounded man described by the Buddha and if we tried to better our condition, within the possible parameters we have.

What must we do? In the first place, we must rediscover the culture of development. Our ancestors, our fathers and ourselves in our early youth, knew this culture. It was because our forbears knew it that they created Guyana, out of a wilderness and founded a civilized nation. This, the People's National Congress is continuing to do. This culture taught us to avoid waste, to work hard, to save and, above all, implanted in our psyche a sense of direction, unity of purpose and a desire to better our human condition. It was this culture which helped our ancestors to buy and establish villages after slavery had been abolished and which made it possible for them to survive in the plantation system and to educate their children, as we learnt yesterday from Mr. Abraham, as scholars and in the learned professions. This development culture was not peculiar or particular to Guyana, but was found all over the world wherever great economic and social developments and phenomena took place. It was found when Western Europe and North America were developing in the

19th century and was very much a part of the soviet development experience and apercus in this century.

Of recent times, however, our country has been almost overwhelmed by the culture of consumerism. Consumerism is antithetical to both development and the culture of development. It assumes a condition of endless plenty and a wasteful and narrowly hedonistic materialist attitude to life. In a situation of scarcity and on where our country is trying to develop itself, consumerism is a most subversive and destructive thing. Once our people make articulate to their minds both the culture of development and the culture of consumerism, they would quickly realise that they must eschew consumerism and recapture the constructive elements in their heritage if our nation would surmount the crisis. In order words, we must rediscover that universal and well-tried development ethic.

As a corollary to resuscitating this "Culture of Development" in our own personal lives and in the life of society as a whole, we must underpin it with two basic mental attitudes. The first is a realisation that our difficulties are partly of our own making and responsibility and are not due, entirely, to some external objective forces over which we have no control. Once we realise this, it follows that we could change conditions for the better and we become masters of our own fates. Except we firmly grasp this truth, our morals would be weakened, action would be asphyxiated and apathy would become all-pervasive. The Budget Statement should be commended for the areas in which it recognised some of our institutional failure and economic shortcomings.

The second concept which is necessary to have embedded in our consciousness is that Guyanese, both as a nation and as individuals, are capable of overcoming whatever problems may face them. In our past history over the last two hundred years, there have been occasions when our people have been faced with the greatest of disasters. Yet, they always had the stamina and the ingenuity and resourcefulness to overcome, and overcome they would, the present crisis under the People's National Congress.

Having the correct mental and psychological approach towards development and towards meeting the present crisis, however, merely provides the necessary basis for effective and successful action. And in such action, Members on both sides of this House and, indeed, our whole nation can be involved, and must be involved, if Guyana is to win the fulsome success she deserves.

The action, or effort, as Cde. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning termed it, which is necessary, is multifarious. There are programmes of action which could involve each and every citizen, and every Guyanese could make his or her contribution in this historic task, and indeed duty, of defeating this crisis. We must, for instance, continue to pay attention to maintaining our research in Science and Technology. The establishment of the National Agricultural Research Institute later this year is a step in the right direction. The Cde. President himself has now constitutional responsibility for Research. Except we do this, the modern world would pass us by both as individuals and as a nation. This is not as far-fetched as it sounds for it happened to large parts of the world not so long ago: India and China, which countries occupy so much of the world's land mass and contain such a large proportion of its people, once led the West in technology. When the Industrial Revolution started in the 18th century, they allowed it to pass them by and as a result retrogressed into backwardness, lost their sovereignty, and became dominated by imperialism. Today, these countries, the largest Third World developing countries, have grasped this truth and have determinedly been absorbing modern science and technology, even merely to preserve their economic and political independence.

We in Guyana ignore modern scientific and technological developments at our own peril. This we do not intend to do. We will surely retrogress into backwardness and face the danger of foreign domination except we keep abreast with modern science and technology. Within our very slim financial resources, we could still do a great deal as our country still produces young men and women of great talent whose input could compensate for the necessity of large financial expenditures. We, on both sides of this Assembly, could encourage our citizens, and especially our youth, to be vitally involved in science and technology, for we must remember that development is like the sun; it benefits all.

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(Cde. Ramsaroop continues)

Cde. Speaker, a manifestation of such involvement would be the use of "Appropriate Technology," which could help to further our country's development without the unevenness, failure and hiatuses caused by a thoughtless and mechanistic importation of whatever technology the Developed World recommends, or desires to sell. When, however, we use Appropriate Technology, it should be clearly grasped that it is not the ultimate, and that it is merely a step forward. Our eyes should always equally be focused on all new developments.

Cde. Speaker, equally important to keeping our country from retrogression, and keeping it on the path of development, is the absorption of modern managerial and organizational techniques applicable to our social and economic life. The Budget addresses this important Calculus for Corporate Progress. For example, we must perfect our skills in such matters as International Banking and Finance. Except we do this, we shall always be the pawns of the Developed Countries and must ultimately depend upon them. Such dependence, Cde. Speaker is costly both financially, and in terms of our self-respect, as well as our independence of action. Mastery of such skills and techniques is not beyond us. We have many young people of exceptional capacity and brain power and the programme of South-South Cooperation to which our country is fully committed envisages the upgrading of such managerial skills.

Cde. Speaker, linked with the whole movement of keep abreast with modern science, technology and managerial skills, is the providing of our young people with a sound primary, secondary and university education. The Cde. Minister of Finance mentioned certain actions which would be taken in the Educational System. Together, these actions imply a greater participation of parents and guardians in their children's education.

The various social and economic organisations of our country could make an invaluable contribution in a variety of ways and government and people would welcome such contribution and must work in symbiotic union.

But Parents and Guardians must take a more vital and active interest in the education of their charges and should not assume that the State would be able to do everything. Education is free to the recipients of it but not free to the state.

Cde. Speaker, in addition to education, there are other aspects of national life and administration which could shift from the Centre to the Regions. I shall of course not attempt to mention them here. My colleague Cde. Corbin will deal with this, but they would certainly strengthen and give greater depth and powers to the Regional Administration. One important factor in the new approach to local administration, which I would like to underline, is an attempt to widen democracy throughout the country.

Cde. Speaker, one of the primary aims of the establishment of the now Local Government bodies is the meaningful involvement of the entire Guyanese citizenry. The ordinary folk in the various Regions would have a vital responsibility for, and oversight of, most of the forces and factors which affect their lives. Indeed, by the new system of Local Government, they would be able to improve their condition and also to greatly influence whatever policies are adumbrated from the Centre. Cde. Speaker, sometimes I have heard a few persons saying that some people in our society are alienated because they are prevented from being involved in the process of Government or in looking after their own affairs. Accordingly, they become apathetic to whatever is going on and even become hostile to all governmental structures and actions. If indeed, such were the case, the new Local Government structures provides for full involvement of everyone and no one should now ever again raise the cry of 'alienation.' This has some about because of the imagination of the People's National Congress. /Applause./

Cde. Speaker, in the Cde. Minister of Finance's presentation, you would have noticed that the major stress was on the sub-structure, that is on the development of economy. This is as it should be. But he also showed concern for super-structural elements. Among the important super-structural elements with which all Guyanese are concerned is the question of leisure. The Right to Leisure which includes culture and sports is enshrined in our Constitution and is certainly one of its most socialist elements. Cde. Speaker, in the past, in the days of high "laissez-faire" capitalism, leisure was regarded as detracting from production and something which was only very grudgingly conceded.

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In fact, it was generally projected that there was something immoral about leisure. This attitude to leisure became very deeply engrained in the national consciousness and many socialists are still affected by this older colonial capitalist attitude.

Cde. Speaker, as socialists we recognise that leisure and productive work are two sides of the same coin. Workers who are able to enjoy leisure activity, and who could look forward to such activity, as of course, tend to be more productive. Leisure is therefore part of the production and development process and should be so regarded. It is also an element in a country's cultural development and is an important factor in any aspirations towards a broad humanism. Cde. Speaker, leisure activity in its very varied forms should be promoted within the context of its being part of the production process and must be directly linked to it. Leisure activity must not depend wholly upon state action. Guyanese citizens everywhere have a part to play in the promotion of and participation in, such activity. The People's National Congress Government will afford citizens this part to play and this opportunity for participation. /Applause./ Cde. Speaker, several of the adverse trends in our society to which I have referred, have been the result of the Cultural Imperialism that Guyanese have suffered over the centuries. Cultural Imperialism tries to impose the mores and cultural ideals and assumptions of the imperialist country on people to whom such mores and ideals are foreign and often inappropriate, thus destroying possibilities of cultural innovation and inventiveness. Indeed, cultural imperialism often lends to a kind of national and even individual schizophrenia on the part of those who are victims of it.

Cde. Speaker, since the Nationalist Movement in the 1950s, Guyanese have been progressively freeing themselves from the effects of centuries of Cultural Imperialism in numerous ways. One of the best examples of this is in respect of clothes. Until the 1950s, Guyanese of all classes regarded Western European dress as the ideal. They dutifully wore lounge suits and ties and woolen clothing despite our hot climate as well as the high cost of such clothing. All other forms of dress were despised because of the irrationality inculcated by foreign cultural domination. Today, Cde. Speaker, Guyanese have freed themselves from such dress prejudices and their clothing has become more comfortable and functional and comparatively cheaper. Cde. Speaker, similarly, during the days of colonialism, only the Christian Religion was given any State recognition or treated with respect. This was so because the nominal religion of the colonialists was Christianity.

Thanks to the People's National Congress. /Applause./ Thus, Guyana is now in the favoured position of having mankind's there major Faiths contribution to her cultural development.

Cde. Speaker, despite the fact that Cultural Imperialism has been driven back on several fronts, yet it is not subtle and its domination of the mind has been so deep and entrenched that it keeps resurging in the most unexpected ways. Accordingly, we have always to be on the qui vive, alert against it. An example of such resurgence could be seen in the styles of food preparation. Twenty or Twenty-five years ago, Guyanese were departing from the foreign and inappropriate styles of food preparation and were reverting to the more local styles and even inventing new ones. Of late, however, Cde. Speaker, such inventiveness on the part of housewives has become even more urgent and necessary, as many are now unable to cook the food stuffs which are readily available in the variety of ways which was once done not so many years ago. Today, the various women's organisations and other such interested bodies have a challenging task to teach housewives the variety of ways they could prepare local foods.

Cde. Speaker, the task before us admittedly is enormous. Yet it must be done and be done by us all for we are all involved and we cannot escape our duty. This is not a time for tantrums, for tempers and threats. It is a time and season for togetherness. Our nation transcends partisanship, bigotry, class, religion and all the other groupings of society. Most of these groupings, institutions and attitudes will in time pass away, even before our very eyes and may be in our own life times. But Cde. Speaker, our nation will remain living and growing and witnessing the new worlds to com

The Hindu and Muslim Faiths were ignored and discriminated against. Today, this vestige of Cultural Imperialism has been completely eradicated and Hinduism, Islam and Christianity are treated equally and with the same respect by the State and indeed the entire population. e under the People's National Congress. /Applause./

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(Cde. Ramsaroop continues)

It is only those positive things which we as a people and as individuals do to win the battle for survival to regenerate Guyana and bring about the better life that will be remembered and appreciated. History has shown that we as a nation could do it! The P.N.C. has shown the way how it can be done and the P.N.C. will show the way again.

Our party, the People's National Congress, has pledged itself to this course, and we are sure that the other side of this Assembly and all our Guyanese people, wherever they are, are equally pledged to defeating the crisis and ushering in a prouder, more prosperous and happier Guyana. Let us together work for the emergence of this New Dawn. The first rays have started in the horizon. The light will grow brighter! It must grow brighter under the benign influence of the People's National Congress! Applause

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud (Minority Chief Whip): Cde. Speaker, we are deeply concerned with the serious economic situation that Guyana faces. We are earnestly concerned about the profound sufferings and miseries of our people. We would like to see attempts and efforts to correct this trend so that once again the people of Guyana can reach some degree of comfort and happiness. Guyanese have never before been exposed to such hardships and sufferings as they are currently undergoing. The quality of life is deteriorating every day and there seems to be no hope for the future.

A question was posed about the day of slavery. I would like to believe that it is not the intention of this Government to take us back to those dark. Since the Government is seeking to equate the current time with slavery, then I can understand why we are in this perilous position. But none of us want to go back to slavery. The quality of life is deteriorating every day and there seems to be no hope for the future. I was expecting great proposals in the Budget Speech to seriously and sincerely cope with the situation. Instead the Minister said the following on the last page of the Budget Speech

"I can offer no comforting solution which will allow us to survive and prosper."

On the same page he also said:

". . . we are considered a territory blessed with an abundance of natural resources, especially agricultural potential."

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The pertinent question is why this country which is blessed with such richness, and may I add, with a people who have proven in the past their capacity to perform, should find itself in such a disastrous economic state? This question was not raised in the speech.

Our gross domestic production fell by some 10.6 per cent. Bauxite and sugar production declined and rice records its lowest production. We should have been self-sufficient in milk long ago but we are now hearing that we will reach self-sufficiency in milk in 1988. What a shame. When the People's Progressive Party was in Government we had not only reached almost self-sufficiency but there was contemplation, a step being taken for the establishment of a condensery so that the excess milk could have been used for the production of butter and cheese and so on. But in 1984, after ^{nearly} 20 years of P.N.C. rule, we are told in another four years we are going to reach self-sufficiency in milk. Lest the Government forgets, they refused to pay attractive or reasonable prices to the dairy farmers for milk. They themselves chased the farmers out of the coastal belt and wanted them to go into the hinterland to fall prey to thieves at night and even during the day. The Government must very seriously and sincerely look at the situation. But the people who are in the saddle are not elected. The people who have been imposed on the people in the regions are big masters and the people must cow-tow to their whims and fancies. The Government knows it and the Government knows many of them.

It is not simply talking about decentralisation but it is what the people are compelled to face in the different areas. During the P.P.P. Government the cattle industry was not neglected. Beef was exported to Barbados. With cheap and regular supply of stockfeed, ^{the} poultry industry became second place to beef.

In 1962 2.1 million pounds of shrimps was exported. By 1964 it rose to 3,250 pounds. There was no neglect in dairy farming. The P.P.P. introduced cattle to improve the quality of milch cows. The P.P.P. Government sold . . . calves at the price of \$18 each to farmers. Milk production improved rapidly. The Milk Pasteurisation Plant in Georgetown was supplied with 500,000 gallons in 1959. This figure climbed to 622,000 gallons in 1960. The last year of the P.P.P. Government, 1964, the Milk Pasteurisation Plant received 800,000 gallons.

There was the heifer scheme and so many other incentives. Time does not permit me to refer to all these figures, but I thought of putting in that one for milk. We have never taken and we will/take the position that we must not use what we produce, if we have a reasonable replacement. But then there is no substitute, there is no replacement and we impose all kinds of ridiculous prescriptions on the population and we expect them to bow to it. The population has not bowed and they will not bow. That seems to be the reality in the country at the moment.

Another area of serious concern which was not raised in the Budget Speech is the persistent braindrain. It has reached scandalous proportions. What is more is that thousands of farmers have migrated and are continuing to migrate. Between 1967 and 1978 33,000 acres of land were not put to use, and these were rice lands. Some 16,000 farmers were affected. The crux of the matter is that people are not involved and on a daily basis they are told to give up this and give up that, give up your eating habits, eat what you produce. The only thing the people seem to be giving up is the country.

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(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

That is what must concern us and I would hope that speakers on the Government side would not continue to prepare a lengthy episode and come here and lecture us, but indeed they will be practical and debate the issues as they affect the nation and as they affect the country, so that with an exchange of views and ideas we can reach consensus for the future progress and prosperity of this country.

Cde. Speaker, in my mind, it is very clear that the people have not responded to the PNC. It is opportune and - the climate is conducive for positive steps on the part of the Government to bring to an end its imposition on Guyanese and to initiate the necessary mechanism to restore peoples' involvement and democracy in this still beautiful land of ours. If the Government is deceived, the nation is not, with the utterances and assembly purporting to convey that the regions are meeting and they are meeting with Parliament in a Supreme Congress. As far as we are concerned only the people are supreme and not a handful of selectees. If in fact there was peoples involvement, if in fact there was a semblance of democracy in this country, surely the production decline would not have been recorded year after year and instead of progressing with all this regionalism and what have you we have been transgressing year after year and each year we come to the Parliament simply to hear expressions of confessions, bold phrases, but very little thought or none as to how all these problems ought to be tackled.

In the budget speech a great deal of time was spent to point out the adverse effect of the parallel economy and after making out a case against those involved, the Minister concluded by saying the hucksters will be licensed. That is something I have not been able to reconcile, probably the Government speakers may attempt to reconcile it. An indictment against a people, probably clear expression of a prima facie case or more than that but you can do and say licence them, let them continue. There is no other interpretation to that aspect of the budget.

The growing strength of the parallel economy is not to be

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applauded but it grows on the absence of what the nation considers necessities. There are certain items which are staple and necessary, which people will not give up. We have called and I repeat the call of the People's Progressive Party and of the people of this country - bring back wheaten flour, bring back split peas, let the people get oil, let the children get milk. We have got the capacity to produce, there can be no doubt about that. We are the bread basket and we should be the bread basket of the caribbean, but since the farmers are not inspired, there is no motivation, they are not being reasonably compensated for their produce in all aspects of agricultural development, we have got a decline in production and obviously Cde. Speaker, an absence of the zeal and zest to do better.

The Government should end its negative attitude in this matter and review items banned together with consideration to permit illegitimate importation of those items which are manifestly necessary and for which the nation has been clamouring. With such approach people will be prepared not to support the parallel economy for buying items and things for which there are substitutes and others which they can do without. I am not simply saying bring back these items, I am going a step further. There are certain items which people are not going to give up and I said yesterday when I was sitting that if you have a open vote of those items in this Parliament, the Government will be surprised I am sure Cde. Speaker, unless there is rigging. Most of those items the members will say bring back. The ballot must be secret and the ballot boxes must be before our eyes and at the conclusion of the polling we must count them in the presence of the Speaker and I am sure Sir you would ensure that the balloting is fair and secret and free as well.

Cde. Speaker, why is the Government deceiving itself? Why is it fooling itself? Because somebody say or because of few we have been hearing all kinds of names. It is not me you know, it is Dr. Reid. I have not asked Dr. Reid and I would not say that it is so. I feel the thing should come back. People want bread, they want roti, it is true, that is a fact. We say here that if those items which are so necessary, which are so vital for the sustenance of life - I have never fallen for the argument

that people will starve. No, I am not saying that, surely, you will get something to eat and you will survive - but that is what we want to reduce the people of this country to. People have got a right to choose. Why you want to deny them that degree of right which is inherent, which they are entitled to and which you say you want to give them in the constitution? But we do not take negative positions. We say there are certain things that you have to stop importing, we are saying that there must be certain restrictions, but we do say that your list of priority has been neither conceived, your banning has been wanton and reckless and you are disregarding the opinion and the feelings of the people on these issues in this country.

I can only Cde. Speaker, that I am persuasive enough to move those men, if they can be moved. If I do not succeed in persuading them to move, it appears to any that the people will move you.

Cde. Speaker, the rice industry has a history which needs recounting. In the colonial days the Rice Marketing Board suffered losses, the farmers were not running it. Prior to 1970 there was no board and the industry was in the hands of private individuals. The P.P.P. intervened, amended the Act and placed the administration of the rice industry in the hands of the producers. From losses, the Board began to make profits. Both the Rice Marketing Board and the Rice Development Corporation were viable under the P.P.P.

Cde. Speaker, let me quickly give those figures. The profits were as follows: 1961 -62 Rice Marketing Board \$839,753.

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(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

Let me quickly give those figures. The profits were as follows: 1961/2 R.M.B. \$839,753, R.D.C. \$211,169; 1962/3, R.M.B. \$613,053, R.D.C. \$114,931. In 1963/4, the last year of the People's Progressive Party Government, despite all the difficulties and problems that were prevailing in Guyana, both the R.M.B. and the R.D.C. made profits – R.M.B. \$567,085, R.D.C. \$135,018. In 1965 I was in this Parliament and this is my twentieth year. I have been here a long time. I have had an opportunity of evaluating speeches. I have had an opportunity of look at changes which occur with such great frequency: one thing today, something else tomorrow. On that occasion, the last W.R. Kendall was the Minister in charge of rice and the R.M.B. He brought before this Assembly legislation and amended the Rice Marketing Board Act removing control of the R.M.B. from the hands of the producers and placing control in the hands of people who had very little, or no, interest in the operation of the Board and the industry as a whole. People with vested interest were removed. What is more is that within a short period – in less than two years – from viability the Board began to lose money. I want now to give the figures for 1965. In that year the Board lost \$4,308,877, R.D.C. \$741,450; 1965/66 R.M.B. \$2,875,640, R.D.C. \$1,269,243. What I show here is that under two years there was clear evidence, some 18 years ago, that the removal of farmers' control from the Rice Marketing Board was a wrong decision. One wonders what were the considerations that led to the removal of those men who ran the Board so efficiently and so successfully and with profitability year after year.

Instead of reverting to the original position, shortly afterwards this Government removed all representatives of the Rice Producers Association from the Rice Marketing Board. The Rice Producers Association is as old as the Board itself, that is, from 1946. The Rice Producers Association is the legitimate organisation of the rice farmers of this country. It has a history and it holds elections consistently with the provisions of its constitution. Every member throughout the length and breadth of this country votes at the Rice Producers Association elections. If, in fact, the Rice Producers Associations was not legitimate and if it is true, as the members of the Government attempt to convey, that they have influence on the rice farmers, why is it that until 1984 the Government has not

succeeded in achieving its targets in the rice industry.

In fact, production in 1983 was less than the production in 1964, which was 163,000 tons of rice to be precise, as against 145,000 last year. Don't argue that: that is a statistical fact. Had that industry been managed and run efficiently, production would not have fallen. Instead, we would have more than doubled production 20 years after. We would have been able successfully not only to satisfy local consumption for rice but we would have been able to export as we were exporting during the time of the P.P.P. Government. Those figures are before us.

This Government has been unable to reach its requirement within the Caribbean and overseas. I understand that recently a Russian boat was here to take rice to the G.D.R. – 3,000 metric tons of rice from the Soviet Union. What has happened? The Government did not have a ready supply of rice. The boat had to wait here a long time. My information is that rice had to be taken from one boat which was to go to Jamaica, I think, and put it on that boat so that the order could be satisfied. The boat was here for almost 17 days.

The Speaker: Three minutes more, Cde. Persaud.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: What is the result? Today there is a shortage of rice in this country. I call on the Government to investigate it today because it is useless for us to pose a question. We would not have an opportunity to hear the reply in time.

I am asking now: Let the Government deny that today, 7th February, 1984, there is not a shortage of rice in all the markets. I made it a point to check it out this morning. The "Man in the Street" says there was a mini-riot in two or three areas and one trade unionist is on record as confirming that there is a shortage of rice.

I want to say that in this Budget Speech the Government is now speaking of separating milling from marketing. This is again extending the bureaucracy. This is not the answer. If time had permitted I would have quoted Dr. Reid who spoke in favour of unifying the two institutions, namely, the R.D.C. and the R.M.B. He is recorded on two occasions as saying it was necessary. There are several experts who came into this country and made recommendations to the Government. I have all the names and I have looked at all the reports. The Government has not followed the advice of those experts. Now, come 1984, 20 years after, we hear that the Government is separating milling from marketing. May I say: This is not the answer. This is an extension of bureaucracy and unless the farmers are

involved in the management, the administration, the marketing of rice, we will not have the kind of production that was targeted and the production that we can clearly make.

My last point, sir, is grading. Grading is significant. It must be an independent board and unless the rice farmers, through the R.P.A., are represented on any grading institution, with the greatest respect and with thanks for your tolerance, I say again there will be no advance in production.

The Speaker: Cde. Corbin.

The Minister of National Mobilisation: (Cde. Corbin): Cde. Speaker, the 1984 Budget Speech, ably presented to this Honourable Assembly by Cde. Carl Greenidge, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, provides a clear and unambiguous statement of the state of the Guyana economy, makes an analysis of the causal and resulting factors, proposes a strategy and programme for recovery of the economy and provides useful guidelines which, if followed by all concerned, will certainly lead to progress and development in 1984.

I do sympathize with some members on the other sides of the Assembly who, either because of a failure to read the Budget Statement in its entirety or a lack of comprehension of the text, have so far, in their presentations, failed to demonstrate a perception of the national economy and offer constructive criticism of the solutions proposed.

I am confident, however, that, with the record of the achievement of the P.N.C. Government, the demonstrated ability to lead this country out of difficulty in the past, we Guyanese, following the guidelines of the 1984 Budget and with our resourcefulness, will make Guyana progress and prosper under the dynamic and competent leadership of our esteemed leader and President, Cde. Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham.

I would like to draw the attention of this honourable House to two sections of the Budget Speech which I consider of extreme importance. On page 17 of the Budget Speech it is stated:

"Second, communities need to be encouraged to pursue communal self-sufficiency; since by that pursuit whole communities can be assured of a continual supply of food items without over reliance on external trade."

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(Cde. Corbin continues)

Again Cde. Speaker, page 68 of this very Budget Speech under the section:

'The immediate tasks which confront us are:'

- (3) "Organising our planning, implementation, and monitoring mechanisms to achieve maximal participating in the agricultural thrust."
- (4) "Maintaining our social services, particularly those related to health and education, in the face of an overall scarcity of resources."
- (5) "Finding ways to reactivate already installed, but currently underutilised, productive capacity."
- (8) "Implementing the capital programme with maximal efficiency."

These are some of the tasks which confront us and in the few minutes I have this afternoon, Cde. Speaker, I wish to establish that these tasks are achievable because of the institutional framework established by this PNC Government, our organizational capability, the administrative and budgetary arrangements to accomplish same, and a readiness and willingness by the people to contribute meaningfully.

In dealing with the Institutional framework, Cde. Speaker, the People's National Congress Government conscious of the need to establish socialist democracy in Guyana, has ensured that the institutional framework is enshrined both in the People's New Constitution and in the subsequent legislation passed since then. I refer to the Constitution, Article 71 which categorically states:

- (1) Local government is a vital aspect of socialist democracy and shall be organised so as to involve as many people as possible in the task of managing and developing the communities in which they live."
- (2) "For this purpose Parliament shall provide for the institution of a country-wide system of local government through the establishment of organs of local democratic power as an integral part of the political organisation of the state."

Again in Article 72 (2) gives various provisions for the establishment of Local Government areas and the division of the whole country into 10 regions and such sub-regions and other sub-divisions as provided for by law and it should be noted, and I quote:

"In defining the boundaries of any areas into which Guyana may be divided under paragraph (1) account shall be taken of the population, the physical size, the geographical characteristics, the economic resources and the existing and planned infrastructure of each area, as well as the possibilities of facilitating the most rational management and use of such resources and infrastructure, with a view to ensuring that the area is or has the potential for becoming economically viable."

The Constitution also makes provision for involvement of the people in national planning and if we refer to Article 15 (4) again of the constitution, we will see:

"National economic planning shall be the basic principle of the development and management of the economy. It shall provide for the widest possible participation of the people and their socio-economic organs at enterprise, community, regional and national levels, and shall also provide continuous opportunity for the working people to exercise initiative and to develop a spirit of creativity and innovation."

In this context, Cde. Speaker, over the past three years we have witnessed the establishment of this new system of local democracy as evidenced by the Regional System. It is a pity that some of my colleagues on the other side of this Assembly have not taken time off to examine the way in which the Regional System and a new system of local democracy offers an opportunity for meaningful and full participation of all the people of this country in the decision making and management of their affairs. We can see, Cde. Speaker, that the Regional Democratic Council which is vested with that authority, not as individuals as the member of the other side of the Assembly stated a few minutes ago, but are vested with that authority after an election which involves all the people of the region. That electoral process placed in the hands of that Council the responsibility for the management and organisation of their affairs. It is, therefore, the leaders of this Council speaking on behalf of the people and executing decisions on their behalf. How else can democracy work? I am sure that the Comrades have examined the concept of democratic centralism in depth for some time. Apart from the Regional Democratic Council, there are several other sectors, the sub-regions, the districts, the communities, the neighbourhoods and the People's Co-operatives which provide for the organisation of people at various levels of the society so that at the very smallest level of the community, there can be full involvement in this entire exercise. Co-ordinating this entire operation is the National Congress of Local Democratic Organ which comprises representatives of the various regional councils and by their examination and analysis of the problems they would be in a better position to coordinate not only Local Government matters, but bring to bear on Central Government issues which affect the practice of Local Democracy. Since then too, we have had legislations passed in this Assembly: the Local Democratic Organs Act which puts the legal framework for the operation of this New Regional System. We saw, Cde. Speaker, over the past few years, the development of the system where people can be fully involved.

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Only a few days ago at the Kuru Kuru Cooperative College, Members of the 10 Regional Democratic Councils were able to sit down and evaluate the weaknesses and strengths of this systems, make suggestions for its improvement and work out strategy by which they can involve the people more fully in the developmental plan, and I am convinced that with the work which has gone on over these past three years, we have been able to build the foundations of genuine socialist democracy in this country because of the commitment of the People's National Congress Government. Cde. Speaker, in addition to that, over the past three years we have sought to divide the country in keeping with the prescription of the Constitution and the Commissioner of Lands indeed, has had a very difficult task to sub-divide Guyana into several People's Cooperative Units. Those People's Co-operative Units following the guidelines of the Constitution have been structured in such a way to provide opportunity for full economic development and social interaction of the people who live there, and I am happy to report to this National Assembly that that work is completed and we hope during the ensuing year to educate Guyanese and inform them of these new sub-divisions which exist. This will enable the people to begin to familiarize themselves with the new units with the view to enlisting their full participation and involvement in the developmental process. As the Regions grow in vitality, they will increasingly develop the capability for executing their functions and responsibilities in increasing measure and correspondingly reduce their dependence on the Centre. As they grow in vitality, they will improve their capability for planning and management and for accelerating self-reliance and self-development. The system of democracy has great potential for stimulating economic growth, and for improving the welfare of the people.

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(Cde. Corbin continues)

What it needs at this particular point is understanding and common sense and an honest desire by all those who have an interest in people to work with this system to provide the assistance and support it so vitally needs at this time.

Cde. Speaker, the institutional arrangements which have been provided both by the Constitution and the legislation which has been passed has ensured that the society can be organized in a way to give maximum involvement of the people at all levels in decision-making and management of their own affairs. For example, the Regional Democratic Council is charged with the responsibility for the management and development of the regions and though the other sectors have not yet been established, interim arrangements have been worked out so that the Regional Democratic Councils can guarantee their plans for development and improvement. There can also be planning at the level of the Local Authority and District Councils and at the same time the Local Authorities are in a position to give active support and co-operation to national plan.

To ensure, too, that this organizational capability is achieved, the regions have over the past year sought to strengthen the regional personnel system and in relation to staffing of regions which have been deficient in both administrative, technical and professional staff, have made efforts and have placed great priority to the placement of engineers, economists, planners, agriculturalists etc., so that the capabilities of the regions can be significantly strengthened to achieve those targets for 1984. We do know that there is need for the urgent establishment of planning units in the regions and at least in one region one planner has been placed. Efforts will be made through the cooperation of the State Planning Secretariat to ensure that these planning units are established very shortly.

We can see that from this organizational arrangement the Regional Democratic Councils, the Local Authorities and the people within the region, the decentralization and regionalisation of staff, we can ensure that those objectives and tasks which we have been set in 1984 can be achieved. We have seen, too, the detailed working of this system and many of the problems which in the past existed in many regions have been tackled very successfully, directly because of the new system and its organizational capabilities. For example, only yesterday in this Assembly we heard one Member of the Minority speaking of the problems in the Rupununi. It is a pity he is not more au fait with those problems because indeed the presence of the regional system is to help alleviate some of those problems which in the past would have taken months before the Central Government would have know about them. The very pure water supply problem in the Rupunni which he referred to is one which has been attracting the attention of that region since its inception. Perhaps he is unaware that through the instrumentality of the Regional Democratic Council several wells have been sunk in that region. Surely there are problems with mechanical equipment as would happen anywhere in Guyana and in any part of the world. One of the problems of the Rupununi is that the water is very low because of unsubstantial rainfall over the past two years. Consequently, some of these wells have not been functioning

effectively. But the point I am making is that the presence of the regional system and the new system of Local Democracy has brought attention to these problems.

The very important marketing operation in the Rupununi has come about because of the regional system and I would not permit the Hon. Member to mislead the Assembly because it is as a direct result of the intervention of the Regional Democratic Council, for example, that proper prices were made available to farmers in the Rupununi. Right at this moment the Regional Council is engaged in negotiation with the Guyana Marketing Corporation and other agencies to seek better prices for the farmers. It therefore illustrates that the intervention of the regional system and the system of local democracy provides a better opportunity for the tackling of the problems in a very speedy and efficient manner.

In that very region we have had significant increases in agricultural production. I will deal with that, however, a little later. But we can see that the involvement of people in running their own affairs is indeed an incentive to greater production and productivity. So effective has been this new system of people's democracy that even when Members of the Minority seek permission to visit the regions we do not approve without consultation with the people. Since the comrade read a letter yesterday, perhaps I can also quote from my file to show evidence of our involvement in involving the people in decision-making. This is a letter from that very village Karaudarnau Village, dated 3rd February, signed by the Captain, Magnus Stephen. It states:

“With reference to your name REF: 4/1/14/13 dated 1982-01-15 re P.P.P. seeking permission to visit Karaudarnau Village during period 1982-01-27 to 1982-02-05 to hold discussion with the Villagers.

Please be informed that the Village Council of Karaudarnau has rejected against giving them permission.”

I have another letter here from the Captain of Awarewaunau, T. Griffith, the date received was 1982-02-29. It states:

“Upon receiving your letter concerning the desire of P.P.P. personnel to visit Awarewaunau, I met with members of our Council and we have decided that we would not like to have them here. Our reasons for coming to this decision are as follows:

1. They do not encourage our people to work together and so produce more for their own benefit.
2. They go around spreading false and malicious rumours about our Government.
3. They cause division in our village and incite our normally peace loving people to argue and fight.

In closing may I ask that you and the authorities concerned respect the wishes of our Council and work together with us towards the peaceful development of Awarewaunau.”

15:45 hrs.

(Cde. R. Corbin continues)

So not only one area has communication, but this is a demonstration of the fact that in the working of this new system of peoples involvement and democracy we have used every opportunity to consult people and put democracy in action.

Cde. Speaker, apart from the organisational capability of the region we have ensured with the administration and budgetary arrangements have been made to ensure that the regional system provides the opportunity for ready implementation of the programme, both capital and current and proper monitoring mechanisms to be put in place and ensuring at the same time maximum participation of the people. The placement of budgetary provisions by Parliament directly under the Regional Democratic Council in essence now means that the responsibility for the co-ordination, integration and management of these provisions and the execution of the work programmes which they sustain rests with the Regional Democratic Councils.

Cde. Speaker, in the formulation of their programmes it is quite evident that the Regional Democratic Councils will be capable of achieving these objectives in 1984. The current budget of some \$59 m and the capital budget of \$23 m in the regions will ensure that the budgetary arrangements are secure to ensure that the regions are able to achieve their objectives. Certain functions and responsibilities previously the preserve at the centre will as a consequence be transferred to the regions. Some significant development so far has been the decentralisation of the functions of the Treasury and the establishment of sub-Treasury in the regions; the decentralisation of the functions of the Auditor General and the establishment of external audit units in the regions; the centralisation of accounting functions in the regions and the establishment of regional central accounting units; the clerks of Regional Democratic Councils or the Regional Executive Officer have been designated Regional Accounting Officers so that they can keep proper accountability of the state funds so assigned; the appointment of the Chairman and Vice Chairman as full time Officers of the Regional Democratic Councils; the legal delegation

of functions of the D&I Board and the supervision of various Local Government matters which were formally the preserve of the Minister responsible for Local Government; direct involvement in delivery systems for agri inputs and marketing in particular the supply of fertilisers etc., and the management of marketing centres; undertaking of economic projects by the Regional Democratic Councils with particular reference to agri-machinery, Regional farms and agro based industries such as the operation of the cassava mill and also a subject which has concerned my colleague a few minutes ago, the regionalisation of the Rice Board so that the people in the regions can be directly involved in managing those operations. The formulation of national programmes, the monitoring of performance through reporting system, the issuing of general directives and the guideline including technical and other standards, training, the provision of technical support services where these do not exist locally, periodic inspections, budgetary and audit control functions are some of the areas which ensure that the administrative and budgetary arrangements are complete to ensure the successful operation of this system.

If you were to look just briefly Cde. Speaker, at some of the uses of the funds in the various regions we will see that a great deal of funds will be expended this year in the region in the capital programme to provide agricultural development. In region two alone, some \$70,000, region three - \$900,000, region four - \$190,000, region ten - 500,000, just to mention a few.

In land and water transport, region seven - a hinterland region, some \$40,000, region ten, another \$100,000. In road infrastructure region four alone \$1.5 m, region two - \$75,000, region six - \$5,000,000. This is an example Cde. Speaker, that the budgetary provision provides an opportunity for the regions to cope effectively with the task ahead. Therefore, the expectation of the Minister of Finance for the achievement of these tasks are not idle expectations, but expectations which are based on the budgetary and administrative arrangement which have been made in the regions to ensure that this is achieved.

Finally, these tasks have been identified and are achievable because in the regions there is a readiness and willingness by the people to

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contribute meaningfully to the solution. This was quite evident from the evaluation exercise which was conducted at Kuru Kuru Co-op College not so long ago, for from those discussions it was evident that there will be a great deal of involvement of the people in the achievement of these tasks - for the regions have pledged to organise people individually and in groups for production and for credit, to establish productive groups in many areas of the country, to establish interest groups and provide assistance such as pig rearing groups, cattle rearing groups and to organise specially for the milk self sufficiency drive in the regions and ensuring that the expectations of central Government in terms of milk self sufficiency are achieved and achievable within the specified time and they have proposed also to identify and involve all progressive farmers and existing co-ops in formal groups, ascertain problems of all existing and deferred co-ops and assist them in identifying and applying solutions to these problems as part of the regional programme for the attainment of production targets.

15:55 hrs

The Speaker : Three minutes more, Cde. Corbin.

Cde. Corbin: Thank you, Cde. Speaker. With regard to the achievement of production targets, these targets have not been arrived at in isolation. These have been arrived at after careful consultation with the people. It is also a common strategy in the operation of the Councils to depend on several exercises to support the programmes identified, particularly in the hinterland regions where communities are isolated. Integrated programmes will be formulated in each community. The regions also propose in 1984 to organise systems for the supply of planting materials and other inputs not only from the centre but from within the regions, establishing nurseries so that planting materials could be readily available to farmers to ensure that the agricultural thrust is achieved during 1984. Communities will determine needs and availability. Propagation campaigns will be established and special plots for propagation purposes will be provided. This will also involve schools and school plots to ensure that the young people of our country are fully involved in the exercise of their objectives.

It is very clear that this 1984 Budget is not a blue print for disaster but really a guide for action. Surely the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning said that he did not offer comfortable solutions. He did not, however, say there were no solutions. He said these solutions were achievable provided all the people of Guyana use their resourcefulness to achieve them. I have no doubt that with the full involvement of the regional system, the new system of local democracy, we will indeed achieve these targets in 1984.

Sitting suspended at 15:58 hrs.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

16:25 hrs

On resumption –

The Speaker: Cde. Corrica.

The Minister of State within the Ministry of Internal Trade and Consumer Protection: (Cde. Corrica): Cde. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise on this occasion afforded me to make a contribution in this debate on the 20th annual budget of the People's National Congress Government presented in this National Assembly. I joint with my other comrades in applauding the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning and his team for a job magnificently done.

On the 30th January, the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning unambiguously presented to us a true picture of the problems we face in Guyana along with some ideas by which we could overcome them. We have listened to comments and reactions by Members of the Minority Parties who seem to feel that there is no hope. They said that this Budget was a recipe for starvation, there is no hope; it is like an empty basket and all sorts of things, but we on this side of the Assembly are not pessimists. We believe that there is a cure for every sickness and we believe in man's ability to solve any problem. That is why we have great faith in the future. We have great faith in the peoples of Guyana, in their ability to overcome whatever problems we are facing now. /Applause./ Since my specific task is to treat with the question of internal distribution of essential items and the parallel and black market situation, I will proceed to do just that.

As you might have observed, Cde. Speaker, the topics I have just referred to are so important to the overall success of our recovery programme that the Minister took some time on pages 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, and part of 27 to deal with them almost in detail, pointing out the ill effects they have on the country's economy and the psychology of our people as a whole.

It is no secret that Guyana, like the rest of the world, is going through an economic crisis and because of this we are forced to change our priorities as far as imports are concerned. By shifting our import priorities, it means that our consumption habits also have to be adjusted. This we should not see as a mark of punishment by a sign of maturity on the part of the Government, an ability to face up squarely to the task of remedying an

ailing economic situation.

We cannot continue to spend more than we earn. We should not see this as a sign of weakness and backwardness. It is like a father, or a parent and child situation. A child will call on its parent for anything the child feels it wants, but the parent would know its financial capacity to provide the child with what the child's requests are. That does not imply that the parent is a cruel parent. That is how we should look at the situation. As a Government, we have a responsibility and we have made mistakes as human beings. I have said this before and I will say it again. Other members of my party, my other comrades, would admit this but, as I said, we have a responsibility to decide on what are the priority areas if we are to exist, not only to survive but to live and to revive this situation which we are in today.

I must hasten to say that it is worthwhile to note that countries in the Caribbean and other parts of the world are having a close look at this situation and most recently even Nigeria, with its vast oil wealth, announced great cuts in the importation of consumption items. Trinidad and Tobago has had cuts on the subsidy on foreign food. Fortunately, we have nutritional alternatives and we are blessed with very fertile land to produce all of the nutritional food which we need to survive. Any person trying to prevent persons from being as self-sufficient as possible could not call themselves "friends of the people" but "enemies of the people." It is only now that we have a good opportunity to grapple with what is called "true independence" and, as we have said from this side time and time again, once you can start feeding yourself, then you can start speaking about being independent.

I would like to say that these facts must be brought to the attention of this Assembly lest we be carried away with the rhetoric of the Members of the Minority Parties who suggest that the P.N.C. Government is wicked and bad and doing things which no other Government has ever been thinking about. This, we must let people know, is not so. What people should know is that these actions should have been taken long ago and by now we would have been reaping the full benefits.

National Assembly

16:40 hrs

(Cde. Corrica continues)

Cde. Speaker, I said earlier that we believe that there is a cure for every sickness. It might be applied wrongly, or there might be a fear to apply the treatment. But the time must come when we have to apply the remedy properly and without fear. The parallel market must be miniaturized or be totally destroyed. Cde. Speaker, any person, any group or groups which decides, come hell or high water they are going to embark upon a programme of illegally importing what we deem as non-essentials into this country and continue to bisect the formal trading system should be seen as enemies of the State and necessary arrangements should be made for them to lend their energies and resourcefulness into more productive activities. Cde Speaker, no one after listening to the Minister's presentation should disagree that the parallel market and black-marketing situation is like an octopus to the economy and must be destroyed in the best interest of the working and productive people of this country. As a reminder to those who were present and as information to those who were not, let me quote from the relevant pages of this 1984 Budget Speech. Cde. Speaker, on page 22 in paragraph 1 the Minister said:

"Its main purpose is to divert resources into areas of activity for which it is perceived that the formal economy is not making adequate provision, i.e. once there exists a shortage."

He went on again to say:

"The huckster's purpose is to use the foreign exchange to acquire scarce goods and services. Since few of the items bought in this way would command a place at the top of a Central Bank's list of national priorities, the parallel market actually diverts funds from priority areas such as medicines and inputs for productive industry."

Now, what the National Bank will not see as priority, they will embark on importing. Cde.

Chairman, in paragraph 2 on page 23 the Minister said:

"The problem is not so much one of immorality and illegality as of the persistent undermining of the economy's capacity to survive."

He went on to explain that the foreign exchange which they were competing for was not properly channelled into the most important areas of production and neither the Government nor the people are benefiting from it. Cde. Speaker, it is easy to say as the Minister mentioned that they are small people doing their little business. Some people would say that they are small people catching their hands.

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But I maintain that I do not think there is ever a country which has been able to move forward economically and make real progress by people just catching their hands and draining the important foreign exchange which is scarce and which the country needs, to purchase non-essentials. Cde. Speaker, I said before that in changing our priorities our habits will also have to be adjusted. We know it would cause some problems and changes always caused problems. When one is accustomed to a certain way of life and certain kinds of foods, etc. and he cannot continue to get what he is accustomed to, that person will feel hardships, and that person in some cases would rebel. But fortunately, we are carrying out educational programmes informing people as to what alternatives they could use in order to still retain the nutritional values which they might lose from those foods which we are importing any more. Cde. Speaker, the parallel market situation cuts very deep because as we see it, it deals a lot with the small man and when we could have easily put our hands on the sharks, it is very difficult to put our hands on the pirais, as we have seen them to be. We all know how difficult the pirais could be. It is easier to trap a shark than to trap a pirai. But Cde. Speaker, at some time, you have to be cruel to be kind, and you have to work in the people's interest, in the interest of the majority and in the best interest of the State against the interest of a handful of people just trying to make profits, and at the same time destroying what we are trying to achieve.

In dealing with the black-market situation and the distribution of essentials items, Cde. Speaker, the distribution of items in short supply is a great task and we will admit that we have not been able so far to have this done as equitably as it ought to be. Although we have been trying various systems including work place distribution, sugar workers, market day operations, clinics, to ensure that the target group – the little one which we have to strengthen before they get into the hardness of life – get their share, we also have buying clubs and so on, so far we have not succeeded in getting this through because it has to do with people. People would have to make things work and we find from time to time the same persons who are placed in positions to carry out these systems do things to foul it up. We are looking at this. We are paying great attention in all these areas and we are trying to remedy whatever ills we see.

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We know what cause great aggravation is to see the same scarce and essential items on sale at tremendously high prices openly by the same hucksters regardless of all the work being done by the price control unit, and the question is constantly being asked: "How these people become of these items?" Cde. Speaker, this is an exercise not for trade alone. The Mayor and City Council wherever they exist, the Home Affairs Ministry, and the people themselves would have to be involved in the exercise.

16:50 hrs

(Cde. Corrica continues)

To answer the question how the people come by these items, after making investigations we have found some of these answers.

Most of the distributors were established during the time that many things were imported into the country. As a result of our economic situation we have been unable to import such quantities so the profitability of the shops or distributing centres became less. Persons, however, still wanted to continue carrying on business so they sought ways and means of keeping the profit margin as high as possible. So that when they get their goods at the controlled price they hoard and pass it out to the hucksters, some at prices which they call for and some at prices which the hucksters bid for. It happens with nearly every essential item.

As I said, Cde. Chairman, this is an exercise for all of us and if we continue to purchase these items at the high prices then we are condoning blackmarketing. We will have to be more serious and to be less sentimental in dealing with these matters. Many of these comrades will have to turn their attention to more productive activities because ^{with} the situation as it is now we cannot afford to supply them with the necessary quantities of goods to allow them to sell at the controlled price and still make a ^{reasonable} profit. I do hope the Members of the Minority would not complain to us that we are harrassing comrades who are their supporters when we embark upon this exercise.

I have had discussions with the Leader of the Minority on more than one occasion and we have been discussing how they could be involved in remedying this situation. I said before that we have tried systems which could work if people allow them to work and we will continue to try new systems as long as this problem raises its head. We have heard the Cde. Minister of National Mobilisation explaining the new system of local democracy. We feel that this is an ideal system to assist in this problem which we have with distribution in the country today.

When we try to distribute items to working people at their workplaces, then we have thousands of others who are not attached to workplaces. We still have to scatter the items around the villages and cities so that they will assist in supplying these non-attached persons. We want to go further than the working place

situation. We want to have communities involved. We want distribution of goods within the communities where people live. Just as we have it distributed in workplaces, we would think it is a better idea to have it distributed within the community. The co-operative unit which is to be formed shortly would play an important role in this exercise because the persons who will be involved in this people's co-operative unit will be people who will be residing and knowing the people within these units. Therefore, they will be able to identify the amount of persons or families within a co-operative unit, identify the distribution centre, whether it be a shop, co-op, buying-club or what have you, which they feel/best able to distribute items to the people in that particular unit and they will be there to actually monitor the distribution. As I said before, this is not only a P.N.C. exercise, this is an exercise for all within the community and I hope the comrades will be involved meaningfully. It is no use coming here, Cde. Speaker, and complaining and when the time comes for remedying the situation we just back out. The comrades on the opposite side know how much we have tried to assist in the distribution of commodities to the workers they represent. I have personally been on the ground and was commended for the way the distribution was done and the Leader of the Minority has that report. He was so happy about that report that he wanted to know if it could not continue.

As I said, manpower is very important and we have to find the people who could carry out this exercise. There is another thing which I would like to touch on and that is, it would not be right to say that we do not have the people's problem at heart and that we want them to give up all the essential things in life. The people are responsible for us being here. But, on the other hand, we have a responsibility of giving guidance to them, it is like a parent/child situation. In answer to Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, we have not stopped importing milk. We have spent millions of dollars importing milk into this country, but as I said it is the dishonesty in the system of distribution. We have been importing oil into this country because we are not self-sufficient. We have been importing soap and the raw materials to produce the same. But split peas, no, not with the amount of pigeon peas all over the place, even in this compound. I am sure you can go and reap without even having to pay anything for it.

The Speaker: Do not be sure about that.

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16:50 - 17:00 hrs

Cde. Corrica: Thank you very much for the correction because I might have been trapped. Although other comrades have already referred to it, I would like to refer to what the Cde. Minister of Finance said in concluding his speech. He said that he cannot offer any comforting solution. As Cde. Corbin said, it does not mean he is not offering a solution. What is being offered here is an opportunity for us now, with our backs to the wall, to show the vigour which we know we have and the strength to fight back and come out successfully.

17:00 hrs.

(Cde. M. Corrica continues)

He said here Cde. Speaker, and I would like to conclude with this. 'I do not believe that as a nation we are incapable of adequate imaginative response'. 1984 will be a year in which our resourcefulness must be made to triumph over the great odds which we face. Thank you.

The Speaker: Cde. Harewood Benn.

Minister of Information and Public Service- (Cde. Y. Harewood-Benn): Thank you very much Cde. Speaker. Cde. Speaker, let me first of all say what a pleasure it is for me to participate in this debate occasioned by the 1984 budget. A budget so ably presented and so comprehensively outlined by colleague the Minister of Finance.

This, Cde. Speaker, is a budget which gives this recipe for recovery, for revitalization and since at least two members of the Minority noted our Cde. Minister indicating that he did not have a comforting solution, I thought I must make some small point of it. I think it is a case Cde. Speaker, of willfully misunderstanding what my colleague meant. My colleague is not offering a placebo, he is offering a sustained and serious bit of work which will enable us to achieve take off. He is not offering a quick fix Cde. Speaker, because according to my understanding quick fixes are notoriously evanescent in their effect – they do not last. This lays the foundation for a situation that will last and endure.

Cde. Speaker, this is a budget that outlines areas of rationalisation, areas of restructuring, areas of change. When we examine change, the methodology for bringing about change dictates Cde. Speaker, that we know what it is that we have, what it is that we are changing to and why to some people our Public Service was not a business and therefore, a business-like approach to managing was not important. To these same people setting targets and systematically working towards them was not part of their culture and ethic – to some too, it was place where cost consciousness was irrelevant and empiricism was an ignored factor.

These Cde. Speaker were dangerous premises in any country but much more so in a developing third world country like ours where the imperative of a vibrant, efficient and effective Government work force cannot be over- emphasised. Ours is a country where development programme follow most closely on each other and concomitant with these must be the management and planning systems to make for successful implementation.

"All developing countries facing the challenge of accelerating economic and social development, with the consequent responsibility for providing the necessary human and material infrastructure must depend on the capability and performance of the personnel in their Public Service. It is therefore important for us to recognise the Government work force as an indispensable element in national development".

We have recognised the necessity to have our public service change radically and I emphasise radically Cde. Speaker, from a passive and more or the less coordinative function, more relevant to our colonial past, to a more positive and catalytic force. In other words, our administration must be development oriented. Given our mission Cde. Speaker which has overall to support the efficient and effective implementation of Government's policies and programmes- given that mission, given too the guidelines of the 1983 budget and our national priorities in 1983 we continued the challenging task of introducing much needed reforms.

There were and are many changes to be made- attitudinal, institutional as well as structural. We must report some success in these endeavours at the same time indicating that very much more needs to be done.

In any society with a colonial past and with certain mores and traditions as entrenched as they usually are, attitudinal legacies are a reality and must be considered seriously and dealt with. It was Machiavelli as long ago as 1513 who talked of difficulties of creating a new system for he said and I quote "for the initiator has the enmity of all who would profit by the preservation of the old system and merely lukewarm defenders in those who would gain by the new one". We appreciate the difficulties Cde. Speaker, but we press on, inspired and buttressed by our conviction that it is worthwhile, that it is necessary, that it is right. Our Managers need to see themselves as involved in the task of nation building, of creating our new Guyanese society and therefore straining every sinew, using every attitude and quality they possess to achieve this very worthwhile end.

Cde. Speaker, in order to improve the Public Service and make effective the essential elements of our thrust, a number of things needed to be done. Some of these began in 1983 and will continue in 1984 given the thrust in the 1984 budget.

These essential elements are first of all, the agricultural thrust, institutional and structural change, thirdly, increased regional activity, man power development,

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performance monitoring and last but certainly by no means least, self reliance – the ethic of...

Our Agricultural thrust – the pursuit of these activities is now institutionalised in the Public Service. A number of Ministries has taken seriously the call to get involved in agriculture – some ministries now have their own farms, while others plant on their premises. They have raised money from their produce and I must say Cde. Speaker, that contrary to predictions work in the office has not suffered, rather conversely work in the office, the atmosphere enhanced by the togetherness, by the sense of achievement, work has improved in these instances. I must admit though that some of our agencies have yet to get started and these must be pursued in 1984. It is important for all these agencies to re-examine their patterns of operation, to make accommodation for agri-activity which must be an integral part of our working life.

As far as institutional and structural change is concerned, that first stage began in 1982 when we attempted to rationalize our service in terms of its size. Stage two was embarked on when the Ministries were grouped in clusters for administrative purposes. Stage three is on-going. This involves internal restructuring with the active assistance of the management services division and they have been involved in a number of management and operation audits at the Ministry of Health when they looked after the Accident and Emergency Unit, the Portering System. At the Ministry of Agriculture, Teaching Service Commission, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Public Service Commission and the State Planning Secretariat among others. This Division has also been involved with Officials of the Ministry of Transport, Civil Aviation Department, Roads Division, Ministry of Trade, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Home Affairs and the Public Service Ministry itself. Work done there was to establish staffing needs for effective performance. Cde. Speaker, as emphasis change, our structures must be examined for relevance, for effectiveness. By 1985 a more dynamic research unit will form of one of the existing divisions of the Public Service Ministry. Generally the restructuring programme in these agencies had been concentrating on a more economical and effective use of staff in the pursuit of our pre-determined goal.

The Public Service Ministry itself has been restructured. Three of our four Divisions were carefully examined. A number of our own job descriptions and job specifications were reviewed to make them more relevant to the demands now being made for us.

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By rearrangement of existing staff a new Division which we call the Adam Support Services Division is now in place and this Division which I commend to other Ministries has specific responsibility for Internal Personnel Management, for General Office Management, Information and Financial Management. The latter includes providing Financial Management Services for all fund-raising activities organized by the Ministry.

In a number of these cases Cde. Speaker, Management Systems were suggested. Many of them put in place by the Ministries concerned, some still have some distance to go. You know Cde. Speaker, there is still a reluctance in some quarters about change, a situation that I alluded to before and that is still constantly with us. However, anyhow, some areas have seen the implementation with quite pleasing results.

Increased Regional Activity – another element – a very important element of our thrust. In order to provide maximum support for the new Regional System, organised regional activity on the part of the Public Service Ministry and the various Ministries in the 1983 increased by 80% over that of 1982.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:10 hrs

(Cde. Harewood-Benn continues)

It is compulsory for senior officers in Personnel, in Training and Management Services Divisions to leave their desks from time to time to talk with public servants in the regions, guiding and advising, training, explaining, encouraging and of course, correcting and learning at the same time.

In Region 1, for example, where three visits were paid, of the 36 personnel problems that surfaced, with the help of the Public Service Commission and the subject Ministries concerned, acceptable solutions were found for 22 of them. In 1984 much more will be done in terms of staffing the regions and to a great extent this staff will come from the centre. The centres of production are the regions and therefore our personnel balance must reflect this bias, this very necessary bias towards production. We have established a close working relationship between the regionalized Ministries, the Public Service Commission, the Public Service Ministry and the Public Services Union. In the regions, the Management Services Division, in conjunction with the regional administration, is still grappling with the task of installing planning systems, programming and programme monitoring systems, budget management and record-keeping systems.

The Training Division has mounted "Support" training in nine of the ten regions in 1983. Some regions have benefited from multiple visits and training has been done in basic management, planning techniques and so on. Still more needs to be done. I must say that the training programmes have been very popular in the regions and the clientele covered a wide span of all senior officers operating in the regions, including headmasters of schools.

I promised in 1983 that despite all the staffing and other logistical problems that characterise any of our public service activities, we would seek, because of some very compelling reasons, to re-introduce what was known as the Administrative Cadet Scheme. The aim is to provide, on an ongoing basis, for the Public Service, a corps of trained persons of high quality with potential for further development, capable of moving very quickly to fill gaps in senior positions. Our present succession arrangement makes this an imperative. I am happy to report that in one month's time this new management trainee scheme will be off the ground with the first batch of twelve trainees for an intensive two-year programme.

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I promised last year, too, that the Guyana Management Institute would come on stream and play its part with the training and development of Public Sector Managers, developing programmes in functional management and enriching its programmes by careful association with external management training and development institutions. Here again, I am happy to report it is now a reality. We have just completed the exercise of appointing new staff; we have its budget allocation and take-off is imminent.

We did serious work, too, in 1983 with the staff of the Sanata Textile Mill, the Guyana National Service, the Guyana Liquor Corporation, Guyoil, the Guyana Broadcasting Corporation, the Post Office Corporation, and the Guyana Telecommunication Corporation. These in-plant programmes in basis management were designed specifically to meet the needs of these corporations. We are still very mindful of our responsibility to provide basic professional skills. Despite our inability to provide funds as before for overseas awards, we still manage to send a few, based on technical assistance. We have to report that in 1983 four veterinary doctors returned and 18 doctors of medicine returned. We also have a sizeable number of agri-engineers, dentists, textile managers, accountants and so on.

In addition to these long courses, a fairly large number of serving officers have benefited from short courses. We are not actively pursuing scholarship programmes with Brazil and Bulgaria in high priority fields. We know that the provision of relevant skills is crucial to the success of our economic survival programmes. We are constantly seeking more effective ways of ensuring that Guyana gets the services of its young citizens who are trained at great cost to the taxpayers and who sometimes mistakenly feel that refund of money spent on their training is a substitute for the availability of their skills in much needed areas. While I do not condone the immorality, the dishonesty of the students concerned, I cannot help but remark that they are encouraged by all the Jeremiahs predicting doom who, instead of helping the wayward ones to appreciate the relationship between their contribution and our development, make remarks which encourage immorality, which encourage dishonesty.

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You have been told about the increased attention which will be paid in 1984 to performance contracts in the public sector. A small group comprising the Chairman, State Planning Board, Office of the President, Ministry of Finance, Public Service Ministry, have already begun considering performance criteria for evaluating managers of Ministries. It was Dr. Fred Nunes, when he visited last year, courtesy of CARICAD, who said –

"The association of non-performance with the public service is its greatest impediment. People do not want to be associated with low performing organisations."

They should have a culture of targets and a target of accomplishment. We take note seriously. Hence performance criteria will be an imperative. We will encourage Ministries to monitor the targets they set at the beginning of each year and to record their accomplishments.

Before I come to self-reliance, let me comment briefly on a few more promises made in 1983. The Public Service Rules will be completed. They were much more obsolete than we thought and very many adjustments had to be made. This new Disciplinary Code will be finalized and this will speed up considerably the processes for disciplining. Public Servants can also expect to earn merit increments in 1985 as a result of appraisals done on their 1984 performance. This, too, will be ready shortly. Extensive discussions have been held with the union representatives on this matter. We have reviewed the unrealistic rates of ration, station and subsistence allowance and they are soon to be sent to Cabinet.

The Public Service Union, we hope they will continue to act responsibly as protector of the rights of the worker and as workers' educators, educating them to perform at higher levels, educating them about national goals and objectives and about the responsibilities that accompany workers' rights.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:20 hrs

(Cde. Harewood-Benn continues)

Cde. Speaker, self reliance for us means making the best use of the local material resources and techniques for the national good. It means devising strategies for involving groups of people at all levels in development projects. It means making use of our creative abilities and special expertise and I always ask myself why do we deny ourselves the opportunity to create, to devise? Why is there this irrational fear and anxiety, this dismay when we are said to be first in something or the only one in something? Why not enthusiasm? Why deny ourselves the opportunity?

Summary of this meaning of self-reliance given at the Society of International Development World Conference in 1976, I think, captures adequately the spirit and intent of self-reliance in Guyana. Self-reliance as he says it is the sense of self confidence as a nation to experiment with its own development style, with its own value system, using its own technology, its own intellectuals, its own ideas." In other words self-reliance in the sense of liberation of the indigenous energies of these countries. Energies which have been sap for so long and over centuries of colonialism. Cde Speaker, why don't we have the courage and the confidence to fail and then to succeed. I hear talk of the time when this was bestowed on us and that was given to us. Where is pride? Cde. Speaker, where is human dignity? Abstract terms I grant you, but easily transferrable into gratifying public practical results. During 1984, Cde. Speaker, more emphasis will be given to the promotion of a self reliance orientation in our Ministries. Some are already involved and if I have time, Cde. Speaker –

The Speaker: Yes you have time.

Cd.e Harewood-Benn: Some are already involved, and to give some examples which may serve as an inspiration to others, small details, but nonetheless, small parts which make a perfect whole. Self reliance! Why the dismay? It is just the manifestation of our inferiority? Some agencies, Cde. Speaker, are involved in their own team building for the many tasks that face them. Some have devised their own systems of monitoring all kinds of consumption, e.g. electricity. Some have devised their own war on waste schemes. Some are involved in their own painting.

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17:20 – 17:30 hrs

One Ministry has been involved in reconditioning old discarded steel cabinets and making them look like new again, saving \$14,000. Cde. Speaker, while we have our self-reliant programme, as vibrant as they may be we recognise that there is need to plan, there is need to monitor. Self-reliance activities like any other must be carefully planned and financial system installed for accountability purposes. Public administration today, Cde. Speaker, is in ferment. It is no longer the administration of our fore-fathers. Change is here. It is threatening. It can be traumatic, but change has to be managed, Cde. Speaker, because paradoxically change is the only constant thing in this universe. We must have the discipline of systems, but at the same time if action is there, if it is identified as purposeful, economic and in the public interest, if it helps us to achieve our objectives, then it is out to adopt. Cde. Speaker, if we are not, I am convinced of the interdependence of our work-life in this country. If we are not efficient with administrative processes, the farmers' land gets flooded. If we are boorish to the man in the street who walks into the offices, he withdraws his enthusiasm for self help projects in his community. In all this though I am sanguine about the ability of our public service to contribute meaningfully to the economic survival of our country. I am convinced that with the guidelines given by the Cde. Minister of Finance in this his first Budget, and given our resolve and our understanding, 1984 will contrary to predictions of doom, be the year when we will realize our great potential and achieve take off. We have the ethic of hard work. We must understand sacrifice and imagination are pre-requisite to economic and social development. We have the resources. Let us in this year of resourcefulness, let us with the guidance of this constructive, realistic Budget, and with the inspiration of our Leader, make this year the beginning of our brave new world, which according to Shakespeare in the Tempest, is with us, because we have it within us.

/Applause./

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: You honour, we used to hear when we were little boys, whenever a group of boys saw two canines romping, who dead? The answer used to be: two gill broad. But these days we cannot say that, Cde. Chairman.

17:30 hrs

(Cde. Ram Karran continues)

But there used to be another saying. The old and more serious people used to say what is play for the school boy is dead for the crapaud!. It would seem to me that notwithstanding the very serious situation that faces the country and, more particularly, the people of this country, that the attitude of our friends on the other side ^{that they are} seems to be/taking not the serious road to the solution of our problems, but they are playing. As they say sir, 'what is play for the school boy is dead for the crapaud'. The crapaud is obviously the Guyanese people. Take, for instance Your Honour, this Assembly, this very important Assembly that is discussing today the nation's business, is allocated, by those who preceded us, 12 days for this important debate. But the Government abridges it. Sir, I know you are unable to change it. There is precedence in this Assembly where persons have spoken for hours. But our friends across there are now rationing time. I had to raise this question because this very important debate is limited to four days, two days for the general debate, allegedly limited according to the numbers in the Assembly, allocated by the P.N.C. in the 1980 elections, rigged to the bone, and they are talking about democracy. I will come back to that.

It would seem to me that we are heading in the same direction as Jim Jones. Down the road Jim Jones went with the 900 people at Jonestown and the Guyanese people are doomed for that. Of course, the lunatic that was Jim Jones is reflected by the . . . over there. I do not know if they are going to use potassium cyanide or they are going to use some other trick to destroy the Guyanese people. That is what is on the agenda. That is why we have this intolerance that Members cannot speak for more than half an hour.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, you have been harping upon this. The rules say that.

Cde. Ram Karran: I know, but I am talking about precedence and Parliaments and where precedence is given every attention. But how many times in past Parliaments our friends, when they sat over here, were not allowed to speak for hours, with extensions and extensions. Even the late Joaquim was given an extension. This is what I am referring to/^{and}all the crocodile tears over there

that we are not looking at the situation seriously.

Sir, the Guyanese people do not want to go Jim Jones' way and at this late hour I appeal to my friends, particularly the Prime Minister and his team, to move in a direction to bring salvation. Do not tell us about change. As Marxists we know the meaning of change. When the hon. pretty Minister tells us about changing the philosophy, we understand that. Nothing is static in nature. This Parliament, as a first step, must do something to allow more democracy here so that we can get down to discuss the business of the nation properly.

I recall the other day, Your Honour - I think you were absent - when this Assembly met and voted together. All Members on both sides of the Assembly voted in one manner. Those days must return for us to bring about some meaningful change in the lives of the Guyanese people. It is a shame, I think, to call this institution a democratic institution, having regard to all that took place in the so-called referendum and elections of 1980. The whole world recognises and those of the P.N.C. are now saying - there was a time I could not walk on the street, Your Honour. I had to be driven in a car. Today you can walk anywhere and Members of the P.N.C. who would have cut off my throat are now calling me comrade. That is the change which has taken place.

The hon. Minister on page 9 of the Budget Speech tells us that dependence primarily on bauxite, rice, and sugar is having its worst effects as the bauxite and sugar industries flounder in the context of recessive world markets. One should not to the hon. Minister seriously, the last nominated Member. Our friends over there have moved back to bringing nominated Members. At the beginning of the debate it was a nominated Member who read the Budget Speech and he is not here today. He was not here yesterday. He is absent. What kind of Government is this? How is he going to hear the criticisms made by the Members of this side of the Assembly, and even over there. This is democracy according to the P.N.C. If you look at the Budget statements - and there are 20 of them from 1964 onwards. Get them in front of you as I have tried to do with some of them and you will find that each year a different story emerges. Look at them together and you will find a disjointed story and a Government that has been in existence for 20 long years, a whole generation, two decades, changing their priorities, changing their tactics,

changing their everything, the Ministers, Your Honour - I remember when the P.N.C. emerged in 1964 by fraudulent means my friend was here, he was Minister of Trade, Finance, Agriculture, the Cde. Minister who was talking about education. The hon. Vice President used to be ^{with} Trade, he used to be with Finance and now he is with Agriculture. We are trading these men who are on their way out, like myself. Let us trade the young people and get something.

We talk about foreign exchange today. You remember, sir, in 1964 there was a coalition Government. I heard my young friend, Fr. Abraham, talking yesterday. Very eloquent. I asked him afterwards if he knew that the foreign exchange crisis began in 1964 when the coalition Minister of Finance Peter D'Aguiar was sitting here at a meeting and at 12 o'clock somebody ^{crowed} in this Assembly. He opened the flood gates and the foreign exchange took feet and wings and went out of the country.

They are consciously running down the foreign exchange. I thought he was calling for the mental asylum. But that is the way that this Government has run this country's economy.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:40 hrs.

(Cde. Ram Karran continues)

That is the way that this Government have run this country's economy, particularly the foreign exchange and now they come and tell us, you must co-operate. They say they nationalise bauxite and they nationalise sugar. The money had already gone – the gold, the foreign exchange, the American dollar had already gone. They were running their concern with overdrafts to a large extent. So what they get – they get the bird. Why this scrambling now about economic crisis. I do not know about any economic crisis that you did not bring about, but this conceited leadership of the PNC. They came out early – import substitution. A high sounding word like the big men had big Ministries. Import substitution – we started out on grapes and apples, then on fruits. We will make our own carambola. We did not quarrel: Import substitution is a good thing, but when the Minister told us that these two items sugar and bauxite were struggling, let me remind them what we on this side of the House said when they talked about import substitution. We agreed, but when they began to talk nonsense, they say they will produce white potatoes in substitution at Kato. Mittelholzer is gone – I do not know if he has gone with any money. He is gone and the white potatoes vanish into thin air. Some jokers say they will plant wheat in the islands of the Rupununi. We are yet to see those items and at the same time when they were talking about all these things, the P.P.P. said let us produce the things we can produce. We know how to produce rice and we have been producing lots of rice. We know how to produce sugar and we have been producing lots of sugar and in those days, the market difficulties for bauxite – we could not meet it, but we were getting the bauxite sold because of world situation, whether they are making arms or planes or what, but we could have produced rice and sugar and milk and cattle and everything else, but what is the situation today? It is the same Guyanese people, it is the same land, it is the same climate, but you know what happen Sir – I think it was 1968 I was going home and there was a huge P.N.C. meeting . People came all the way from Golden Grove and Victoria. I knew them because I used to work on the train and I knew a lot of country people. People from Golden Grove. Victoria and Georgetown all came to support this meeting in Bel Air, where you had a few people living.

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I remember a man passing with his cows and there was such a commotion there – he had no right to pass there with his cows. They nearly murdered the man. Today my friend – I hear from him from the brass cuts, he is a good boy, the cows are all gone, he is gone too. The only thing I am sorry about Sir, is that he or his children might join Reagan's army to invade Grenada or places like Grenada. That is the only pity, but we can assure our friends across there – the first day, I remember this very well because I said it in this Parliament. The first day that the judicial boundaries were extended to include Bel Air, Sophia, Liliendaal and Turkeyen – the very first day cows were brought in I wanted to know if they had so many cows in Bel Air. I made the point in this House, you did not spend a cent in the area. You only prescribed it by law and this lucrative trade of impounding the cows. Now you are crying you do not have milk, you do not have rice, you do not have meat. Why you do not have it? The P.P.P.'s position remains the same for increased production as some of the Comrades over there seem to be saying. We stand for that, but you cannot do as my friend Cde. Ptolemy Reid did at the Rice Marketing Board. They say they have so much care, so much sympathy for the rice farmers when he loosed the dog on them at the Rice Marketing Board. All they asked for was increased price. He loosed the dog on them. Will you get production like that? And when the honorable members come here they must not tell us we make mistake – you make big mistake and you have to correct those mistakes now.

The honourable Minister – the pretty lady there was talking about the public service. Let me ask her why is it that Naraine – why did he wait in one trade for fifteen years before he was promoted. That sort of discrimination that continues in the public service is not going to bring about the situation where we can talk about development. It cannot, when the one repressive forces of this society – the law enforcement society remain under one ethnic group. How will you get democracy, how will you get justice, how will you get people? No wonder Your Honour as I pass by the passport office there every day I see huge crowds – go to the American Embassy and you will see. Is it production we are aiming at?

The honourable Minister talks about hawking back to the days of colonialism. Colonialism is bad and we are proud of the fact that we sought to destroy it.

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We do not want to bring it back as they are bringing it – but even in those days people like Gagraj went to jail for blackmarketing. I remember going to a meeting at Belfield – we had a meeting there, all the Trade Unionists and the decision they were going to take was that since the shops were blackmarketing that the milk must be given to Co-ops fade into thin air and they must be given to friends and they are responsible for the parallel market today.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

17:50 hrs

(Cde. Ram Karran continues)

They are responsible for the parallel market: they are responsible for breaking up the distributive system which existed during the war years and which existed all the time, because their aim was against the Indo-Guyanese community whether they were in rice, whether they were in sugar. It is a fact. I had to walk out of a meeting. [Interruption] My friends do not like to hear the truth. I am telling you. How much coolie man shop there are now? How much Portuguese shop there? How much Chinese shop there? How many hucksters in the parallel market? I am speaking on the Budget.

They say they are not American puppets although they ride horse with Johnson. They are not Soviet puppets, but the minute they were enthroned, the minute they came into this Assembly, they imposed a ten percent tax, contrary to G.A.T.T., against all Sino-Soviet sources. We had a lucrative trade going on with Cuba, all the rice was going there, a lot of wood, mora and sleepers, was sold to them. The Government imposed a ten percent tax and withdrew the trade.

What has happened now? I was in Trinidad the other day; I was in Jamaica. Do you know what I saw? I saw Uncle Benn long grain rice. You could see all the brands of American rice. As for Guyanese rice – a little bit of Indian Maid. It was the same thing in Trinidad. I asked because I am a Guyanese. I am a patriot. They said they did not get the rice. In Jamaica I asked, "What about rice?" They said they cannot get our rice. When I made a few more enquires a very knowledgeable person told me that they stopped importing the Guyana Government rice because the Guyana Government said that the soya which they sent here was rotten. The fact behind that whole thing was that somebody here said that there was soya bean rotting in Jamaica and they concluded that the soya bean was rotting here.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, do you wish to drink some water? I would not let that affect the balance of time.

Cde. Ram Karran: Thank you very much. The whole thing is that the Guyana Government is not pushing it. The members of the Government are talking about aggressive marketing. I am more conversant with aggressive water. We have been warning

for years and years that the Americans are no decent people when it comes to trade.

We know that the Americans are undercutting; we know that they are using PL 480 and all sorts of things. We were members of the Rice Marketing Board and when the Americans began to enter into the Caribbean market we held them up to the Agreement and they were forced to withdraw. The Americans were faced with a situation where they were forced to withdraw. They could not even dump it under PL 480. There were three criteria for the sale of rice. I do not know what changes have taken place. I heard my friend talking about the G.R.B. The price had to have some relationship to the local cost of production; it had to have some relationship to the selling price of rice locally and that price had to have some relationship to the local cost of world prices. The Caribbean countries could not refuse to buy the rice. They had to buy it. That was the agreement. Today, we have Caricom I; we were of Caricom II. Our friends on the other side have completely mismanaged everything they touched.

The Speaker: Three minutes more, Cde. Ram Karran.

Cde. Ram Karran: Already? It would be better if I drink the water. Let me use the three minutes to make one last point. The Government has made a lot of mistakes and the greatest mistake it has made is to carry up the price of sugar. The price of sugar has gone up nearly 200 percent from 13 to 35 cents per pound and the Minister said it is likely to go up more because the Minister is a joker. He said that if he increased the price of rice he will carry it up to the same price that prevails around the Caribbean.

At one time when the T.U.C. made a comparison between the wages of sugar workers here and their wages in Trinidad and Jamaica, the government argued that the cost of living is higher in those countries. Now, it is carrying up the cost of living. Did it increase the wages? In 1975 G.A.W.U. made a proposal which was acceptable. We are suggesting today that a part of the millions that will come from this increase in the price of sugar - the portion is written in the Resolution - should be given to the sugar workers for their pensions. Who is the Minister for pensions? In this enlightened age sugar workers who are fortunate to live to the age of 50 years earn \$12 a week. They disqualify for every other thing. Another portion of the money should be given immediately to improve the wages of the sugar workers. The final part - I will write to the Minister and give him the formula - should be given to workers throughout the country to increase production.

That is the only language we understand. Do not threaten them. Do not tell them: "You cannot eat rice; you cannot eat sugar; you cannot eat flour; you cannot eat channa; you cannot eat dumplings made of wheaten flour." That is a criminal act. I ask the Government to rescind that decision. Get in touch by improving democracy in the country. Increase production. Produce what you can produce and sell it. Who is going to buy from you if you do not buy from them? They are going to tell you to eat the bauxite. Yes, comrades, that is how the world goes around. You sell and you buy. Produce the things that you can produce. You have thrown up your hands. You say you cannot produce anything. God help you!

The Speaker: Cde. Jackson.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs (Cde. Jackson): Cde. Speaker, the Cde. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning in his speech on Monday, January 30th, dealt with, in detail, the performance of the economy in 1983, the projections for 1984 and the outlined measures which, if implemented assiduously, can accelerate our capacity, not only to survive but also to provide for our prosperity.

The Minister's presentation referred to both the domestic and the external contexts in which resolute and determined action is called for. Naturally, he emphasised the former. I wish to deal somewhat more expansively with the international environment; its impact on and relationship with our own domestic efforts.

The Cde. Minister of Finance and Economic Planning did refer in his speech to the necessity to take account of -

"The nature of the world in which we live."

He went on to advise that the action which we take on the road to economic recovery must –

"signal to the international community, of which we are an inalienable part, our stance on the many issues and problems that beset efforts at economic resuscitation."

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:00 hrs

(Cde. Jackson continues)

Finally, if I might quote from the Minister's Speech in identifying "the immediate tasks which confront us," the Minister drew attention to several including this particular one the necessity of:

"Redirecting our patterns of trade and other international relations to facilitate achievement of the objectives already outlined."

Thus, Cde. Speaker, I suggest that we cannot in analyzing the Budget and in making our contributions, ignore the international milieu. We cannot attempt to, much less achieve, sealing ourselves hermetically. We cannot insulate ourselves; for this is an inter-dependent world. We find that not even the two largest national economies, the economies of the USSR and U.S.A. can be entirely autarkic. But we should be careful because there can be attempts to isolate us. The reasons for attempts to isolate us are clear. For this Government of the People's National Congress has pursued policies aimed at making our independence real and strong. As the Cde. Leader said at the Summit Meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries in August 1979; "For Guyana Independence means Independence." Thus, Cde. Speaker, we have through the pursuit rigorously of a policy of national independence and national development, sought to bring about the transformation of our society through socialist democracy. Cde. Speaker, I suggest that the path we have chosen of socialist democracy internally and the unflinching pursuit externally of an anti-imperialist stand have attracted enemies. Such policies are frowned upon and opposed externally. Let us remember however that in its operations imperialism functions best in conjunction with domestic allies. If we look at the international economic environment, Cde. Speaker, it is to observe that there is clearly a deep global economic crisis. The general state of relations between developed and developing countries in parlous and there have been during 1983, contradictory tendencies and trends. I think perhaps one of the most succinct analyses of the international economic situation was given at the time of the Summit Meeting of the Non-Aligned Countries held in New Delhi in March of this year.

It reads as follows:

"The current crisis affects all countries but it has particularly grave consequence for the developing countries. World production declined by 1.2 percent in 1981 and a further fall took place in 1982. The recession in developed countries has led to unemployment in excess of 10 percent of the labour force. World Trade stagnated for two years in succession and this stagnation has intensified because of the defensive protectionist policies and shortsighted monetary policies practiced by developing countries. There were also the disconcerting trends towards nationalism in some major developed countries which were contributions to an alarming deterioration in international relations and compounding difficulties of the management of economic crisis."

Turning its attention to the particularly adverse consequences for developed countries as a whole, the Conference noted, and I quote:

"In the past two years they – that is the developing countries – have suffered a loss of foreign exchange availability on the following counts:

- (1) Export earnings have fallen by \$50 billion.
- (2) Debt service payments have risen by \$37 Billion particularly as a result of high interest rates and
- (3) The annual rate of private bank lending to developing countries has fallen by \$25 billion."

I think it is necessary for us to locate our discussion in an appropriate international context so that we are not misled into believing that certain developments rest on the particularity of our own experience Cde. Speaker, since then some people see hope in signs of recovery in some developed non-socialist countries. But others assess these developments as no more than spasms, palpitations. Thus the real question is, will recovery be sustained? The evidence at the moment is very slim. But there are other indications of perverse developments in the international economic relations. I would like to mention a few. First the persistence of high interest rates in the United States of America which is a source of worry and concern.

The Speaker: Just a minute Cde. Jackson, Comrades if you want to have a discussion please go outside, unless you want to become Members of Parliament.

Cde. Jackson: As I was saying, one of the evidences of deleterious international economic relations is the persistence of high interest rates in the United States of America and that this persistence is a source of worry and concern to allies and non-allies alike. indeed to many people in the United States of America itself. Further afield, we find that the North-South dialogue languishes, and those who control the levers of power are unwilling to democratize the system.

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Instead they cling rigorously to the discredited trickle-down theory. We also have the problem of debt and politicisation and subversion of International Financial Institutions. Cde. Speaker, during 1983 the question of international economic relations was discussed at many multilateral forums. I earlier made reference to the Summit of Non-Aligned Countries which was held in New Delhi in March last year. But we participated in several other gatherings. I might mention for instance, the Meeting of the Group of 77 in Buenos Aires which adopted the Platform of Buenos Aires. That meeting was preparatory to the IVth UNCTAD Meeting at which all members of the International Community participated. I would like to mention also the Commonwealth Summit, which was again held in New Delhi, later last year in November-December.

At all of these meetings, Cde. Speaker, the efforts of the developing countries, including Guyana, to make recommendations with the developed North without abandoning fundamental positions of principle, were every present. I wish to draw the attention of the Assembly the language of the Buenos Aires Platform – certain parts of it which went before the UNCTAD Meeting. That Platform urged the representatives of the developing countries going to that Conference to particularly stress the urgency of launching a concerted and sustained programme aimed at the re-activation of World Economy and the accelerated development of the developing countries; of reaffirming the necessity of an integrated set of policies in the interrelated fields of commodities, trade, money, finance and developing; of encompassing immediate measures in areas of critical importance to developing countries, of pursuing the restructuring of the World Economic System and relations needed for the establishment of the new International Economic Order, and to underline the menacing implications of the current economic crisis for international peace and security and the Ministers present in Buenos Aires agreed to go forward to Belgrade in a spirit of understanding and cooperation, willing to urge their colleagues responsible for Foreign Affairs and International Economic Relations from advanced countries, socialist and non-socialist to bring the same attitude to bear on their participation in that Conference.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:10 hrs

(Cde. Jackson continues)

I would like to recall as well that at the earlier meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement there were serious carefully worked out proposals for a programme of measures for immediate action whilst pursuing efforts at solving the medium and longer term problems affecting the global economy and, importantly, there was the suggestion a conference of money and finance which would have universal participation. Suffice it to say that when the representatives of the world's nations met in Belgrade in June for the meeting of UNCTAD IV, there was a notable lack of convergence of views and an absence of the conflation of positions between the North and South. Indeed, on the contrary, there was marked intransigence by some non-socialist developed countries to embrace the methods of dialogue and consensus. They chose confrontation and intransigence. In short, they applied a theological approach to the question of global economic cooperation. Thus, the gains in the multilateral for involving powerful non-socialist countries have been minimal if we can regard what has been achieved as gains.

But there have also been other approaches at the regional and sub-regional levels for intensifying economic cooperation. Here I wish to make reference to the initiative taken by the President of Ecuador last year for convening a meeting of personal representatives of Heads of States and Government early in this year, January, with the assistance of SELA and ECLA, to work out a plan of action for dealing with the economic difficulties faced by Latin America and by its various sub-regions and individual countries. That meeting in which we participated dealt with the fields of debt, inter-regional trade and the necessary support mechanisms and services, and looked at the question of joint action to improve the climate and substance of international economic relations.

I think in terms of its achievement, one has to wait and see whether the political will, will accompany the declarations that were made in Quito. But I would like to assure this Assembly that consistent with the objectives of the sub-regional organisations of Caricom and the Amazon Cooperation Treaty that the Government of Guyana intends to work wholeheartedly for the full implementation of the decisions of the Quito meeting.

We have to take account of the meeting of CARICOM held in Trinidad and Tobago last July. It is true that there were many difficulties but there were some important decisions, for instance, on food security. I would like to remind this Assembly that at the Caricom meeting the region took a decision that it should be the primary source of its own food supply. Here again to give emphasis to the line taken by the Minister of Finance in relation to the thrust for agriculture in the context of our Caricom policy, there should be a regional strategy aimed at self-sufficiency through interregional trade – I wish I had time to answer some of the inaccuracies about our trade in Caricom that were indulged by the Deputy Minority Leader. So there is quite a substantial body in the area of food security in which, assuming that the political climate, which was seriously affected by the invasion of Grenada is restored to a reasonable balance, it can point the way for agricultural development not only for our own use but also for exporting to Caricom.

I believe that the area in international economic relations in which there has been some movement is in the South/South cooperation. The necessity is, I hope, indelibly etched on the consciousness of the South. The steps which have been taken are modest but I suggest they are encouraging. As this Assembly is aware, the Government of Guyana has always pursued the strategy of South/South co-operation with seriousness and has done so both multilaterally and bilaterally.

During 1983, for instance, we have strenuously sought to increase South/South cooperation bilaterally with Brazil, with India, with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, with Yugoslavia, with Trinidad and Tobago, with Columbia, with Argentina and with others. Here, perhaps, I might deal with some rather whimsical, uniformed and unpatriotic criticisms which were made of the cost of visits to achieve these very laudable economic ends and I hope that as a result of being provided with better information we can have a more informed Minority participating in these debates and not one indulging in empty and cheap politicking.

We have also developed our relations with socialist countries. You will recall, Cde Speaker, that over the last few years we have been indicating to this Assembly our desire to pursue this path. There have been growing pains in seeking to establish new relations with different systems with different cultures and different backgrounds.

I am happy that 1983 represented something of a watershed, a breakthrough, with relations with socialist countries. I refer to the U.S.S.R., the G.D.R., with whom we have had earlier good relations, with Bulgaria, with China and an intensification of our relations with Cuba. We do not intend to rest here. We are within the limits of our resources of both money and finance and I hope that here again when the money is expended for these causes we would not find uninformed criticism hoping to develop our relations even further and to strengthen our relations with socialist countries. We do not intend to deepen and extend these schemes of cooperation. We have also not neglected our relations with non-socialist developed countries and we remain ready to pursue these relations and to develop them on the basis of mutual respect.

In the general political lieu, last year we witnessed an increase in tension globally, but noticeably, in our own area, the Caribbean, in respect of which the invasion of Grenada on October 25, 1983 and its longer term implications are but one manifestation. We had the opportunity of a full debate in this Assembly on the occasion of that invasion on which, happily, the Assembly resolved unanimously to condemn it. This naturally leads me to the consideration of the defence dimension of the Budget. I will only deal with the Foreign Affairs component. If I may interject something here it is to draw the Assembly's attention to a new phase in terms of the use of misinformation in the whole campaign of destabilization. We notice that with an increasing frequency original lies are being repeated about the numbers of Cuban and Soviet planes and personnel in Guyana in allegedly secret airstrips in the interior. We wish to categorically deny this and to alert the National Assembly and the nation to this programme of misinformation which is intended to confuse and to destabilize.

If I might return to the defence dimension of Foreign Affairs, it is to say that we have a primary task through diplomacy to play a vibrant role for the security of our state and the defence of our territorial integrity.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

18:20 hrs

(Cde. R. Jackson continues)

The House has already establish a Parliamentary Committee which I hope will become more active in the weeks ahead to deal with the question of our territorial integrity, but I am confident that this aspect of the foreign policy activities will be lost to no one in this National Assembly.

Cde. Speaker, 1983 was a difficult year. For a time it appeared that the world was poised for the outbreak of a nuclear war. The danger in my view has not yet been averted. However, some shrillness and absurdities in the rhetoric of some who wield power have given way for whatever reason, to more measured tones. One hopes that through the efforts of the non-aligned and other peace loving force through the activities of the peace movements that pressures can be brought to bear for the improvement of international climates. For in a certain sense, without peace there can be no development and without development there can be no peace. So we have to have a parallel track approach to the question of peace and development.

The prospects for international economic cooperation through universal and global action, however in my view again Cde. Speaker, remains dim. I suggest, however, we cannot abandon the search for movement forward. But for improvement in the international economic relations, in all that we do in 1984 we will be advancing principled positions within the group of 77, the non-aligned movement, the United nations and in all our contacts with development countries and with developed countries, socialist and non-socialist alike. What is however clearly signaled by this assessment of the present nature of the international system is the greater need for self reliance, more south-souht cooperation and the development of economic and other relations with other countries which wish to do business with us on the basis of mutual respect.

The role of the Ministry in 1984 – the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1984 – therefore Cde. Speaker, would include: (1) the maintenance of our principled stand in multilateral agencies like United Nations, UNCTAD, the IADB etc. (2) Remaining strong in our quest for unity and solidarity in the non-aligned movement, in the group of 77 and in other developing countries groupings. (3) The strengthening of bilateral relations and generally promote south-south cooperation. (4) Endeavouring to maximise the benefits of cooperation with socialist countries. (5) Maintaining and developing wherever possible relations with developed non-socialist countries.

The Speaker: Three minutes more Cde. Jackson.

Cde. Jackson: (6) The intensification of actions to promote national development through the gathering of relevant information and utilizing beneficial contact both governmental and non-governmental. (7) Finally, to maintain a high defence posture for the security of the State and the territorial integrity of the country.

Cde. Speaker, the fulfillment of those tasks calls for quality representation, dedication and hard work. These attributes are however not available for free. They cost and they require money. Any objective analysis will show that over the years and particularly in 1983, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs exchange, and manpower. In these circumstances, any call whether within this House or outside of it for extensive cuts in overseas representation is misplaced and illogical. Such action if embraced can only lead to our isolation in the international community and to a serious weakening of our capacity to defend and to promote our true interest.

This Government Cde. Speaker, sensitive to its responsibilities to the people of this country will not be party to such action. The budget correctly assigns the proper role to self reliance for our economic recovery. The disarray in the international economic systems makes this a necessary prerequisite for economic recovery. In this year – the year of resourcefulness it is my hope and my conviction that the foreign policy arm in the execution of national policy will not be found wanting. With the guidance of the PNC, there will be performance for political and economic independence and for socialist development. Thank you Cde. Speaker.

Sitting suspended accordingly until 8 p.m.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

20:00 hrs

On resumption –

The Speaker: Dr. Jagan.

The Minority Leader: (Cde. Dr. Jagan): Cde. Speaker, the Budget presented by the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning in our view does not get down to the root of the problem and, like others before it in the recent past, will not produce the desired results. True, the Minister being an economist has presented us with a very technical and what appears to be a theoretical relational presentation, but his approach is basically technocratic monetarist. It is little different from that of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan who are busy dismantling the capitalist welfare state. Here, as in the U.S.A. and the U.K., what was inherited and initiated is being dismantled step by step. The quality of life, no one will deny, has seriously deteriorated from the days of the P.P.P. Government and every day it is plunging downwards.

The Minister's dilemma is real and being unable to take the dialectical, political, economic and revolutionary, as distinct from the static, economic approach he is incapable of finding real solutions. For instance, he stresses that he views the deteriorating effects of the parallel market as the main problem, but he failed to point out that the parallel market came into being precisely because of the Government's inability to provide the basic needs of the people. This is how it came about. Basic needs have to do with money, local money, Guyana dollars and foreign exchange, foreign currency. We have neither. Why? If we look at the budget structure, we will see that it is because of fantastic debt payments and huge and costly bureaucratic and military apparatus. These are responsible for our chronic and growing budget and balance of payments deficits. Without a revolutionary approach it is impossible for this Government to take this country out of this crisis. All that is being offered is a tinkering here and there, a little change in this Ministry, a little change in that Ministry.

The Minister did not indulge in a lot of political rhetoric in this Speech, but there was provided from the floor by our friend the Minister of Manpower and Cooperatives and this afternoon by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

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20:00 – 20:10 hrs

We heard the usual jargon about building a socialist society, about socialist democracy and about anti-imperialism, but slowly and surely the road is being prepared for a course which the imperialist masters who brought the P.N.C. to power want for this country. Look at the Budget. I have taken out these quotations which indicate that the Government is changing from its present position of state bureaucratic, cooperative and parasitic capitalism to free enterprise, dependent, distorted capitalism which Reagan and American administration want. Here are some of these, thrown in a different points but indicating a direction.

First, reliance on market mechanisms, the whole price control system has gone one after another. All gone. President Reagan talks about the freedom of the market place. That is the road to democracy and progress, that is to be found on page 19. Then on page 40 there is a suggestion of denationalisation:

"Non-strategic companies will be divested or brought into joint ventures with private firms."

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

20:10 hrs

(Cde. Dr. C. Jagan continues)

Go to London now and you will see Margaret Thatcher is doing the same thing. But this is called socialism here. Margaret Thatcher does not hide her monetary policies and her blatant outright conservative capitalist policies. Even some of her Colleagues in the Conservative Party does not agree with her.

Last but not east on page 51-52 he talks about "Management Contracts" and I quote:

"The issue of strengthening day-to-day management requires us to choose an appropriate model of expatriate management involvement. The willingness of some customers and prospective lenders is linked to the preference of these sources in relation to both the management and marketing solutions."

We were hearing this afternoon about political and economic independence. You can nationalize, certainly, the imperialists are not too worried about that. A new form of neo-colonialism is to take over the lucrative sections: management contracts, marketing contracts, and other consultancy services. We see them all over the place, crawling in the economy of Guyana today. Yet we hear we are dead on. An in dealing with the socialist world, Cde. Speaker, let us call a spade a spade. This country reached the situation of chronic crisis beginning in the end of 1976 and every year it is getting deeper and deeper. In 1977 we made a tour of the Socialist Countries. We were busy all over the place. In 1977 we jointed the Comicon. In April 1978 they were given a lucrative deal by the Soviet Union and the then Prime Minister, now President, visited Soviet Union and limited credits helped to rehabilitate the bauxite industry to buy bauxite, to help to develop the gold industry. But Socialist countries do not give cash. It is not in keeping with their policy. They want dollars. So they went in June and signed the IMF Agreement. They had a lot of foreign exchange. First with sugar levy, that was squandered and then from the IMF deal – we had IMF credits, plenty of it. They credits from the World Bank, I.D.B. and USAID. Thirty-seven percent of all United States aid in 25 years was given in that period, 1978-1980. Of course, they had to pay a price for all that – a retreat in foreign policy and they had to open the door with the New Investment Code to Foreign Capital. But that did not save them. Now despite all that help we are back to square one.

The crisis is deeper. Mr. Speaker, I have a budget speech here of 1977. The Minister then said: "External Debt Service Ratio is estimated to be no more than 10 percent of export earnings in 1976." Today they are telling us it is 42 percent inspite of all the insistence and foreign dollars that came here. Has it helped the economy? Why are we now not only in this mire of having to spend 42 percent in servicing foreign debts, but the total debts – foreign and local – is equivalent to 92 percent of current revenue. Can you believe that? The debt that this country is paying is 92 percent of the revenue. This is an impossible situation. I do not know if Comrades on the other side of the Assembly recognise where this country is. Perhaps if they were, they would not be sitting and chairing when all those rhetorical utterances from the other side were being made. Now, does the public know this? Cde. Speaker, the situation is serious. We have been saying over and over again what is the answer? The answer should not be only loans from outside if you can get them. There must be democracy; there must be an end to discrimination, politically and racially; there must be an end to extravagance; an end to corruption; a redistribution of income in favour of the people; a raising of morale so that the people can get down to producing. We are saying this over and over. We are not the only ones shouting now, others are also shouting. Mr. Feilden Singh today read a statement on Carl Blackman where he said we must call a spade a spade. Why tell us about reevaluating in relation to a basket of currency. That is called devaluation and this is going to affect our people. Already cost of living has gone up. He said let us be serious, let us start setting the example. Cut out the extravagance. Cut out the big spending. The General Secretary, Daniels, P.S.U. President, recently headed a Committee, what did he say? In this report of the TCU Committee, it says one of the aims should be to reduce spending on Military, National Service and Foreign Embassies thus re-directing funds to other sectors. The People's Progressive Party said this since 1981 or 1982. At our last Congress we outlined how we should reduce spending. I read it out here.

Cde. Speaker, apparently the only thing that will shake these people up is a good riot. They are heading for it. They are paving the ground for it. The President said last May that the conditions set by the IMF is a recipe to riot. They had it in Brazil and he knows it for he is smart enough to understand. What are they doing again? They are going along the same road once again. They are sending their men to all the socialist countries looking for cash. But they got no cash.

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20:10 – 20:20 hrs

If you want to develop your economy you are going to get help. If you want to develop industries, yes. If you want to put agriculture and education on a sound footing, if you want to do it with the help of the people, yes. If you want to do it that way you will get help. But if you want dollars only, go to the IMF and throw it down the drain.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

20:20 hrs

(Cde. Dr. C. Jagan continues)

This is what they are starting on again. The I.M.F. told them 66 to 100 percent devaluation. The President said that is a recipe to riot. When I say you are preparing the ground you start with 25 percent. You are on the road. What is the justification except a lot of rhetoric? What is the justification for that? Add it up in economic terms, get all the Guysucos, Guymines and the Treasury, and you will see there is no reason for it. The traditional reason for devaluation is not applicable to Guyana.

Cde. Speaker, the Government is asking for cooperation from us, from the working class, from the T.U.C. Cooperation will come not only by statements but by doing what is in the interest of the people and showing the people that you mean business. The Vice President gave us a lecture yesterday supported by a school teacher, another Minister, Mr. Denny, about what is production and productivity and called on us to get improved production. Obviously every school child knows that is the answer to the problems of the country. We are not producing. Production today in the three main sectors of the economy; sugar, rice and bauxite is lower than in 1964, the last year of the P.P.P. Government. Why? Let us sit down in this Assembly and have one debate only on this question and say what must be done. Step by Step, what are the factors, external and internal?

First, foreign exchange. The Government's focus in this Budget is the leakage of foreign exchange through the parallel market. I have already said that the parallel market is a creature of the Government; it is the effect of the Government's failures. I have already pointed out that foreign exchange service was only 10 percent in 1976. Every year it is increasing. Last year it was 42 percent of foreign earnings. Oil is taking another 40 percent. So where are we? What is left? 20 percent, even if some is leaking. So the parallel market does not help us. It does not help. The little that there is, is not adequate for raw materials, for food, consumption goods, for spare parts, for new equipment. It does not matter what amount of Burnham magic you can find, take out 80 percent, 20 percent cannot be enough and it is not use blaming and finding another scapegoat. You have found so many in the past, you are finding one now in the parallel market. You cannot solve that problem. What is needed is a revolutionary answer to these problems

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The Minister of Foreign Affairs gave us a lengthy circle around the Non-aligned Movement, the Committee of 77, North/South dialogue and how the North is not cooperative etc. What he fails to realise is the imperialist North exist on the plundering and the suffering of the South and they are not going to give it up without struggle. They are not going to give it up by pleas from capitalist oriented Third World countries who want to beg but not to fight. Those who are in the Third World who want to take a socialist oriented course are getting pressure like Grenada which was recently thrown out. Those others do not want to fight because they want to go on the same course, so they are begging. Do we expect imperialism to give up its plunder simply by imploring it to do so? This is wishful thinking, it is not realistic. Unfortunately many Third World countries are becoming foot-lickers, faced with financial problems like this one and instead of trying to find a real solution they are going back again, preparing the ground again for the I.M.F.

At the last special May Day Conference when the GAWU said experience has taught us that I.M.F. is no solution, reject it, four Ministers were there and trade union leaders were all saying no, we cannot take that line. All we have to do is argue for better terms. So they go to the socialist countries and want to use no doubt the socialist countries to see if they can blackmail the I.M.F. and Uncle Sam.

The Speaker: Dr. Jagan your time is up, how much more time you want?

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan: I was told that I have 45 minutes.

The Speaker: Okay proceed.

Cde. Dr. C. Jagan: The answer, Cde. Speaker, is not to go back begging the I.M.F. The I.M.F. has not solved anybody's problem in the Third World. Experience has shown that it will make it worse. The time has come for boldness and no vacillations. The time has come also for looking at the internal factors. We were told by the Foreign Minister today how the external situation is complicating our situation. Of course everybody knows what imperialism is doing to the Third World.

Here is a report which is signed by Mr. Leslie Melville for the T.U.C., another third Committee report. Let me just read you a few sentences. It is talking about this business.

Page 2 state:

"It has been argued by some that our falling living standards are due entirely to the world economic crisis but it is the view of the Committee that while world economic crisis has contributed to the problem there are other factors that are also contributing."

We have been saying so all along. The T.U.C. is now saying no. It continues to show that the investment ratio, that is the investment as a percentage of gross national product, was 32.2 percent in 1980 average, 28.8 percent for 1979 as a percentage of G.D.P. investment average, 27.2 percent in 1970 and 31 percent and 26.2 percent for 1981 and 1982.

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20:30 hrs

(Cde. Dr. C. Jagan continues)

But it goes on to compare other third world countries and the developed capitalist countries saying that it was far more - investment ratio to GNP and GDP. What have we done with it? What have we achieved? Then it goes on here to talk about consumption - private consumption. They are saying we must hold private consumption and use the money for investment for production. Here what the TUC says: "A look at the figures reveals that in 1969 private consumption as a percentage of domestic expenditure was 62%, while by 1979 this figure has fallen to 53% and as estimated at 1980 it would be 5%. It goes on to say that this figure is also lower in other countries. In other words although, this is the TUC, it is not the P.P.P. TUC which is dominated by the PNC Government, controlled by the PNC Government - so Cde. Speaker, we have and I repeat to deal with those internal factors. I mentioned already the question of for instance democracy, racial and political discrimination and so on. My colleague talked about a comprehensive development plan. Why is it we do not have a comprehensive development plan? After twenty years, after planning commissions and everything else, so much noise was made about this. We have not got one yet.

Cde. Chairman, it is necessary, we cannot just move adhoc - every now and then we move off to something else. We have to see how this operates. Let's face it. What did the Vice President said about milk yesterday - milk by 1988. Our Comrade told you this afternoon how we were already becoming self sufficient in milk in 1960s - but we told that so many milk cows, so many heifers are being slaughtered. All of a sudden we will stop slaughtering them. Okay what happen to beef consumption? In the P.P.P.'s time we used to export beef to the Caribbean, to Trinidad, to Suriname, to Barbados - now we do not have. We had to fight the West Indian Government once about the foot and mouth disease, now we do not have beef, we do not have milk, so we will concentrate on stopping some of the slaughter. Okay, I agree with that - it is quite sound, but what will happen to beef - now it is \$9.00 a pound. Planning involves taking care of all of that - not just simply to look at milk. You have to look at people, you have to look at beef, you have to look at the price of beef because peoples' everyday lives has to do with production too. If they are sick, malnourished - protein is an essential part of the diet- they will not produce.

I am saying that this country needs a plan – coordinated and integrated. Everything has to be sorted out, not as this Government is doing as we find now. Factories set up at great costs like the Textile Mill and we have not got the raw materials, like the oil mill and we have not got the raw material. We have cassava mill without cassava. Where is the integrated planning that is necessary. Administrative democracy is an essential part of administration not bureaucratic management only.

We are told that a lot will happen to the Rice Marketing Board which has of course pressure from the United States to dismantle that set up Guyana Rice Board – well now we have some cosmetic changes. My colleague told us today that at one time they came in this House and argue how you must merge the Rice Development Company and the Rice Marketing Board into the Guyana Rice Board. All kinds of arguments were given. Now, no doubt under pressure some of the rice mills have been shelved out. A separation will take place between milling and marketing and some private millers and so on will be allowed to sell rice abroad. Also Cde. Speaker, I am not arguing for the Americans but I think they are concerned with their friends' political stability and therefore they see the rice industry going down and down and soon if this rigmarole does not stop you will have riots for rice too. We hear about rice and flour and so much. Were all the great qualities of rice being thought about in the days when Mr. Burnham said we will grow wheat in the Rupununi. The fact of the matter is this rationalization, because they had no foreign currency to keep buying the wheat. They are rationalising now, but Cde. Speaker, soon we will find because of increase consumption of rice to replace the falling of the imported wheat that we cannot supply the markets – even the traditional ones that we had, much less where we are trying to engage in what you call barter trade. We have the example which was told to us today of a Soviet Ship here for more than two weeks – cannot get enough rice to load it – had to load from one which was taking rice to Jamaica because the people I believe are making a hell of a lot of noise. So where are you gaining? You are denying the people flour and now you are finding you cannot have rice to sell and soon you will have the problem of finding rice to feed the people inside the country.

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20:30 - 20:40 hrs

Cde. Speaker, maybe the Government is not worried about all these changes in the structure of the GRB and so on, allowing private millers – they say private millers will be allowed to export if when the Government has fulfilled its Government to Government contracts anywhere in the world, plus the Caricom market. Tell me what is left of them? This is a cosmetic change to satisfy the imperialist that you are doing something, like giving off some of the rice mills to the Regional Committees which is nothing more than the same administration.

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

20:40 hrs

(Cde. Dr. C. Jagan continues)

I can go on and talk about this. Cde. Denny talks about workers' participation we got to creep. Well, the T.U.C. of which he is a big member, has advocated at least a 50-50 arrangement in the Board of Management where the trade union will have half of the members, as happened in colonial times in the G.R.B. when the R.P.A. was playing a role. Nothing was said about the restructuring of the G.R.B., about the role of the R.P.A., nothing except that cosmetic changes will take place to see if the Americans and U.S.A.I.D. can be fooled to give them some more dollars.

Today, we heard another example of lack of democracy when the Minister said that they believe in consultation. This is a democracy and therefore Harry Persaud Nokta cannot go to an Amerindian area. He is not only a parliamentarian; he is Organising Secretary for the P.P.P. He cannot go because the Amerindian Captain has to improve. The captains are puppets in most places. They are paid and elections are rigged. That is the democracy they want to foster, to deny Guyanese, including parliamentarians and the P.P.P. Organising Secretary, a right, constitutional right, to go anywhere in the country. That is democracy for them.

I have already referred to Mr. Blackman and the question of extravagance. I have referred to Mr. Daniels talking about controlling expenditure and military and national service and so on. If you do not distribute income -- Mr. Denny told us yesterday that you cannot get what you do not produce. The fact of the matter is people are producing. They are not producing as much as you want them to produce because you are penalising them all the time but whatever they are producing is not going to them. The figures are here in the Budget. It is going toward debt payment. Out of the revenues the Government collected last year, \$565 million, it was going to spend \$990 million. \$521 million is going to pay debts and salaries; \$253 million for civilians and military apparatus. How much left for the people? Social services were to have \$216 million, a fall in this sector of the current budget from 45.5 percent in 1964 to 21.8 percent this year. And we expect the people to produce: Clearly one has to heed the advice of the working class, the T.U.C. Mr. Denny knows this.

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20:40 – 20:50 hrs

In the same Report I was reading from are some figures based on the cost-of-living index figures and a budget for families. This is what the T.U.C. said: That the monthly wages in 1980 should be \$654.23, \$25 per day. I am giving you the round figures now. For 1981 it was \$772 a month, \$29.68 per day; 1982, \$918.81 per month, \$35.34 per day; 1983, \$988.30 per month, \$38 per day. Today it is \$12.71 whereas in 1979, according to this Government, it should have been \$14 a day.

How can we expect starving people to produce? How do we expect people who are malnourished, whose children are going to school with tea in the morning, who are suffering, to produce? How do we expect the children to learn? How do we expect, if we produce a nation of dunces, to bring development? People are involved in development. Education is a vehicle for development. How do we expect development to take place under these conditions? There cannot be improved production without seeing the needs of the people. There is an interlinked interaction between economic development and social development. You cannot penalize the people and expect economic development. This is a truism. It is a fact of life and you have to face up to this, but the Government's dilemma is real. I understand. It is being pressed by "reaganism" to go backwards to free enterprise, dependent, distorted capitalism. The members of the Government do not want to do this because they do not want to dismantle the system of privileges and corruption and bureaucratic, cooperative, parasitic capitalism. They do not want that. That is understandable.

For the same reason they do not want to go forward to socialist orientation, which the new situation demands, which the T.U.C. called for in 1978 – a political solution. Mr. Pollydore recently called for it again. He said the time has come when perhaps we should think of this again because in 1978 when the call was made, the Government rejected it. As Pollydore said after he went to the Constituent Assembly meetings "Not one iota of our recommendations in this regard was accepted." This is their dilemma.

The only way I see the dilemma is to be solved is from the growing contradiction within the P.N.C. now from the bottom and the top. The bottom cannot live and the top is getting richer. The top has two streams characteristic of the petty bourgeoisie class and becoming the bourgeoisie and the other, having gone to socialist countries, having studied in socialist countries, understanding political economy, understanding theory but with no face.

They know that what we have now cannot take this country out of the mess. They will tell us in parlours and in private, but their voices are weak. They are creatures of the leader. They have been made by the leader. They have no votes; they have no face. Therefore they cannot influence the process. One thing will strengthen them, but the class struggle sharpens at the bottom and fortunately not everybody is running away. Those who remain have to fight. They bauxite workers in 1979 had a five weeks' strike. Last year there was a one day a week strike for food, and there was a six weeks' strike when they tried to put them on a three-day work week. In December 1972, the same T.U.C. which brought them to power took to the streets. They manoeuvred to wreck the last T.U.C. Congress. Ask Cde Denny, the chief bottle-washer, how they manoeuvred. They told five delegates from the P.S.U. that they were not accredited, their accreditation was withdrawn. This was a manoeuvre which helped to wreck the Conference. Up to now Denny with all his bureaucracy and trade union democracy and social democracy cannot get the T.U.C. to meet again. They are now afraid even of their own creature. Herein lies the hope for Guyana – a sharpening class struggles. The P.P.P. will be with that struggle to see that we get the dawn of a new day in Guyana. /Applause/

The Speaker: Cde. Prime Minister.

The Prime Minister (Cde. Dr. Reid): Cde. Speaker, we have now come to the winding up of the general debate on the 1984 Budget. I wish to join my colleagues in complimenting the new Minister of Finance and Economic Planning for the presentation of the Budget and I also wish to congratulate the people of Guyana for their resilience between the last Budget and now and for their steadfastness in our process of development.

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20:50 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

This debate has been on that has been useful. There was an attempt, of course to lead us into racialism and to emphasize false statements about discrimination in our society. But I will not be tempted to follow in that train, for we are indeed in serious time – a difficult economic situation. Hence, on our side, the approach has to be extremely serious as we carry the responsibility for genuine development. We must remain calm and patient without getting agitated in this very critical period, for we have the task of developing this revolution. Regardless of what the Leader of the Minority has said, I think we will accept that Guyana is going through a period of serious revolution and if we are to succeed, then we must uphold the gains we have already made and these gains are evident on the ground. We can see if in the new housing areas in our country. We can see the great efforts that have been made to improve our school facilities and our educational opportunities, not only for those of school age, but even for our adults, not only at university level in our own country, but an explosion of training overseas so that development can be meaningful. This is the work of consolidation of the revolution that has been going on.

It seems as if as we review in a moment some of the happenings in the world, that the time has come for use to intensify our own consciousness in cooperation, in production and in defence. The conditions, as is well known, are more serious than the conditions that were presented during the last World War. This is indeed a global crisis. If there is to be genuine development, then we have to face up to the reality. I will deal sometime during this response with some of the points made. But if we are to appreciate what is happening in our own country, we must not lose sight of what is happening in the world. This Budget this year has been presented at a time when the world continues in a state of imbalance with disproportionate spending on ornaments while a large part of the people of this planet are facing starvation – something which our Cooperative Republic is being insured against by our policy of self-reliance. May I take this opportunity to give praise to the Leader and Present of this country for his vision and foresight. /Applause./ While today most parts of the world have recognised the seriousness of endeavouring to feed their people, this exercise was started a long time ago in Guyana. But for that, there would have been in its

real raw nakedness, some of the evils not in one or two areas, but all over our country.

Cde. Speaker, looking at other countries cannot really give us much consultation. But by knowing what is going on, appreciating what is going on, strength can be gained and the courage to carry on with the fight. It is said in a very recent news item on the Associated Press only a few days ago, that some twenty-five Governments deferred their debt payments in 1983. I want to seek your patience, Cde. Speaker, to quote from this Article for it has so much bearing and will help us to appreciate the world in which we have to operate and I quote:

"Debts of poor countries piled up so fast in 1983 that at least twenty-five Governments had to ask creditors – many of them American Banks – for delays in payments."

This is a big jump from the eight requests for late payments in 1982. A.W. Clausen, President of the World Bank, has counted new arrangements and \$100 billion worth of debt payments since mid 1982. In the previous 5 years, only 5 or 6 countries a year had to ask for such arrangements. Payments were rescheduled on about \$5 billion annually. Not only did a large number of countries make such request last year but three of them, Brazil, Chile and Nigeria went back twice in the same year. An International Monetary Fund study said that poor countries debt rose at a rate of 10 percent a year from 1974 through 1981, even though these countries were increasing their payments by 23 percent a year. At the end of 1983 poor countries were \$810 billion in the red from 767 billion at the end of 1982, Clausen, President of the World Bank, estimated in a recent report, but despite the staggering figures, some officials say that the debt problem can be solved and so that story goes on. Cde. Speaker, I mentioned that because unless we get some glimpse of the global situation, part of the environment in which we have to operate, part of the material conditions that we have to take into account, then we will get into the kind of difficulty that can cause us to lose our very country or the control over our country. We have seen it not far from us, happening almost at our doorstep. Unless we walk wisely in the development process, then those who are planning to turn us back will certainly succeed and I hope that friends on the opposite side, the Minority Party, will recognise the seriousness of Guyana having to turn back. I therefore, at the outset court their support in this economic crisis. The Cde. President Leader, has made an analysis of it and he is certain that: "The scene in the world is little short of frightening" to quote his own words.

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The General Secretary of the United Nations at the 37th Session of the General Assembly puts it this way: "We are perilously near to a new international anarchy." In the Cde. President's analysis these points have surfaced. The World Economic Crisis, particularly the World Capitalist Crisis, has entombed the very little prospects of immediate improvement.

21:00 hrs (Cde. Reid continues)

The retreat from multilateralism and international economic relations has resulted in frustration and disaster. This retreat has been finding expression in the reassertion of single-minded approaches to economic development. The problems of the rising prices for commodities, the endemic chaos caused by inflation and high interest rates, the block to the expansion of trade and the virtual collapse of the international financial system are more pronounced than ever before.

Cde. Speaker, while that is going on there is war in so many parts of the world. The Middle East trauma remains. Lebanon is a state in theory. Palestinians are now tragically divided with the support of imperialism. Israel continues as a warmonger. South Africa's apartheid policies continue unabated, disregarding every principle of international relations and it now links with the aid of imperialism on the question of Namibia's independence with the withdrawal of Cuban troops in Angola. Central American troops are in a state of tension and insecurity and this has been aggravated by the United States led invasion of Grenada; the United States support for the Conference against Nicaragua; the undesirable presence of the United States forces in El Salvador and the uninterrupted strategy to destroy Cuba. Guyana itself has become the target of a new act of destabilization. We know from our own experience the several acts of political, cultural and economic aggression. New attempts are being made to use traitors and mercenaries to purchase certain types of weaponry to assassinate Party and Government Leaders and overthrow this Government.

We must therefore be on the alert as people talk of riots and counter-revolutions. Let us be conscious of what the implications are for the mighty and powerful United States is identifying not just individuals in Government, but the system and our steadfastness in pursuing a socialist construction in this part of the world. It will be reasonable for all of us to ensure that another Chile does not occur in Guyana when those who call themselves socialist and Marxists aid and abet the imperialists to destroy our country and to find out that they themselves would be in just as serious trouble, if not more. The arms race in the world is going on and billions are being spent every day in that area instead of on development projects.

In the past five years, from 1976 to 1982, the external debt of under-developed

countries grew from 336.6 billion to 626 billion while the debt service rose from 56.9 billion to 131.3 billion in the same period, an annual average rate of 23.3 percents and a greater rate than the increase of the debt itself. That apart, the most urgent and demanding needs of the under-developed countries have failed to attract remedial action. Instead persistent poverty, naked hunger, unemployment, lack of medical care, illiteracy and other social evils combine to create a veritable nightmare. That is the picture of the world and we who live in Guyana have an opportunity to compare our own situation. If we do that objectively then we will find some reason for thankfulness that our country has been saved the worst of this crisis.

I want to say a word about food security because so much is being said about that. We are ensuring in Guyana about all that food will never be used by the imperialist to thwart our socialist direction. I have listened to the Leader of the Minority talking about money. I sometimes wonder, with his own experience, if he does not realise that when aid is sought or aid is given, whether loan or other commercial arrangements, that it is not a matter of money coming into the country; it is really goods and services. I thought this was common knowledge from his own experience. It is goods and services. I do not think it is any different in the Soviet Union. You hear of goods and services as well. For us, once we can get the kind of assistance in goods and services then that is part of the development process. Be that as it may, our country is involved in critical engagement with the enemy from all sides. If development is to take place genuinely, then one of the areas that has to be dealt with correctly is the supply of food. Of course, we have a wheat flour mill here. In the early years of the crisis it was not practical to purchase wheat for cash as we have been doing over the years, \$35 million. The United States of America thought that if there was no wheat there would have been the food riots that some people have envisaged. So when arrangements were made by that very mill for wheat on credit, even though the wheat was put on the ship to come to Guyana, the Commodity Control Department in the United States of America refused to let that wheat move. It was thought then that we would have fallen on our knees and accepted their call that we should turn back, change our political thrust, go back from whence we came, to nothingness: to bad roads, to no homes and all sorts of inadequacies. We refused to turn back. We decided to be persistent in our thrust towards proper development.

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21:10 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

The decision had to be made whether to use scarce foreign exchange for a food commodity that can be replaced or use it on a more consumer item. In the interest of the people of Guyana, not with the bitterness that I have heard about, but in the interest of the people of Guyana and the development of this country, here was an opportunity for us to struggle for genuine development by using more of our own resources. For indeed the real key to development is the way people who wish to develop can use the resources that are available to them to the maximum and one cannot help but remembering how the now mighty and powerful United States took opposition against an imported and triggered off consumer item in the days before the war of independence in 1776. I have told that story before but I do not mind repeating myself because development of people is important and we will only achieve proper development if together we cause more and more people to understand the pains of development, the bitterness of development, the critical engagement that has to take place if genuine development is to become a reality.

It was the early settlers in the same United States of America who decided, notwithstanding what their kit and kin were doing that they were not going to accept the consumer commodity, namely tea. It was the beginning of development for them. It was a great eye opener and they did not only say they would have none of that tea, they had the courage enough, the spirit enough, the confidence in themselves enough to get on board that ship and throw that cargo of tea overboard. Today we know of that as the Boston Tea Party. It was the beginning of development for the mighty and powerful United States. As a matter of fact, so determined were they, that they went to war and thus we have in our history of the world, the 1776 war of independence.

If we are to be independence and to develop this country then notwithstanding the attachment we think about, east or west, north or south, the final task is ours. The will has to be our own. The sacrifices we cannot escape and thus we have the critical engagement at

this time. Our country has dared the United States that it will pursue its own non-aligned thrust. Today, as we talk of these difficult times – those on the other side say we must find the funds so that workers pay can be increased now. In the budget provision is made for some increase even in difficult times but it seems as if the Leader of the P.P.P. has forgotten that in better times when he had the authority and the opportunity to cause some development to take place, it was he who said 'not a cent more' to these self sane workers. Is that a forgotten story?

Much has been said about the first line of the closing paragraph of the budget speech and even though my comrades have already dealt with that, I thought that it is an important issue for us to spend a minute on. Much has been said about the first line of the closing paragraph of the budget speech. It is the right of those who have spoken to use that first line. It is their right. But those who are conscious of national responsibility must see that behaviour as deception which allows for misinterpretation of the fact. I want therefore to emphasise this point by presenting that paragraph. Not the first sentence all by itself, out of context without the relevant point. "I can offer no comforting solution, which will allow us to survive and prosper." We are in critical engagement – a period of bitterness and pain. The Finance Minister says "I can offer no comforting solution which will allow us to survive and prosper," but the Finance Minister continues - "we ought not to be clinging resolutely to old ways, old practices, old habits of production and consumption in a world whose very dynamism says that continual and timely change is a pre-requisite for survival. I do not believe that as a nation we are incapable of adequate, imaginative response. 1984 will be a year in which our resourcefulness must be made to triumph over the great odds which we face. This is hard work. This is a difficult road, but it is clear that this is the only way we can go if genuine development is to take place."

Let us therefore carry that message correctly around the communities so that we would not demoralise the people of this country and then blame them for riots and things of that kind. All over the world there are serious happenings in so many countries. I was in Venezuela only a few days ago. They had come into a new crisis in all. They had made great surpluses, they had foreign reserves, but the New President in his inaugural address said that that wealth self has caused them to be in serious difficulties, because people had come

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associate wealth without work. The two things cannot be separated and so today they too are in difficulties. I need not go through all the different countries all over the world, but what we need above all is self-confidence in our country. Self-confidence that can grow, what we can do and what we must do are set out in the budget speech, as guidelines of some of the things we can do. Apart from all that, if we think of some of the waste that takes place in our country and if...

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(The Prime Minister continues)

people are not demoralised, then they will exert themselves to ensure that we eliminate waste.

We need to be more careful under the material conditions about husbanding whatever is available to us. The task for all of us is to ensure that we give protection to our communities through cooperation, production and defence. Too often we talk about standards of living without thinking too of standards of values, and attitudes to work. Probably in our rush for improvement, we have lost our sense of values. When our colonial masters left us there were so many inadequacies. We did not have even 100 miles of good road. We had bottom-house schools. In some places water came from holes in the ground. We were in such a great rush to improve the social section of our country so that people could have a better standard of living that probably we began to live beyond our means.

This crisis helps to bring us back to reality and that is what the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning has been endeavouring to do, to remind us that we cannot keep on spending and spending what we do not have. It is no use pointing to the security forces. Because of our present material conditions, we need to ensure that we have proper defence forces for this country of ours otherwise we might wake up one morning to find that there is nothing to talk about developing because we have no country at all. Notwithstanding what the thinking is in the trade unions or in the minority parties, we have a responsibility to ensure the territorial integrity of this country. We must ensure that we can maintain that integrity so that we can have a country that we can call our own. This is the only country we will be able to call our own. /Applause/ We have the kind of defence forces that are not purely military. They do all sorts of other jobs. When we come to the details I will take the opportunity to show what the security forces have done over the period in all sorts of ways in helping the developing process in our country.

I want to say a word about the rice industry. My friend was shouting because he knows that some of the things are not well known. Some of the things are not part of the statistics. Statistics can fool a lot of people. When the P.P.P. was leaving the Government, it had an inventory of great achievement, of stock in bonds and things like that. In the

wisdom of some people it was decided to make a physical check to find out that these were only paper statistics. Goods did not correspond to the inventory. They ought to tell us that in those days they believed that we were evil creatures that we were raw capitalist agents and what not, so that arrangements to sell a commodity were cancelled once the Government changed. I have told them over and over that that was a most wicked act and it did not show any interest in the welfare of the people at all, not even in the welfare of the people who were involved in the rice industry. Because of a change in Government it did not matter what happened to those people. We had goods on hand, bargained for, but never uplifted. It was our task and we took it on with all the energy we had in order to save that industry. We had already lost some of the West Indian markets. The Jamaica market was already lost. It was a great fight to get those markets back and to get the rice industry moving so that today we can come to this Assembly and still talk about the rice industry.

Some of the errors that were made had to be corrected because so many changes of a fundamental nature had taken place in husbandry, in harvesting and everything while people were using a variety that was outdated as far as that type of husbandry was concerned. Heavy machines were used for reaping. The old fashioned varieties shattered so quickly by the mere vibration that production would not have been of any significance.

We cannot depend on the statistics to prove some of these matters. The farmers were involved, but there is not one particular way to have people involved in anything. There was the Rice Producers Association and, because of their motivation or inspiration or political persuasion, they decided that they could not function effectively with another government in office. They thought we would just stay on and depend on them. I have had my own experience with that and I am glad that I am still in this Assembly to again report it now so that those who come after me will never forget the story.

When the President of the R.P.A. – one Ramlackhan who is now in Canada – was asked at a meeting in my office how many bags of paddy he got per acre, he said 20 bags per acre. At the time some farmers were getting some three bags per acre, and five bags per acre. I asked him in all sincerity why he did not go out and teach farmers how all of them can get 20 bags per acre. To my great astonishment and agony that President of the R.P.A. said he would never do that. That is the kind of interest they have in farmers. That is the

kind of interest they have in the poor struggling people. He would not do that. Why? They must find out by themselves. Cde. Dr. Jagan: "The first thing you did was to drop the price of rice. Tell us about that."/I know that I would stir you to say something. You could not keep quiet as I did. I took particular care to keep quiet with all the things that were said on that side. Cde. Dr. Jagan: "You loosed the dogs on them. Tell us if you did not do that."/

The Speaker: Dr. Jagan, there is one speaker already.

Cde. Dr. Jagan: Yes. I know.

The Prime Minister: You will always be my friend.

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(The Prime Minister continues)

That is the kind of effort that has been produced in this country from time to time – deceiving the people who need development the most. It was the People's National Congress Government that struggled to modernise it and to make sure that the low level of production should be changed. I think today the farmers are benefiting from that kind of work. We will not give up in this exercise because we know notwithstanding what is being said, the people of this country experience proper guidance from us. It is confusing some people that notwithstanding all the difficulties we are hearing about, there is no food riot. Some people are even surprised that we could have had the kind of bringing together of thousands of people in the centre of Georgetown at a time when they were predicting that all evils would have befallen this country. People have confidence in the People's National Congress Government. /Applause/ Some of the people who were mentioned as being discriminated against have their own practical experience, have their material conditions that they have benefited from tremendously. Look at the houses we have in some of the areas. Look at the facilities we have in some of those homes. Much of this can be attributed to the genuine development work that the People's National Congress has given to this country. /Applause/ We are in the struggle for food. This struggle for food is not a local struggle per say, and unless we understand what it means in this struggle for food, we will be caught by those who wish to destroy us. For in the world of today, even though money is still important and will be important, the world of the imperialists has come to the conclusion that it takes a long time to bring a country to its knees if it depends on money alone to achieve that indignity.

The great inspector the IMF is busy doing all its worst but we are still here. We have not had any facility with them. We are still here, and so that world has turned its attention to food. When you are dealing with money, you can spend a year or more negotiating for aid of one kind or the other if you can still stand up your full height and argue, but when you are bargaining for food then you have to count the period of coming to agreement in a matter of days, and that is why this Government in its wisdom is using every opportunity it gets to promote the development of our food so that we can proceed toward proper

development.

If we could not have fed ourselves, then we would have had to go the way that many other countries have already gone looking for Public Law, 480, food; looking for packages of food and crying out that if the boats do not arrive fast enough more people will continue to die from starvation and famine. Food has become a real weapon in the world. That is what food is now – a real weapon in the world. Those who are using that weapon would not wish small countries like ours to be in any position to feed itself. Let us therefore, see food for what it is. There are many countries that once upon a time used to produce even wheat that now must import wheat from the mighty and powerful United States of America which Government have a grand plan and that plan is to orient over 70 percent of the world's people to use wheaten flour as their basic food. Today, the greater population of the world use rice. The US Government wheaten flour adds to soya bean to give us milk, to give us chicken, to give us beef so as to have total power. I heard them talking about meat. They are going to turn that vegetable into all kinds of things. Peter D'Aguiar had tried it out and he did not pass the test or else all of us will be looking for soya drink.

Due to our poverty, due to our lack of time to concentrate on some of the essentials of life and living, food being one of them, today we are so fouled about food that if we do not get beef notwithstanding what available protein there is, we believe we are not properly fed. I do not want to touch on milk. It is time we settle down and learn about the world in which we live. One of the things which we have to learn is about food itself. I have a friend – I would not call his name – who will tell you that for 26 years he has not tasted anything like wheaten flour. He is strong and healthy, and not only himself, but his entire family. It is no magic. It is just custom and habit. People would have us so oriented that we could be their slave until time ends. We are now shaking ourselves out of that and it is vexation to those who see themselves having this weapon and they cannot hang it over our heads. The test of it is that if people are really hungry for some of the things that are smuggled in, then a lot of people would have died. For even though some flour – wheaten flour – is smuggled in, it must be a small fraction of what it used to be when we look at it in terms of \$35 million worth of wheat per year.

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21:40 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

Some people say if we do not buy from other people they would not want to buy from us. We know we live in a world of interdependence, but let us try to export more than we import because we have to import a lot of things. It is that scarce internationally accepted currency that is giving us hell today. Even though we talk of an increase of production we have so many inputs that must come from overseas. We have to import the tractors, we have to import the combines, we have to import the draglines. We must do business. But things that we do not need to import we are not to import and the secret of development is just that. If we are not careful we will find ourselves begging for food.

World Wars I and II have taught lessons to the poor world. Some of us were in no position to benefit from those lessons. During the last World War this country had to do without many of the things we were accustomed to and we did it in the name of democracy. So dull were we that we did not really understand what the people were fighting for. We thought they were fighting for democracy, for freedom, for the best of everything for us. The reconstruction of Europe should have taught us that lesson, that it was not really for us. Now we should be able to recognise the resources that we have.

The crisis has given us that challenge to do it, just as how the crisis gave the British, our then masters during the war, an opportunity to identify much more in Guyana than they used to before and to put those resources to use. But when the war was over we went back to the old ways. This time it should be different for Guyana has the resources. If we work together in concerted effort, then we will be able to move the masses of people along to do the task that can be done.

I have listened to my good friend Cde. Jagan saying the imperialist North has a particular attitude. That is true. The imperialist North does not want any poor country like Guyana not to remain poor. What interest they have in changing that situation because that North really believes that in this one world there must be some in poverty and want, so that they can manage them easier, not realising that in this one world if we are to save ourselves there must be change for the betterment for all the people in the world. We in

Guyana have to see that as part of the material condition of the environment in which we live. Those learned Marxists like themselves would know that the material conditions are so important that nobody can transfer revolution from one place to the other. These conditions must be present and if you have any wisdom at all in the struggle for development, you must constantly take note of the material conditions in which you must work. We have an environment within and without. That kind of thing he talked about, the Soviet would have done this and the Soviet would have done that – we have no objection to getting goods and services. But we are not selling ourselves.

If development is to take place for the development of people, the leaders cannot sell out the greatest resources. The leaders must be able to stand up and say no when no should be said, not to carry on a life of poverty where people put you on a piece of thread and dangle you and treat you as they feel. That is not the kind of development that should happen. We are not pledging ourselves to be puppets of either East or West. They have lucrative deals, all countries, East or West. When they come to negotiate on commercial undertakings they do business arrangements and unless we negotiate on commercial with our eyes wide open then we will get snow ploughs instead of draglines, hymacs, bulldozers, and tractors. It has happened in this world.

We must learn from other people's mistakes so that whether we are negotiating with East or West we must do it to the best of our ability and capability. That is why for us education is important and that is why our foreign policy is such that it has a record of principled positions all through the years. The East will tell you that, the West will tell you that. We talk positions on principles, keeping in mind that the interest of the people of Guyana comes first. All over the world we go, the Minister of Foreign Affairs would tell you that, there is respect for our international behaviour.

I am not here to keep this meeting much longer but, Cde. Speaker, I wish to mention a few things. Some of them might be repeated again but I make no apology for that. In this world in which we live the international media with its information system is so devilish against us that we must ensure that our people understand. There is a determined effort to destroy the confidence of people in Guyana, not only confidence in Government and confidence in Leaders, but confidence in their individual and personal selves. That can be our worst state.

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I want to say in passing that there was a view about the world of 1984 by a man called George Orwell and he has seen the capitalist system as booming in this year 1984. He has seen socialism as being the destructive force, as President Reagan has already said that is the evil thing in the world. I do not think it is the system that is evil, it is the human beings who are evil. But against this view antagonists of capitalism have told of the virtues of socialism, which according to our ideology guarantees the freedom of individuals and equitable allocation of resources.

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21:50 hrs

(The Prime Minister continues)

Some of them are so bare faced that even though they know thousands of people have seen their behaviour in their own country, they still emphasise the myth that they have – a land of the free and the home of the brave where in some parts of the country you have to get far away in the side walk if you want to keep your physical self– to be safe.

1984 has arrived and is now almost five weeks old. The dark predictions have not overtaken us and the world today is far from the Utopia promised by the capitalist system. Today, our world is on the brink of nuclear catastrophe, the growth and sophistication of nuclear armaments puts at risk the destruction in seconds of the civilisation which has taken centuries to construct. This build up of such armaments and of the conventional arms have been achieved at an alarming manifestation of human suffering.

In 1981, the world's military establishments spent more than five hundred billion dollars on armaments which is equivalent to one million dollars every minute. At the same time, in the developing countries 250 million people had no houses, 550 million are illiterate, 300 million permanently unemployed, 700 million are under-nourished, 900 million live on incomes of thirty cents per day and 2 billion of the world's population had no access to dependable or sanitary water supply. That is the world in which we live and then we have in fifty banks some 2310 billion dollars, some 400% increase compared with the year 1971.

A study sponsored by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development shows that 80 - 90% of the value realized on export commodities of the developing countries in the markets of the developed world are realised by foreign enterprise. Only 8% of the price paid for cocoa in the Federal Republic of Germany is received by the exporting country, and so that story goes. In our own country today the price of sugar on to yesterday was 140 pounds per ton. Whereas the price of the tractors has risen about six or seven times its 1973 price.

We have seen the International Development Associations which raised interest free loans to the world's poorest nations, has its funding for the next three years reduced by some 25%. Today, we live in a world where by pressing a button there can be total

holocaust. These conflicts divert our attention and energies from the urgent task of nation building. We cannot pass them over lightly. We must be aware of them, we must let people in our own communities know the kind of world we live in. Certainly, it is difficult as we strive with dignity to construct a society of our own choosing and that is the record of the PNC Government as far as this country is concerned. It is a struggle with dignity so that we can construct a better society for ourselves.

The Party and Government have emphasised the pivotal role of agriculture in our development. It is a policy that has not been adopted overnight – that has been our rallying call long before the crisis. Events have proven the wisdom of the Leader of the People's National Congress and President of the nation when he charged us with the responsibility of feeding ourselves some fourteen years ago in a world, as I said a while ago, where food has become a weapon and is used indiscriminately by the imperialist. The imperative of being food secure becomes an even more urgent necessity. The steps this administration has taken to increase the meaningful involvement and participation of all our people in agriculture underscores our intention to anchor the recovery and expansion of our economy in agriculture. Hence as we move on in organising and reorganising and restructuring the time has come when we will be visiting all the communities in this country to talk sense to people so that we can carry a programme, cooperation, production and defence – for all three are important and must move together. It is our hope that as we put these structures into place and implement programmes we will get the support of all the people of this country and if we work thus together I am satisfied beyond the shadow of any doubt that the Guyanese people are ready, willing, and determined to have this country that they call their own improved in all its facilities and they will see this period only as a plateau – as all development goes through, sometimes on a plateau. They will see this as a plateau – a crisis that should teach us the hard lessons of development.

I lived on the Prairies of Canada where – some 50 – 75 years ago, the British then their masters had thought that part of the world was unfit for human habitation. It was their will – political and otherwise that caused the said prairies to become the grain basket of a large part of the world. Guyana has the potential to become the food basket, not only of

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the Caribbean, but far beyond. Let us therefore work together now and for all times so that the people in this country will give praise to the ability of themselves properly inspired and motivated to carry on the work of development.

My final word is to my friends on this side. Let us be steadfast in season and out of season and to you on the other side - see the opportunity that has never been like this to join to be in step with this great task of development. Thank you.

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20:00 hrs

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

22:00 hrs

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Members, the general debate on the 1984 Budget has now been concluded. The Assembly will resolve itself into Committee of Supply to receive and consider the Report of the Business Sub-Committee.

Assembly in Committee of Supply.

The Chairman: Comrades and hon. Members, as Chairman of the Business Sub-Committee of the Committee of Supply, I wish to report that the Business Sub-Committee met yesterday, Monday the 6th February, 1984, to consider the allocation of time for the consideration of the 1984 Estimates of Expenditure in Committee of Supply. The Committee passed a Resolution the matter. Copies of the committee's Resolution, the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee and the Timetable prepared by the Committee setting out the allocation of time for the consideration of the Estimates were circulated to Members during the Sitting yesterday.

The Vice President, Production will now move the necessary Motion seeking the agreement of the Committee of Supply to the Resolution of the Business Sub-committee Cde. Hoyte.

Vice- President Production (Cde. Hoyte): I beg to move that this Committee doth agree with the Business Sub-Committee in its Resolution.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried

The Chairman: In accordance with the Resolution consideration of the estimated will begin tomorrow. The Assembly will now resume.

Assembly resumed.

The speaker: Cde. Leader of house, Cde Ramsaroop.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, "That this Assembly do now adjourn until tomorrow, Wednesday, 1984-02-08 at 14:00 hrs. /The Vice President, Party and State Matters (Cde. Ramsaroop)/

Adjourned accordingly at 22:00 hrs