

National Assembly Debates

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF
THE FIRST SESSION (2006) OF THE NINTH PARLIAMENT OF GUY-
ANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE
REPUBLIC OF GUYANA HELD IN THE PARLIAMENT CHAMBER,
PUBLIC BUILDINGS, BRICKDAM, GEORGETOWN

Part I

3RD SITTING

2.00PM

Thursday, 2 November 2006

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (71)

Speaker (1)

The Hon. Hari N Ramkarran, SC, MP. - *Speaker of the National Assembly*

Members of Government (42)

(i) People's Progressive Party/Civic (41)

(ii) The United Force (1)

The Hon Samuel AA Hinds, MP,

- *(Region No. 10 Upper Demerara/
Upper Berbice), Prime Minister and
Minister of Public Works and
Communications Absent - Performing the
functions of the Office of the President*

The Hon Clement J Rohee, MP.

- *Minister of Home Affairs*

The Hon Shaik KZ Baksh, MP.

- *Minister of Education*

The Hon Dr Henry B Jeffrey, MP.

- *Minister of Foreign Trade and
International Cooperation*

The Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy, MP.

- *(Region No. 6 - East Berbice/
Corentyne), Minister of Health*

The Hon. Carolyn Rodrigues-Birkett, M.P.,

- *(Region No. 9 - Upper Takutu/Upper
Essequibo), Minister of Amerindian
Affairs*

*The Hon Dr Ashni K. Singh, MP.

- *Minister of Finance*

*The Hon S Rudolph Insanally, OR, CCH, MP. -

- *Minister of Foreign Affairs
(AOL)*

The Hon Harry Narine Nawbatti, MP.

- *Minister of Housing and Water*

The Hon Robert M Persaud, MP.

- *Minister of Agriculture*

Thursday, 02 November 2006

The Hon Dr Jennifer RA Westford, MP.	- (Region No. 7-Cuyuni-Mazaruni) Minister of Public Service
The Hon Kellawan Lall, MP.	- Minister of Local Government and Regional Development
*The Hon Doodnauth Singh, SC, MP.	- Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs (AOL)
The Hon Dr Frank C.S. Anthony, MP.	- Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport
The Hon Brindley H.R. Benn, MP.	- Minister of Transport and Hydraulics
*The Hon Manzoor Nadir, MP.	- Minister of Labour
The Hon Priya D Manickchand, MP.	- (Region No. 5-Mahaica/Berbice) Minister of Human Services and Social Security
The Hon Dr Desrey Fox, MP	- Minister in the Ministry of Education
The Hon Bheri S Ramsaran, MD, MP	- Minister in the Ministry of Health
The Hon Jennifer I Webster, MP	- Minister in the Ministry of Finance
The Hon Manniram Prashad, MP	- Minister of Tourism, Industry and Commerce
Mr Donald R Ramotar, MP	
Ms Gail Teixeira, MP	
Mr Harripersaud Nokta, MP	- (AOL)
Mrs Indranie Chandarpal, MP	- Chief Whip
Ms Bibi S Shadick, MP	- (Region No. 3--Essequibo Islands, West Demerara) (AOL)
Mr Mohamed Irfaan Ali, MP	
Mr Albert Atkinson, JP, MP	- (Region No. 8 -- Potaro/ Siparuni) (AOL)
Mr Komal Chand, CCH, JP, MP	- (Region No. 3--Essequibo Island, West Demerara)
Mr Bernard C DeSantos, SC, MP	- (Region No. 4--Demerara/Mahaica)
Mrs Shirley V Edwards, JP, MP	- (Region No. 4--Demerara/Mahaica)
Mr Mohamed F Khan, MP	- (Region No. 2--Pomeroon/Supenaam)
Mr Odinga N Lumumba, MP	
Mr Moses V Nagamootoo, MP	
Mr Mohabir A Nandlall, MP	
Mr Neendkumar, MP	
** Mr Steve P. Ninvalle, M.P.	- Parliamentary Secretary
Mr Parmanand P Persaud, JP, MP	- (Region No. 2-Pomeroon/Supenaam)
Mrs Philomena Sahoye-Shury, CCH, JP, MP	- Parliamentary Secretary
** Mrs Pauline R. Sukhai, M.P.	
Mr Dharamkumar Seeraj, MP	
Mr Norman A Whittaker, MP	- (Region No. 1 -- Barima/Waini)

* Non-Elected Minister

** Non-elected Member

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Members of the Opposition (28)

(i) Members of People's National Congress Reform - One Guyana (22)

Mr Robert Corbin, MP	- <i>Leader of the Opposition</i>
Mr Winston S Murray, CCH, MP	
Mrs Clarissa S Riehl, MP	- <i>Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly</i>
Mr E Lance Carberry, MP	- <i>Chief Whip</i>
Mrs Deborah J Backer, MP	
Mr Anthony Veria, MP	
Mr Basil Williams, MP	
Dr George A Norton, MP	
Mrs Volda A Lawrence, MP	
Mr Keith Scott, MP	
Ms Amna Ally, M.P.	
Mr James K McAllister, MP	
Mr Dave D Danny, MP	- <i>(Region No. 4 – Demerara/ Mahaica)</i>
Mr Aubrey C Norton, MP	- <i>(Region No. 4 – Demerara/ Mahaica)</i>
Mr Ernest B Elliot, MP	- <i>(Region No. 4 – Demerara/ Mahaica)</i>
Mrs Judith David-Blair, MP	- <i>(Region No. 7 – Cuyuni/ Mazaruni) (Absent)</i>
Mr Mervyn Williams, MP	- <i>(Region No. 3 – Essequibo Island/West Demerara)</i>
Ms Africo Selman, MP	
Dr John Austin, MP	- <i>(Region No. 6 – East Berbice/ Corentyne)</i>
Ms Jennifer Wade, M. P.,	- <i>(Region No. 5 - Mahaica/ Berbice)</i>
Ms Vanessa Kissoon, MP	- <i>(Region No. 10 – UpperDemerara/ Upper Berbice)</i>
Mr Desmond Fernandes, MP	- <i>(Region No. 1 – Barima/Waini)</i>

(ii) Alliance For Change (5)

Mr Raphael GC Trotman, MP	
Mr Khemraj Ramjattan, MP	
Mrs Sheila VA Holder, MP	
Ms Chantalle L Smith, MP	- <i>(Region No. 4 – Demerara/ Mahaica)</i>
Mr David Patterson, MP	

(iii) Guyana Action Party/Rise Organise and Rebuild (1)

Mr Everall N Franklyn, MP

OFFICERS

Mr Sherlock E. Isaacs - *Clerk of the National Assembly*
Mrs Lilawtie Coonjah - *Deputy Clerk of the National Assembly*

Thursday, 02 November 2006

PRAYERS

The Clerk reads the **Prayer**

MOTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OR SITTINGS OF THE ASSEMBLY AND MOVED BY A MINISTER

BE IT RESOLVED

That Standing Order No. 54(1) (a) be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its sitting on Thursday 2 November 2006, with the second reading and the remaining stages of the IC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 Bill 2006 - Bill No. 22/2006.

The Speaker: Honourable Minister of Home Affairs.

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, with your leave I wish to nominate the following Honourable Members. *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: Honourable Member, you wish to move a Motion?

Hon Clement J Rohee: Yes.

The Speaker: Well, this is not on the nomination; this is on the Standing Orders. Do you have before you a Motion for the Standing Orders? *[Pause]*

Hon Clement J Rohee: Sorry about that Mr Speaker. Sir, I would like to move the Suspension of the Standing Orders, to enable the National Assembly to proceed with the Second reading of the remaining stages of the ICC Cricket World Cup 2007 Bill 2006 - Bill No. 22/2006.

The Speaker: Honourable Members, the Motion is set out in your Order Paper. The Order Paper was distributed on last occasion Honourable Members. Standing Order No. 54(1)(a) be suspended to enable the Assembly to proceed at its sitting on Thursday, 2 November 2006, with

Thursday, 02 November 2006

the Second reading and remaining stages of the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 Bill 2006 - Bill No. 22 of 2006.

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

PUBLIC BUSINESS

(i) GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

MOTIONS

1. NOMINATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

The Speaker: Honourable Members, the next item on the Order Paper is the Nomination of the Members of the Committee of Selection. I do not see Mr Carberry here, so we will put this down for a little later.

[Deferred]

2. APPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT'S POLICY IN PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Assembly resumed the debate on the following Motion:

BE IT RESOLVED;

That this National Assembly expresses its sincere thanks and appreciation to His Excellency the President, Mr Bharrat Jagdeo for his Address to the National Assembly which was made on the occasion of the Ceremonial Opening of the First Session of the Ninth Parliament of Guyana on

Thursday, 02 November 2006
Thursday, 28 September 2006, and approves of the policy adumbrated
therein.

We can now proceed with the debate on the Motion which began on the last occasion. I do not have a list of speakers. I do not know who the next speaker is. *[Pause]*

The Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon Dr Ashni K Singh: Mr Speaker, I rise in support of the Motion to approve Government's Policies as outlined in the Address of His Excellency President Bharrat Jagdeo, on the occasion of the Ceremonial Opening of the Ninth Parliament of Guyana on 28 September 2006.

It would be remiss of me, given the occasion of participating in my very first debate in the National Assembly, not to emphasize how honoured I am to serve in this venerable House. I am ever aware of the fact that we, Members of the Ninth Parliament, follow a long tradition of excellence and service established by the fathers and founders of modern Guyana.

Over the years, in this very House and indeed elsewhere, they laboured long hours and endured great sacrifices to win us the freedoms we now enjoy and to shape the world we now occupy. We owe a great debt of duty to their memories to continue the work they started.

I am also ever aware of the great privilege I enjoy in being able to serve among such outstanding contemporaries that sit in the current Assembly. A number of whom have years of valuable experience in Public Service, while the others bring what I am sure would be bound to be refreshing new voices and prospectors.

Mr Speaker, in his 28 September 2006 Address on the occasion of the opening of the Ninth Parliament, His Excellency President Jagdeo, was explicit in identifying the economic policy objectives to be pursued by this Government. He articulated his vision that Government will work towards the political, economical and social transformation of our Country, in which all of our people will have equal access to resources and benefit from economical development and improvement in social conditions. He elaborated the context in which he saw this happening, by saying, our economy must be one capable of generating wealth, leading to higher standards of

Thursday, 02 November 2006

living for our people. He emphasized that we must continue to embrace an economic system that is open and driven by an aggressive entrepreneurial ethic.

In other words, His Excellency reiterated Government's principal strategic economic objectives of:

- Promoting economic growth;
- Reducing poverty; and
- Improving the Standard of Living of the Guyanese people.

In order to achieve the objective of *promoting economic growth* his Excellency restated the commitment to restructure and re-orient the economy to achieve greater qualitative output, by facilitating the strengthening of the traditional sectors, supporting new and growing sectors, and redoubling our efforts to improve and sustain the environment for doing business, thus making Guyana a more attractive destination for private investments.

On the thrust to *Reducing Poverty* and *Improving the Standard of Living* his Excellency spoke of continuing to expand access and quality of basic social services to all Guyanese, ensuring that every home has access to potable water, electricity and telephone, first rate public healthcare, education, sporting and recreational opportunities for children and providing greater personal security and ensuring the elderly, indigent and vulnerable in our society are treated with dignity and fairness.

Mr Speaker, on the subject of *Macro-Economic Sustainability*, I am sure you would agree, is absolutely essential to providing a conducive atmosphere for fostering strong growth in an Economy, it is the objective of aligning the macro economic parameters, without which the result will surely be negative growth and little or no investments and the creation of few jobs or no jobs. If we were to examine only the past decade, Guyana has had to confront for many severe external and domestic shocks. These have included:

The Asian Financial Crisis - An economic meltdown that plunged us into recession over the past decade.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Significant Oil Prices Increases - Particularly since 2004 that continued to threatened our productive sectors and indeed, that continued to threaten our fiscal operations and our external position, our balance of payment.

Incidentally on a note of information, the world market price stood at less than US \$25 per barrel in September 2003. The price rose to US \$60 by August 2005 and in July 2006, we observed world market prices for oil as high as US \$78 per barrel.

Mr Speaker, our external challenges have also included:

Deteriorating Prices for Commodities Exports - particularly sugar and rice and this is widely known. Related to this of course is the whittling away of the traditional preferences of preferential markets.

Weather Phenomena - The El Nino and La Nina phenomena affected agricultural production in particular and adverse climatic changes that affected Guyana, in particular and we would all remember the extensive flooding in January 2005 and indeed of 2006 again.

Mr Speaker, our domestic shocks have included disturbances in the aftermath of the 1997 and 2001 general elections, labour strikes and increased crime and criminal activities, particularly after the February 2002 jail break.

In his testimony to the soundness of the Policy Environment and indeed the discipline and resilience of our people, Guyana defied these challenges and nevertheless sustained a solid track record on macro economic stability. Key achievements of the past decade would include, low inflation throughout virtually the entire period, with inflation being contained to single digits even in 2005, as we confront the huge surge in import prices for oil and the sharp price increases for food in the aftermath of the worst floods experienced in Guyana's history.

Mr Speaker, as a second example is the *Treasury Bill Rates*. The benchmark rate for establishing interest rates in Guyana fell from 15.49 percent at the end of 2005 to 3.74 percent ten years later. Consistent with this, the prime lending rate from the commercial banks fell from 19.07 percent in 2005 to 14.54 percent later, bringing down the cost of borrowing to businesses. Simultaneously,

Thursday, 02 November 2006

we observed steady increases in savings and foreign and local investments with foreign direct investment totaling \$500 million over the last ten years, while deposits in the commercial banks increased from \$48.8 billion in 1995 to \$140.2 billion in 2005, a 187 percent increase over the ten-year period.

Similarly, Private Sector Credit expanded phenomenally, from \$21.1 Billion in 1995 to \$52.4 Billion in 2005, a 148 percent increase over the ten-year period. In fact, in 2005 alone, Private Sector Credit expanded from \$48.4 Billion to \$52.4 Billion, an 8.4 percent last year alone, confirming the Private Sector's positive reaction to the policy environment.

In addition, by demonstrating a commitment and a capacity to implement sound policies, Government has been able to lobby successfully, a drastic reduction in the debt burden. The external debt stock stood at one time as high as US\$2.1 billion was reduced to US\$1.1 billion, at the end of 2005. It is projected to decline to less than US \$900 million by the end of this year, in the wake of write-offs by IMF and the World Bank, under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative. Indeed, when we would have concluded our discussions with the Inter-American Development Bank, this figure will reduce even more significantly.

Alongside, this Government contained the fiscal deficit to a sustainable level; 4.6 percent of GDP in 2004, 13.6 percent of GDP in 2005, but including expenditure at Skeldon totalling approximately 4.5 percent of GDP. Despite the sustainable fiscal position was achieved despite the Public Sector Investment Programme increasing from \$11.5 billion in 1995 to \$35.1 billion in 2005, financing critical and much needed investments in important sectors. The sustainable fiscal position was also achieved despite the central government wage bill increasing significantly from \$5.7 billion in 1995 to \$18.5billion ten years later. Related to this of course, the Public Service monthly minimum wage increased from \$6,318 ten years ago to \$24,828 at the end of last year, which incidentally, in Guyana dollar terms, represents an increase of some 289 percent over that period. Incidentally, in US dollar terms, it would represent an increase of 173 percent, over that period.

Among our achievements included:

- restructuring of the traditional sectors;

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- nurturing of non-traditional sectors such as:
 - fishing;
 - forestry;
 - livestock; and
- the emergence of new sectors:
 - information and communication technology;
 - tourism and other Services.

These have aided significant growth in gross domestic product from \$88.3 billion in 1995 to \$157.1 billion in 2005.

Mr Speaker, the sum total of all of these is the prudent fiscal and monetary policies, backed by solid overall macro economic performance, have enabled our economy to withstand the shocks that it had to confront, while helping to improve overall confidence in Guyana.

The lower government deficit has meant less need to utilize private sector savings and at the same time monetary stability has provided an environment in which business can be conducted with a certain knowledge that both inflation and exchange rate should be kept in check. I believe it goes without saying that businesses would much rather focus their talent, creativity, energies and indeed their investment decisions on issues related to products, production and delivery systems, and on exploring new opportunities than on dissipating their energies in combating runaway inflation and rapidly deteriorating exchange rates. This, Mr Speaker, I believe to be of paramount importance.

For all of these reasons, the economic Policies for the next five years, will seek to assure the sustaining of a macro economic environment that reflects fiscal and deficit sustainability built on prudent expenditure policies, while maintaining the required levels of spending in critical sectors:

- Low inflation;

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- Low -interest rates;
- Favourable balance of payment position;
- Sustainable reserves position; and
- Exchange Rate Stability.

All underpinned by sustained real economic growth.

Mr Speaker, His Excellency also emphasized in his 28 September 2006 Address, the need to improve the *Institutional and Regulatory Environment* and in this regard, he mentioned the elimination of red tapes and the reduction of the cost of doing business in Guyana, thereby pointing to the more general need to improve the friendliness of our environment, in which the Private Sector operates. This is an essential element also of the work that would be necessary to make Guyana a more attractive destination for private investment and indeed, to achieve the levels of real economic growth that we anticipate.

Critical to the *Institutional Environment* for doing business, is the judiciary and reforms in the justice sector. We have recently observed the commencement of the operations of the Commercial Courts. This is expected to result in more timely and predicable judgments in matters of a commercial nature and going forward. Government has recently published a Justice Sector Reform Strategy for the years 2006 to 2010, an implementation of the US \$10.2 million programme for modernization of the Justice Administration System. It is expected to achieve enhanced capacity of Justice Sector Institutions to:

- Deliver services efficiently and effectively;
- Strengthen linkages between Justice Sectors Institutions;
- Improve access to Justice, especially to the poor and vulnerable; and
- Enhance citizens' trust in a justice system which respect their Rights, uphold their responsibilities and meet their needs.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Equally critical to reducing the cost of doing business in Guyana is the enhancing of security environment and of citizen security. My colleague, the Honourable Minister of Home Affairs, has already given some insights into plans in this regard.

Mr Speaker, the *National Competitiveness Strategy* that was developed through a close co-operative effort between Government and the Private Sector is a flagship initiative. I believe, the implementation of this programme will transform the business environment in Guyana. A few examples, of the actions that would be taken include:

- Completing reforms to the Deeds Registry - to strengthen that Agency and to enable it to better deliver its important mandates;
- Facilitating improved arrangement for sharing credit information;
- Strengthening Guyana Office for Investment - to improve its efficiency and effectiveness;
- Continuing to strengthen the Guyana Lands and Surveys Commission;
- Providing further support to Guyana Securities Council and Guyana Stock Exchange - to enable them to achieve their important, respective mandates more effectively.

Mr Speaker, as part of our ongoing efforts to improve the business environment, the Tax Reform Agenda which has already commenced implementation, will be further advanced. In this regard, I must say that the spirit of discussion and we observed a broad-based consensus that surround the decision to implement the Value-Added and Excise Taxes. Both this Honourable House and the key stakeholders were most encouraging.

It is with the benefit and advantage of this background that arrangements for the instant implementations are proceeding apace. I would urge all stakeholders to engage themselves fully in the processes of getting prepared for successful implementation of these taxes.

Mr Speaker, successful implementation of the value-added and excise taxes having to be achieved, the foundations would have already been laid for a review of corporate and income tax

Thursday, 02 November 2006

rates and the Fiscal Incentive Regime, all with the objective of enhancing Guyana's competitiveness constantly in mind.

Mr Speaker, it is important for me to emphasize also that Government is studying and will continue to study closely, the impact of the introduction of the value-added tax on both businesses and the consuming public. In this regard, I wish to state that announcements will be made very shortly on the treatment of basic food items that will provide a basis for consumers not to be adversely affected by value-added tax on these items. [*Applause*]

Mr Speaker, the traditional pillars of Guyana's economy have supported us robustly over the years. His Excellency spoke of restructuring and modernizing them, in response to global competition. My colleague, Honourable Minister of Agriculture, has already elaborated on plans that have been developed and are being implemented to transform the sugar and rice sectors. I expect subsequent speakers, to address the bauxite industry. Suffice to say that over the next five years, the viability and competitiveness of these industries would have been secured and their significant expansion achieved.

For example, the Minister of Agriculture spoke of the sugar production rising to over 450,000 tonnes under this plan, up from approximately 300,000 tonnes per annum, where it is currently. Over recent years, we have also observed in Guyana a notable emergence of new and non-traditional sectors. Among these other crops:

- Aquaculture;
- Livestock;
- Tourism;
- ITC and others,

have been stellar performance and show great promise. We will exhort all energy to facilitate their continued expansion.

His Excellency also spoke at length, about his vision as it relates to infrastructural development to support growth and also about social sector with interventions to reduce poverty and improve

Thursday, 02 November 2006

the quality of life. I will not address the issue at length, since my colleagues, particularly the Minister of Health for example would have already spoken on some of these matters and other speakers still to come will elaborate even further.

Mr Speaker, in His Excellency's Address, he spoke of entrenching the integrity of our Public Institutions, which will involve continuing the relentless fight against corruptions and an unequivocal prescription to transparency and accountability in the Affairs of Government. In this regard, a number of significant achievements have already been recorded; this can really be seen as a work in progress. Initiatives that have been put in place includes, the passage of the New Audit Act of 2004 paving the way for a stronger and more dependent Audit Office. There currently is being implemented a US \$600,000 Project to strengthen further the capacity of this Office, including in such areas, as conducting Audits in a computerized environment and conducting value-for-money audits.

On the subject of *Public Accountability*, we would all have taken note of issues raised during the last session of the debate, including by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. On many of those issues work is already ongoing. The Government takes great pride in its record on public accountability and I believe rightly so. The interest shown on this subject is therefore much welcomed. Alongside the strengthening of the Audit Office, Government has also been strengthening Public Sector Management through a number of initiatives, these include a \$15.5 million Fiscal and Financial Management Programme, which will see Government Financial Management Programme functions further computerized, resulting in greater efficiency and resulting in the capacity of the Ministry of Finance being strengthened. Along with providing support to improving Tax Administration and Fiduciary Oversight through activities at the Parliament Office, an additional US\$5.6 million Public Management Modernization Project will facilitate improved management capacity and practices in the wider Public Sector and result in strengthened accountability arrangements in the statutory bodies' sub-sectors.

Government also places high importance on strengthening Public Procurement Processes. The passage of the Public Procurement Act in 1993, have now been followed with establishment and

Thursday, 02 November 2006

appointment of the National Procurement and Tender Administration Board and the work to strengthen Public Procurement, will continue.

Mr Speaker, on *Money Laundering* we recognize the current legislative framework is in need of improvement. To this end:

- We have conducted a review of the existing Anti-Money Laundering Act;
- We have identified a number of areas that requires strengthening;
- We have drafted a new Anti-Money Laundering Encompassing the Financing of Terrorism Bill, which aims to bring Guyana in line with current international best practices, in terms of an effective Anti-Money Laundering Encompassing the Financing of terrorism system.

This Bill will be submitted to the National Assembly very shortly for consideration. Coupled with this, we have also just concluded a *Financial Sector Assessment Programme* which has reiterated the soundness of our Financial System, but has made a number of recommendations for further strengthening. These are both in terms of ensuring the stability of our financial system and also in terms of increasing its capacity to contribute more effectively to the policy objective of raising economic growth and reducing poverty. These recommendations are currently being studied with a view to developing a plan for implementation.

Mr Speaker, it is widely recognized, that proper planning and effective policy making depends on the availability of quality data and statistics. We have therefore developed an action plan to strengthen the institutional data management capacity of the Bureau of Statistics. In this regard, a major Social Statistics and Policy Analysis Project, is ongoing.

Among other actions to be taken, are the conduct of a Household Income and Expenditure Survey, which has commenced already, Business Surveys, re-basing of the GDP and the CPI. The Bureau's organisational structure will also be examined and areas of technical assistance needs, identified, all with a view to improving the quality and availability of statistics to aid in policy making.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, I have endeavoured so far to present some insight into selected actions that will be implemented in order to achieve the policy objectives outlined in His Excellency's Address. I do so cautiously of course, because I expect to be coming back to this Honourable House very shortly, with the Budget Speech for 2007, in which further details of the action plan for next year, will be provided. I have no doubt in my mind, that we, all of us in this House and all of the people in this country aspired to achieve a Guyana that is prosperous and growing in a sustainable manner, that is resilient to external challenges and uncertainties that might be forthcoming and whose people are comfortable, productively occupied and can meaningfully nurture their talent, and realize their potential.

I am convinced, Mr Speaker, that the policies outlined in His Excellency's Address of 28 September 2006, provide a strong basis for the achievement of the aspirations we share, as a Nation. I am encouraged by the endorsement of these objectives that were offered on Monday by both sides of this Honourable House and I believe there were endorsements, from both sides of the House. I believe strongly that if we work together as a Parliament and as a people these objectives can be achieved.

Mr Speaker, as I conclude, I am reminded of how much and for how long the wealthy potential of this beautiful land of ours have captivated the minds and imagination of the World and indeed of how formidable the external challenges can be. Sir Walter Raleigh's 1596 classic, the discovery of the large rich and beautiful empire of Guyana, is well known and frequently cited. He described Guyana by saying:

Whatever Prince shall possess it, that Prince shall be Lord of more gold and of cities or people than either the King of Spain or the great Turk.

Approximately three years later another Elizabethan, Sir William Shakespeare provided an important insight into how Guyana was viewed in his eyes and perhaps in their works as if to emphasize the extent to which Guyana's wealth had aroused acquisitive external intention in *Act 1 Scene 3* of his celebrated work *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Shakespeare caused his philandering Hero, Sir John Falstaff to describe his love interests, Mistress Page and Mistress Ford, in the following words, referring to Mistress Page:

Thursday, 02 November 2006

She bears the purse to. She is a Region in Guiana, all gold and bounty, I will be cheater to them both and they shall be exchequers to me. They shall be my East and West Indies and I will trade to them both. Go bear thou this letter to Mistress Page and thou this to Mistress Ford. We will thrive land; we will thrive.

These are Shakespearian words, Mr Speaker. Shakespearian words no less and perhaps an unfortunate, but certainly a historical significant metaphor. That was over 400 years ago and has often been said since, the rest is history. Suffice it to say that modern Guyana exists and we are all here today because of this great and celebrated potential.

Mr Speaker, we the Ninth Parliament of Guyana, have a serious collective responsibility to work together and to deliberate our collective energies to the cause of confronting the Shakespeare Falstaff of the modern world and to ensure that Guyana's potential, its proverbial gold and bounty is harvested to the benefit of the people of Guyana.

With those words, Mr Speaker, I add my points in support of the Motion to thank His Excellency the President for his Address of the 28 September 2006 and to approve of the policies contained therein. Thank you very much. [*Applause*]

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Honourable Members, before I call on the next speaker, I understand there was a discussion and the understanding that upon resumption today the Second reading of the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 Bill will be taken immediately after. That no doubt accounts for the large and welcome interest of members and the public and I think connected with the cricket of this Debate.

It is with great sadness that I have to announce that there is an agreement or there is an understanding that we will take this Bill immediately upon the conclusion of the next speaker.

I would have liked such distinguished Members of the Public, to get a glimpse of our debate on the President's Speech. However, I have a suspicion that they will leave as soon as the Second reading of the Bill is completed. I invite you, however, to stay and if you do, I will invite you to tea [*Laughter*] at four o'clock, but we shall see.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

The Honourable Member Mr Winston Murray

Mr Winston S Murray: Mr Speaker. Sir, I would like to join with those who before me have expressed congratulations to all Members of Parliament, on their election to this august body. As part of the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana component of this body, I look forward to working with all in the national interest. I would like to join also in the expression of appreciation for the contribution made by those Members of the Eighth Parliament, who have not returned to this the Ninth Parliament.

With your permission, Sir, I would like to make special mention of Mr Reepu Daman Persaud, who rendered dedicated service in this Assembly and through it, to the nation for over four decades. By any standard, that is a phenomenal length of time. Through you, Sir, I would like to say, thank you, Reepu.

Mr Speaker, I venture to say that the vast majority of Guyanese, who listened to or read the President's Speech, would have had no problem with it or to put more positively, would definitely have supported the broad objectives set out therein. There is much in that Speech, Sir, that holds out promise and hope for Guyana. I would like, with your permission to quote a few extracts which holds out such hope and promise.

On Page 2, the President asserts:

We must return to the task of building this Nation.

Now none of us, no patriotic Guyanese I dare say, could want anything else.

On Page 3, he says:

It will require a climate of institutional and political trust.

That we agree is a necessary if not sufficient ingredient for success.

On Page 3, he also says:

We must entrench the integrity of our public institutions.

What a thing for us to look forward to. He also says:

Thursday, 02 November 2006

We must continue the relentless fight against corruption.

Who in Guyana would not want that, Sir?

He speaks of:

Unequivocal subscription to transparency and accountability in the affairs of Government.

I dare say, every Guyanese yearns for that.

On Page 4, he says,

In the next five years, my Government will work towards the political, economic and social transformation of our country, in which all ...

And I like always to emphasis, *all*,

... of our people will have equal access to resources and benefit from economic development and improvement in social conditions.

Who amongst us, I dare ask, would dare to disagree with that objective?

On Page 24 he talks about:

The fair allocation of resources and we have to make a more concreted effort to overcome our political divisions.

On Page 25 he speaks about:

The identification and implementation, of an agreed agenda of national issues.

On Page 27 about -

Seeking common ground.

And on Page 28 about -

The spirit of compromise.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Sir, none of us, I dare say, could ever disagree with all that I have quoted, but a real issue in my respectful view, which arises is whether the President and the Government, possess the will and the intention to give substance to those noble objectives.

One basis for assessing this is to measure their performances hitherto against previous policy statements made and objectives set. In this regard, with your leave I will identify what I consider some significant areas and compare words with deeds. I want to go back, as far as 1992, to the then President of the Republic, His Excellency Dr Cheddi Jagan, who at the Ceremonial Opening of this Parliament on 17 December 1992, on Page 4 of his Address said.

Some of our major trust will be ensuring good governance, a clean and lean

Government, strict accountability.

Sir, let us take them individually,

Lean Government - In 1992 when the PPP/C came to office, they had sixteen Ministers. Today, there are twenty-one Ministers, plus three Parliamentary Secretaries - a fifty percent increase in the political bureaucracy.

Instead of lean Government, we have a bloated Government, but maybe that objective has been dropped, except that His Excellency the President did not so advise us in his Address recently to this the Ninth Assembly. What is more is that the retired Ministers are wedged into positions in Agencies to provide them with sinecures with equivalent salaries even as they receive a Parliamentary pension. Is that, what is meant by fair allocation of resources?

Clean Government - The answer to this one is to be found directly in President Jagdeo's recent Speech on Page 3, when he speaks about, *continuing*. I have a question over *continuing*, because I wondered, if we ever started, but I will leave that aside.

Continuing the relentless fight against corruption.

I dare say that is at minimum, an acknowledgment that corruption is something that is of great concern, fourteen years after President Jagan made his speech, in this National Assembly about a clean government.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

There are rumours abound about narcotics money in high places, kickbacks from contracts; lack of transparency in the award of contracts. After every Cabinet day we are told by the Head of the Presidential Secretariat, about no objections to values of contracts, but we have always asked, what about the names to whom these contracts have been warded? That is what transparency would mean. That is what accountability would mean? But we have never yet had the benefit of hearing to whom those contracts were being warded to [*Interruption: 'Which television station are you listening to?'*] You do not listen to the same television station that I do; probably on yours, they announce something different. [*Laughter*]

Sir, we have also heard of strict accountability which is a part of Dr Jagan's statement in 1992 to this House to which the jargon of transparency has also been added. Where is this transparency in the handling of the Lotto Funds? These Funds under our law must be placed in the Consolidated Funds and they must be available for scrutiny by the National Assembly. To tell me or to present me with a list of projects, for which this money is used, is no substitute for an adherence to our Constitution and the Laws of our Country. [*Applause*]

Sir, there has been the stone scam. When the Auditor General pointed fingers in this matter, rather than the Police being called in, to let the trail leads wherever it may, there was a hush put on the investigation and shuffling of officials, but nothing of major consequence was done. It is that truly what is meant by *accountability* and *transparency*?

Sir, a new phenomenon has been introduced in the Estimates by the insertion of a category of employees called *Contracted Employees*. While we know and we accept the need for rationalization in the Public Service to make it more efficient, there is nothing transparent in this insertion of this Contracted Employees. I will tell you why. We have in this House on numerous budget speech debates, called for an identification of the categories of these employees, at the back of the Estimates, where indeed the Public Service employees are categorized along with the levels of their emoluments. Your predecessor, Mr Minister of Finance, in this House, undertook to consider this matter and I can tell you up to when he left, having presented last year's budget, we did not have such information in the Estimates. Is that what we mean by *transparency* and *accountability*?

Thursday, 02 November 2006

There is something even more worrying Sir, emerged in the 2006 Estimates. We used to have in the Estimates, *Authorized Positions* and *Filled Positions*. In 2006, they *took out* Authorized Positions and left, only Filled Positions. So, this National Assembly has no way of knowing, what is the total establishment for a particular Agency and what the Filled Position represents, as a percentage of those as *Established Positions*. I dare say that is not accountability nor is it transparency. *[Interruption: 'It is there.']* You do not know what I am talking about Madame, if you tell me it is there. *[Laughter]*

Sir, I want to again return to Dr Jagan's Speech, this very revered man, who is deeply respected by all of us. On Page 2 of that Speech Sir, he said:

Our country must be rid forever of bureaucratic-command-type government.

Oh, how he must be turning, in his grave. In the Forestry Commission, there was an issue when the Forestry Commission decided. But low and behold, the bureaucratic-command-type government ruled from the centre that that decision could not stand and turned it on its head.

We have Environmental Protection issues, when the Agency gives decisions that are overturned by the Centre. We have a recent example of the President passing and directing, when cars were parked in certain locations, where permission was given for a parking lot to be, calling the Commissioner and telling him to remove those cars. Not paying any heed to the procedures that is in place for dealing with issues of this kind. Even if there was a wrong, there is an procedure. I am pointing to the bureaucratic-type-command Economy, that we are running. Do you know that Dr Roger Luncheon made it bold to say, we are abiding by the principles of democratic centralism - Consistent with bureaucratic-command-type governments? Let me tell you as I go on. Oh, I know you are a little upset, Dr Ramsammy, cool it. *[Laughter]*

Sir, let me stop there. I have couple more quotes from the great Dr Jagan, but I will not go on there. I will now come to President Jagdeo.

Sir, President Jagdeo, in his Address to the Eighth Parliament of this Country on Page 6 said:

Moreover, communication technologies should ensure that we remain an open society, be critical of excesses, ensure accountability and that the affairs of State are conducted

Thursday, 02 November 2006

transparently. Towards this objective, we have to enact broadcast legislation.

That was made by President Jagdeo on 4 May 2001 in this National Assembly. Five Years have gone. But what is more, what is more to take the wind out of their sails. Even if there were some obstacle that prevented such an important measure from coming to the National Assembly during the Eighth Parliament, why did not His Excellency the President see it fit to refer to it in the Speech he made recently in this Ninth Parliament to continue to demonstrate his commitment to bringing broadcast legislation to this National Assembly? It was woefully absent, noticeable so, in his Speech to the National Assembly of the Ninth Parliament. [*Interruption: 'Read the Manifesto.'*] We are not talking about the Manifesto; we are talking about his Address, to the National Assembly. There is a distinction between the two.

On Page 27, President Jagdeo also said in his Speech:

It is not the intention of my Government to retard the deliberative nature of the National Assembly or to dominate the proceedings of this House. We believe that through the exchange of ideas, discussion and respectful debate there can emerge ideas and suggestions that would further the well being of our people.

Well this is news to us and it is music to our ears. For we can recall very vividly the number of occasions in this National Assembly, when we have made representations for amendments, when we have asked for matters to be taken to the Special Select Committees and we were told that they cannot go there, because there is IMF or other imperative that robs us from the ability to benefit from cross fertilization of ideas.

I remember particularly, that heinous Bill called the Infrastructure Development Bill, which was brought here in a rush. and when there was a plea to take that Bill to a Special Select Committee., we were told no, it cannot go. Today, that Bill sits on the desk of the President if that is where it is, because to this day, it has not been assented to. That is only because external agencies took up the mantle and said that such a Bill could not be allowed to go on the Legislative Books of our Country, but once those views came from us, they were shunted aside. I say that to say, I hope when the President speaks in the tone and content as it is in this Speech that this is indeed an indication of a new dispensation within Parliament.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Sir, there were agreed amendments to the Public Procurement Bill of which the Minister of Finance spoke. I agree with him that there are many aspects to the Act, which we supported, but there were aspects of concern to us. A committee met and agreements were reached on amendments to be made to that Act, to this day, those amendments have not come to this National Assembly.

I do not say these things to embarrass the Government though that might be an unintended result. I do, however, say them because the President's Speech points a direction forward, but I feel I have a duty, to draw upon our experience of the past and to put to the test the Government's commitment to do the things which the President has stated in his Address. So much for historical experience with commitments made and goods delivered. The other real concern that we have is that the President's Policy Agenda and the overall thrust of his Presentation are generally devoid of measurable targets or benchmarks that would allow for serious and informed assessment of achievements versus promises.

There are some notable exceptions, so I do not want it to be felt that it is all gloom. Maybe it is the influence of the young Youth, Sport and Culture Minister that caused there to be inserted under the Heading *YOUTH, SPORT AND CULTURE* the following statement as an example of what I am talking about that should be throughout his Speech. It says:

Over the next five years, my Government will spend in excess of \$1.5 billion to train 25,000 young persons in various skills as part of our plan to rebuild the entrepreneurial class in Guyana.

That is a clear-cut policy that sets a context of expectation and hope for the next five years in this particular area, but such clear cut policies are woefully in short supply in the President's Speech. It is my respectful view that the absence of clearly defined targets and benchmarks, robs the Speech of much of its appeal to citizens. But since my specific remit is the economy, I shall illustrate more fully the concern I have by reference to that area.

On Page 4 the President says:

In the next five years, my Government will work towards the political, economic

Thursday, 02 November 2006

and social transformation of our country.

If you look at Pages 9 - 11, you would see the generalities about how this is to be done. With the sole exception of sugar to which I will address some remarks on shortly. My point is, the

Address needed to say to the citizenry for example that over the next five years, it is projected that the Economy will grow by an average of X or Y percent. I was looking to the Minister of Finance when he get up, to perhaps elaborate and give us that kind of specificity; to tell us in the next five-years - the life of the Government - how many jobs they are working to create and in what sectors, primarily. What levels of private capital injections are forecast? It is all well and good to have heard the distinguished Honourable Minister of Finance, tell us what was achieved over the last ten years. I thank him for the information and for putting it in the Public domain, but what we are addressing today is the President's Speech and Projections for the next five years. He told us little or nothing about that in those areas of which he was specific.

He told us for example about private sector borrowing has not gone up over the decade, but what are the projections? Is that going to continue? Right now, there is a standstill in much of the Private Sector, I can tell you.

Debt write-offs - Yes, it is good to tell us that you expect on debt write-off. What is your expectation in this area? Sir, this is particularly necessary in our view to demonstrate to the people of Guyana the basis on which they may expect economic transformation and the results of such transformation especially in the context in which the economy grew by an average of a mere three percent - not three percent - 0.3 percent per annum over the last five years. If you are going to be doing all these things, I believe you should have put in the public domain in an address to the nation what your projections are for growth in the economy, which will have to form the basis for such expectations.

Is this Economic Transformation? In this economic transformation:

- Is the contribution of various sectors to the GDP going to change? And if so, by how much?
- Will traditional agriculture with all its attendant vagaries, continue to be the

Thursday, 02 November 2006

main contributor to the GDP?

- What contribution in percentage or money terms can we expect from the non-traditional agriculture to make towards GDP?

The Honourable Minister of Agriculture, in speaking very glibly reeled of a set of sentences about what he plans, but he could have given us no quantifiable contribution that we could hold him accountable for. That is the back-handedness. Had I checked the *PPP's Manifesto*, which I have done and I have it here, there is a greater degree of specificity in that Manifesto about all these sectors than there is even in the President's Speech or in the addresses given by the Ministers in the follow-up.

The test of the pudding is in the eating. It is one thing to try to garner votes on the basis of telling people that you are going to spend so many billion dollars in education, so many billion dollars in health. I noticed the Minister of Health when he spoke; oh, he was so specific, he was going to do all these possible things specifically across the country. Then at the end, this is the catch phrase, but you know, we do not know if the resources will be available. *[Laughter]* I think it is ironic. Indeed, we can find so much more specificity, in the PPP's Manifesto, than in the President's Speech or in the Ministers' interventions. Because it is here, when you come that you confirm for public's perception what it is that you intend to do. This lifts the Manifesto to another level - to level of commitment - in this august Assembly to the nation.

In the one sub-sector in which there was some specificity, namely sugar, we were told that by 2015, we will produce 4,025 tonnes per annum. That is welcomed information, very specific information. But he tells us nothing about the projected profitability of this Industry. This country and this National Assembly ought to know that as a contributor to the National Treasury, sugar contributes now zero. We have given us, back to the Industry, the Sugar Levy, that brought Billions into the Treasury. They have consumed it all and on top of that, they now are in a lost making position, so that they do not contribute by way of Corporate Income Tax.

What about the profitability? That is what would have been helpful to the people of Guyana; not to tell us how much you are going to produce in absolute terms. So Sir, I believe there was a missing bit of information here.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

For the *Non-Traditional Sectors* - Again only general words, this could not be a sound basis for which we could create hope or expectation for our people. These must be rooted in clearly identifiable and quantified targets.

What about *Private Sector Investments* - local and foreign? Realistically speaking, these are the only bases on which economic transformation can take place. The comfort words in the President's Speech are:

We must redouble our effort to improve and sustain a business friendly environment that will make Guyana, a choice investment destination.

Mr Minister of Finance, it was good for you to tell us about the \$500 Million that came in during the last ten years, but this is about the next five years. It would have been helpful, if you could have told us in your presentation, what were your expectations for private sector investments - local and foreign - over the next five years? That is what would have lifted our hopes and our expectations, if you had that degree of specificity.

What are the further incentives that are being considered that are stated in this Address? They are clouded in mystery at this point in time. If there is any, what is the role of the National Development Strategy in this economic transformation? I note that it earned a passing reference on Page 14 of the Speech to the National Development Strategy in the following words:

Consistent with the National Development Strategy, our goal of developing an integrated or core infrastructure project that provides a deep port harbour, a possible rail-link especially in the mining rich areas of Berbice and Linden and a Highway to Brazil, will be advanced in the next five years.

Apart from that the Honourable Member Ms Gail Teixeira did seek to inform us that the components in the National Development Strategy, dealing with Governance was in many aspects being executed by the Government. *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: Your time is up Honourable Member

Mrs Clarissa S Riehl: Mr Speaker, I rise to ask that the Honourable Member be given fifteen

Thursday, 02 November 2006

minutes to conclude his presentation.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker: You may proceed Honourable Member.

Mr Winston S Murray: Sir, the National Development Strategy (NDS) is much more than those elements and is much more than a competitiveness strategy, which the Minister of Finance talked about. It is the overarching development and economic framework, put together by prominent Guyanese technicians, but which has only been occasionally spoken of without really been spoken to.

In an effort to give it life and relevance in a changed environment, this National Assembly during the Eighth Parliament passed a Resolution that would have put the National Development Strategy (NDS) back on track. This Resolution was passed in December 2005; as of when Parliament was dissolved in May 2006, absolutely no action was taken. For me, that is a very poignant demonstration of the level of commitment to the National Development Strategy. So Sir, we have brought it back in the hope that our colleagues on the Government's benches would have no problem, in giving their support again to this Motion, to bring it back to life; so that we can re-construct this development strategy and use it for the betterment of Guyana. Sir, the Minister asked, why? He is obviously is one of the forces holding back the implementation of this Resolution. *[Laughter]*

I do not know, how many he represents, but we are getting an insight into your thinking. Thank you very much, Sir. *[Laughter]*

Sir, before I move on, I want to talk about the VAT, because it has been mentioned by the Honourable Minister of Finance and it has been mentioned by someone else, who spoke during the debate or spoke in heckling from the benches. That person, not the Minister of Finance, I say distinctly, said that the PNC/R did not support VAT. I want to say, categorically that in this House, when we spoke on the VAT, we give our support to the introduction of VAT.

When we went into Special Select Committee under the able Chairmanship of Honourable Member Shaik Baksh, he knew that we had a disagreement with the Government on the way,

Thursday, 02 November 2006

because the work of the Consultant, who did at the Tax Impact Assessment of VAT, clearly demonstrated in our view, that a rate lower than sixteen would have been revenue neutral. I do not want to go back there. It was pleasing to hear, because this is a concern that we have from the Minister that soon a decision will be taken about zero-rated important consumer items. As we stand here today that is not the case. These items are slated for VAT. So at minimum, food items will go up by sixteen percent on those which do not currently pay consumption taxes, garlic, split peas, onions, et cetera. So, I am anxiously awaiting, because Minister Shaik Baksh and the Members in the Special Select Committee, that looked at the Excise Regulations that included the rates for VAT agreed, when we drew it to their attention, that the Bill they had brought did not cater for zero rating these items that they would have included these items through an amendment to the Legislation. To this day, we wait. Minister, we anxiously await to see what it is you will in those garbled words that you used about appeasing consumers, because I am not clear that there was a total, unequivocal commitment to doing what we understood. We will see! We will see!

Mr Speaker, the President in his Address underlined the necessity for integrity in our Public Institutions and eliminating red tape. I just want to quickly make reference to the fact that that is most welcomed, especially since in a recent World Economic Forum's Report on Competitiveness, where 125 countries were surveyed, Guyana is listed, as 111.

What is clear, to support the President's point, the countries that occupy the highest places in this Competitiveness Report are those whose public institutions are transparent, stable and efficient. If you look at the comment on us, what it says, a lack of sound and credible institutions remains a significant stumbling block. Sir, what is evident here, is that to get upgraded in the international competitiveness we have to do something about the integrity of our public institutions. We want to say that we support this most whole-heartedly and will look forward to doing whatever we can in that regard.

Sir, one way in which we can demonstrate commitment to this is to ensure that Chairmen and Members of Boards of these Public Institutions, in the future are chosen on the basis of merit and not on the basis of perceived political affiliations and that composition and promotion of staff

Thursday, 02 November 2006

will also be on merit and not on political allegiance.

Having said all of these things, which may appear very critical, I hope that my colleagues on the Government benches will take them in the spirit in which they were intended. I plead on Page 27 of the President's Speech, where he talks about compromise and being willing to listen to the views of the other side and robust debate. I hope I qualify for protection, under that section.

[Laughter]

I also wish to say that there were some things done over the last five years, that were positive and in the national interest. I would not deny that because I want to be balanced. I want to say, of these, the efforts at Parliamentary Reforms, in my respectful view, stand out.

As you yourself, Sir and Dr Ramsammy as Chairman of the Committee that looked at the Standing Orders, played a very important role, in trying to bring these things into being. Also we, ourselves, I must sing our own praises lest nobody else does so. *[Laughter]* We ourselves also played, with due respect, an important role, I would like to think. So this was a together effort and now we have a structure in this place that I believe could be positive and in the National Interest.

Many of the Reforms are fledging, but there is positive indication that they could work in the interest of a more vibrant institution with strong oversight functions effectively performed.

In other cases such some legislation for example:

- the Investment Act;
- the Procurement Act; and
- the Financial Management and Accountability Act.

In respect of those, much remains to be done to make them live up to their potentials to contribute to the objectives outlined by His Excellency the President.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion I wish to reaffirm my faith in Guyana and my party's faith in Guyana and in the Guyanese People. The sounds emanating from the President's Address would have

Thursday, 02 November 2006

undoubtedly been pleasing to the ears and hearts of most of us, if not all of us. However, I have demonstrated that there are strong historical reasons for skepticism, but this I assure you, the Guyanese people will know, if and when you and we have delivered. For they will experience the positive impact in their daily lives in the form of well paying jobs, of ready access to sound education and reasonable good health care and overall, in the form of a higher quality of life and standard of living. No buzzwords could make them think they do not have these things, when they have them. But equally no buzzwords could make them believe, they have, what they do not possess. The key to achieving those things for all Guyanese lies in our collective hands. The PNCR-1G is ready to serve the national interest. Thank you, Sir. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member Mr Murray.

[Debate on the Motion for the Approval of Government's Policy in President's Address suspended]

We can now proceed with the next Item on the Order Paper.

BILLS - Second Reading

3. ICC CRICKET WORLD CUP WEST INDIES 2007 BILL 2006 - Bill No. 22/2006

A Bill intituled, an Act to make provision for the fulfillment of Guyana's commitment to the efficient and effective staging of ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 and for related purposes.

The Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport

Hon Dr Frank CS Anthony: Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill intituled, an Act to make provision for the fulfillment of Guyana's commitment for the efficient and effective staging of ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007 and for related purposes, be read now for the second time.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, allow me to congratulate the West Indies on their Victory over South Africa. *[Applause]* and I hope that they go on to win the finals.

As you are aware, cricket has a special place in the hearts of every Guyanese. It is a game that has been played in Guyana for more than a century. Indeed, many of the territories playing cricket, were playing cricket in the 18th Century and one of the earliest recorded Inter-Colonial Matches was between British Guiana and Barbados in 1846.

However, it was only in 1890 that the West Indies Cricket Board was formed and the West Indies team emerged. It took us until June 1928, when we played our first Test at Lords in England that we became the fourth Cricketing Test Nation. For Guyanese in particular, it is significant and historic that in 1929-1930, when England toured the West Indies to play four tests that the third test, which was played in the then British Guiana was the first test won by the West Indies. These and other historical remarkable feats have made cricket an integral part of Guyanese ethos and indeed, part of West Indian ethos. It has helped us to play on the world stage and we earned respect and recognition, as we dominate in this game of cricket.

Mr Speaker, Cricket World Cup Tournament was inaugurated in 1975 in England. In the first tournament the West Indies once again dominated. Since then England continued to host the tournament in 1979 and 1983. In 1987, it was played in India and Pakistan; in 1992 in Australia and New Zealand; in 1996 in Pakistan, India and Sri Lanka and in 2003 in South Africa.

Of these seven World Cup Tournaments, none was ever played in the West Indies. Over these thirty-one years cricket World Cup has become the largest cricket event and is the third largest sporting event in the world. Little wonder that it presents, such lucrative business opportunities and attracts such competition to host the games.

For the eighth Cricket World Cup Tournament, there was a strong bid challenge from the United States of America, for these matches to be played in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. However, nine West Indies Cricketing Nations came together to bid, to host these matches. These countries are:

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- Antigua;
- Barbados;
- Jamaica;
- St Lucia;
- St Vincent and the Grenadines;
- St Kitts & Nevis;
- Trinidad & Tobago;
- Grenada; and
- Guyana.

Our bid prevailed and we were awarded the rights to host Cricket World Cup in 2007. Indeed, the significance of this fact is truly historical. It is the first time in the hosting of cricket and for that matter any mega-sport event that nine sovereign States have come together to host the single event. The challenges posed by this undertaking have been swept away by the zeal with which the Governments have collaborated and this may serve as a catalyst to accelerate for the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME).

I think, each of our countries have undertaken this venture for three principle reasons. These are:

- Sporting;
- Economic, and
- Social-Cultural.

From a *sporting perspective* - It helps to improve the standards of our local cricketers and bring us the visible role models, that help to encourage our youths to participate in sports. It also helps to bring spectator gratification and helps to unit us as a people as we route for our team. It will also leave us with a legacy of a stadium, the equipment and developmental initiatives.

From the *economic perspective* - There is a direct and indirect impact. The *direct impact* is the

Thursday, 02 November 2006

increased spending in our country's economy. While the *indirect impact* is the increased tourism and investment before the event such as development of general infrastructure ranging from roads, utilities and accommodation facilities. There is also investment subsequent to the event that is generated by marketing and publicity of the host venue.

From the *Social-Cultural Perspective* - It enhances people's skills through our volunteer programmes. It would also engage various communities and of course, enhance Guyana's and the Caribbean's international reputation and image. Attendance to the anticipated economic and social development accruing to each hosting territory - the sponsors and rights holders of Cricket World Cup 2007, are also banking on the commercial benefits of the event, seeking returns on their investment of million of dollars. As such, they insist on legislative protection, which each territory was asked to guarantee in their bids submission. These rights must be protected to guarantee optimum commercial benefit that is derived from a world-wide viewership and fan-based of more than two billion persons. The Republic of Guyana, in successfully tendering a Bid, therefore became contractually obligated under the Host Venue Agreement to perform certain key obligation, in conformity to what was commented to in the bid submission. As such, Guyana like all successful bid countries for Cricket World Cup 2007, are bound by obligations, contained within the HVA and specifically through *Clause 5*, the Local Organizing Committee irrevocably and unconditional, must procure the implementation of ICC World Cup West Indies 2007 Bill of 2006, which is popularly referred to as the *Sunset Legislation*.

Again, together with the other hosting countries, Guyana was obligated to provide, a Government's guarantee contained within the Host Venue Agreement at Appendix 13, which states at Part B, *Clause 7* that Guyana will enact and enforced, appropriate legislation and regulation in order to facilitate the efficient and effective hosting of CWC 2007 matches and events, which shall be fully operational by no later than the 1 November, 2006.

As one can imagine, a Bill of this type is quite unique in the Caribbean. It therefore required a lot of effort between CARICOM Legislative Drafting Facility and the Chief Parliamentary Counsel of each CARICOM Territory. It underwent numerous and significant amendments from its original draft form. The Legal Affairs Committee, consisting of the Attorney Generals of

Thursday, 02 November 2006

CARICOM, have also made comments and proposals throughout the process for amendments and has pronounced favourably upon this final draft. Unfortunately, the final draft of the Bill as received from Cricket World Cup in June 2006, at a time when our Parliament was in recess. Now that Parliament is convened, the Bill has been presented for the consideration of this Honourable House. There have been some furore and hype on the Sunset Legislation. This Law as the terminology connotes is not for eternity, but that the obligations and rights conferred by it, will come to an end, on a prescribed date. Simple put, the sun begins to set on the legislation as soon as it is passed in Parliament.

It is important that we understand that many of the protections adumbrated by the Law are already enshrined in various laws of our country. The purpose of this distinct Legislation is to bring together the separate existing provisions of the Law into one single piece of Legislation. This Legislation will now include all rights and obligations that will be applicable for Cricket World Cup 2007. This Sunset Legislation provides a comprehensive framework for the hosting of the games at the nine venues.

The CARICOM-wide approach would facilitate uniformity and clarity across the Region and would leave no room for ambiguity in the application of the Law.

The Sunset Legislation has also made provisions with respect to certain anticipated effects in order to fulfill Guyana's own commitments to the efficient and effective staging of Cricket World Cup 2007.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, hosting a mega event requires millions of dollars. Organizers of the World Cup Cricket has secured the following sponsors, who have exclusive rights to the games. These Companies are:

- L.G Electronics
- Pepsi;
- Hutch;
- Hero-Honda;

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Indian Oil;

- Cable & Wireless;
- Visa; and
- Scotia Bank.

The proposed Bill seeks as a one-off measure, to modify the application of the law, in some respects during the staging of the event. This is to give protection of the commercial rights, of the sponsors and rights holders to prevent ambush marketing.

Mr Speaker, very briefly, *Parts I and II* of the Bill deal with Interpretation Section and Special Arrangements for Cricket World Cup 2007 respectively. The later will entail among others, the declaration by the Minister of what is to become Cricket World Cup venue as well as match periods; provisions relating to road closures and offences relating thereto are also included, together with prohibitions on the sale and distribution of Cricket World Cup 2007 tickets; issuance of visas and work permits where needed; exemption from income and other forms of taxation, as well as waivers of import and export duties, foreign exchange regulations and the control of air space are also contemplated by these parts.

In *Part III* - The Bill caters for the conduct within a Cricket World Cup 2007 venue. This Part makes it clear that not only is the conduct in the Stadium being regulated, but that all venues so declared by the Minister to be a Cricket World Cup venue.

Among other things, it provides for;

- the procedures relating to unauthorized entry;
- Reserved Areas;
- Members Entitlement where applicable;
- Prohibited or Restricted Items; and
- The Sale of Goods and Services.

An area of importance, especially to the sponsors, is *Part IV*. This section deals with the control

Thursday, 02 November 2006

of advertising and here the procedures are laid out dealing with the absolute prohibition of certain advertisements, as well as certain prohibition of certain advertisements on lands, buildings and structures. It provides for the restriction of commercial broadcasting, telecasting, recording and filming, as well as the prohibition of certain practices that could be described as ambush marketing; restriction and promotional use of Cricket World Cup 2007 tickets for promotional purposes.

An area of importance is contained in *Part V*. This provides for the procedures relating to the protection of Cricket World Cup 2007 Marks, Indicia and Images. This is basically the Prohibition of the Unauthorized and Unlicensed use of Cricket World Cup marks and procedures relating to application of tickets of Cricket World Cup 2007 Indicia and Images and of course prohibition of its unauthorized use.

The part goes on to contemplate among other things the power of Customs Officers to seize any unauthorized imports.

PART VI the Bill relates to remedies that may be ordered or what may be obtained ranging from injunctive relief to corrective advertisement; damages; account for profits and destruction of unauthorised goods are also contemplated in this Part.

Of particular importance to all persons is *PART VII* of the Bill. This section guarantees among other things that if a citizen feels aggrieved by any provision of this Act, his or her right to seek through the Court action and obtain compensation is preserved.

The Minister's power to prescribe regulation under this Act is also contained in this part as well as the date when the sun finally sets on this piece of legislation, which is the 30 June 2007.

Mr Speaker, many outstanding Guyanese in Government, Sports, Private Sector, Political Parties, Non-Governmental Organisations, Media and Local Communities have been participating in the process of planning for this mega event. To get this far, is a testimony to the hard work and dedication of the local organising committee, which has been working since 2004. To Mr Karran Singh and the local organising committee secretariat; to Mr Walter Willis and the hundreds of Indian and Guyanese workers, business and contractors that helped us to build the stadium and the many Government Ministers and their Ministries and agencies.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

I will also like to thank former Ministers Hon Gail Teixeira and Anthony Xavier, who have offered sound leadership to the LOC to advance the work of hosting this event.

I would also like to single out for special commendation His Excellency President Bharrat Jagdeo for his vision and foresight and for making the resources available so that we can build a world-class stadium and host a world-class event. His personal commitment to this project has been unwavering and for that we must thank him.

Mr Speaker, It is because of this cooperation and collaboration by so many individuals and assorted organisations that has made the hosting of Cricket World Cup 2007 such a national enterprise. The sport by all stake-holders has been exemplary and outstanding; I would like to urge that we continue to drown our partisan action with this new imbued spirit of cooperation.

Mr Speaker, once again cricket has brought us together and presents this wonderful opportunity for us to realise our potential as Guyanese and for us to demonstrate to the world Guyana's readiness. Let there be no lingering doubts about the tremendous direct and indirect benefits that would be accrued from this mega event. With more than a century of cricketing history the investments that we make now, will be an investment for the future of this great game. We must not be timid now. Let us make a great move for cricket and a bold move for Guyana

Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill on ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2006 Bill to fulfil Guyana's commitment to the efficient and effective staging of ICC Cricket World Cup and for related purpose therewith, be read for the second time. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

The question is proposed.

The Honourable Member Mrs Riehl.

Mrs Clarissa S Riehl: Mr Speaker, this Bill is being proceeded here today in this Honourable House, with the full support throughout all its stages on this side of the House that is, the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana.

A Bill of this length with fifty-nine Clauses would usually be the subject of a Special Select Committee, but we have been presented with this Bill approximately just a week ago. It was

Thursday, 02 November 2006

tabled only on Monday. We have to commend the Prime Minister, who came to us and requested our support to have this Bill move through all its stages today. We have given that un-stinted support as we always do when the Government requests it of us. *[Laughter]*

Mr Speaker, we have been presented in this Honourable House with a Bill with *EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM* which states:

The Bill provides the legal structure for the efficient staging of International Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007.

This legal structure that is Bill No. 22 of 2006 has been brought to this Honourable House, in what I would call a bare-bone fashion, because no other documentation has ever been laid in this National Assembly concerning the event, which will have a tremendous impact on the people of this country and for which we have been preparing, I think, since 2003.

One hears and the Honourable Minister has just cited and spoken of the Host Venue Agreement between the ICC and the West Indies Cricket Board signed on to by the Governments of the nine participating territories that is Antigua, Barbuda, Barbados, Grenada, Jamaica, St Kitts Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad & Tobago and Guyana, but no one appears, at least on this side of the House, we have never seen that agreement - the Host Venue Agreement seems to have been shrouded in some secrecy.

There is also information of a Regional Security Plan, which again embraces all nine territories and agreed to by the Heads of Government of these territories and we seek to create a secure CARICOM Single Domestic space from 15 January 2007 to May 2007. In this single Domestic Space, visitors after entering the first port of the secured space and persons who live within that space could move freely about - the single space. Of course, this movement is premised especially for foreign visitors on the issuance of a common CARICOM Visa.

It has been said that this provision has already been signed on to with Regional Security Plan, which has been helped by the British and the American Governments. Let us think for a moment, if this provision is implemented, World Cup Cricket may have achieved albeit for a limited period what CARICOM and CSME have been grappling with for over three decades that is, a Single Domestic Space, seamless borders for the free movement of our people. As I said,

Thursday, 02 November 2006

even though it is for a limited fifty-five day span when the cricket would have been played in these territories.

Mr Speaker, crime and security issues loom large and it is comforting to note that both the United Kingdom and the United States are cooperating in helping our region with security arrangements for this World Cup. Prime Minister, Manning of Trinidad & Tobago, who among CARICOM Heads of Government has responsibility for Crime and Security Affairs, recently signed a Memorandum of Intent with US Secretary for Homeland Security Mr Michael Sherton to share intelligence ahead of Cricket World Cup 2007, especially with regard to advance information on Trans Atlantic visitors. I believe they have worked out about forty-six ranging countries from Asia to Australia. I may say, the expected assistance is not entirely altruistic since the US has abiding interest in the Security of the Caribbean which she considers being her backyard and especially in this era of heightened terrorist activities, any threat to the Caribbean must necessarily be a threat to the US itself.

Internal assistance, internal crime and security measures presumably will also be helped by these governments. One hears rumours of FBI people circulating in Guyana. I do not know how true that is. *[Interruption]*

Mr Speaker, the Bill we are debating in this Assembly today is based on draft CARICOM Legislation - Model Legislation. The Honourable Minister also alluded to that. My information is that this Bill was in the hands of the Government since April, but the Minister has confounded that by saying it has been with the Government since June, but it is model legislation and all our draftsmen had to do, is to tailor this Legislation in accordance with our Constitution and our Laws. Each participating territory after CARICOM drafted this piece of legislation was given that job to do. Our Attorney General's Chambers have had this at least since June and we feel that this Legislation ought to have been brought to this House before *[Interruption: 'There was no Parliament between May and September.']* Oh, you bring Parliament when you feel like.

Mr Speaker, notwithstanding that Parliament was not in place, the Legislation should have been enacted and come into effect as of yesterday and I wish to quote this Honourable Minister who has piloted this Bill, because he said in yesterday's Stabroek News dated 1 November 2006 that today is the day for Sunset Legislation enactment in the territory that it would be hosting Cricket

Thursday, 02 November 2006

World Cup 2007. However, though the Bill was tabled in Parliament on 30 October 2006, its passage is not expected in Guyana until tomorrow.

Minister of Sport, Dr Frank Anthony, spoke with Stabroek News via telephone interview and said, *I do not think this is an issue, because we have assured them that when the Bill is passed, it will be effective from 1 November 2006*, but I do not see any retroactive clause in this Bill. If it is passed to-day, it would have to-days' date as the date of implementation, I would assume. So I feel that this Legislation should have been brought at the first sitting of the Parliament, at least on 28 September, 2006 and then perhaps we could have done things and gotten it in place. We must always strive to get things done properly. I make this point to demonstrate the last minute nature of many of our activities and the Government which has the lead role in Cricket World Cup matters, simply cannot treat with World Cup matters in the manner it treats with a lot of national issues - bringing last minute matters.

We have less than five months; an unprecedented number of foreign visitors are likely to come to our shores. We rise or fall by the quality of our preparedness and our preparation to receive, house and entertain them and failure is not an option. There are twenty-four deliveries according to the Cricket World Cup 2007 bid book, which a host nation must guarantee. The Minister said, we bid, all nine territories and we laud the fact that we got the bid. The delivery of the Stadium has been made the centre piece of the country's focus and even with that delivery, many deadlines have come and passed, the latest being 31 October 2006 and that is also in the Stabroek News that it has not, because there is where we get bulk of our information about these matters. There are many other aspects to be covered besides that Stadium. Medical facilities, transportation, stable political environment and no one can accuse us, as they always want to do of creating instability. Since the Honourable Member Mr Corbin has been our leader, you have had no cause to speak to us about anything like political instability.

Mr Speaker, I would like to look a little at the transportation issue and I wish to read a letter or a part of an article written in the Trinidad Guardian two days ago. The columnist is one Christi Ramnarine writing on looking at Antigua and Barbuda who is host of the red package, but the article is written in the Guardian News Paper. I will omit a lot of the article and go to the salient point I would like to bring to you. It speaks of a public campaign as part of the local

Thursday, 02 November 2006

organisations and this concerns Antigua and Barbuda as part of the local organising committee public awareness campaign, vendors, bus and taxi drivers and the general public were invited to view and discuss the transport plan which was developed for the committee. Vinci Brown, Transportation Co-ordinator for World Cup Antigua Inc. said, the forum was important, although the event is nineteen weeks away and mind you Antigua is counting down in terms of weeks, it is essential that we meet with the various stakeholders on a regular basis to keep them informed on various plans that are being developed. I cite this aspect of this Article to say that even though I know that there is a public awareness sub-committee of our Local Organising Committee, at least I have been told, I do not think that the public is sufficiently aware of all aspects of the World Cup and what is demanded of them in this World Cup scenario.

I would not touch more on the medical facilities, because I understand just recently His Excellency the President signed off \$198,000 worth for the provision of medical facilities. Mr Speaker, all the pundits have warned us that failure in any one of the deliveries in this amount of the twenty-four can jeopardise the entire progress. We, on this side of this Honourable House have given our unqualified support to the whole thing of Cricket World Cup 2007. As far back as 2004, our leader Mr Corbin met with Mr Chris Dehring, Director of CWC 2007 and then Director Mr Don Lockerbie and outlined our position and our believe in the enhancement of racial harmony through sport. Even though we still have reservations about the ever increasing cost factor. Is this wise to await the feasibility study which his Excellency the President had talked would have been done simultaneously with the construction of the stadium? The stadium is near in completion or ninety-nine percent completed. We hope that the feasibility study is also completed and I give notice ahead that we may very well bring motions and questions on the issue of this feasibility study.

Mr Speaker, I turn now to some of the provisions of the Bill. The first striking aspect is the penalty regime of this Bill, exorbitant fines ranging from \$320,000 to \$4.8 million for various infractions of the law and these matters are being dealt with summarily. For instance, the Commissioner of Police has been invested with the authority under Clause 6 to gazette road closures. Roads, in this Clause have been defined very widely to include:

- foot paths;

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- thoroughfares; and even
- private roads.

Sub-Clauses 7(a) to (c) say that anyone who enters a closed road, interferes with the road closure sign or refuses to leave a closed road upon the direction of a Police Officer, commits an offence and is liable to a fine of \$800,000. Since these sub-clauses speak of anyone, this will include the ordinary Guyanese pedestrian, who may not know of the existence of this law and find themselves on a closed road.

Sub-Clause 7 (d) deals with vehicular traffic, but Sub-clauses 7 (a) to (c) deal with pedestrian and anyone.

We feel that these fines ... and I sought some information as to whether this model legislation came from perhaps the United States, because we do not use the word *Sunset*, we have had many bits of legislation which had time limits. We just refer to them as *spent legislation*. It is spent when the time comes and not to be used.

I inquired from someone whether the usage of the term *Sunset Legislation* which is really quite nice showed that the model legislation may have come from the US and that is why it is a conversion of the fine structure that give us these huge figures. At least that is what I thought, until I learnt, that this Legislation was in fact drafted by the CARICOM Secretariat so that it is not accidental for these fines are so horrendous. I know that foreigners will also be caught and we expect a whole lot of them to come to our shores, but for the average Guyanese, this fine regime is staggering; it is killing. One understands also that the fines which are stated under the clauses of this Bill and later in the sections of the Act would give the Magistrate ... and the Magistrate always has the jurisdiction to reprimand and discharge or charge the minimum fine or something in between. I do not think there is any thing...we understand how the courts work, but nonetheless the fine structures by any standard are severe. I know that they want to make examples of people, but that is not the way you make examples of people by putting these stiff penalties for some things that is for a limited period and a sporting activity at that. Certainly these fines need revision.

Mr Speaker, I looked at Clauses 21 and 24 which I have nicknamed best-behaviour Clauses. I need to read it Clause 21 of the Act:

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Unless authorised by CWC 2007 Inc, no person shall, during the match period enter or be present in or on -

(a) any part of the playing field;

Fair enough, this attracts a fine of \$320,000.

Clause 24 speaks of the conduct of patrons during a match period and a person indulging in any prohibited conduct risks not only physical removal, but also liability to be charged and to a fine of \$3.2 million.

In fact, many of the clauses where they deal with the human person speak of the removal of the person and we in law know that it is only *together with* what it means. But still *together with* means both penalties will be exacting.

But we have the stringent situations. I will also read from Clause 24, because I will tell you why a little later. It reads:

A person shall not in any CWC 2007 venue -

(a) misuse, deface, damage, or tamper with any building, seat, chair, et cetera.

Well, that is bad. That is horrible behaviour that is not even best behaviour, but I will go over some of them:

(d) block any stairway, step, aisle, gangway, overpass, underpass, pontoon, bridge, entry, exit or other thoroughfare unless authorised by CWC Inc.;

(g) operate or use a loud hailer, public address system or any other broadcast device or any other device that may interfere with electronic or radio communications unless authorised by CWC 2007 Inc.;

(h) conduct public surveys or opinion polls or solicit money, donations or subscriptions from members of the public unless authorised by CWC 2007 Inc.;

I use these clauses to say, many of these prohibited conducts are well-known antics of our Guyanese during any cricket match.

Also there is another clause which deals with unauthorised selling of tickets and things like that. The question is, how do you contain an exuberance of our average Guyanese cricket fans so that he would not run out on the playing field to lift Sarwan shoulder high and how do you prevent

Thursday, 02 November 2006

the impecunious fans from liming on the thoroughfare which may now be designated a road hoping to slip in or positioning himself to peep, but not knowing that he is risking thereby the facing of a magistrate and paying all of these stiff penalties. How do you protect the Guyanese element in this Cricket World Cup? I know we are putting out our best to the foreign visitors, but we cannot neglect or to understand the local scene here in Guyana. I know, we cannot sit in a cricket stadium and no Guyanese sits in a cricket stadium without shouting things. They would even be throwing bottles and yes, that is one of the things - throwing a plastic bottle when they do not like the thing. Okay, that is typical behaviour

Mr Speaker, there is a great need for the sensitisation of the Guyanese public to these behavioural changes that are needed in this Bill and the strictures of the law if they should deviate from the behavioural patterns. These are things that we should all be concerned about and that the LOC should take note of.

Mr Speaker, I will not go further. There are many other areas in the Act ... and notwithstanding all that has been said, the risk involved and the potential problems that could possibly surface in the hosting of this third largest international sporting event -third only, I understand to the Olympics and World Cup Football.

The hosting of this thing is a matter of immense prestige and with huge political and economic spin-off benefits to be derived for our country. The Honourable Minister has outlined all of these things, in tourism, in economic, in marketing and all these kinds of things that we can reap. That is provided we get it right, conversely failure would spell disaster. It is therefore incumbent on the Government to galvanise this process by a massive information, education and PR Campaign, which must be started now to sensitise the entire nation to all aspects of this World Cup phenomenon. Time is not on our side; we can take a leaf out of the Book of the Antiguans and bring our Guyanese brethren into the forum

Finally, if we can extract from this cricketing experience all the positives and apply them to achieving that elusive goal of Caribbean unity, then cricket can truly be said to be in the jell that can weld us all - Caribbean peoples together. I thank you. *[Applause]*

The Speaker, Thank you Honourable member.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Honourable Members, this is an appropriate time for us to take the suspension for half an hour

16:15H - SUSENSION OF SITTING

17:10H - RESUMPTION OF SITTING

The Honourable Minister of Labour

Hon Manzoor Nadir: Mr Speaker, as I rise to make my first contribution in this Ninth Parliament, I take this opportunity to extend to you, the Deputy Speaker and the Leader of the Opposition my congratulations on your re-election.

Mr Speaker, I would also like to offer congratulations to the Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, Dr Frank Anthony in the professional dispatch with which he moved the Second reading of the Bill before us.

Before I deal with some aspects of the Bill, which I had addressed my mind to, I would like to respond to some of the comments made by the previous speaker, the Deputy Speaker herself. She mentioned that the Host Venue Agreement somehow was shrouded in secrecy and that her party and she have not been able to see a copy of this Agreement as yet. But later down as she went into our hosting of the agreement speaking of the twenty-four deliverables, our security issues, our transportation issues, it said to me that she was very well briefed and that the representative of the PNCR-1G on the local organising committee is doing a very good job in informing the organisation he represents as to what is happening on the local organising committee.

Mr Speaker, I would agree with her that we need to inform our people more about all of the preparations for World Cup 2007, because while many of us have been involved and are privy to lots of the information about the hosting of this event, John Public still has many questions about our hosting of this event.

She mentioned the issue of accommodation and entertainment during the event and I know that there was established a secretariat with sufficient funding to get on board the accommodation

Thursday, 02 November 2006

aspects and also the issue of the entertainment. The other social activities would be carried on during the World Cup itself.

The issue of Guyana's ability to host World Cup 2007 and in particular the security of the crowd considerations was fully tested only recently as we were told GUYEXPO itself passed the test with flying colours for CWC 2007, where security and crowds were concerned. Let me take this opportunity to offer congratulations to Minister of Tourism Mr Manniram Prashad on the successful hosting of GUYEXPO 2006.

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member mentioned about the feasibility of the stadium and made reference also to the ever increasing cost of hosting this event and she did make reference to the fact that there could be enormous benefits if we get it right. I am sure, with all the hard work that has gone into the preparation for Cricket World Cup 2007 that Guyana is on the road to getting it very, very right come March 2007, as we open the doors to receive the first, patrons, teams, officials, media and sponsors for the quarter finals matches which we are to host.

Mr Speaker, with specific reference to the Legislation before us, Guyana and eight other West Indian countries have agreed to host Cricket World Cup 2007 and we have been told by the two speakers before me that it is the third largest spectator event in terms of television in the world with an excess of two billion viewers and third only to the sisters Soccer World Cup and the Olympics.

Guyana's commitment and contractual obligation are set out in what is known as the Host Venue Agreement, which we have signed with the ICC and Cricket World Cup 2007. We are at this point, because we have obligations to fulfil. This Bill more particularly known as Sunset Legislation, is but one of these obligations and perhaps the most important one at that.

With our country becoming a host venue and in particular a host to our quarter final matches, Guyana has to bring itself up to the highest international standards for such activities. We are in the big league and we have to conduct ourselves in a manner that will meet such standards; a manner that is enshrined in the provisions of this Bill before us. The Bill aims to ensure that we will as part of our laws meet these international standards.

Mr Speaker, one of the criticisms of the legislation could be the amount of local control or perhaps sovereignty which we may have to seal to ICC and Cricket World Cup 2007. For

Thursday, 02 November 2006

example Section 4 and those that take away members' rights to venues which they have membership to and are designated CWC venues, but CWC is beyond this small sacrifice. We are dealing with a franchise, Cricket World Cup and the holder of that franchise the International Cricket Council. We are, in this instance, takers and hold very little bargaining power in my view. In fact, ICC, CWC is in a very strong position while for previous World Cups they would have had to deal with a few countries in this case, while the West Indies bid for the hosting of these games, they had nine countries to play against each other. But one has to weight the loss of sovereignty as against the need to ensure that we conduct ourselves, as I said before, in the highest international best practices.

ICC Cricket World Cup as the Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports said, began over twenty-five years ago with Guyanese Clive Lloyd, Captain of the West Indies Team, lifting aloft the coveted trophy of the champions. Last year, the West Indies also won the first ICC Championship - the mini World Cup as it was called.

The ICC to its credit has a wealth of experience and one can hardly argue against their positions on many issues. For example, Section 10 dealing with the sale and distribution of CWC 2007 tickets. The provision of this section is intended to deal with the scalping and black-marketing of tickets - a practice that contributes to the freezing of fans and the putting into disrepute the event itself.

Mr Speaker, in close alliance with the sale of tickets issue is that of infringement of copy-rights ambush marketing and advertising are taken care of in PART IV of the Bill. For events such as these to be a financial success, it is important that international sponsorship be sought and that the revenues from international televisions be maximised. This can only be done with national laws to protect sponsors and advertisers thus the necessity for PART IV of the Bill itself. This sets the stage for other franchise holders in the area of sport, conventions and exposed to evaluate Guyana as a country of principle and one which will comply and confine itself to international norms. In this regard also, PATT VI details the position of the ICC CWC... its .trade mark and mascot to protect these entities from counterfeiters and ambush marketers.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, perhaps the part that I have the most interest in is PART III of the Bill dealing with conduct. I feel perhaps this is the most important part of the Bill in my estimation; I view this inclusion, as I have said, the most essential part of this legislation.

Mr Speaker, I remember in 1989, being a student in the United Kingdom and watching at soccer match, the finals between two of the top leading teams, a soccer fans surge in a hotly contested game had crushed to death over fifty persons and injuring hundreds of persons. That particular unfortunate lost of life and limb, led the UK Legislators to make changes with respect to stadiums, individual seats for patrons, no standing against fences, no blocking of passage ways. If you do not have a seat allocated to you, you are out, no compromise what-so-ever in terms of the protection of patrons and also players.

Mr Speaker, I also remember a few years ago, at the end of I think it was a West Indies verses Pakistan nail biters at Bourda, the invasion of the crowds. Even before the players completed the final runs of the game, we had a swarm of fans running onto to Bourda ... *[Interruption: 'I hope you were not running there too.']*... I did not notice the Leader of the Opposition there too. Mr Speaker, I remember a vivid image of a player fighting in a tug-of-war with a fan over a stump and other players scampering off the field. We see these scenes repeated over and over again all over the world and even when we get to the Asian Sub-continent we notice the issue of missiles being thrown at players. So Mr Speaker, PART III of the Bill deals very condignly with the infractions in terms of conduct.

Mr Speaker, the threats to players, managers and team officials, even between these very countries, India and West Indies have seen missiles tossed at players. The Honourable Member Mrs Riehl made mention of the high fines, but we are part of serious international business with our participation in Cricket World Cup 2007 and commensurate with this, the fines I am sure, they are the highest ever imposed by any law in our land passed in this National Assembly. We cannot conduct these games indulging in antics and entertaining antics. As the Honourable Member Mrs Riehl, the Deputy Speaker said, we have to get it right and I am sure, with the provisions of this Act, we are placing the tools that our law makers, our law enforcers in placing at their disposal, the tools to getting the Cricket World Cup 2007 right.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

So Mr Speaker, it was my honour to support the Second reading of this Bill. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member Mr Mervyn Williams.

Mr Mervyn Williams: Mr Speaker, it is indeed an honour to be considered worthy to serve the people of my beloved country Guyana and in particular the people of Region 3 at the level of this august Assembly.

I know that the challenges would be monumental at times, but with courage, purpose and vigour and the support of my party's redoubtable team of committed patriots, such challenges would only serve as an impetus for major accomplishments.

Mr Speaker, we need to stop viewing the area which lies between the two sides of this House as a separator. We need to instead see it and indeed, the entire hallowed Chambers as a safe place. A place where we come to represent the interest of those who elected us to serve them; a safe place to which we can bring ideas which would be recognised as valid and where our participation in the various conversations will be meaningful and our energies and involvement will best benefit the citizens of Guyana. For this, trust is needed; a good place to start maybe to recognise the political will, honouring agreements, establishing proper priorities and sticking to them are required. Albert Einstein seemed to have been speaking direct to us when he said:

The problems we have created cannot be solved with the same level of thinking on which they were created

Mr Speaker, it is time for us to move forward. In doing this we could take advice from Oliver Wendell Holmes who said:

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us

Mr Speaker, I now turn my attention to Bill No.22 of 2006, the ICC Cricket World Cup West Indies 2007- Bill of 2006. and to say that following the footsteps of the Honourable Mrs Clarissa

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Riehl, I wish to say that we support this Bill since cricket is the established unifying factor of the CARICOM Community, more importantly World Cup Cricket is our thing in Guyana and throughout the region.

However, having said that there are some issues which present some worry and which I will need some clarifications. I will come to those in a moment.

Mr Speaker, the concept of a stadium to accommodate Guyana's varied sporting events preceded Cricket World Cup 2007. The distinguished Sir Clive Hubert Lloyd, former Guyana and West Indies Cricket Captain was the first to take practical measures with respect to building a stadium in Guyana. Mr Lloyd engaged the former Minister of Sports the Honourable Mrs Teixeira, between 1994 and 1996 and presented a proposed architectural design to that effect, not much or anything came out of that. Then came the announcement that the West Indies will be hosting World Cup in 2007. With that announcement came the concerns.

Mr Wesley Kirton another distinguished Guyanese came up with a proposal for the construction of a stadium at Providence. After rejecting Mr Kirton's plan, the Government proceeded to use the site as well as to incorporate several of the features in his plan as proposed.

Mr Speaker, in the initial stages, the Government did not act with respect to the establishment of a structure to fulfill the ICC's requirements. Indecisive action followed when the Honourable Minister established one such body which was later replaced by an all-controlling Government body. In the process Sir, the efforts of many well-intentioned Guyanese were ignored; not least of these Sir was Mr Norman McLean who took the pain to record in a letter to the Honourable Minister on 5 December 2003 which states:

Surprisingly, the Committee which you have established to organise and arrange for the hosting of the World Cup was not invited to meet the Indian representatives. Exclusion of the Committee was quite unfortunate and it is apparent that the Committee would have no further role to play and is being discarded without even so much as a thank you.

At a meeting chaired by the National Sports Council at which you and the President of the Guyana Cricket Board, His Excellency Mr Avinash Chandra Gupta, High Commissioner of India and Mrs Ashok Tandani and Parveen Kumar,

Thursday, 02 November 2006

the two representatives of the Indian Government spoke. There was apparently a deliberate policy to exclude any mention of the work of the World Cup Committee.

Mr Speaker, cost is also a worrying factor. The Government's public focus on the construction of a stadium is viewed by many as an attempt to shift attention away from the real cost factor involved in the hosting of World Cup 2007. Initial projections showed that the cost to be upward of US\$60 million. For a poor country such as ours borne down by a heavy level of debt, this is a staggering sum. Let it not be forgotten also that the study that the economic sustainability of the stadium to be undertaken by Price Waterhouse is still to be completed.

The IMF is also to complete the feasibility studies which depending on the conclusions reached therein, may very well entail cuts in our allocation.

Mr Speaker, apart from the completion of the stadium, the Government has undertaken the stated twenty-four other deliverables of these, political environment, medical facilities, transportation and a properly administered local organising committee are perhaps of gravest importance.

While the LOC has been established, it is yet to be adequately staffed. In fact, by letter dated August 3 2005, Mr Rushman and ICC Representative told the Government:

I am becoming increasingly concern regarding Guyana's commitment to event management. Would you please be kind enough to update me in writing in respect of your staffing and planning for an event management disciplines

And he listed them:

- *Event operations;*
- *Special event;*
- *Volunteer Programmes;*
- *Visitors' experience;*
- *Protocol and VIP Management;*
- *IT Telecommunication;*
- *LOC Operations;*
- *Accreditation;*
- *Media Management; and*
- *Medical and Health.*

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, the question of whether we could find enough doctors, equipment and medical paraphernalia to satisfy the demands of Cricket World Cup 2007 is an issue that needs clarification. With the deficiencies, as we know them, at the Georgetown Public Hospital Corporation, questions arise with respect to the Government's ability to establish the number and types of medical centres required for the people.

Mr Speaker, this brings me to the point of contracts. While it is true that Cricket World Cup 2007 will bring employment to Guyana, the contracts awarded to the event thus far also present cause for concern. The trend is consistent with the Government's historic record of awarding persons in accordance with partisan and other considerations. Mr Speaker in keeping with the Government's programme, Mr Majid Husain, who is a member of the PYO was appointed to the head sub-committee responsible for volunteer programmes. It is the perception of many that there is an intention to use this event for the purpose of mobilising Guyana's youths as they seek to convert their love for country and the need to serve into numbers for the PYO and by extension the PPP/C. If this is at all true Sir, it is indeed a serious cause for worry. Hopefully, the Honourable Minister will at some convenient point clarify.

Mr Speaker, the introduction of Indian labour force at the stadium was also another major area of concern. There has never been any clear declaration of the numbers with respect to those persons who came to work on the stadium. At one particular point in time, the numbers was said to be 87 and 147. However, knowledgeable sources have placed this number as much as 347. These sources have also indicated that an attempt to cut cost in order to support a reduce bid from US \$29 million to US \$25 million resulted in the importation of labour force that is said to be from among persons who are currently serving prison time. These are also questions that require clarifications. Mr Speaker, it is hoped that the Government is going to make public the bond that was signed by His Excellency the President, which binds our country to a joint regional liability of US \$500 million in the event that anyone of the nine host countries being incapable of hosting the games.

Mr Speaker, I thought that perhaps the Honourable Minister would have advised on how the Government proposed to address the issue of the effects of closure of roads; closure of schools and the effects on local businesses with respect to advertising as an example. It would also be

Thursday, 02 November 2006

reasonable I believe, for us to be advised with respect to public education programmes being launched to give local business a comfort zone in a sense that they are made aware of the nature of the offences and the associated harsh penalties and how those penalties may affect their operations.

Mr Speaker, full disclosure would be very helpful in allowing persons to more fully appreciate the value of what is intended from these legislations. Mr Speaker, it is time that we move in the direction of honouring the stated position with respect to transparency and so the time for the Government to make that change will be now. Mr Speaker, it was Isaac Asimoff who put that best in my opinion. He said:

It is change, continuing change, inevitable change that is the dominant factor in society today. No sensible decision can be made any longer without taking into account not only the world as it is, but the world as it will be

Sir, I restate at this stage our support for the Bill. Thank you. [Applause]

The Speaker, Thank you Honourable Member.

The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs.

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, I rise to lend support to the Bill piloted by my colleague the young and exuberant Minister of Youth, Sport and Culture in respect of the Cricket World Cup 2007 and also to commend this Bill to the House for positive endorsement.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Home Affairs as the agency that is responsible for the maintenance of public order and safety, wish to assure this Honourable House and the Minister himself and his Ministry as well as the LOC that we will endeavour to execute its responsibilities given an efficient and effective manner.

Clause 6 - Mr Speaker, this Clause of the Bill that is before this Honourable House, stipulates that the Commissioner of Police must institute measures for the control and regulation of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. That is to ensure the safety of persons and the protection of property. Clause 6 also spells out other responsibilities of the Commissioner of Police.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, I have been assured by the Commissioner of Police as head of the Guyana Police Force that the Police Force would execute its mandate during Cricket World Cup 2007

[Interruption: 'Don't say 'execute' say 'carry out.']

Mr Speaker, we seem to be living in the past, we seem to have a phobia about this word *execute*, so I will try to satisfy the concerns of the member.

Clause 7 of the Bill identifies certain offences as they relate to the use of certain roads. These offences carry as was mentioned by the Hon Mrs Clarissa S Riehl, a huge monetary fine to the tune of \$800,000. Now this may seem a rather exorbitant amount of money, but I will come to address that in my conclusion.

In other words, the driving public must be aware or made aware at this stake and this takes into consideration the point that has made about a public awareness programme, of those roads that will be closed during a match period. Now, we have been looking at this question of closing roads as such and we have to bear in mind our own traffic peculiarities and the designs and so on of our roads. While we may be able to close some roads, we are taking into consideration that there are other roads which we may not be able to do as such. So the point here is that we may have to be flexible bearing in mind the peculiarities of some of our roads, how they are designed and the question of our traffic. Now the relevant notices will be put up and the public educated accordingly.

Clause 8 empowers the Police to remove unattended vehicles within certain limits of Cricket World Cup. These limits will be made known to the driving public so as to minimize the committing of this offence. Now I do not think that I need to expand on this. I think those of us who follow the activities of international terrorists and terrorism in today's world would know that the parking of vehicles with no one inside could result... I am not anticipating anything, but I will come to say what could happen if we do not take the requisite steps, because as you should know while I am no security expert, security is not something that we can underestimate and I am sure this House recognises that. So the police would be empowered under *Clause 8* to remove unattended vehicles in the precincts of Cricket World Cup. Of course, this would be made known to the driving public.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Clause 9 seeks to give the Commissioner of Police the authority with the approval of the Minister to regulate or prohibit certain activities in relation to vehicles within Cricket World Cup 2007 venue. I have observed that the person who contravenes any of the directions of this clause, if convicted summarily can be asked to pay a fine of G\$800,000 as well.

Clauses 11 and 12 - In my view, the most important clauses of this Bill as they relate to the Ministry of Home Affairs are Clauses 11 and 12. These two clauses seek to set out the necessary visa requirements and the issuance of work permits to visitors during the match period. As the Minister of Home Affairs with responsibility for immigration and other related matters, it devolves upon me to ensure that all the necessary arrangements are in place to administer in an efficient and effective manner the requirements of these two important clauses. Hence, the Immigration Office has commenced the training of immigration officers who will be posted at the various ports of entry and know where those ports of entry are:

- Timehri;
- Moleson Creek,
- Bartica; and
- Lethem.

It is to be recalled that over 37,000 visitors would be passing through these ports during the match period. The magnitude of work anticipated must be taken into consideration and it must be borne in mind and I think the Honourable Member Mrs Clarissa Riehl alluded to this that Guyana will be judged by the welcome received at the ports of entry, because that is where people get the first impression of the country they are entering.

Mr Speaker, it therefore behooves each and every one of us in this House and outside this House, to ensure that the circumstances, our immigration authorities are adequately trained and fully prepared to perform their functions in a manner that will give credit to Guyanese and Guyana and therefore the intensification of the training of immigration officials. These personnel will work and will seek and assume the responsibility for the issuance of work permits and extensions of stay in our jurisdiction.

Mr Speaker, as my colleague, the Honourable Minister of Youth, Culture and Sport pointed out, this is a game that will cause millions of cricket loving people over the world to focus on

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Guyana. We are a cricket loving nation and nobody disputes that and therefore we must let our love for cricket guide our actions and therefore we must endeavour not to be surprised or overwhelmed by the magnitude of what Cricket World Cup is all about.

Mr Speaker, I refer to the making the general public aware of the various aspects of the laws as they relate to the control and regulation of traffic and I would like to emphasize that full use would be made of the media to inform the public and support the activities that would take place during the match period. In fact, recently at the CARICOM meeting in Trinidad a sum of money has been allocated for public awareness in respect of security matters.

In addition, the necessary domestic legislation as it relates to visa requirements for certain countries *vis-à-vis* the CARICOM special visa, this has to be ready by the end of November of this year. A common ED that is the arrival form will be used at all ports of entry - this will be common across the Caribbean Region and that form has to be settled in at least by the end of November as well. In fact immigration officials will be meeting here in Georgetown at the CARICOM Secretariat tomorrow, to sign off a number of immigration matters in preparation for this deadline.

Mr Speaker, it is intended that visas will be issued in all the capital that is, the common CWC visa will be issued in all the capitals. Guyana will be one of the in-country CWC visa issuing sites and we expect to be ready to commence the issue of such visas by the end of December of this year.

Mr Speaker, the cost of hosting the Cricket World Cup has been mentioned both in this House and outside of this Honourable House, but I believe, if I may respectfully suggest that the cost of hosting this game must be weighed against the benefits. In other words, as usual we do the cost benefit analysis and I think the Heads of Government in their deliberate judgment have already done this, and that is why they have committed to hosting the games in the single space within CARICOM.

I recall that we have to bear in mind and take into consideration that the stadium will be made in Guyana. The stadium is not going to be relocated from Guyana after Cricket World Cup ...

[Interruption: 'We did not know that.'] You did not know that? Ooh, Rip Van Winkle has just awoken. *[Laughter]*

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, we hear talk of vision, when we complement the benefits of Cricket World Cup Stadium remaining in Guyana, with that of the International Conference Centre Mr Speaker because in a previous speech, one of the Honourable Member from the other side of the House, spoke about will and commitment to carry through with certain objectives, but if we were to look at the will of the administration to carry through with certain objectives, obviously there are certain standing symbols or there are certain standing projects which are symbolic of the commitment of the administration and the will of the administration to pursue its goals and objectives to finality.

Mr Speaker, we have to bear in mind that fifty hours of international television will be viewed by two million people around the world and who can really cost this, unless we seek to underestimate that and not tax price it and take advantage of it and I agree, that we ought to take advantage of that, but fifty hours of international television time viewed by almost two billion people around the world, I believe we can call that (if I may use the word) *priceless*. Of course, this can generate a tremendous amount of economic activity in our country.

If I may conclude, I do not want to end on a negative note, but I am somewhat disappointed (Honourable Member Mr Murray if you will allow me) by the tenor of the pessimism and the negativism, had it not been for your intervention (Mr Speaker through you) had it not been for the Honourable Member Mr Murray's intervention, listening to the other Members on the opposite side of the House, I discern a certain degree of pessimism and negativism on their part, that is to say questioning every aspect of putting Cricket World Cup into place as though we do not have the confidence in ourselves as a nation. We have to have the confidence in ourselves as a nation to successfully host this game. *[Applause]* That confidence and that enthusiasm must emanate from this House - they must emanate from this House - we have to send the right message to the nation; we must send a direct message to the nation *[Interruption: 'We are supporting this Bill, you know.']* I hope so. I am prepared to give you the benefit of the doubt. Therefore, we will get this right as a nation. This is not PPP/C or Government only; we will get it right as a nation; we have to get it right; we must get it right, because we will fail as a nation if we do not. Therefore, we have to be positive, stop stirring the pot up on negativism.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, there is a lot of positive things that will come out of us hosting Cricket World Cup, because they would have built capacity in so many areas, which we do not have now and so Cricket World Cup is a blessing in disguise for those areas [*Interruption: 'Not in disguise.'*] [*Laughter*] You may laugh, you make fun of it, because you are in the opposition, but if I may respectfully submit, this will help us build capacity in areas where we never would have considered building capacity, had it not been for Cricket World Cup. If I may say ... You know, I want to close on this note. If something happens during match period, then it is quite possible; I do not know, I do not have a crystal ball to say this is going to happen. If something happens during Cricket World Cup, it is quite possible that there could be inquiries as to why this happen and how was it allowed to happen? We do not want as a nation to be ringing our hands in regretful sentiments by saying if we did know. We do not want to be in that syndrome and therefore if we are to approach hosting this game and the Sunset legislation from that perspective, we will not want any mishaps and any inquiries to take place, then we must ensure that Guyana and the entire nation host a successful game and at the end of this, we walk away proud and happy as a nation. I thank you [*Applause*]

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member Mr Khemraj Ramjattan.

Mr Khemraj Ramjattan: Mr Speaker, I want to on behalf of the Alliance for Change indicate our wholehearted support for this Legislation and also to state what it is in our view should be some of the aspects about it that concern should be shown. But before I do so, I should not let this opportunity go amiss congratulating you for once again being the Speaker and of course all those new members here and also all those new Ministers that we have; congratulations and hopefully this Ninth Parliament will bear the fruits we so much talked about during the campaign period.

With regard this Bill, we have to indicate that businesses spend vast sums of money to hold mega events of this nature. The sponsors and the organisers of those events like these must have some exclusivity as it were to ensure that their investments, their finances; their funding are secured.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Cricket as you know, is an extraordinary game more than play it in the Caribbean, we live it, it is part of our culture. Since we are going to now host the biggest event in Caribbean history;, since we are going to be hosting the most magnificent event that we are going to ever have in these parts, we must then have special rules - it would require then special legislation and especially, as I mentioned, for those who are organising and sponsoring. I do not know the amount of money that is going to be arranged to have the entire thing sponsored, but it is obviously going to be hundreds of millions of dollars. Of course, Guyana is going to be one such venue that will have a good number of matches, I think it is five? Eight matches [*Interruption: 'Six,*] I understand that six figure brings a sparkle in this Parliament. I could understand why? In any event, for that reason, we must ensure that the sponsors and the organisers get what they would have wanted and would have invested. That of course means getting the assurances that competitor businesses will not gain publicity as they ought to, because of course they would not have paid for it. So organisers and agents of the sporting events must be given assurances particularly in return for those large sums. Of course, to ensure that Governments must get involved and that is why I am glad that indeed we are having this piece of legislation to ensure investors ...because from the capacity, the Hon Clement J Rohee just mentioned, it is also going to showcase the fact that we can have legislation that can take care of investment of this sort. So, Governments must get involved too and I must say that the legislation of this sort did come from I think, originally South Africa when they had done the World Cup in 2003, they introduced the legislation that prohibit the use of brands that were unauthorised and also to secure the venue to ensure that there is law and order and the maintenance of them during the course of match periods and even outside of them. Of course, that country was not the only one, we had other countries doing similar things for mega events, like London now is passing legislation of this sort for the London Olympics in 2012.

So indeed, it is important that we all be united in that game that is the greatest unifying factor of the Caribbean. So, notwithstanding the fact that we have fines that seems ridiculous to the ordinary Guyanese, that indeed they would be supportive, because it is not only Guyanese we are going to have these fines for. This country is going to be probably flooded with non-Guyanese during the course of the matches and so if there is bad behaviour on their part, the fines must be

Thursday, 02 November 2006

akin to that which they ought to pay rather than what Guyanese ought to pay. I also say that although it might be discriminatory in that regard against them, I do not think they would mind and especially the CWC would not mind at all.

In addition, I want to make the point that as the Minister mentioned, this piece of legislation is directed towards ambush marketing, but quite a lot of us do not know what that is and it is a commercial concept that I was totally unacquainted with, until of course, I realised that it is necessary when you are hoping this kind of event that lots of people would want to shake after the big bucks, by doing their publicity stunts as it happened in World Cup Football in Germany recently, where Dutch supporters wearing orange trousers afraid they will remove a Beer Company that was a competitor to one of the sponsors. They were refused entry into the Match and what the fellows did was that they then took off their trousers and on their underwear, they had the logo. How do you then get the enforcement to take off their underwear so as to avoid ambush marketing? *[Laughter]*

The Speaker: Were they male or female, Honourable Member, because you can get the Speaker's advice if they belong to a particular gender as to how to ... *Interruption*].

Mr Khemraj Ramjattan: They were male and female here, Mr Speaker. So it could be that at some stage, we may be venturing into some un-chartered territory here, but of course we must have the enforcement section as Honourable Minister Clement Rohee has mentioned to take care of these things when they do happen. Because it is one thing to pass the legislation, it is another when these very innovative, creative minds get to work to ensure that they do that kind of ambush marketing.

There are some other examples, because I really want to know what the concept was, but I am not going to do it. It might get even beyond the underwear and let us not go there.

There are a couple of points that I wish to make before I take my seat. Those are:

- CWC Incorporated, I hope would be registered in Guyana. I made a little check there today and it is not yet registered and so all the other Incorporated Entities are going to play this large role - ICC and the rest.
- The other aspect has to do with *Venue Delineation*. This Parliament, by this

Thursday, 02 November 2006

legislation is giving this authority over - it is a delegated authority- to another body *to* delineate what the venue will be. I am hoping that the best advice will be given so that *venue delineation* is proper and does not extend beyond that which is reasonable. So that we are not affected, because there are some draconian measures, but as I mentioned, there is need for that kind of special legislation here.

Before I take my seat, the other aspect has to do with -

The protections granted to the sponsors and the organizers have extended beyond the protection one normally gets in the course of opening a opening a business.

Very many businesses in Guyana do not get this kind of protection. Of course, we are hoping that although these Laws introduced by this Act are going to be far-reaching and if I may say it is somewhat disturbing that its enforcement is going to be left to the discretion of the organisations that benefits. That is the technical little objection I have, because it is CWC that is really going to benefit and they are literally the enforcers here. However, I wish to make this point that sports sponsorship is an essential part of any major sporting event and if countries want to host those events, protection needs to be provided to the fullest to those official sponsors.

I want to conclude by saying that in my opinion; regrettably the balance might not be perfect here. Cricket, is too great a game to me, even though the balance may not be perfect, for me not to support this thing. So, I do commend it to the House for their support and the AFC whole does so. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member Mr Bernard De Santos.

Mr Bernard C De Santos: Mr Speaker, I rise to lend my support to what has been called the Sunset Bill or Bill No. 22 of 2006. The Honourable Minister of Sport has been pretty generous,

Thursday, 02 November 2006

in his congratulation of the persons involved in the preparatory arrangements for us to hold, what Sir Lionel Luckhoo would have called a humongous effort.

I think, it is appropriate for us to congratulate the Honourable Minister for what I considered to be an excellent presentation of this Bill. *[Applause]* Having listened to him and the historical background and all, I was well educated and I thought that there would be precious little else for me to say.

The area which I will attend to, in a little while, is an area of my special expertise. Therefore, the Minister is forgiven for what I consider maybe a small oversight.

Mr Speaker, the decision by the Government of this country to host Cricket World Cup 2007 is a momentous one. It is an undertaking of gargantuan proportions completely unlike anything we have undertaken in the past. The hosting of this event, as the Minister rightly pointed out is pregnant with serious with political, socio-cultural and economic implications. This undertaking is essentially a business enterprise for some and therefore, as the Honourable Member Mr Ramjattan pointed out the investment of these persons must necessarily be protected.

There are also other issues which arise which have been pointed out by other speakers, like the security issues - security of persons and security of property. The Bill deals with these matters and several others which the draftsmen had anticipated would arise.

For me, one of the most important aspects of this event would be that we the Guyanese people, will be on show. We will have the lights turned on on us and we must respond appropriately. I know we can. Minister Rohee said that we must. I say and I am not citing Sir, all these famous authors from Shakespeare to Azimuth. So Bernard De Santos says, we will. *[Applause]* Sir, being human we may fall down, but Honourable Member Mrs Riehl's fear is that we may not deliver on these twenty-four deliveries that she said we must make. I am particularly worried by that, because coming come her, she ought to know that some deliveries are delayed. They do not all come at the time of expectation. *[Laughter]* You should know too because of the several issues, which hosting an event of this magnitude raises, this special legislation was needed to regulate the various concerns and the Bill seeks to fulfill that need. I have no right whatsoever to

Thursday, 02 November 2006

assume that all the other Members of this House cannot read. Therefore, I will not attempt, to read section after section of this Bill.

I think, since it has been a subject of harmonization and for those who have never heard that term in terms of legislation, it simple means that there comes a commonality of legislative intent by several Countries and there is an alignment of the legislation. This is a process which had started a long time ago, at least between 1992 and 1997 years when I had the honour to serve in a certain capacity.

Mr Speaker, since it has gone through that process, I am willing to keep faith with it. It has been the product of the collective experience of many draftsmen in the Caribbean and elsewhere and indeed, Sir, of our own Team. We sometimes tend not to recognize our own expertise. I wish at this point to recognize the work - a lot of work - despite the harmonization of our local drafting section. *[Applause]* They say that *charity should begin at home*. So, it is well, it is good, it is meant that we should recognize them.

However, my singular concern is what I alluded to a little earlier and the Honourable Minister, will forgive me, if I point out that I have noticed, in these several penalties - I think, Mr Hoyte once described it - the Narcotic Legislation by the use of a word - he said it was ... what is it he said? I do not remember. *[Laughter]* But what he meant to convey was very harsh. These penalties by our standards are extremely harsh, but this is for a limited period and for limited purposes and for purposes which I think we need. So I am not going to raise any objections whatsoever to the severity of the penalties. You will notice that in no case where a monetary penalty is imposed, is there an alternative of imprisonment or any other penalty. So if John Brown jumps over the fence or whatever runs out and exposes himself at the West Indies performance or the lack of it and he is caught up; it says a fine of \$320,000 and he says, thank you very much, I am not going to pay it, I do not have it. What does this Act do to him? I am afraid there is a lacuna which must be remedied. As I said, this might have been a deliberate attempt of the draftsman, but out of an abundance of caution, I would rather have it there even if it was not used. I would have it there for completeness, I would have it there so that it would makes good sense and in keeping with normal drafting in these matters.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Therefore, I have had consultations with the Chief Parliamentary Counsel and we have fashioned a little amendment, which I proposed to the Honourable Minister. It should be done by adding a sub-clause 55 (a):

(Section 55 A)

In any case, where a monetary penalty is imposed for an offence under this Act, the court may impose as an alternative penalty a term of imprisonment not exceeding nine months.

I want to make it clear, the word *may*, gives the courts discretion. Because if the man jumps over but does not expose himself, we will give him a shorter penalty, than if he takes his orange pants off.

Before I close, there is another concern I must address. The Honourable Member Mr Ramjattan, has took me to a state of unease. I do not want to walk into the stadium ... you see I have underpants of several colours and I do not want to walk into the stadium worrying about if somebody will investigate what I am wearing, only to decide that my black and white underpants, offends some sponsor. I want to go and enjoy my cricket. So, I do not know whether the Minister might wish to consider another sub-section which says, all underpants are okay.

[Laughter]

Mr Speaker, with those few words, I commend this Bill to the House and hope that it is passed, subject only to the minor amendment which I proposed.

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

Honourable Member Mr Basil Williams.

Mr Basil Williams: Mr Speaker, if it pleases you, permit me to congratulate you on your re-election; the Honourable Member Mrs Clarissa Riehl on her re-election as Deputy Speaker; our Leader Mr Corbin as Leader of the Opposition and all the Members that are present in this august Chamber. Congratulations are the order of the day.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, it is about cricket - lovely cricket – indeed that great national and regional past-time institution.

I am therefore, pleased to announced that the PNCR-1G is happy to let the sunshine in.

Mr Speaker, we do so not only out of an appreciation for the intrinsic beauty of the sport, but also out of a recognition of its influence on the lives of our people of this region historically and present.

Mr Speaker, even as we deliberate on the purpose and intent of the clauses of this Bill, we are not unmindful that our boys are at present engaged in their a spirited defence of the ICC Champions' Trophy in India. I had prepared this even before this glorious victory today in the Semi-Finals. We also wish to send our congratulations to the West Indies Cricket Team and wish them further success in the Finals. It is my own view, as we say in common Guyanese parlance, Australia is always our muck and we know, that we could beat them. *[Applause]* I am sure that we all wish them well. It is my respectful view that like Hubert Nathaniel Critchlow, our cricketers are undisputed heroes of the Caribbean. Our pantheon of cricketing heroes includes:

- the great Clive Lloyd,
- Rohan Kanhi,
- Basil Butcher,
- Joe Salomon,
- Roy Fredericks,
- Shivnarine Chanderpaul; and
- Externally or in the Region:
 - Sir Garfield Sobers;
 - the three Ws - Sir Frank Worrell;
 - Sir Everton Weekes;
 - Sir Clive Walcott who recently departed,

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- the great Sir Vivian Richards,
- Courtney Walsh; and
- the great Brian Lara.

Mr Speaker, the importance of cricket is reflected at the level of the CARICOM Heads of Government, where caucuses Heads of Government have been convened from time to time, to treat with major issues affecting cricket, such as this ICC World Cup West Indies 2007. Indeed, Mr Speaker, conventional wisdom suggests that West Indies Cricket is one truly indigenous, integrated, an enduring institution in CARICOM.

It was Sir Michael Manley, a former Prime Minister of Jamaica, in his Book *A History of West Indies Cricket* who wrote,

At a Political level, the University of the West Indies apart, cricket is the most completely Regional activity undertaken by the people of the Member States of the Caribbean Community - CARICOM. It is also, the most successful cooperative endeavour and as such, is a constant reminder to a People of otherwise wayward insularity, of the value of collaboration.

I think, we could draw some inference from that statement. In the light of these premises, we can embark upon an examination of the factors involved in delivering a successful Cricket World Cup 2007 in Guyana.

The Guyana Local Organizing Committee (Guyana LOC Inc.) is entrusted with the task of delivering a successful tournament of cricket in Guyana. From the outset, a representative of our Party, the PNCR -1G has been a member. The Guyana LOC Inc. like its sister committees in CARICOM in planning such for event, would appreciate that it would probably be the greatest single event to showcase Guyana to the world.

The Guyana LOC Inc. must therefore be alive to the challenges, common vulnerabilities and negative events could pose. Mr Speaker, these vulnerabilities include:

- (i). Acts of Terrorism;

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- (ii). Criminal Activities - for example violent crimes against tourist;
- (iii) Drug Trafficking;
- (iv) Trafficking in Arms;
- (v) Trafficking in Humans - That is a very important aspect. I saw the discussion in the Caribbean about whether certain workers ought to be allowed officially;
- (vi) Illegal Immigration;
- (vii) HIV/AIDS - Up to now, we have not heard any Public Awareness Programme in relation to the influx of visitors that are expected at this time and the importance of pushing HIV/AIDS awareness;
- (viii). Maintenance of law and order - Well, the Honourable Member spoke to that;
- (ix) Logistics, transportation, communication and accommodation;
- (x). Disaster mitigation and response.

Some of the main negative events that may occur include:

- Terrorist attacks - bombing, shooting, et cetera. The Honourable Minister has said that we must prepare to guard against these eventualities;
- Another important one is infrastructure failure -The possibility of a stand collapsing;
- Breakdown in public order;
- Supporter rivalry and organized protest;
- Public health disasters;
- Breakdown in the transportation system - air, land and sea. Tourists are supposed to come in for these games, so air transportation will be important. Guyanese coming from the Interior, ship and sea transportation;
- Mass causality incidents could also be of concern;
- Communications failure - The breakdown of GT&T or U-Mobile;

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- Utilities Failure - When you are in that stadium - water, electricity for example what happen in Guyana, we hope that this is being attended to. Could you imagine we have a night game in the stadium and the power system goes? You could understand what would happen.
- Failure at Immigration and Customs Procedures.

However, the two most significant vulnerabilities are logistics and crime. In terms of the logistics the following considerations are relevant:

Transportation - It is importance that we have an efficient road network.

Labour disputes - Also at this time, we do not have things like labour disputes, et cetera.

Accommodation - This question, as I said, the availability and quality accommodation.

Medical Capabilities - The question of efficient medical capabilities or the question of lack of capacity, because if there is any mad stampede in the stadium, the question about capacity to deal with casualties will rise and be very important.

Criminal Activities- The Minister said that he would, protect attacks against tourists, players and officials, gang violence in and around the stadium and at places of accommodation.

Those considerations ought to be uppermost in the minds of the Guyana LOC Inc.

Also, the Guyana LOC Inc. must complete certain tasks in time to make the Cricket World Cup possible. These include:

- (i) The construction of the stadium;
- (ii) The preparation of the playing area;
- (iii). The preparation of areas contiguous to the stadium for example, roads, fences, parking lots;
- (iv) The coordination of provision of accommodation for visitors;
- (v) The coordination of the provision of transportation;
- (vi). The coordination of the provision of security;

Thursday, 02 November 2006

(vii) The coordination of the sale of tickets.

Mr Speaker, upon a proper perusal of the provisions of these clauses in the Bill, one can discern a comprehensive and all-encompassing regime, designed to secure and protect the investment of the promoters/sponsors, while at the same time eliciting the support of the State of Guyana, in the venture.

The Provisions of PARTS IV, V and VI contain Clauses affording protection to the venture CWC 2007.

Clause 30(1) prohibits anyone having land or a structure or building on a land within a CWC venue from advertising thereon without the permission of CWC 2007. Who can erase or remove any such advertisement: Therefore, for example at Bourda or at Everest Cricket Ground, there could be no other advertisement there other than the advertisement of the sponsors/promoters.

Clause 32 prohibits unauthorized commercial broadcasting, telecasting, recording or filming of any activity of CWC 2007, which is basically speaking to copy rights. Broadcasting, telecasting, recording or filming of any information for the purpose of criticism or review, simplicitor does not contravene this section nor does the reporting of news and presentations of current affairs.

Clause 34 makes it unlawful for any person to use a CWC 2007 ticket for any commercial activity, lottery competition, games of promotional prizes without the approval of Cricket World Cup 2007.

Under *PART V Clause 35 - 40* provisions are made against unauthorized or unlicensed use of the CWC 2007 Mark, Indicia and Images. Also, the provisions of this Act would not dispense with existing laws regarding trademarks and patents and also the third of passing off

Mr Speaker, a common feature running throughout the fabric of the last mentioned Clauses is the inordinately high sums of money payable as penalties for the various breaches which amount to summary offences under the Act. These penalties include fines of \$320,000 for offences under Clause 21 relating to unauthorized entry to the playing field and other restricted

Thursday, 02 November 2006

areas of the stadium. In other words, streakers for example, will have to face this hefty fine of \$320,000.

Under *Clause 27* hawking or vending goods within the stadium, Bourda or Everest Cricket Grounds would also be visited with this fine of \$320,000

At the other end of the spectrum are fines of \$3,200,000.00.

Under *Clause 19* relating to breaches of the air space over CWC 2007 venues

Under *Clause 24* relating to the committing of act of waste and nuisance in the stadium and the other two cricket venues.

The largest fine is that of the sum of \$4,800,000, which is speaks to a second conviction for publishing so-called misleading advertisement about CWC 2007.

Mr Speaker, it is obvious that these fines are into rorem of cricketing enthusiast. I am sure they are intended to be a deterrent only, because as you know, these fines are not in accord with our prevailing summary offences' regime. So the misuse or the defacing of a chair could cause a patron to be suddenly visited with a fine of \$3,200,000. It is wholly unacceptable and we propose that relevant amendments, to be made to these bizarre sums that they are speaking to that they purport to visit any person whom they considered to have breached the relevant provisions with such heavy fines.

According to *Clause 59*, what is relevant is that the life of this Act ends on the 30 June 2007.

According to *Clause 3*, the Minister publishes in the Gazette and at least in one national newspaper a declaration that the Providence Stadium, Bourda and Everest Grounds will be required for the staging of World Cup as CWC 2007 venues, and for the period - whatever period it would be. The Minister would also declare what the match period duration would be.

Clause 4 provides for the CWC 2007 Inc. to have full and unrestricted control of the stadium for such duration.

Mr Speaker, there are provisions in this Bill which require State action to successfully host this Cricket World Cup in Guyana.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Clause 11 for example empowers the Minister of Home Affairs to make Regulations with respect to visa for entry and departure from Guyana. In this connection, the issue of whether an entry into one of the host countries amounts to automatic entry into all of the countries including Guyana looms large. In other words, if you enter through Jamaica, are you required also, to be with visas for all the other Caribbean Countries? I know that was an issue engaging the attention of many relevant circles in this Region. The Minister spoke *to* it, but I am not sure that what the Minister spoke to amounts to that.

Clause 12 requires work permits. The Minister said that he would expedite those things or cause them to be expedited, because he is not the Chief Immigration Officer.

Clause 13 - Grants, Import and Export Duties exemptions, et cetera.

Now taxes are given as exemptions to Members of the CWC 2007 Officials including cricketers and staff. Also, income earned from the operations of CWC 2007 would not be affected by foreign exchange restrictions.

So, the Government has a very important role to play in making CWC 2007 very important. It is a question for us to wait now and see what will be the position in that regard. The State's imprimatur is also required to facilitate weekend banking, et cetera.

The provisions of *PARTS 6 and 7* preserve civil remedies in relation to matters arising under this Act. These include:

- Injunctive relief;
- Damages suffered as a result of any contravention of the rules; and
- Compensation for infringement of the rights of every person.

So, Mr Speaker, the whole regime which this Bill purports to speak to is really a one-off regime and this whole question of whether the benefits outweigh the cost or vice versa that would be relevant, but at the end of day, any cricket lover, if asked to vote on this subject, would vote very, very much in the affirmative.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

We in the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana say, we are in support of this Bill and we agree that the games must begin. So, let the games begin, Mr Speaker. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

The Honourable Minister of Culture Youth and Sport

Dr Frank CS Anthony: Mr Speaker, I rise again, to speak on the Bill. I would like to thank the Honourable Members for their insightful comments and their unanimous support for this Bill. As is required, this Legislation is necessary for us to host the games and therefore, I am very happy, that we have this unanimous support.

As was pointed out, the fines that are contained in the Bill seem harsh and the framers of the law were probably deliberate in setting such high penalties. This Law was not meant to be punitive, it was meant to be a deterrent so that potential offenders will comply with, rather than breach the law. I can assure you, that there will be an aggressive campaign to educate people on the law to deter infringement.

On the issue of ambush marketing, it is necessary to protect the rights of sponsors, hence the obligation to provide clean venues. These are the conditions attached to hosting this mega event. We are not the first country to accept them and we will not be the last to accept them. This is a standard requirement. The other CARICOM Countries with whom we have partnered to host Cricket World Cup 2007 have also passed similar legislation. Again, an aggressive campaign has already started to educate the relevant stakeholders. It is anticipated that by explaining the provisions of the law, we would minimize its infraction.

Mr Speaker, new investments as was expected before, during and after Cricket World Cup 2007, would inject financial resources into our economy.

This legislative framework sends a strong signal to investors that as CARICOM Countries, we

Thursday, 02 November 2006

are serious about protecting their investments. This positive signal demonstrates that we are opened for business generally and more specifically in the niche of sports tourism.

Mr Speaker, the management of this event is being done locally by the Local Organizing Committee and its Secretariat. For the Local Organizing Committee, they are several Sub-Committees that have been assiduously working. These include:

- Security;
- Public Relations;
- Accommodation;
- Cricket Operations;
- Transport;
- Stadium Oversight;
- Medical; and
- Volunteers;

I can assure you that they have been working very hard to ensure that we have a very successful Game. *[Applause]* They have done several master plans. These have been accepted and are now in the process of being implemented.

On the issue of the stadium, I would again like to thank the Indian and Guyanese Workers for a job well done. Those of us who have had the opportunity, to visit the stadium would know that this facility would make all of us proud.

Again, Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the many persons who have worked with us in the past and will continue to work with us, in the future. Especially, I would like to single out, the Members of the Opposition, who have worked with us and I hope we will continue to get their collaboration as we go forward with the hosting of this national event.

Mr Speaker, our country's integrity and honour are at stake. We have committed to hosting the games; we have invested substantially so that we can reap the short, medium and long term benefits. We must now honour our commitments and enjoy the benefits.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, the hosting of Cricket World Cup 2007 is a gateway to create many opportunities for cricket, our people and our country. The importance is to recognize these opportunities and to act decisively. As Virgil once said, *fortunes sides with whom who dares*.

Mr Speaker, Honourable Members, the fortune is in our hands and I am happy that this House has acted so unanimously and decisively. I note the Honourable Member Mr Bernard De Santos' amendment. I would like to say, I am supportive.

Please allow me again to thank all the Members of this House for acting so unanimously in supporting this legislation. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker: Thank you, Honourable Member.

Question put and agreed to.

Bill read a Second time.

IN COMMITTEE

The Chairman: I ought to announce before hand that here are some minor printer's errors in the Bill; I just want to ask you to ignore them. The Clerk will correct those as he has the authority to do so under the Standing Orders.

As I now have authority, what I have been doing without full authority previously, is to put forward, all the Clauses at one time. We have included in the New Standing Orders, explicit authority for me to do that.

I understand there is an Amendment that is going to be moved somewhere in the vicinity of Clause 55.

I will put the first 54 Clauses at one time. I expect that there will be no amendments and then we will take the application for an amendment.

Clauses 1 to 54

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Clauses 1 to 54, as printed, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

The Chairman: Honourable Member, do you wish to make your proposal now? Are you adding this in as Clause 54

Mr Bernard C De Santos: Yes Mr Chairman, it is proposed to do the Amendment by way of adding after *Clause 55(A)*, *Clause 55(a)*. That is the arrangement, which I am advised by the Chief Parliamentary Counsel is the proper way to do it.

The Chairman: Okay. Can you make the Amendment now, please?

Mr Bernard C De Santos: We are trying to get the typed copy ready, but it is not out.

The Chairman: I gather it is not too long ago, could you read it out?

Mr Bernard De Santos: In any case, I move that *Clause 55(A)* be inserted immediately after *Clause 55 (4)*.

The Chairman: Clause 54 (4)?

Mr Bernard C De Santos: No. It is *Clause 55 (4)*. *Clause 55(A)*. It is a separate section.

The Chairman: Could you pause for a moment and allow me to put Clause 55? I have not *Clause 55*.

Mr Bernard C De Santos: Oh, you have not.

The Chairman: I will put Clause 55 and then invite you to make the amendment.

Mr Bernard C De Santos: As it pleases you, Sir.

Clause 55

Question proposed

Mr Winston S Murrery: Mr Chairman, should we not take the amendment first and then the Clause?

The Chairman: I understand that Mr De Santos is proposing that Clause 55(A) should be after Clause 55 and I have not yet put Clause 55.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Bernard C De Santos: If I may Mr Chairman, might I respectfully suggest that what you should put now is Sub-Clauses 55 (1) to (4) and once the House approves that, we can then add Sub-clause 55(A)

The Chairman: Yes, that is what I understand you to say.

Sub-Clauses 55 (1) to (4)

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Sub-Clauses 55(1) to (4) as printed, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

The Chairman: The Honourable Member Mr De Santos.

Mr Bernard C De Santos; The amendment which I propose is as follows:

Amendment -

Insertion of :

Clause 55(A)

In any case, where a monetary penalty is imposed for an offence under this Act, the court may impose as an alternative penalty a term of imprisonment not exceeding nine months.

I propose that as an Amendment by the addition of that Section.

Mr Bernard C De Santos: If I have gone too quickly, I can repeat it for Members on the other Side..

The Chairman: Is there a seconder please? We need a seconder. *[Pause]* If there is no seconder, I cannot put the Amendment.

Mr Donald R Ramotar: I wish to second the amendment.

Amendment is proposed, put and agreed to.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Amendment carried.

Clause 55, as amended, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

Clauses 56 to 59

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

Clauses 56 to 59, as printed, agreed to and ordered to stand part of the Bill.

FRIST, SECOND and THIRD SCHEDULES

Question proposed, put and agreed to.

FIRST, SECOND and THIRD SCHEDULES, as printed, agreed to and ordered to stand part of Bill

Assembly Resumed.

Bill Reported with an amendment; as amended; considered; read the Third time and passed as amended.

MOTION

NOMINATION OF MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE OF SELECTION

The Speaker: Honourable Members, we have one outstanding Matter, save and except, the Debate. That is the Election of the Committee of Selection. I called it earlier, but Mr Carberry was here. Are we ready now?

Mr E Lance Carberry: Mr Speaker, I would like the opportunity during the break to speak with you about this particular Matter.

The Speaker: Very well, so we will defer that matter for later.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

[Deferred]

It is now 19:00h; do Members wish to take the suspension now?

[Members replied in the Affirmative]

19:00H - SUSPENSION OF SITTING

19:35H - RESUMPTION OF SITTING

Assembly Resumed the Debate on the Motion for approval of Government's Policy in President's Address

The Honourable Minister of Transport and Hydraulics

Hon Brindley HR Benn: Mr Speaker, in rising to resume the debate on the President's Speech inaugurating the Ninth Parliament of Guyana on 28 September, I feel humbled and honoured to again be called to serve my country and to lend my own efforts towards the works which should result in the continued development of the country.

Mr Speaker, please allow me to offer my congratulations to you; the Deputy Speaker; to all the Members here; to the new Ministers and Parliamentarians too, in particular who are now again in this august House. Thinking a bit on this matter, I too, have to remember in some ways that a Benn preceded me and that I have a bit of work to do to be remembered as he was.

Mr Speaker, I also want to offer my congratulations to you in terms of how the House, itself, the Chamber has been rehabilitated. I know that there was talk too about the hallowed nature of the Chamber and of the institution itself. I think too that aside of the debates, the situation is that the entire compound is hallowed too. I know that discussions which maybe were of no good at one point in time to our people, whether they were Amerindians, who as a people in this country, at

Thursday, 02 November 2006

one time were neatly rubbed out. To our African ancestors as slaves, I think, they were people from 1823 rebellion, some were drawn and quartered in this very compound and at the Parade Ground and succumbed to severe questioning. Also too, issues in relation to indentureship and the ongoing development of the country over the centuries occurred in this very Chamber. I am pleased to see that the overall appointments are much better and I am also intrigued to see that even in the washrooms we have an interesting device as electronic as it were to control water. I want to think that this is a welcome development and metaphorically speaking, springing a leak in the lavatory of the Chambers. It is very interesting now *[Laughter]*

Mr Speaker, if I were to attempt to and hopefully not to be rude, would want to suggest that the efforts of improving the Chamber of the building, in doing so, that you would turn your attention to the compound and I would be willing to lend assistance to improvements of the compound and that also too out of the largesse now afforded me by the Parliament in terms of monies, I am prepared to buy a few plants to put in the compound to help with the landscaping.

Mr Speaker, the debates that I have heard so far, we have had the discussions relating to the Cricket World Cup and a very worthy debate. I must congratulate all the persons who participated and particularly the Honourable Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport on his presentation and on successfully piloting the Bill through the House.

The issues that relate to my new areas of responsibility are weighty ones and like our President, I too, see exciting opportunities in our infrastructure development, which he says on Page 14:

Not only will this complement private sector development, but also begin integration of our country with others in South America.

He states at Pages 14 and 15:

We will also continue to invest heavily in expansion of the physical infrastructure. To this end, we will further rehabilitate and expand the national road and bridge network, the drainage and irrigation system, including major conservancies and the sea and river defence system.

Many of the issues really, which relate to these particular areas are part of my brief and I have also to relate with other agencies in considering and dealing with these matters.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, a consideration of the issues relating to infrastructure development in the country has always been contentious. I noted recently that there were some criticisms with regard to the issue of an integrated infrastructure development made on Page 14 of the Speech, where it was said:

Consistent with the National Development Strategy our goal of developing and integrating our whole infrastructural project, that provides a deep port harbour, a possible rail link, especially in the mining areas of Berbice and Linden and a highway to Brazil will be advanced in the next five years. The cost of such a project is prohibitive, so careful cost benefit analyses will have to be done. This project, however, holds bright prospects for transforming Guyana, increasing national income and lifting living standards.

Mr Speaker, this particular paragraph has been quoted a number of times. There were criticisms, I think by a very well respected-engineer, Mr Allsop, about the intent of building a road to Brazil, which will be interlinked with a deep water port and the question was raised as to timings of these things. I think particularly in this section, it was said that this project was prohibitive and so careful cost benefit analyses will have to be done. There were issues raised about the internal rate of return on the return on the project at some levels and whether you needed to consider that at all. One has to be careful and I want to say to Members that I have been on the road to Manaus and Bon Fin in Brazil many years ago and that road at one point in time was a laterite road, well developed with good drainage but today, after nearly thirty years is a fully paved, asphalted road on which one can ride in air conditioned buses from the Bon Fin side, all the way to Boa Vista and then on to Manaus. Even the Brazilian themselves with their much greater economy and greater engineering capabilities were not able for over a period of 30 years to develop the highway to the point at which it is now.

So, the intent here, I think is to assure by use of money for a feasibility study to make sure that we leave no stone unturned, to answer all the questions with regard to developing this integrated project and to make sure that public funds or funds raised in a public/private partnership maybe are optimised and are used in the best way possible. There is no question and no intention that

Thursday, 02 November 2006

this project will be completed in the next five years. However, it will be advanced. I want to make that clear at the outset.

Mr Speaker, my responsibilities relate to roads, bridges, air transport, river transport and sea defences. I have to pay attention in the Ministry, overall to issues of improvement of the various departments and divisions, towards improving not only the infrastructure, but improving every facet of operations of the Ministry. This also relates to the human resources, the physical infrastructure, whether it is bridges or ferries, issues which relate to safety, comfort and efficiency and dispatched with which services are provided to the public. I think for too long we have been accustomed to maybe accepting standards which have been improved long ago and so for us now, I want to build on the good work which has been done before by Minister Xavier and the Honourable Minister and Member Harry Narine Nawbatt to comprehensively evaluate the situation of the various departments in the Ministry and to ensure that we can improve all facets of operations of the Ministry.

In presenting the issues in relation to the Ministry of Transport and Hydraulics as it relates to the vision adumbrated in the President's Speech, I would like to start with the issues of sea and river defences. Much work has been done over the years with respect to sea defences. At one point in time, I think in 1992, there was a thought that of the 425 kilometres of Coast that we have, some 360 kilometres comprise river and sea defences; 120 kilometres of which were solid structures and some 40 kilometres or 12 percent of the entire linear arrangement was in a critical state.

Much money has been spent over the years in terms of redeveloping our sea defences. We have had partnerships with the World Bank, with the Caribbean Development Bank and particularly the EU. We are just completing an eight EDF and are going into a nine EDF. The critical thing with the sea defences is that 90 percent of our population live on the Coast, as we know and all the public investment, all the capital that we have invested in Guyana, basically are in place on the coast.

There are issues with regard to rising sea level and sea level change and global warming. I have recently seen issues on global warming, I think Sir Nicholas Stern, he was commissioned by the British Government - by the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the 29th Observer and also the

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Pre-Republic were printing that failure to act now upon issues of global warming and climate change,

... would turn 200 million people into refugees, the largest migration in modern history, as their homes succumb to drought or floods.

The Stern Report also says:

Unchecked climate change could cause up to £3.68 trillion, more than World Wars I and II and the great depression of the 1930s.

It is also warrant that the World needs to spend about one percent of global gross domestic product, equivalent to £184 billion on the issue now or face a bill up to 20 times higher than that in the future. Failure to act quickly will trigger a global recession and calls for an international framework to tackle the issue.

This relates to a successor agreement to the KYOTO Agreement on green house gases.

Mr Speaker, we know, if we would consider our history that aside from Amerindian settlements which occurred both on the Coast and where people built their houses on stilts to deal with the issues of flood and the mountains in the North West District on which people have lived for centuries that the Dutch settlement and general settlements in the countries in the three counties of Demerara, Essequibo and Berbice, moved downriver to the Coast. Governor Lawrence Storm Van Gravesande was one person who triggered such a movement as the estates upriver became worn out and were not as fertile and when the colonies were in a position to translate experience to the knowledge that they had or continued to bring in from the Netherlands, along with the harvest of slaves who came in, that they were able to establish dykes and empoldering, so that we could conquer and settle on the Coast.

There has been talk of a general movement of the population of Guyana into the Hinterlands, as we face the issues of climate change. I want to think, however, that considering the great capital investment on the Coast, the relative infertility of the mid Hinterland, the great capital on the Coast again, that it would be very difficult without trying to live with the water, as we have tried over all the years. Our experience and our efforts all over the years have been towards living with water, doing water management and we have to get better and more involved with this

Thursday, 02 November 2006

practice and to try to optimise the resources which we use towards making sure that we can survive further increases in sea levels over the next decade. I do not think that it is an insurmountable challenge. We have had the experience of visiting in Holland itself and what was once the Pseu de Zee, which is now the Isel Mere and when we stand up on our seawalls at the low tide level, we are perhaps two to three metres above that low tide level. But if you go on the dykes of the Pseu de Zee today, you are fifteen to twenty metres above the land above the low tide levels.

So, given the fact that the fertility that we have on the Coast and given the fact that we have a great investment on the Coast already and given the fact that we have always learnt to live and work with water, we are the *Land of Many Waters*, but as I have said, our experiences have been towards working and living with and managing water and despite setbacks, we have successfully done so over the centuries. I think that we can continue to develop and optimise on the resources which used to improve on what there is that we produce out here and to lay the basis for the continued development in the country and the gradual and measured movement into the Hinterland, hopefully as more and more people come to settle and develop our Guyana.

The issues of sea and river defence relates to safeguarding property and protecting livelihoods, stimulating economic activities and reducing poverty. Large sums have been expended over the years. In 2005, I think, we spent \$2.5 billion of public and international funds with respect to strengthening the sea defences and our portfolio there this year has a budget of \$2.4 billion and it may even go a bit higher as some additional requests are made and fulfilled. The maintenance, surveillance and assessment system will be improved. We have to do a lot of work with respect to data gathering and we have to pay attention towards our response capabilities and the resources which we apply after spending a lot of money to expend on sea defences. It cost us something like US\$2,500 for each linear metre of sea defence structure and this could go up to US\$5,000, in particularly stressed areas. We have to learn more about the physics and the science of course and all the issues which go on out there with respect to understanding the overall regime in which we find ourselves on the Coast.

One of the new tasks we are taking and which has been developed in the Ministry and I am pleased to say that I have to ... and coming midstream I will have to work with it, is that we will

Thursday, 02 November 2006

have to look at issues of mangrove rehabilitation in a shore zone management system. So that there are areas where we may have to remove from partially/fully having systems where you have full rip rap or aggregate concrete sea defence structures to ones where there is a rehabilitation mangrove. There is a possibility of having some economic activities related to that and that the energy of the waves and the wind too, are reduced before they encounter the earthen dams behind and the hope is that by calculation that we would have a less burdensome system in terms of tax dollars spent for the rehabilitation for the sea and river defence systems.

Issues relating to regulations would have to be looked at - laws and regulations. There may be some anachronisms in terms of how we approach the whole issue of sea defences. The citizenry will have to be more interested and directly involved in surveillance and assessment and reporting as to what happens with their sea defence frontage and at the level of the local authorities. There is every hope that with a new system in place that one will be able to have focused preventative maintenance, so that we are not sometimes and particularly at high tide periods, under severe stress, in terms of prioritising activities or being aware as to what may next fail and to how best to respond to failures.

Mr Speaker, the discussion in relation to the President's speech has some resonance too. I have been looking in skimming the supplement to the Parliamentarians, which we got here this evening and the focus seems to be Nigeria - Democracy in Progress and I saw in an article by the Hon Osita Izunaso, who is an MP in Abuja, where he says:

The two key components here are energy and transport. Both electricity supply and roads are in poor state, every prospective foreign investor in the productive sector will be easily put off by dilapidated infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, I think, I will be surely superfluous in saying that most people, if not all of us here would have noted that there has been a significant advance in the development of physical infrastructure in Guyana over the last few years. *[Applause]* In terms of these developments, we have had the completion of:

- the Essequibo roads for 61 kilometres;
- the East Bank Demerara road;
- the railway embankment from Sheriff Street to Enmore - 21 kilometres;

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- the four-lane highway on the East Bank; and
- the West Bank now under construction.
- large investments with regard to the Linden road;
- the Georgetown to Mahaica road for 40 kilometres;
- the Mahaica to Rosignol road for which US\$23 million were spent and where kilometres of road were repaired.

We have had a comprehensive road safety and road maintenance programme underway, which includes signage, striping and marking. The government on its own initiative particularly has put in place street lighting along most of these major highways and particularly the areas where there are large numbers of pedestrians.

One would have to note and the Hon Mrs Deborah Backer did state in her discussion on the President's Speech, point us again to the issue of carnage on the roads, the very death of a Guyanese and particularly mostly of young Guyanese diminishes all of us. I think, I would have to say and one would have to hope that it may be a more of a nuance in the statistics, but I think there were 182 deaths in 2005 and to date 132, many of them pedestrians and particularly children amongst them. It may be 133 now, but one hopes if we go through the Christmas season, that one would have the hope and begin to think that even though we have a greater number of road mileage travelled by Guyanese, even though we have a greater number of cars, buses, trucks and minibuses on the road that the result of the development in road infrastructure, is that there may actually be a reduction in the number of deaths, trauma, injuries, and hospitalisation. The cost related to them, I think the Honourable Minister Rohee pointed out to the cost of trauma on the roads of injuries - permanent long term injuries and the trauma and loss of income to the families as a result of road accidents and incidents.

The putting in of the four-lane highways, particularly the fact that there are lanes, means that there should be a new culture on our roads. We have to continue to work with the minibus operators and others who use the roads, so that a new culture can be developed. I have had some meetings with minibus operators and the Guyana Road Safety Association and I have to say too that the minibus operators, the heads of their Association were upset about the situation. I hope

Thursday, 02 November 2006

to be able to develop along with them a new initiative towards improving safety, efficiency and the dispatch with which we can operate on the roads.

I think we have all been upset that there have not been working traffic lights in the city for a number of years. I think in 2001, we had 16 traffic lights working in the city of Georgetown. I think at the present time, we have none working at intersections and the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Guyana Police Force have been making a lot of efforts towards controlling the traffic at intersections. We are now going into an arrangement, where we expect to be putting in 52 traffic lights - intersections control and they should all be in place by the end of February 2007. The intention is that these traffic lights will be backed up, to get away from the issues of an unreliable power supply at some points in time and will have solar energy capacity, battery backups and will also be on the mains. These systems will all be hooked in to a centre where there could be variations in terms of the time of signals, red or green or whatever and where there is some control and cameras in terms of the management of the traffic and in terms of determining and following up on people who breached the lights. So, I think this would be a very welcomed development and it will perhaps take away fifty percent of the problems which we have in Georgetown, in terms of online moving traffic management and the other fifty percent in terms of improvement will have to come from improvement in culture - a change. We have also spent over \$2 billion on miscellaneous road projects, Mara, Black Bush Polder, De Hoop Mahaica, Parika ... *[Interruption: 'Bartica']* ... Bartica too, thank you, Ma'am. We also have an arrangement in place with the City Council, with respect towards improving roads in the city. We expect that overall, these improvements would see, as I said, a great improvement in safety and economy and in the saving of time with respect to movement on the roads.

Mr Speaker, the investment in infrastructure in the country over the years has had improvements with regard to bridges. We know that we have a signature project coming up, I think that it has been capitalised into an amount of US\$25 million and it is a private partnership - the Berbice River Bridge. It is a very significant project and one would want to see by next year, the start of construction to the Berbice River Bridge.

This new bridge will result again in the saving of time and the stress related from travelling from the eastern most part of the country and the fact too that we have a link to Suriname through

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Moleson Creek with the Canawaima Ferry Service. We hope too that this will interface with developments with the Transport and Harbours Department, where the ferries will move over to the Essequibo. In fact, we have an arrangement being developed where two new roll on/roll off ferries will be built and developed along with the adequate facilities - the stellings with the Chinese government on an aid project. There may be some effort or some worry that it may see a reduced role with respect to the Transport and Harbours Department, but I think we have to look forward in terms of thinking that we will have a new role for them in terms of the additional movement of goods and providing other services in Guyana and hopefully regionally.

[Interruption]

The Speaker: Your time is up, Honourable Member.

Hon Dr Leslie S Ramsammy: I beg that the Honourable Member be given fifteen minutes to conclude his presentation

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker: Proceed Honourable Member.

Hon Brindley HR Benn: Thank you, Mr Speaker. So, the developments that we have seen in sea defences, in river transport and in bridges and roads, will see an improvement in the overall safety and security with respect to the travelling public in Guyana.

With respect to air transportation, we hope to develop better systems in place, to rehabilitate the landing control systems and the navigation systems with respect to the Cheddi Jagan International Airport. One may have noticed that there too there has been significant development in terms of the airport. There is also development, again on public/private and maybe mostly private partnership in terms of activities on the ground. We have development at the Ogle Aerodrome, where a new aerodrome is being built and the new airstrip itself will inaugurate tomorrow and all this speaks to the growing confidence we have had in the developments in the infrastructure in Guyana.

Mr Speaker, without wanting to sound triumphal again, I want to say and to ask people to note that there is a miracle unfolding in Guyana - a small miracle is unfolding in Guyana. If people have not noticed, in spite of the lights, even at nights that despite the difficulties we have had in the country, that despite we have had the most catastrophic floods in the history of the country in

Thursday, 02 November 2006

January 2005 and the smaller repeat in 2006, despite the issues of crime and security, we have been able to hold the line and to make sure that we have had development in the country and that the basis has been laid for continuing and sustained development in the country. *[Applause]* Of course, people have said ... *[Interruption: 'Miracle!']* ... yes, a small miracle for the ordinary Guyanese people; for most of the Guyanese people is unfolding throughout the country.

[Applause] The Leader of the Opposition, the Hon Mr Robert Corbin, I am sorry that he is not here ... *[Interruption: 'He is here'.]* ... oh, he is here. He did say at one point in time in the debate that he wanted to wait and see, I think he was quoting Chuin Li, the venerable Chinese leader and I would want to suggest to Mr Corbin and others that the tone of the President's message ... the message itself is not simply ... and he says:

I implore both sides of the National Assembly to work together in an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect.

This is my charge to you. I do not think I am quoting the Speech as much as it has been quoted on the other side, particularly by the Leader of the Opposition. This is not simply a charge to the National Assembly, it is a charter for the next five years and I think the energy and the exuberance, careful and measured as it is by the President, is one that we all have to pay attention to; is one that I should say that the people should not simply sit back and wait as outlined in the document. It is not simply a matter of sitting by idly and waiting and expecting and maybe establishing ambush cage for things which may or may not happen, but to critique, to have reasoned, measured debate and useful criticisms and critique. So that the House itself and we can all have a synergistic input into what should occur as a result of our membership of this great House. The Guyanese people expect no less of us.

We are all here on one side with a renewed mandate, with another emphatic victory, with respect to the mandate of the people of Guyana. We are all here, elected in our own right. The Guyanese people, I believe and we all here in this room love and need each other. The elections that we have just had and the behaviour of the people themselves were exemplary, the people have spoken and Sir, I think we all need to take the lead from the people, in terms of working together and as emphasized in the Speech of His Excellency with regard to the developments which we expected to lead off on and to ensure that it will occur in the country.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, there have been difficulties and I do not want to sound as though I want to maybe be malicious or disputative, but one of the reasons we have had difficulties is because over the years, and I guess particularly since 1997, an atmosphere has been created in the country, which has had the government, the body politic, industry and commerce and the ordinary Guyanese people be set and fearful and irresolute with respect to the work that they have to do.

There has been interference with the machinery of government, there have been misinterpretations, there has been a stirring up of unnecessary passions and these have all worked towards creating problems for us. I think the fact that the people have spoken again, emphatically, speak to what they desire of us all and the atmosphere with which they think we should do our proceedings. We have had situations where people doubted whether they should do useful work when they come to do work. We have had situations where people have not paid attention to their responsibilities and we have had situations where you may talk about a servant when you are in it. We are all here to serve when we take a position in a government job or a job in commerce or industry but I want to quote from Kipling. They are only short pieces from it and it starts by Proverbs 30. I do not want to sound religious and to blaspheme. I know the Leader of the Opposition did say when he was introducing his list at City Hall that God was on his side, but I do not want to thread in this direction but to simply quote:

For three things the earth is disquieted and for four which it cannot bear;

For a servant when he reigneth; and a fool when he is filled with meat;

For an odious woman when she is married; and a handmaid that is heir to her mistress.

For three things made the earth unquiet and four she cannot brook, the God, he however, counted them and put them in the book.

These four tremendous curses with which mankind is curse;

But a servant when he reigneth all ogre entered first.

In fact, a servant when he reigneth there is confusion to the end;

His feet are swift to tumult; his hands are slow to turn,

His ears are deaf to reason; his lips are loud in broil.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

*He knows no use of power, except to show his might,
He gives no heed to judgment unless it proves him right;
And further his vows are lightly spoken;
His faith is hard to bind,
His trust is easily broken,
He fears his fellow kind [Laughter]
The nearest bump will move him to break the pledge he gave
Oh! A servant when he reigneth is more than ever slave.*

Mr Speaker, the situations and discussion that we have had and the difficulties we have had and which have been rejected generally by the people, allows us to think that a new paradigm is unfolding too in Guyana, that not only outside there among people who desire safety and security and hopefully, not that in the Parliament itself. As the President wishes and requires of us, that we pay attention to better relationships among us, that we pay attention to advice and are open to advice to each of us on each side are extremely important and we should not return to the situation, where we have had servants when they reigneth.

Mr Speaker, in the debate on the President's Speech, we have had issues with relation to the re-establishment to National Service and I wonder sometimes why there always seems to be a rush to institutionalise some sections of the Guyanese people, particularly young people. I think, there is always a case and a place of voluntary national service and then when we work or educated by the government and we sign up to situations, when we work we are indeed doing national service.

There have been issues of shared governance and they are worrying ones in term of how they are advanced, I believe governance is rightly shared in the right way when we have our inter-sectoral Parliamentary Committees. There may be some difficulty on the other side or with some people that power is law but hubris remains and this may be the difficulty that hubris remains and that issues of shared governance spring only from that when we consider the context in which parliamentary democracy is unfolding in the country.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

In closing, Mr Speaker, there has also been talk about a Guyanese renaissance and about an African renaissance and I would like to say that here and now we look forward to a renaissance of Guyana as a whole, that all Guyanese will benefit from developments and renaissance in each and every community. As I said, that renaissance embodied in the small miracle which is unfolding in Guyana is here and now and that under the energy and leadership of His Excellency Bharrat Jagdeo, we will see it through and we will build Guyana. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, the debates have unfolded with a fair bit of charity and I think it maybe demands much more grace. I want to pledge the efforts of myself, my Ministry and my working together, not only with my colleagues on this side of the House but also pledging too that I will be open to all Members in this House to try to advance the progress, along with the vision as laid out by His Excellency, President Bharat Jagdeo, so that we can altogether build Guyana. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member Mr Anthony Vieira

Mr Anthony Vieira: Mr Speaker, I want to say how honoured I am to have been selected to serve in this honourable place with these honourable people. I hope that we can work together in some kind of harmony. We will disagree, I have no doubt and hopefully we will not be disagreeable.

Mr Speaker, President Jagdeo's Speech launching this Ninth Parliament laid out in glowing terms:

- A place where there was prosperity,
- A place where there was peace and cooperation among different groups of a plural society,
- A place where development was going on, where people cherished the rule of law;
- A place where the government had vision and was spending billions solving national problems as a matter of urgency; and

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- A place where every man and woman had equal opportunities.

He enumerated numerous accomplishments, which made me wish that I was living in the Guyana Mr Jagdeo was speaking about.

Sadly,

- I see another Guyana, one where the rule of law does not exist, where the judges are under effective executive control. This is not my opinion, only the US State Department Report in 2005 said so.

- I see a Guyana where victimisation is rampant. I can bear witness to this fact.

- I see a Guyana where there is no equity in sharing of the national pie.

- I see a Guyana where corruption is not unknown, where incompetence has reached monumental proportions.

- I see a country which is in the middle of the crime spree in its history due to the poverty with citizens.

- I see a country where civil strife is just a spark away from ignition.

- I see a Guyana where borrowing is at an unprecedented rate and is hoping for debt forgiveness, since what we are building with the money we are borrowing. It is not bringing wealth to the nation and while one group gets richer, the other groups are plunged into an ever-deepening chasm of despair and poverty, making Mr Jagdeo's claim of equality un-substantiate.

- I see disaster written all over it.

- I see despair for the consequences we will have to endure if things do not change.

So what is the truth? Is what Mr Jagdeo saying true or is it only my perception? The truth is contained in the Bank Guyana's statistics for 2005 and also in the National Budget for 2006.

Mr Speaker, for the purpose of my presentation, I will deal specifically with the Tables 9.1 and 10.1 of the Annual Report for 2005 of the Bank of Guyana. Now, before I get started on table 9.1, I would like our new Minister of Finance to get a copy of 2005 Bank of Guyana Report and look at Table 9.1. Minister, if this is the way that we are going to account for the GDP of this nation, we will only be communicating to the world that we are an illiterate country, incapable of producing meaningful GDP statistics. So, as a matter of urgency, I urge Dr Singh with the best possible will in the world to examine it and rectify the flaws that I have seen.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, the situation as outlined on Table 1 such as it is of the Bank of Guyana statistics for 2005, tells us that sugar grew only 3.93 percent. In the 11 year period 1995 to 2005 and that rice declined by 19 percent. Even in 2004, before the flood rice was showing a substantial decrease in its yield and in its production. However, livestock grew by 170 percent. I am sorry Mr Nadir is not here. Of course, part of the answer is this fiasco has created a monotony in livestock rearing to enrich a few and at the expense of many local consumers, who have to pay double for chicken today, compared to three or four years ago.

In addition, we have lost \$3 billion in import duties over the three years during which this has been going on. My calls to the Bank of Guyana could not inform me what this 170 percent increase really represented. Whether it was chicken or chicken and cattle, because this is livestock, but the Bank of Guyana were unable to answer my questions and so were the Bureau of Statistics, which is why I pointed out that these numbers should be checked by the Honourable Minister.

Other agricultural groups grew by 83.51 percent and seeing that this other agriculture grew by such a big amount from \$3.5 billion to \$6.5 billion, I again asked the Bank of Guyana what it represented, since this \$6.5 billion was very close to the \$8 billion which is the GDP value for rice, making it almost important as rice in our GDP. Again I was unable to get a satisfactory answer, as to what this other agriculture, which was such a big part of our GDP represented. The fishing industry grew by 100 percent during the eleven-year period, forestry declined by 4.49 percent, mining and quarrying increased by 108 percent, manufacturing increased by 58.2 percent. So, in the eleven years between 1995 and 2005, expressed as a percentage of our GDP sugar, rice, livestock, other agricultural operations, fishing, forestry, mining and quarrying and manufacturing, grew from \$51.8 billion in 1995 to \$62.9 billion in 2005, which is an increase of 21.37 percent. Yes, it is good, but wait until you hear the rest.

During this same period our GDP in the areas of transport and communications, engineering and communications, rent of dwellings, financial services and government expenditures expressed as a function of GDP increased from \$22.4 billion in 1995 to \$66.6 billion in 2005, nearly 200 percent. Now, Mr Speaker, because the productive sector has only grown by 21.37 percent, it was

Thursday, 02 November 2006

surprising to find that the non-revenue earnings sectors of the economy expanded by so much – that something had to give and it did.

In 1995, our gross domestic product of market prices was \$88.3 billion and our domestic expenditure of market prices was \$95 billion, which is a difference of \$6.8 billion, high but not unmanageable.

In 2005, the GDP of market prices was G\$157 billion and the domestic expenditure of market prices were \$211 billion which is a difference of \$54 billion in that one year alone. Is this the affluence that Mr Jagdeo is speaking about? This huge deficit is also recorded in the 2006 Budget. I know that my colleague Mr Winston Murray spoke in the areas of economics and I am poaching a bit, but I think that it is important enough to be repetitious.

It is the largest deficit budget in our history;

It calls for the expenditure of \$103 billion;

It visualises a loss of \$10.9 billion;

It estimates selling or disposing of miscellaneous capital assets to the tune of \$4.4 billion;

It estimates borrowing from the international financial institutions as \$18.3 billion; and

It visualises HIPC and other grants of \$10.7 billion.

So, in reality all we will generate as revenue by relevant authorities is \$58.6 billion of this \$103 billion budget, the other \$44 billion contained in the Budget, we are begging, borrowing and selling our patrimony to spend. Now, I have promised cousin Philo that I would behave myself, so I will not express the words which my true feelings over this situation require.

Mr Speaker, I now move on to sugar, if I may. It is incredible and unforgivable that even after having nearly a decade of notice of the withdrawal of the European Union's subsidy of our sugar, we are now totally unprepared to face the future with any sort of viable, alternative plan in place in the sugar industry.

Today we passed a Bill in this House required by the cricket authorities for World Cup Cricket, which may be even a day or so late. We have not been so fortunate in sugar; we have missed the boat completely. There have been no legitimate attempts to diversify the sugar industry whatsoever, especially to ethanol or aquaculture. There is only the one dicey expansion at Skeldon, which appears to be our panacea for all of the ills that faces the sugar industry. This

Thursday, 02 November 2006

opium induced dream, which embraces the concept that making the Skeldon factory produce sugar at some incredibly and probably unattainable low price could compensate for the inefficiencies and expensive nature of the other parts of our sugar industry is - to tell the truth - ludicrous. It does not help that this year despite what our Honourable Minister of Agriculture said, Albion which has asked for G\$529 million to do its capital works was only given \$183 million. It does not help Rose Hall similarly asking for \$414 million to do its capital works, but was only given \$193 million. It does not help that all these estates are now producing sugar at a higher cost in 2005 than the estimated amount that was first calculated when the Skeldon project concept was first announced. All the projections that would push the price down have failed and denying the sugar estates the capital money the required to become more efficient is not conducive to keeping the industry competitive. For example, at this time Albion, Port Mourant and Rose Hall are currently carrying the sugar industry in Guyana. They are your best sugar estates, denying them money for capital - well Booker Tate did it not you - and Booker Tate was hired by Hoyte, in case you forget. You guys here tend to forget a lot.

Incredibly, we do not have a functioning diversification department and I offered this suggestion to the Hon Robert Persaud, there is no functioning diversification department in GUYSUCO. The Tate people are here to grow sugar and apparently they do not want to do anything else. The Board of GUYSUCO comprises of people who apparently do not have the vision or knowledge to instigate a diversification as a matter of urgency, have sat back and allowed time to catch up with them to the detriment of the nation.

Mr Speaker, the Board which was commissioned in 1948, estimated that to establish each square mile of sugar cultivation in Guyana required the digging of 65 miles of trenches or drains to facilitate the movement of sugar cane from the fields to the factory by punts. In doing so, we moved one billion tonnes of earth in the sugar belt and in the process our forefathers bequeathed to us fields, which are in fact ten acre fish ponds, which can be flooded in most of the Demerara Region by gravity alone. You would not even have to buy one pump to grow fish there. But nowhere in the industry in Demerara from Uitvlugt to Enmore do we have one legitimate experiment in aquaculture to see what the problems are likely to be in this area where the Chinese have a lot of experience. I would have expected a small pilot project run by the

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Chinese, our land their technology, trying to develop a database of agricultural field operation problems in Guyana from which we could learn how to grow fish economically. There are lucrative markets abroad for fish; I believe in New York, tilapia is selling for \$8 a pound. So, the alternative of sugar in ethanol, we have not done a single legitimate experiment to decide how exactly we will ... at least the Demerara Estates, convert them from growing sugar, not sugarcane. We will continue to grow sugarcane, but instead of trying to produce sugar, we will produce ethanol and there is not one legitimate experiment anywhere in Demerara doing that. Mr Speaker, the difference between the Demerara Estates and the Berbice Estates, is the Berbice Estates are higher and have less rainfall and takes less tonnes of cane to make a tonne of sugar. The Demerara estates are more vegetative; they take more tonnes of cane to make a tonne of sugar and for that reason growing cane in the Demerara Region is more expensive. But happily for the purpose of alcohol production, one tonne of cane produces 20 gallons of alcohol and it does not care what the purity of the juice is. Komal would know what I am talking about. Mr Speaker, it is a sad commentary on our abilities as managers that all we can do is come up with this risky and probably unattainable goal of transforming the sugar industry in Guyana by building a new factory and expanding the Skeldon's cultivation at a time when everyone else on the planet are abandoning their sugar lands. Expanding the Skeldon cultivation is fraught with much danger and the effects are beginning to be felt, even as I speak here today, since the Skeldon's yield has been declining and at the end of 2005, they were taking more tonnes of cane to make a tonne sugar than any other estate in the industry, including Uitvlugt which has its lowest yield. The reason is simple, they are trying to drain the back areas of the expansion without expanding the infrastructure in the south of the estate, the koker, the trenches, the sidelines, et cetera and they are overloading the drainage system. This is having a deleterious effect on the growth of the cane, in front there as I predicted, since May 2005 in a commentary I did on that day. So Skeldon is performing worst than Uitvlugt is today. Mr Speaker, it is easy to build a new factory, but expanding the cultivation to supply the factory with enough cane is the real problem and it is looking more and more dicey and unattainable at every moment and I predict that it would not materialise for at least ten years. I do not care what factory you build, once you cannot supply it with cane, you are operating a scrap iron heap.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

The production of rice is declining.

In 1999, we produced \$10 billion worth of rice which accounted for nearly ten percent of our gross domestic product.

In 2005, we produced \$7.9 billion worth of rice which was only around six percent of our GDP. This is based on what we produced, not what we exported, which is why I am using the GDP values and not the export values. This would have been a good time for rice to be a strong contributor to the GDP to help us weather the storm that is to come in sugar, but we are totally unprepared with the sugar, but we are failing at six percent of GDP, it is just not as important to the economy as it used to be and this decline is apparent across the board for all agricultural products. To give a few examples which are typical of the whole and are not selected, because they are not performing well.

In 2005, expressed as a percentage of the year 2000, which was set at 100 percent:

- coconuts were 75 percent of what they were in 2000;
- cassava was only 45 percent;
- other ground provisions were 51 percent;
- plantains were 15 percent;
- eschalotte were 8 percent;
- pineapples were 50 percent;
- hot peppers were 19.8 percent;
- citrus were 43 percent;
- cereals and legumes, et cetera were 41 percent; and
- tomatoes 70 percent.

It is really sad that in our situation as a nation, we have not maintained the infrastructure to keep the farmers on the land and we are going to have to accept the consequences of years of mismanagement, spending what Mr Jagdeo and Mr Persaud are given to tell us proudly are billions of dollars on this and on that and are not telling us what exactly they achieved by spending it. Mr Ramotar and Mr Persaud, it is what you achieve when you spend, not how much you spend.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Frankly, there is very little that can be shown which makes those levels of expenditure worthwhile and therefore this is the reason we have these matters as problems.

Mr Speaker, with the agricultural sector now in this downward spiral, they are going to add insult to injury by adding VAT to the equation in agricultural inputs, which Christopher Ram in his new booklet calculates will make these new raw materials for agronomy ten percent higher than they are now.

Mr Speaker, there is massive theft plaguing the fishing and shrimp sector. One of the reasons why Georgetown Seafoods were forced to close was the theft of almost forty percent of their catch. This theft is apparently operating under an un-enabling situation by the government, who refuses to implement a few simple control mechanisms advanced by the trawler and processor owners themselves to curb it. There are even allegations that the theft is being facilitated by the Ministry of Agriculture, because they are turning a blind eye and a deaf ear to implementing systems which require any exporter, intending to export fish or shrimp to show where they got this huge amount of fish and shrimp they are exporting from. So stolen fish and shrimp are being exported openly from Guyana as legitimate produce by people who do not own a trawler or a processing plant, which is ridiculous if you think about it in those terms.

Mr Speaker, we have lost all control of our system of government. The Westminster System visualizes a highly trained group of Permanent Secretaries who will manage the various ministries. We are mutilating this time under the unproven systems by expecting that a political appointee, a Minister with no experience whatsoever in managing anything can assume - and this is not for all Ministers, this is just for some; only some can destroy the whole system, all do not have to be incompetent, only a few have to be - the responsibility of a multi billion dollar operation without the backup or the competence which the real manager of the system visualizes, that is, the Permanent Secretaries, who are not chosen today for their managerial skills or their competence, but are essentially just rubberstamps to the Minister and they both have become totally incompetent to run the affairs of the State.

The Minister's functions under this Westminster System are purely to provide political guidance and essentially not much else. It is an absolute necessity to put back in place the highly skilled

Thursday, 02 November 2006

managerial personnel that will manage our national affairs effectively before we sink further down the well of poverty and debt. I think Mr Benn has said that he has to retrain his staff. Now, investigating the Ministry of Agriculture's structure, I discovered that when there were two Ministers of Agriculture, there were two Permanent Secretaries. The indication being, that Ministers regard their Permanent Secretaries merely as their assistants and nothing else, which is the inherent problem with the system that I have alluded to? That is what makes the entire system so dysfunctional and inefficient. After looking at the situation at the Ministry of Agriculture and after having examined the competence of the PS of the Ministry of Agriculture and his workload, I have come to the conclusion that we may need two Permanent Secretaries under the one Minister. *[Laughter]* No, I am serious, one for crops and one for fisheries and livestock. Mr Speaker, we are in a state of flux, we have to convert our sugar industry into aquaculture; to grow ethanol and we have to start discovering why it is that our farmers are not producing what they used to produce.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to point out that any diligent researcher into these areas of agriculture and indeed the economy is handicapped due to the absence of data. The Bank of Guyana's statistics are becoming more and more unreliable. One gets the impression that they are produced to obscure rather than to reveal. The rice production figures for this nation is not coming in on a timely fashion from the Rice Board. By the time we are made aware of the shortcomings, the year is too far advanced to salvage anything. GUYSUICO for example, has not placed an annual report in this Honourable House, as they are required to do by law since 2002 and the fishing industry is unable to give actual figures for their industry. They have an association, but they are too competitive and narrow minded to share information and this leaves us relying on the questionable Bank of Guyana numbers at the end of the year. I found this reluctance by the Fishing Association strange and inexplicable, since the fishing industry is made up of a number of large companies and there is precedent. For example in the past, there was the British Guiana Fishing Association which shared information so that they can better represent their industry at the national level, but suspicion and fear is preventing the fishing companies from forming a fully proactive body to represent them.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Is this the Guyana that we want? A situation governed by suspicion and fear? Thank you, Mr Speaker. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

The Honourable Minister of Education

Hon Shaik KZ Baksh: Mr Speaker, I will be more direct to the President's Speech and charge for this National Assembly, because when I listen to the Honourable Member who just concluded, I thought that I was listening to a budget debate and not a debate on the President's Speech. I thought that I was listening to viewpoint on a noted television channel.

Mr Speaker, the President's Address to the Ninth Parliament represents his vision and the programme in support of this vision for the development of Guyana and for all its peoples.

The Honourable Member, Mr Murray criticised the structure of the presentation or the format of the presentation by saying that it lacks benchmarks and targets, but this is not a development plan that the President presented to this National Assembly. It was a charge, a vision and an outline of some of the programmes in support of that vision. So, we do not need benchmarks and statistics in support of that. We have it here for each sector. The Ministry of Education has a strategic plan and if you go through it you will see all the details in this plan with all of the figures and percentages that you so elaborately spelt out. *[Interruption: 'I do not have a copy.']*

I will send a copy to you.

Mr Speaker, the President's vision is to create the opportunities for society and he mentioned this is in his Presentation, no less than five or six times - the opportunities for society. On Page 4 it says:

To create a society where there are opportunities for all to build a more inclusive society in which there is equal treatment before the law and by all agencies.

The Honourable Member, Mr Vieira spoke about equality, that there is no equality in this country. That is a perception and I will come to the role of perceptions just now.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, the President was at pains to point out and on five occasions he made the point that the programmes are for all Guyanese. I will quote just one of them on Page 24. I want to save you with dealing with all of them.

My government will pursue approaches that are predicated on the fair allocation of resources.

And this is what we have been doing for the past five years and what we will be doing for the next five years. Mr Speaker, it is in this context that I find the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition quite delusive.

Again, we hear about discrimination and perceptions. I want to be fair, perceptions of discrimination, as we heard the Honourable Member talking about perceptions of victimisation. Mr Speaker, he cited the case of Sophia, where he stated that in a recent visit that the people in Sophia had a perception of discrimination. I want to treat with this just a little. We have transformed Sophia. That is what we have done. *[Applause]* Sophia was created by the PNC/R as a slum area, because there was no housing programme. We all know that but, I am not going back to the past. I want to deal with the present and the future. We have spent over the last six years \$1.5 billion in Sophia alone. *[Applause]* About \$250 million a year and we have built paved roads ... you should go into Sophia; you are not living in Guyana. Go into Sophia and see the paved roads, the drainage network, the drainage structures, the electricity, the state-of-the-art schools, the police station, the health centre and the vocational centre. Only the blind will not see what this government has done for Sophia. *[Applause]* When we compare what the PNC spent for the whole of the housing sector and what they gave to the Central Housing and Planning Authority in 1992, this is in the budget - a paltry \$29.5 million. We have given to Sophia alone \$250 million each year. *[Applause]* Then you hear about discrimination.

I concede that there are problems of water supply in some sections of Sophia, not the entire Sophia. The Sophia zone comprised of ten distinct areas and in some of the areas we do have a problem and we are now spending \$165 million to improve the water supply and by the end of this year, Sophia will be receiving an improved supply of water. *[Applause]*

The Honourable Leader of the Opposition spoke about Kaneville. Kaneville was another squatting area in a swamp and we are now spending \$300 million to put in paved roads,

Thursday, 02 November 2006

drainage, water supply and electricity. [Interruption: 'With the EEC money.'] It does not matter if it is the EEC money; we have negotiated a grant for the EEC. Apart from that it is not only physical infrastructure, we are delivering thousands of titles and giving them ownership to the land - to all those living in Sophia and in Kaneville. [Applause] This is what we have been doing and I can give you the statistics to prove that - thousands of titles.

Mr Speaker, on the water supply on the West Bank of Demerara, again a delusive statement was made by the Leader of the Opposition because he said that the President ... and he quoted from the Stabroek News:

The President visited Sisters Village in the year 2005 and promised water supply to the people ...

But he is mixing up two things; he is mixing up the zone, Sisters Village/Nouratt Dam Zone and Little Pond Zone with the La Grange Zone. There are two areas, because the Sisters Village is supplied by the Belle Vue pumping station, whereas the La Grange problem only occurred in April of this year when the well failed. I am not saying that there are not pockets of water supply problems in these areas. I am not saying that, but do not mix the two up and say that His Excellency the President visited and then the people had to go and protest. No, they are two different areas altogether, for a point of clarification.

Now, the La Grange well collapsed in April and we worked hard, we are spending \$40 million right now and by the end of this month the well should be functional and those residents should have at Bagotsville/La Grange a good supply of water. At the same time we are experiencing some problems with the Belle Vue well and we are doing the design and we will be drilling another well at Belle Vue as we are doing at Meten-Meer-Zorg. There are problems. They are getting water supply at Belle Vue and we are delivering water by tankers in compliance with the President's directives.

Mr Speaker, in his Presentation the President stated on water supply:

We will continue to invest large sums of money in the water sector, so as to ensure a safe and adequate delivery of potable water supply.

Listen to it carefully, to invest and currently the government is investing in the water sector \$5.4 billion in the next five years to improve water supply in Georgetown alone.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

[Applause] So, we will be seeing improvements in the water supply and water treatment plants. This will be part of that. Also, we will be spending \$2.5 billion to improve water supply systems at Anna Regina, at Parika and areas at Rosignol. For the upper Corentyne water supply project \$1.6 billion. All of those are funds already at hand, projects have been designed and we will implement those projects over the next five years. If you go all over this country ... the Honourable Member from Region 7 will tell you, at Bartica they are getting pure water supply at the top floor of the houses. She is having a perception problem too. *[Laughter]* Only recently at Mahdia and we won Region 8 and the people will be getting a supply of water from the Salbora Creek. It is successful, we have to do some work in the distribution network and the people of Mahdia will be getting water in the top floor of their houses. *[Applause]* Sir, it goes on and on.

We recognise that the problems cannot be resolved in one year; it will take a number of years before we get there. So we recognise that, but we are working hard with the resources we have at hand to improve the systems countrywide and including the Hinterland areas also.

Mr Speaker, now let me come to the education sector. When you look at the President's statement on the education sector on Page 16, it identifies fifteen areas where we will focus over the next five years and for which programmes will be developed. Very comprehensive outlines of the education sector, but I do not intend to deal with all of those fifteen. I will just outline them and I will deal with two or three of them, because I will leave the remainder for the budget speech in the next three months.

The President rightly said and recognised that an educated and healthy workforce is a productive workforce. He stated that there is a contribution to growth and development from social sector investments in health and education. That is why for 2006 alone, we are spending \$13.5 billion for education in this country, *[Applause]* 16.5 percent of the budget goes to the education sector. So, we are putting the resources where we have outlined clear, comprehensive programmes, this is what we are doing. *[Interruption: 'Tell us about the literacy rate.']* I am coming to you just now. He spoke about education access and this is so important. Let me tell you, over the years,

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Guyana has moved forward in terms of education access and we now have a national enrolment ratio of 100 percent, equal to many of the other countries in the CARICOM area.

At the secondary level we have a national ... listen, if you do not understand the terms I can explain ... national enrolment ratio for the secondary level is 73 percent. We will be working over the next five years to ensure that we have 100 percent enrolment in our secondary schools.

[Applause]

Mr Speaker, in completing the NER of 100 percent for primary education, we have already satisfied and achieved the Millennium Development Goals too - achieve universal primary education. We have already done that.

In terms of an international comparison, we have done well, because the UNESCO Report for 2006 have shown that 100 million children are still not enrolled in primary schools and it further shows that twenty-three countries' enrolment ratios are declining, but in Guyana we are holding steady. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, the President spoke about the need to improve the quality of education.

[Interruption: 'Tell us about the drop-out rate'.] We will talk about that in the quality of education, because achieving the 100 percent enrolment, while good in itself, we will have to improve on the quality of education in all aspects.

Mr Speaker, as I mentioned before, the government is putting a lot of resources in the education sector, but the government alone cannot achieve this quality focus and imperative - the quality of imperative I am talking about. We have to all get involved. You in the opposition also have a role to play in ensuring that we uplift the standards of the education system in this country.

In the formulation of our new strategic plan, I will invite a member of the opposition to be part of that, as the former Minister of Education has said, that they were already invited. We want to get you involved. The teachers will have to be involved. There are so many dedicated teachers in our country and we have to harness this human resource asset that we have to ensure that they make their full contribution. But when I listen to the Honourable Member there castigating the Permanent Secretaries, it really worries me. Yes, it hurts me to hear the Honourable Member talking so sarcastically about hard working public servants and I want the media to take note of that. There is also a role for parents.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

We have ensured that in our schools throughout the country - 80 percent of the schools have active Parent Teachers Associations and they are making their contributions. To improve the quality of education, we have also decentralised the educational system in all Regions and they have Regional Educational Committees, Regional Educational professional people responsible to the Regional Administration and so on. But we have gone further than decentralisation and Parent Teachers Association. We have established, we have democratised now, the education system. We have now set up school boards; thirty-four school boards have been set up in the secondary schools systems. *[Applause]* The parents are all working hard every day to help in the upliftment of the educational standards in this country. This is what we have done. So, the government will also play its role and what have we been doing? We have been providing free textbooks, for the years 2005 to 2006, 800,000 textbooks have been distributed in the primary and secondary schools in this country, because of our interest in improving the quality of education. That is a fact, hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent in this area and we have been improving the learning environment and that is the reason why we have rehabilitated and we have built hundreds of schools. Right now in Region 7, the Region which you now control, we have a state-of-the-art secondary school going up there. You must accept the fact that we are building schools at Wisburg in Region 10 also and you are talk about discrimination? We are building a state-of-the-art at Wisburg in Region 10 also, and all over this country, in the Hinterland areas, we have taken secondary education, unheard of during the PNC administration. *[Applause]* Mr Speaker, we are working very hard in terms of the qualitative improvement and it will not come overnight.

One speaker I heard talked about the 2006 CSEC results but education statistics cannot be looked at from one year against another year. You have to have a base year at which you look at your statistics over a period of years. So you cannot compare 2005 with 2006. We have a base year of 1998 and if you look at it you will see that it has been improving in all subject areas over those years. I will make available to the Member over there if she wants the results of the CSEC Exams. We have the results of the analysis, these are public documents. Just ask and you will see the trend analysis how it is carried out and what is happening. So, Mr Speaker, we are moving forward.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

The other area which I want to touch on, as I said, I would not be dealing with all of the areas, is the area of the alternative pathways to education, because for too long we have been looking only at academic programmes, for example, the CSEC Examinations and so on. But what the Ministry has been doing and we will continue to do over the five years and the President has mentioned that in his statement, let me read for you:

Key elements of the plan including equipping our children with adequate life skills to function in a productive society

And he goes on:

technical and vocational education will be expanded.

This is what we are doing. In the area of TVET Education, we are expanding. You are well aware of the new industrial training centre, opened up in the Upper Corentyne and it is the intention that within the next five years to open centres in Region 5 and Region 3. We already have at Linden and we have in other parts of this country, New Amsterdam, Georgetown and so on, so we intend to expand and there is a reason for this. We have to prepare the workforce in this country to meet the challenges of the CSME and also the globalisation challenge. Therefore, we have to prepare and find alternative path-ways to prepare our students for the job market out there and to also prepare them for further education. So, we have introduced several new tech-voc, a combination of a mixture of academic and vocational education programmes.

One is the BCCP, which is the Basic Competency Certificate Programme, which is already in our schools in this country. Then we have the Skills for Life Programme, the pilot is now at the BV Practical Instruction Centre, we also have the Health and Family Life Programme and the President was very, very clear on this one here in his charge. We have already given the mandate to the officers of the Ministry to proceed to revise the curriculum, to take cognisance of what the President's vision is and that is, every Guyanese, owes it as a duty to learn and to understand these cultures that is within Guyana. The best place to start this renaissance in education is through the educational system. Therefore, in our Health and Family Life Programme, we intend to revise the curriculum, because he has also called for a review of curriculum and this is what we will be doing, to ensure that moral values are taught, civic responsibility is taught, multi culturalism is taught and the deepening of democratic values are

Thursday, 02 November 2006

taught and so this is will be a main focus in the coming years for the Ministry of Education in that programme.

So, Mr Speaker, these are some of the areas which the Ministry will be concentrating on over the coming five years. We recognise that there are problems and we have to work hard to improve on these problems in our school systems and as I mentioned before, all must be involved. So, I am making a special appeal here and the Ministry and its officials will be working with the parents, with the school boards, through the Parent Teachers Association and with the students themselves. I have not spoken about the new technology which has been introduced and will be expanded, computer-based programmes in our schools. In Sophia, that is one of our pilot areas, fourteen new computers have been placed in the new Sophia school there.

I have spoken about the IT expansion in our schools, we will talk more about that later, but that is another important area, IT education. So, Mr Speaker, in terms of distant education, we will talk more about that because there is need to expand distant education in our Hinterland areas.

We have already the IRI programme that is the Interactive Radio Instruction Programme to teach Mathematics, because we recognise that there are weaknesses in this area and we want to use the technology to improve in literacy and numeracy training in our schools. In the final analysis that is one of the principal objectives of the education system.

To bring fruition to the President's vision and the programmes outlined, we on this part of the House will have to work very efficiently, very prudently and with effectiveness to ensure that within the next five years ... and I heard the challenges by all the members of the Opposition, including the Leader of the Opposition; we have heard them and we intend to take our jobs very seriously on this side of the House to ensure that the vision becomes a reality. Thank you very much. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

The Honourable Member Dr Frank Anthony. *[Pause]*

The Honourable Minister of Trade and International Co-operation.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Hon Dr Henry B Jeffery: There is a mistake, Mr Speaker. I really do not mind answering to the name of Frank Anthony.

Mr Speaker, I stand really to say a few words on the President's Presentation to this House. I would like him to paint a broad picture of how my Ministry can be located in the overall scheme of things.

I too, would like to congratulate the new Members for being here, but let me say and give you some advice. It is said that in academia, you can and you should understand both sides of the issue, but in politics, you should only understand one side.

Of course, there are those, such as the wily Mr Murray, who of course understands all sides of the issue and I will advise the new Members of the House to take him seriously and to page from his presentation. *[Applause]* Please note, Mr Speaker, that only recently, not so long ago, a couple of hours ago, he proceeded a critique of the government on the question of governance as if nothing was done. Remember? And just by the end of his presentation, he congratulated the government for what was done in governance. Then he said ... precisely Mr Corbin, he patted the party on the back and he said you know what? We did it together and do you think he forgot that a moment before, not so long ago, he was calling us autocrats, democratic centralists who listen to no one. Yes, we worked cooperatively to bring about parliamentary change.

[Applause] He knew fully well what he was doing and then of course, it is his normal classic style ... *[Interruption: 'That is the President's Speech.']* ... I will get there, Mr Carberry. His classic style and his classic style really is a reversed straw man argument. What he did, he decided that the President should not have done what he wanted to do and that is paint a broad picture, he should have added details and then he proceeded to tell us the details he should have added. Amazing! Wonderful, I said wily. But he knows, you know, I say here, he knows all the sides of the issues and nowhere is that more true than when he came to deal with the competitiveness index. He said ... *[Interruption: 'Who is he?']* ... Honourable Member Murray - he said that his remit is really economics, but when he came to deal with the competitiveness index, did he deal with economics? No, he went and talked about the issue of governance and why? Because listen for what the competitiveness index says:

Thursday, 02 November 2006

In terms of international trade freedom ...

Freedom in international trade,

... the top country in the competitiveness index is Hong Kong

Hong Kong gets 9.5 out of 10, Guyana gets 7.5 in the Caribbean, the highest in the Caribbean in the International Trade Freedoms.

Sound money - Hong Kong gets 9.2 percent, Guyana gets 8.1 percent; Jamaica is higher at 8.7 percent of the index.

The Honourable Member went to the global outcomes and that is why he went to the issue of governance, because he knew fully well where we fell down on, some of the more important and difficult things to change. Do you know where we fell down? Law and order and judiciary - there is where we fell down and that is why he went there. He knows all sides of the issue and he knows which limb to jump on.

Mr Speaker, that aside, the main purpose of government has not changed. It is to provide the citizenry with safety and ever growing prosperity. What has changed over the centuries are the ways and means of doing so and more importantly our understanding of those ways and means. Today, of course we live in a different era. An era characterized by change and competition and the good life will ultimately goes to those who are on top of the game of encouraging and utilizing innovation to enhance value.

Standing where we are presently as a country, such a stark description of reality would leave us with little hope. Fortunately, natural, human and historical endowments are still not totally negated by this overarching tendency. Indeed, it is doubtful if in an irrational ordered world, these endowments can ever be totally be negated. As I see it then, the task ahead of us is to utilize all of our resources to assess our conditions and then make the kind of interventions that will result to the greatest possible benefits to our people.

Mr Speaker, my basic contention then is that we live in an extremely dynamic world environment in which a Ministry such as mine must respond in a timely and creative fashion, if it is to be effective and if the people of this country are to have a good life. This would be extremely difficult in any circumstance, but for a poor small country such as ours, it is near

Thursday, 02 November 2006

impossible if the structure of that response is not inclusive. Therefore, for me a most important element of the President's Presentation to this Assembly is contained in its consideration of governance. After stating that his government will pursue approaches that are predicated and respect for the rule of law; the fair allocation of resources; protection of political and civil human rights; accountability and transparency; he claimed that -

In addition, I have already signaled my intention to join with the political opposition and find innovative ways to work together to solve our problems. This will be pursued within an enhanced framework of political cooperation encompassing the principles of increased meaningful contacts, the identification and implementation of agreed agenda of national issues and greater scope for the participation of civil society in the decision-making process.

With this kind of inclusivity as a back-drop at various places in his presentation, the President touched on issues which if pieced together in a logical fashion can provide something of a meaningful framework of how he sees Guyana being located economically in the regional and global arenas that are of interest to me. Of course, at the base of that vision and I quote him and it should be remembered -

We must continue to embrace an economic system that is open and driven by an aggressive entrepreneurial ethic.

- the basic for it is pivotal - for it has amply been demonstrated that countries that follow the path of openness and outward led growth have been most successful. For example in 1995, Jeffrey Sash and Andrew Warner in a book entitled *Economic Reform and the Process of Global Integration* argued that those developing countries that have had opened systems and opened economies have grown some 4.5 percent on average for the decades the 1970s and the 1980s and for the developed countries the situation was no different. The open economy countries grew by 2.3 percent over the two decades, while those with close economies grew again by 0.7 percent pushing the envelope somewhat, a paper from the centre for trade policy studies concluded:

Firstly, there is undeniable relationship between growth rates and economic freedom, including the freedom to conduct international transactions.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Secondly, contrary to the claims of the anti-trade forces, there is no evidence whatsoever those countries that shut themselves off from global markets have prospered over the long run.

In my view, if we are to prosper in the current era, we must have a similar type of commitment to openness and in the pursuit of regional and global interests. Perhaps the first port of call for any Caribbean leader is of course the Single Market and the Economy. The President was no different and this is what he said:

Today, we are provided with an opportunity to move resolutely forward with the deepening of regional integration process especially as it relates to the complete realization of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy. However, to take full advantage of the CSME and other global markets, our industry again must be competitive.

Presently the single market aspect of the CSME is on board; it has all member States on Board except the Bahamas. The general rules of course are in place to allow for the free movement of goods, services, people and capital throughout the community thus enhancing the creation of a single economic space. Of course, there will be difficulties not least because the communities made up entities of different sizes and levels of development. The rules which govern it, seek to take this into consideration, but even if initially some members benefit more than others, this should not deter us. Quite apart from the obvious political benefits that result from such an association, the larger market will create more appropriate space, not only space for trading and maybe trading is secondary in this issue, but for adaptive learning. In my view, the CSME is a convenient stopping place, the final destination is global competition seen in its multi-dimensional formation. That said, in his Address, the President claimed that -

Economic diplomacy including strengthening relations with Latin America and our neighbours will continue to feature highly in the foreign policy agenda of Guyana.

And to quote him again:

Both at the WTO and at the level of ACP/EU relations, my government will spare

Thursday, 02 November 2006

no effort, defending our fundamental economic interest on which the livelihood and survival of thousands depend. Our largest, of course and economically most powerful neighbour is Brazil.

We will continue to make every effort to create linkages ... [Interruption: 'Who is saying so?'] I am saying so Mr Carberry ... to make linkages that will be of benefit to both our countries. I have already argued that countries with open outward looking economies have strived much better than those with closed economies. Today, 149 countries are Members of the WTO, whose mandate is to further liberalize the world's economy, particularly among NGO sector, there are doubters, but the burden of proof seemed to be with those who have argued that properly aligned particularly to take into consideration the development dimensions globalization will be of great benefit to the developing world. Indeed, some go even further and content the least developed countries have the most to gain from engaging in the global economy.

- They will gain access to larger marketplace for imports and exports;
- They can gain late-comer advantage by having access to the latest technology,
- Since most LDCs are people rich and capital poor, they will be able to gain access to foreign capital and this kind of foreign capital can provide infrastructure such as ports, power generation and transportation networks that LDCs are usually in need of.

Notwithstanding these acclaimed benefits, there is a growing belief in international negotiating circles that LDCs need not be driven by what they call a trade-driven approach to development, but they need a developmental approach to trade. From this perspective and let me quote here:

Policy should focus on developing the domestic productive resources of the LDCs through increased public and private investment in the physical infrastructure. Developing their entrepreneurial capabilities and facilitating technological learning. Facilitating structural change and the development of the dynamic linkages between sectors and enterprises including between domestic and foreign investors.

As is well known, however, the Doha Round of discussions on trade liberalization is in suspension largely because of a failure to agree on the scope and nature of access and cuts in

Thursday, 02 November 2006

agricultural subsidies. As the President mentioned:

As the EU/ACP partnership discourses proceed, there are similar kinds of issues will arise. In addition, he noted at the EU level, we have major programmes in the sugar and rice industry. Here, I just want to digress a bit, because I think that the Honourable Member Mr Vieira has no understanding of what is going on in sugar and rice. Today the European Union has accepted our sugar modernization plan for some \$700 million. Mr Per Eklund was there saying ... and this plan consists of all the things he was saying that do not exist, diversification, ethanol, co-generation, even a social safety net, deep water harbour and they have accepted this plan to the point, where for this year we have already collected the first tranche of \$6 million to set up a a packaging plant in Enmore. He does not understand. It is quite clear that he has no understanding of what is going. And further, he has no understanding of what we know. He went on to tell us about the GDP and how it is being configured, but everybody knows that at the end of the day, the GDP fell last year for all kinds of reasons. Last year, we discussed here the configuration of the government's budget. What is he trying to come here and tell us? He does not know what we know and he does not know what he should know either. The truth is, if he wants and if you want, you can have the modernisation programme. You can see it, it is all there. There are difficulties with it. I would never sit here and say there are no difficulties. There are difficulties in making certain programmes in bankable, but they exist. Of course, once there are negotiations among sovereign entities there will be a struggle for advantage. As such we will have to remain vigilant in all these arenas. Mr Speaker, I agree with the President that we should do all we can to safeguard the national interest. However, the great difficulty here is to decipher what really is the national interest from the complexity of the varying and vile private and sectoral interest. This kind of deciphering of course is essentially the mandate of government and I believe that we will be on the right track in our consideration of the national interest if we focus on the requirement and application of innovation - the requirement, acquirement and application of innovation and as the President said, added to that continue to embrace an economic system that is open and driven by an aggressive entrepreneurial ethic. I thank you. *[Applause]*

Thursday, 02 November 2006

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member

The Honourable Member Mr Norton

Mr Aubrey C Norton. Mr Speaker, permit me first of all to congratulate all the Members present here, especially the Speaker of the House and the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, the last speaker asked where our national interest lies? I believe that the President's Speech suggests that he is *au fait* with the language that he should use and for that I give him credit. But I find it difficult to understand why in the Foreign Policy section of the Speech there is not focus on environmental diplomacy.

Honourable Member Dr Jeffrey, I will suggest to you now that if one looks at this world and if one looks at Guyana, one will see that it is in Guyana's national interest to pursue an active international environmental policy and diplomacy. I wish to point out that a few years ago, to be precise I think 1995, and then in 2006 we experience flooding. Mr Speaker that suggests to me that at the domestic level, the environment is a consideration. If one looks at the international world at present, one sees that the world is focusing on global warming in particular and environmental matters in general. It is therefore obvious to me that it will suit Guyana well to develop an environmental diplomacy policy and to pursue it actively and that can bring to Guyana much benefits. I believe, the fact that Guyana is a low-lying coastal developing country makes it vulnerable.

We participate in a world in which decisions have already been taken on these issues. I want to quote from the United Nations Framework Convention on Biodiversity. It says:

The specific needs and special circumstances of developing countries especially those that are particularly vulnerable to the adverse effects of climate change and of those parties especially developing countries that would bear the disproportionate or abnormal burden under the convention should be given full consideration.

Therefore, right away the framework if there, but then it goes on to say something else that I think Guyana should utilize in this world: It says:

Thursday, 02 November 2006

In the implementation of the commitment to this article, the party shall give full consideration to what actions are necessary under the Convention, including actions relating to funding, insurance and the transfer of technology to meet the specific needs and concerns of developing countries' parties arising from the adverse effects of climate change and/or the impact of the implementation of the response measures especially:

- (i) Small island countries; and*
- (ii) Countries with low-lying coastal areas.*

I am suggesting that Guyana is perfectly suited to take up this opportunity and to carve an environmental diplomatic policy that will permit us to become forerunners, not only in the debate on the environment, but also to be able to garner benefits for Guyana. I believe, this area is teamed with potential as it relates to diplomacy.

Mr Speaker, the next point that I want to make is that when we look at the President's Presentation, it is interesting to me that there is no mention of the new Global Human Order. I hope it will be explained to this House whether in fact it is a change in policy or it is just an omission, because over the years, it has been established as one of the main planks of this administration's foreign policy and so to me, it does appear that there seems to be an acceptance that it is not relevant and that the present international world is not conducive to it and so we are seeing an attenuation of the focus. I would humbly request that if that is the case, we be so advised.

Mr Speaker, the second tenet that has been identified is that of economic diplomacy. When one looks at what is said about economic diplomacy, it is very vague. Apart from the fact that Minister Jeffrey will know, it is teamed with a certain amount of conceptual confusion and as you said in academia - in classical academic terms - when one talks about economic diplomacy, one is in fact talking about the use of economic power to achieve diplomatic objectives. I sense that we want to use our diplomatic effort to bring assistance to Guyana, but nothing is wrong with that, but with some redefinition we should be okay.

In this circumstance, therefore, I wish to suggest that we can in large measure suggest in clear terms that we in terms of directing our foreign service suggest that they undertake:

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- (i) To obtain resources from the international community in the form of development and technical assistance;
- (ii) Lobby support to ensure the protection of our traditional markets and create openings for Guyana to access new markets including niche markets
- (iii) Promote Guyana as an investor friendly country;
- (iv) Promote sustained relations with Guyanese in the diaspora with the host country with the aim of them contributing to Guyana's development; and
- (v) To undertake diplomatic work with the aim of accessing appropriate technology for agricultural, manufacturing, industrial and other sectors in Guyana.

I believe, if we can outline that to our people in the Foreign Ministry and in the core generally, then we will be efficacious.

But, Mr Speaker, to achieve this we need the capacity to implement. I believe all and sundry will agree that over the years for a number of reasons which I do not want to get into since my friend and colleague, the Honourable Member Mr Rohee has been very reconciliatory in tone, we know why the capacity has been in some regard destroyed. So, I believe to achieve what I am saying, we need to improve the Foreign Ministry. I do believe that if we take the advice of the UN Advisory Mission to Guyana which says on Page 9:

That this can be done by recruiting the best minds in the country to support the Ministry, and then we will be successful.

And so, I believe that this Speech could have addressed the things that are needed to be done in a policy framework in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to achieve these objectives. *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: Would you pause for a moment, Mr Norton?

Honourable Member Mr Rohee, would you move that Standing Order No. 10 (1) be suspended to allow us to proceed until the conclusion of today's business?

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, with your guidance and appropriate intervention, I so do.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

The Speaker: Proceed Mr Norton.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Aubrey C Norton: Mr Speaker, the world has changed. Years ago, foreign policy could have stood by itself. The world is now in the era of globalization. You will agree as well that the world has become very inter-disciplinary and so one sees the need for the concomitant change in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I believe, as a policy position, the President should have said to the Ministry and to us that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should become the central focus of Guyana's Foreign policy and the fulcrum of Guyana's foreign policy. What I am about to say now, Honourable Member Dr Jeffrey, must not be taken at the personal level; it must be taken in the national interest.

Mr Speaker, for Guyana to achieve these objectives, I suggest a coordinating role for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and I want to agree with the UN Advisory Report. It says on Page:

In particular effectiveness must compromise by the creation of the Ministry of Trade and International Co-operation.

Mr Speaker, the UN said that, but if I am permitted, I also want to quote from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Republic of Guyana Publication entitled *Guyana's Foreign Policy Securing Peace and Development for the 21st Century* when DIEC was shifted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a rationale was given and I quote what is said here:

Working in close collaboration with all relevant ministries and agencies of government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is devising appropriate strategies and measures aimed at securing international support for the development of the national economy. The bilateral and multilateral units of the former Department of International Economic Cooperation now located within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is being suitably staffed to further the inter-ministry and inter-agency collaboration and to serve as a focal point of communication with foreign governments and agencies.

I am submitting here that the government recognizes and acknowledges that there is need for one ministry and that muftis should be obviated into the dustbins of history. This is important to promote the development of Guyana through the use of our diplomatic corp.

Mr Speaker, I wish to add that in this circumstance of inter-disciplinary matters and the need for inter-agency co-operation, it is very useful to have one ministry coordinating as is happening in

Thursday, 02 November 2006

the Caribbean. In different parts of the Caribbean we hear the same thing by different nomenclature - Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. But not only must we do that, we must acknowledge that in this world today, other agencies and ministries are involved in diplomacy. To the extent that they are involved in diplomacy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must also take on the role ... and here is where it is sad that the Foreign Service Institute - the brainchild of Minister Rohee, I thought at the time - is not longer viable, but it could have performed the function of training all the people in the various agencies that have to interact with the international community so that the people in the Ministry of Agriculture, Finance, all the Ministries are given diplomatic skills and can work in a cooperative way to achieve the objectives of this country's foreign policy.

Mr Speaker, added to this, probably we are the only country in the world now that does not accept a five-year rotation of diplomatic staff. I believe that the government side should tell us when we will have a Heads of Mission conference. I gather we have had one since 1992, because if you leave people out there and they are not operating and interacting with home and developing a practical understanding of Guyana and things Guyana, I believe in foreign policy they called it *clientelism step* in and they become controlled and into the culture of the client state. I believe we must make the decision that it is important for us to rotate them. It does two things;

- It allows those that are out to come back home to familiarise themselves; and
- those that are out to get the opportunity to go out.

May I submit that if you look at the very UN Report and information recently, it is well established that people in the foreign Ministry or most people do not travel. You cannot create a viable diplomatic corps if the people in that diplomatic corps do not get exposure to international conferences. How are we going to develop the institutional capacity to carry our foreign policy if we fail to send over people overseas to have the experience of conferences and to learn diplomacy. It is therefore important that we give a new life to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and consequently to our diplomacy and to the efforts to garner support for this country.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, I believe that one of the problems that we have to deal with is that we have to change the view that foreign policy can be done on the cheap. Unfortunately, it is one of the things that are not possible and therefore it should change.

Mr Speaker, I shift to Local Government. Again, it is an area where the Speech unfortunately does not cover, but we on this side of the House particularly the PNCR-1G believe that it is important an issue to have some debate on it.

The operational manual for Local Government of Guyana - Principles and Guidelines – prepared in 1998 by the Ministry of Local Government of Guyana and the Caribbean Centre for Development Administration (CARICAD) states on Page 4:

It should not be suggested that Local Government is simply a de-concentrated arm of the Government. To the contrary, Local Government is but an institution which allows for self-government within each locality.

Mr Speaker, this is true. Unfortunately, however, the PPP/C's Administration treats Local government as if it is merely the de-concentrated arm of central government. Therefore, I wish to posit that there is need for change in this approach. There is need for Local Government bodies to become genuine self government bodies. In this regard, the PNCR-1G wishes to recommend a few measures that will help to make our local government bodies what they are intended to be.

- (i) We believe there should be consultation and involvement of local government bodies in decisions and projects that relate to their locality. One advantage the people in the community have is that they know the community and while they might not be technically sophisticated they have practical knowledge that we can draw on.
- (ii) Involvement of regions in the appointment of key officials to the region especially the REO.
- (iii) Put mechanisms in place that will make regional and other local government bodies accountable to the people of the locality.
- (iv) To de-politicize local government bodies by gradually removing political parties from the local politics beginning with the neighbourhood Democratic Councils.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

I believe that if we can do that the political fights that go right down to the bottom of our society will be attenuated and with time we will be able to develop the faith, the trust and the kind of political culture that will serve our country in good stead. I believe that while these measures will contribute to the development of local self-government, there is need to advance the process of making the bodies autonomous. In this regard, I wish to turn to the Constitution.

The Constitution states in Article 75:

Parliament shall provide that the Local Democratic Organs shall be autonomous and take decisions which are binding upon their agencies and institutions and upon the communities and citizens of the areas. To achieve this objective, there is need to take action to ensure that the resources are not provided by the whims and caprices of the central government.

Article 77A of the Constitution states:

For the formulation and implementation of objective criteria for the purpose of allocation of resources and the garnering of resources by Local Democratic Organs.

Mr Speaker, no one in this House will doubt that that will contribute to developing the autonomy that is needed in the area of local government.

May I also urge this august body to bring to fruition the Local Government Commission as is stated in Article 78A of the Constitution? Since apart from contributing to autonomy, it will promote and contribute:

- (i) The proper regulating and staffing of local government organs; and
- (ii) Once properly done it will establish an organ that will objectively resolve dispute between and among the various organs.

Mr Speaker, I believe that we all here are committed to seeing self-government at the local level in healthy working conditions. The People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana believes that with those measures we can achieve our objectives.

Since I was a boy one of the things I always heard said by leaders in the PPP is that the PPP was a working class government. I found it strange that this entire presentation is bereft of reference to the working class of this country. Probably one of reasons why the government is a little

Thursday, 02 November 2006

concerned is that because historically fettered emerged as a result of actions on the part of the PPP and in some regard the divisions here could be attributed to the government, of course at that time they were on this side of the bench. They probably have returned to haunt.

Interruption: [*Interruption: 'You do not know what you are talking about.'*] I would be a lecturer Donald. At Accabre I will be a lecturer, no doubt.

Unfortunately, you need to know that recently in breach of ILO Rules and Practice, the practice of inserting FITUG as the representative over the Trade Union Congress at this level, I do not believe is the best thing and it is something that we should look at and seek to resolve in an amicable way.

I want to make the point that wages and salaries are most important and it is unfortunate that in the presentation, there is little or no reference to a wages and salaries policy. I want to recommend that we consider wages and salaries policy. I wish to aver that the following can be elements in this process:

- (i) That there should be the involvement of the Trades Union Movement in its formulation;
- (ii) That wages and salaries increases be linked to inflation;
- (iii) That is must focus on the worker real income and not the nominal.

I believe the tendency is for us to talk to 500 per cent, 200 percent and not look at the real wage. I do not think that I have to explain what the real wage is. So that policy should give all workers except in the case of rare skills that are need, the opportunity to obtain wages and salaries based on fixed scale rather than the ongoing use of contracted employees to reward some and punish others. Mr Speaker, I believe if we can move in the direction of a wages policy, we can solve many of the problems we face today.

Mr Speaker, I hope that in the first part of my presentation I made recommendations and that they are useful to this House. Unfortunately, I was hoping when I was coming here that I would not have to respond to many of the things that are said, but I believe some of them need responses.

First, I want to start with this question of democracy. The Honourable Member Mr Donald Ramotar suggested to us that the fountain head of knowledge on this issue was Dr Jagan and I

Thursday, 02 November 2006

have no disagreement, Sir. Therefore I will read from the West on Trial to illustrate. I want to point out that the flaw in which Mr Ramotar was saying is that he was quoting Dr Jagan as if he was a democrat in the western sense and so by the use of the word democracy people will believe that Dr Jagan is a democrat. I hope to treat this House to a few. I will read about three for you. Mr Speaker, this is what Dr Jagan said on page 356 on the West on Trail:

The opponents of democracy preferred to keep these terms vague. Properly defined democracy should mean a majority expression of will among people who stand in equal relation to one and another. As long as there are inequalities that arise from a class society of exploit of an exploited all the people do not stand in equal relation to one another.

If that is true, Mr Speaker, all your claim about democracy in Guyana will fall to the ground, because by this definition there is no democracy since all the people in Guyana are not equal to one another. These are not my words, Mr Speaker. [Applause]

Mr Speaker, Dr Jagan went on:

Carl Marx was right in saying the first freedom of the Press consists in it not being a business.

That does not sound like western democracy. Western democracy suggests that the press should be in private hands and that competition in business should be free. I asked Mr Ramotar, has exploitation been abolished in Guyana and if it is not, it means logically that people are not free. So the point I want to make here is that in essence the democracy we are talking about is not the democracy that Dr Jagan is talking about. Therefore we need to be clear in our mind that this is a Marxist conception of democracy and is totally different to what is expected to happen and to what happens in the developed world.

Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member Ms Teixeira said to us that the Constitution of Guyana is the most advanced and I would not argue too much with that, where I have a problem ...

[Interruption: 'In the Caribbean.']. I am saying in the Caribbean. I am now going to tell you my disagreement, my dear. My disagreement is, when you try to suggest that it is a product of the goodwill of the government benches. May I, in historical terms recapitulate so that you can understand the reality? When in 1992, all political parties went to elections; they all agreed that

Thursday, 02 November 2006

there will be constitutional reform. *[Interruption: 'Where did you get that?']* In your manifesto, in mine, in The UF manifesto ... *[Interruption: Separately!']* We will agree whether separately or not, it does not matter. You agree, I agree, she agrees, together we have agreed. Having agreed, once government became the order of the day, we saw a complete *volte-face*. I recall at a conference at the Tower, where it was suggested and the Honourable Speaker will remember this that the government was comfortable with the 1980 Constitution. Mr Speaker, between 1992 and 1997, not one attempt was made to reform the Constitution. There were discussions, et cetera.

Ms Gail Teixeira: On a point of order - There were constitutional discussions.

Mr Aubrey A Norton: I said, there were discussions.

Ms Gail Teixeira: There was a Constitutional Reform Committee headed by Mr Bernard De Santos.

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member. That is not a point of order,

Mr Aubrey C Norton: Mr Speaker, I am tolerant enough, but I did not say that there were not discussions; I did establish that there were discussions, but what I said no decision that led to constitutional reform.

I will proceed to make the point that in 1997 after the elections (You know, I am convinced that Neendkumar is an MP, he is misplaced), but let me continue. *[Laughter]* Mr Speaker, after the 1997 elections, we saw a situation in which as a result of protests and negotiations that constitutional reform was formally placed on the agenda. I want to read from the Measures for resolving current problems that accompanied the Herdmanston Accord. It says on Page 3:

A Constitution Reform Commission will be established by law with a wide mandate and a broad-based membership drawn from representatives of political parties, the labour movement, religious organizations, the private sector, the youth and other social partners. The terms of reference of the Commission and its members will be determined by the National Assembly after a process of consultation with political parties.

I made this point to mention that it was not goodwill of government that gave us this Constitution. This Constitution is a function of political struggle; it is a function of negotiations

Thursday, 02 November 2006

between the People's National Congress at the time, the WPA and other forces. It will be wrong for the government to suggest that it is a product of the government's goodwill. I submit you came screaming to the table and we managed to eek out a few things.

Mr Speaker, having said that you will note that I am objective; I am not depriving you of credit; I am giving you credit, but I am also saying to you that in the interest of our children and accuracy, we should put the records straight and understand the reality. The reality is that over the period, we struggled for it, we arrived. I am glad that we have improvements, but they are as a result of a process and not an event on the part of the government. *[Interruption]*

The Speaker: Your time is up Honourable Member.

Mrs Clarissa S Riehl: Mr Speaker, I ask that the Honourable Member be given fifteen minutes to conclude his presentation.

Question put and agreed to.

The Speaker: Proceed, Honourable Member.

Mr Aubrey C Norton: Mr Speaker, I want to read one piece that I left out, but I should. It would be remiss of me if I do not mention it. The Honourable Member Mr Odinga Lumumba is not here, but I want to read Dr Jagan on dictatorship. I am only doing this because he has been established as a democrat here. On Page 356 he says:

The US criticized the Castro regime for being a dictatorship, but this is not the real cause for concern.

That suggested to me that it did not matter if you are a dictator. Not that I am suggesting that anybody should be a dictator. I believe in the history of this country, people can be accused of authoritarianism, et cetera, but dictatorship I do not know it has its place.

The Honourable Member Dr Jeffrey in his presentation tried to suggest, we did well in terms of competitiveness. I just want to quote from the Global Competitive Report 2006/2007. It says:

A lack of sound and credible institutions remain a significant stumbling block in many Latin American countries:

- *Bolivia - No. 97;*
- *Ecuador - No 90;*
- *Guyana - No. 111;*

Thursday, 02 November 2006

- Honduras – No. 93;
- Nicaragua - No. 95; and
- Paraguay - No 106

Achieved low ranking overall and are in particular among the worst performance (listen to this) for basic elements of good governance including reasonably transparent and open institutions. These countries all suffer from poorly defined property rights, undue influence, inefficient government operations, as well as unstable business environment.

Mr Speaker, the point that is being made here is what the Report says and therefore any language to the contrary will ... we all must acknowledge that work has been done in infrastructure. No one will doubt that some amount of work has been done. I am suggesting that all of us must admit that some amount of work was done in infrastructure, but I want to tell you a story before I give you this quotation from Dr Jagan.

I was told once that a man was minister of education and he put up a budget for a set of money and the Minister of Finance when he saw it, he decided that he cannot handle that. The Minister of Finance told him that he cannot give that amount, that is too much and he rowed and went backed. By the time he returned, the President reshuffled and the Minister of Education was the Minister of Finance and the same Minister of Education who was rowing the previous Minister of Finance said, I cannot give you that.

Now we must have principles. In dealing with infrastructure, I want to read to you what Dr Jagan said a few years ago:

As regards allocation in government's spending emphasis is being placed on construction of roads, seawalls and buildings. These are by and large unproductive as has been said, you cannot eat roads.

Mr Speaker, I agree that we have done well in infrastructure and I will not make that criticism, but I want to say, in this House we must accept that to deal with poverty, et cetera, we have to improve the lives and wages of the people and only then we can talk about eradication of poverty and achieve the things that we want.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Mr Speaker, I heard mention of all kinds of roads being rehabilitated, et cetera. I recall that there was money to rehabilitate the Soesdyke/Linden Highway. I believe if you so like Region 10 as you claim, it is incumbent on this government to do the Soesdyke/Linden Highway because it is not only for the people of Linden, it is pivotal to all we are saying about Brazil, et cetera.

I want to say that in this Assembly, we must be prepared to give credit where credit is due; we must be prepared to criticize where criticism is in order, then and only then we will be able to develop the kind of political culture that is necessary. Then and only then we will have the cross-fertilisation of ideas that will be redone to the benefit of this nation.

Mr Speaker, I close by saying to you that I believe this Ninth Parliament opens new vistas for us to take Guyana to higher heights, but it is dependant upon our maturity, our political skills, our tolerance and a willingness to say what is right is right, what is wrong is wrong and give credit where it is due. I thank you. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Member.

To use your own words in the interest of history and our children, in 1992 when those remarks were made at the Tower Hotel, they were published in the Catholic Standard as you mentioned them. Two weeks after the Catholic Standard retracted those words and offered an apology, because the actual words were, some people say that the PPP is comfortable with the Constitution.

Mr Robert HO Corbin: Do you think he was referring to you, Mr Speaker?

The Speaker: No, I remember reading the event, Mr Corbin.

The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, save and except for a few spattering of constructive proposals here and there, I would like to respectfully ask the opposition to take on the advice on one suggestion and I know that you have the creative minds to do so. Find some way of getting out of the criticism for criticism and for opposing for opposing syndrome. To link this to your electoral strategy, because it appears that it is causing you to lose votes rather than to gain votes. I think and I may respectfully say that there is need to make this quantum leap to a more

Thursday, 02 November 2006

constructive approach to the Government of Guyana's programmes and policies, because too often we hear the old hackneyed arguments that the government's performance is unimpressive; that the Parliament lacks legitimacy and I could go on.

But Mr Speaker, the Hon Mr Murray in his presentation asked the rhetorical question whether the President and the PPP/C Administration possess the will to give substance to the lofty objectives set out in the President's Speech. If we want to talk about will and I mean political will; and if we want to talk about achieving objectives, I believe the records speak for itself. Had it not been for the political will of the administration; had it not been for the benchmarking of objectives set over the last five years, it would have been well nigh impossible for us to be sitting on this side of the House today. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, aspersions for one reason or the other were cast about buzzwords. I have no difficulty with aspersions being cast, because in political life that is the name of the game, but I think for us it is not a question of introducing and making buzzwords, it is a question of delivery and performance. What I found strange in the contributions of some of the Honourable Members on that side of the House was when they said, they are ready to serve the national interest, but at the same time in the same breath they see catastrophe all around. It is the same cry we are hearing year after year. It started out with the late Mr Hoyte that the economy is going to collapse and the government is not going to last for two years. History has proven him wrong and history will prove his followers wrong equally. The electorate does not support the view that the government's performance was unimpressive and that is of the previous administration. We were told that the PNCR-IG this is the PNC-RIG have instructed their lawyers to pursue their legal interest with vigour and urgency. Those were the precise words that were used. What we hope and we would like to see is the taking of what I would describe as a twin track approach and that they would pursue with similar vigour and urgency the task of nation building for this house called Guyana in which we all live.

Mr Speaker the Hon Mr Corbin, Leader of the Opposition in a very subtle way sought to imply that a plagiaristic approach was taken in formulating the text of His Excellency the President's Speech to this Honourable House. This was indeed what people would call a low blow. We have heard platitudes to the effect that the President's Speech was unclear ... *[Interruption: 'In*

Thursday, 02 November 2006

some sections.] ... that is true and that it made excellent reading, but that was rather pedantic to restrict, to talk only about form and not substance. Let us discuss the substance of the Speech and not only engage in academic parlay to the effect that it made good reading. Mr Corbin sought to rubbish the President's Presentation claiming that the President took the advice of the opposition, that it is the PNCR-1G by extracting excerpts from your manifesto. But that was mere politicking, I want to assume and the rhetorical question was asked when and what time will these lofty objectives and goals be realized. When will these objectives be translated into reality? I think, we know who made that statement. You call the name and I will whistle if whistling is permitted by the Speaker. The point to note that many of these - what you described - as lofty objectives have already begun to take shape in our society. Many people - thousands - have already begun to benefit from the government's programmes and policies. What we are witnessing over these next five years is not only a continuation of those policies and objectives but new areas of emphasis opening up.

Mr Speaker, we were told that this is a testing period for the PPP/C Administration and that these next five years; we will be able to judge the extent to which the administration will be receptive to constructive criticisms. The Honourable Member Mr Corbin had said that one issue that struck a rather discordant note in the President's Speech is the point made to the effect that Guyana emerged from a pariah State and he claimed that this was an attempt to rewrite history. I may respectfully submit that this is far from truth.

If I may attempt to interpret the President, I believe that when the President spoke about a pariah State, this has to do with the legacy of rigged elections and the huge foreign debt that Guyana had accumulated over the years thus making it un-creditworthy in the corridors of the international financial institutions and the donor community.

Reference to page 10 of the President's Speech where he says:

We are mindful of not returning the country to the unsustainable borrowing of the past ...

You will notice that we are mindful of not returning the country to the unsustainable borrowing of the past and he did not stop there,

... and therefore we will pursue a careful sustainable borrowing strategy to

Thursday, 02 November 2006

mobilize additional resources for developmental purposes.

In the budget debate of 2006, the Honourable Member Mr Murray said that he is ready and willing to engage in a public debate on the foreign debt. We took up the challenge and we made an offer for a debate, not only on the national debt, but on many other national and international issues. In true form, when that invitation was extended they backed down.

The Honourable Member Mr Corbin said that we do not need Parliament for government to make its statements a reality. This is surprising statement, because I am sure you would have felt disappointed after having put in all those efforts to make this Parliament what it is today, a truly deliberative body which facilitates inclusivity not only at this level, but at the level of the committees in order to facilitate implementation of policies. Mr Speaker, this statement worries me and it sounds as though it is an attempt at minimizing the whole question of inclusivity and the utilisation of Parliament as the collective decision-making forum. I got a sense of *déjà vue* when listening to my colleagues on the opposite side of the House. They have nothing new to say. We have heard these oldies before, but I must warn you that those oldies are not *goldies*. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Member Mr Corbin said that if we are serious ...

[END OF SIDE B TAPE 5]

... I can only speak and I do so in all modesty and humility from where I stand; speaking on this side of the House that when we come to talk about seriousness that seriousness is judged by the electorate and they have done that time and again and that is why we are still on this side of the House. *[Applause]* So when we come to talk about seriousness, let us talk about performance, let us talk about delivery, because that is what you are judged by in terms of the people's appreciation. Mr Speaker, if the electorate did not take us seriously and if the electorate did not consider us to be hard working, if the electorate did not consider us as gold oriented *[Laughter]* You may laugh, you are free to laugh, have fun, you are in the opposition, you have more time in your hands, you have leisure time, we do not have time of leisure, but I am saying being on the road to delivering goods and services to the people is no laughing joke. So you sit back and have fun.

Thursday, 02 November 2006

Someone told us, I cannot recall who it was, but I think it emanated from that side of the House that the people in Essequibo - they singled out the people of Essequibo - for what reason I do not know, but we were told that the people of Essequibo feel that they have been left behind and are isolated. *[Interruption: 'That was in your mind.']* No, that was said. I think you are sitting near to the person who said that, but I do not want to prolong the discussion, but it is reminiscence of the old hackneyed tune of marginalisation and victimisation and I think that trotting out of that old shoe is not getting the country anywhere, because people feel and think differently. I am not electioneering here, the time for the campaign is over, but I think the people of Essequibo have spoken and spoken in clear and unequivocal terms.

I now turn to the Honourable Member Mrs Backer ... *[Interruption: 'You have a very long list.']* No, I only have two or three pages. The problem of Mrs Backer's presentation is that it failed to see the inextricable link between crime and development. Our position is that the fight against crime in all its manifestations must be seen in the context of the government's developmental trust, its policies and programmes. That is to say as we pursue our developmental goals and as we face the challenges and take advantage of the opportunities, we will simultaneously be addressing the crime and security situation.

Mr Speaker, what Mrs Backer was seeking to do was to entrap us in a catch 22 situation namely saying, we do not need massive foreign aid to implement the recommendations in respect of the reform and the security forces - *to implement the recommendations to address the recommendations and to ensure security and public safety in our society.*

At the same time we were told that as we were doing in the last budget debate that it is the government's responsibility to give leadership and to find the requisite resources. That is what we were told, that it is the government's responsibility to give leadership and to find the requisite resources to deal with the crime and the security situation and that is precisely what we have done.

Mr Speaker, recently on behalf of the government, we handed over twenty-nine out of forty-five vehicles to the Guyana Police Force. This came from the government's coffers, this did not come from the donor community's money. *[Interruption: 'Largest!']* Thank you very much. This did not come from the donor community's largest. The point is that I am saying to you that

Thursday, 02 November 2006

we are taking actions on our own, using our own resources as far as it can allow us to beef up the security forces in this country and not necessarily going cap in hand as you suggested to the donor community for money to do so.

Mr Speaker, I understand that a statement has been issued. I was told that the clock is ticking. You see, these doom-sayers are really amazing. We were told in this Honourable House that I made a promise about the establishment a traffic court and the establishment of a traffic magistrate and I need to be careful, because the clock is ticking. I made that statement on 7 October at a funeral and the Hon Mr Corbin was present when I made that statement. I understand that a statement has been made by the Office of the Chief Justice to the effect that a senior magistrate has appointed to sit daily from tomorrow on 3 November and that the learned magistrate will treat not only with the current cases but even with the backlog cases. So the clock has stopped ticking. *[Laughter]* Tick, tock, tick, tock, we have gotten what we have delivered and what we promised.

Mr Speaker, I want to conclude, when the Honourable Member Mr Norton said that he did not notice anything in the President's Speech about the New Global Human Order, but Mr Norton is a consummate diplomat and he is a lecturer at the University of Guyana. I understand that he is a prolific writer and he reads extensively. There is something that is called reading between the lines. *[Laughter]* On Page 23 of the President's Speech says:

My government will work with these bodies ...

That is the United Nations, the Commonwealth of Nations, et cetera ...

... to enhance our economic and social well-being as well as to secure global peace and development.

Mr Speaker, if I may develop this a little more, when we on this side of the House elaborated the concept of the New Global Human Order, we said that we should think globally and act locally. One of the first things you have to do among others if you want to pursue successfully and by example this concept of the New Global Human Order, one of the things you have to do is to put your house in order and that is what this Speech seeks to do, because when you go out there and you begin to talk about a New Global Human Order, if you do not have a proper track record of what you are doing in your own country, nobody is going to agree with you or believe you. It

Thursday, 02 November 2006

will just go as another pipe dream.

Then the Honourable Member Mr Norton quoted extensively from Dr Jagan's *West on Trial*. I am very happy that he did so, because we always feel a sense of attachment. We always feel a collection when the *West on Trial* is quoted from. *[Interruption: 'Your eyes light up.']* The heart is also lighted up, not only the eyes. He used certain quotations to interpret what Dr Jagan meant about democracy and what Dr Jagan meant about governance and so forth. He also quoted Marx and I would like to equally quote Marx, because in seeking to interpret what Dr Jagan meant by democracy, I would like to use what Marx said in respect to interpretation when he said that –

The philosophers have always interpret the world, the point, however, is to change it.

So, we cannot only restrict our interpretation to democracy, we have to seek to change what we understand democracy to be and we did that in 1992, we did that in 1997, we did that in 2001 and we did it in 2006. *[Applause]*

Mr Speaker, the debate on the President's Speech was good and true to the expectations of His Excellency the President. It was in a sense a precursor to the upcoming budget debate at which time we will have more time to elaborate and *profoundicize* on our specific areas of focus.

[Interruption: 'That is not at word?'] You check scrabble. I do not think that Mrs Backer is a scrabble fan. In this connection, that is to say the budget debate being a healthy and lively one, the AFC's position is regrettably, which is they cannot approve the policies adumbrated in His Excellency's Speech until they have put the administration to the test. Put this administration to the test, Mr Speaker? This administration has been put to the test umpteen times since it was formed as the Honourable Member Mr Ramotar said in 1950s with the Political Affairs Committee. Since the party was established in 1950, this party has been put to the test and it is still being put to the test on every passing year. Mr Speaker, this test was passed on 28 August 2006 and we are now on the road to another five years. We, on this side of the House have absolutely no doubt that when we come to 2011, we will pass the test once again this time with flying colours.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the People's National Congress Reform-One Guyana for their

Thursday, 02 November 2006

contributions to this debate and to say that compared to the conclusion of the AFC, I did not get a sense that the PNCR-1G was on the same wave length as the AFC in so far as the President's Speech is concerned and therefore I commend it for the general acceptance of this Honourable House. Thank you. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Thank you Honourable Members for your contributions to the debate.

Question put and agreed to.

Motion carried.

Thank you very much, indeed.

Honourable Members, there is one item remaining on the Order Paper for today and that is the nomination of the Select Committee. I understand that there is a request that this be deferred to the next occasion. That is therefore *deferred*.

Thank you very much for your patience and attention during this long debate.

The Honourable Minister of Home Affairs

Hon Clement J Rohee: Mr Speaker, I wish to move that this Honourable House stands adjourn to a date to be fixed.

The Speaker: The House will stand adjourn to a date to be fixed. Thank you very much.

Adjourned Accordingly at 23:06H