

THE  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES  
OFFICIAL REPORTS

[Volume 8]

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE FIRST SESSION (1981) OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

---

4<sup>th</sup> sitting 2 p.m. Friday, 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1981

---

MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (82)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government – People's National Congress (69)

Prime Minister (1)

Cde. P.A. Reid, O.E.,  
Prime Minister

Other Vice-Presidents (4)

Cde. S.S. Naraine, A.A.M.P.,  
Vice President, Works and Transport

Cde. H.D. Hoyte, S.C., M.P.,  
Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance (Absent)

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,  
Vice President, Public Welfare (Absent)

Cde. B.Ramsaroop, M.P.,  
Vice –President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations

Senior Ministers (10)

Cde. R.Chandisingh, M.P.  
Minister of Higher Education

Cde. O.E. Clarke, M.P.,  
Minister of Regional Development

Cde. R.H.O. Corbin, M.P.  
Minister of National Development

Cde. F.E. Hope, M.P.  
Minister of Trade and Consumer Protection (Absent)

Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,  
Minister of Energy and Mines (Absent)

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

Cde. R.E. Jackson, M.P.,  
Minister of Foreign Affairs (Absent-on leave)

Cde. J.J. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,  
Minister of Agriculture (Absent-on leave)

Cde. S.A. Moore, M.P.,  
Minister of Home Affairs

Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,  
Minister of Education (Absent)

\*Non-elected Member

### Minister (13)

- Cde. J.P Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.,  
Minister, Environment and Water Supply,  
in the Ministry of Public Welfare.
- Cde. U.E. Johnson, M.P.,  
Minister of Co-operatives
- Cde. J.N.Maitland-Singh, M.P.,  
Minister, Consumer Protection, in the  
Ministry of Trade and Consumer Protection
- Cde. S.Prashad, M.P.,  
Minister, Crops and Livestock, in the  
Ministry of Agriculture
- Cde. Sallahuddin, M.P.,  
Minister, Finance, in the Ministry of  
Economic Planning and Finance
- Cde. R.E.Williams, M.P.,  
Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry  
of Agriculture
- \*Cde. C.A.Nascimmmento, M.P.,  
Minister, Mechanical Equipment, in the  
Minister of Works and Transport
- \*Cde. F.U.A. Campbell, M.P.,  
Minister of Information
- \*Cde. F.U.A. Carmicheal, M.P.,  
Minister, Forestry, in the  
Ministry of Agriculture
- \*Cde. Y.V. Harewood-Benn., M.P.,  
Minster of Public Service (Absent-on Leave)
- \*Cde. H.Rashid, M.P.,  
Minister, Office of the President
- \*Cde. R.C. Van Sluytman, M.P.,  
Minister, Drainage and Irrigation, in the  
Ministry of Agriculture
- \*Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,  
Minister, Health, in the Ministry of  
Public Welfare.

### Ministers of State (3)

- Cde. M.Corrca, M.P.,  
Minister of State for Culture, in the  
Ministry of Education, Social Development  
and Culture
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,  
Minister of State for Youth and Sport, in the  
Ministry of National Development.
- \*Cde. C.E.Wright, M.P.,  
Minister of State for Construction, in the  
Ministry of Works and Transport (Absent)

### Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Women's Affairs and  
Housing
- Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
- \*Cde. E.M. Bynoe, M.P.,  
Parliamentary Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister
- \*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, M.P.  
Cde. M. Ally, M.P.  
Cde. M. Armogan, M.P.  
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.  
Cde. B. Bhaggan., M.P.  
Cde. J.B Calderia., M.P.  
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.  
Cde. E.B. Davidson, M.P.  
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.  
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.  
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P. (Absent)  
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.  
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.  
Cde. J. Gill., M.P.  
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.  
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.  
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.  
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.  
Cde. H.L.B. Singh, M.P.  
Cde. S.H. Sukhu, M.S., M.P.  
Cde. B. Tiwari, M.P.  
Cde. C. Vandenburg, M.P.  
Cde. H.B. Walcott, J.P., M.P.  
Government Chief Whip

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

Cde. R. Bishop, M.S., M.P. (Absent)  
Cde. B. Latchminarayan, M.P.

Member from the Regional Democratic Councils (10)

Cde. K.N. Jones, M.P. (Region No.1-Barima/Waini)  
Cde. K.V. Jairam, M.P. (Region No.2-Pomeroon/ Supenaam)  
Cde. C.A. Singh, M.P. (Region No.3-Essequibo Islands/West Demerara)  
Cde. W. Bipat, M.P. (Region No.4 Demerara /Mahaica)  
Cde. H.L. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No 5- Mahaica/Berbice)  
Cde. I. Chowrimootoo, M.P. (Region No. 6- East Berbice/Corentyne)  
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No.7- Cuyuni/Mazurni)  
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8- Potaro/Siparuni)  
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No.9- Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo)  
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No.10-Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

Cde. Dr.C. Jagan, M.P.,  
Minority Leader (Absent)

Deputy Speaker (1)

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

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan, M.P.  
Cde. Reepu Demand Persaud, J.P., M.P.,  
Minority Chief Whip  
Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.  
Cde. C. Collymore, M.P.

Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P. (Absent)  
Cde. I.Basir, M.P.  
Cde. C.C.Belgrave , M.P.  
Cde. Dalchand, J.P, M.P. (Absent)

(ii) United Force (2)

Mr. M.F.Singh,J.P, M.P.  
Mr. M.A. Abraham, M.P. (Absent)

OFFICERS

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

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKERHours of Sitting

The Speaker: Comrades it has been agreed by the Government and Minority Party that we will sit from 2 p.m to 5 p.m. and from 5:30 pm until the debate is completed. For this session 2 p.m to 5 p.m., the speakers will be Comrades Chandisingh, Corrica, Janet and Sharma, the hon. Member Mr.Feilden Singh, and Comrades I.Chowritmootoo and P.Federicks.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following Reports were laid:

“Reports of the Transport and Harbours Department for the years ended 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1976 and 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1977.” /The Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations, on behalf of the Vice-President, Works and Transport./

2.10 p.m

PUBLIC BUSINESSMOTIONAPPROVAL OF GOVERNMENT’S POLICY IN PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS

Assembly resumed debate on the following Motion:

“Be it resolved that this National Assembly approves of the Government’s policy adumbrated in the President’s Address which was made to the Assembly on Monday, 9th February, 1981.”

The Speaker: Cde. Chandisingh.

The Ministry of Higher Education (Cde.Chandisingh): Cde. Speaker, may I first of all say that after an absence from this Assembly of approximately seven years it pleases me very much to be able, on my return, to address you as “Cde. Speaker”. /Applause/ I think this is another indication of the attitudinal changes which have been wrought by the People’s National Congress in this country. /Applause/

I would like to observe, on rising to support the Motion, that running through the Address by our Cde. President adumbrating Government’s policy is the socialist ideal, the commitment to socialism of the vanguard People’s National Congress.

Several references have already been made, and can be made, in this respect. Also, references have been made to the People's new Constitution, itself historic, the Guyanese fundamental law fashioned by Guyanese which not only sets the direction but facilitates the achievement of our national goals. I would like to cite from page 13 of the President's Address, paragraph 3, where he states:

“My Government's commitment to the socialist ideal is a matter of common knowledge...”

In my contribution I would like, among other things, to merely touch on the ideological directions of the Party that informs Government's policy.

As I have indicated, the socialist content of our policy is revealed throughout the President's speech and in the People's New Constitution. It is therefore no accident, it is not a matter of mere chance, that embodied in the Address in such great concern for people, for their development and well-being, for their involvement; and that this concern is demonstrated in a very practical and concrete manner by way of very practical measures that can be taken by Government in co-operation with the people of Guyana within a certain time-frame to meet our specific problems and advance our people's well-being.

As I see it, this concern for the well-being of our people has two faucets. One is the concern for people's well-being as such, for their development and happiness. Another faucet revealed in the Cde. President's speech is the concern that people should be actively involved in shaping their lives and development.

Socialism cannot and must not be seen in the abstract, that is, only in its general principles. The general principles have to be concretely applied in the specific conditions of our country and I think that it is in this respect that the Party that informs the Government, the People's National Congress, has demonstrated its superiority in Guyana and has earned its Vanguard position and the increasing support of the Guyanese people. Learning from the experiences of others is not only useful but necessary. But copying blindly is not the way of the People's National Congress.

Significant in this respect, therefore, in the President's Address is the great wealth of very concrete and practical proposals that are achievable if Guyanese appreciate that we really have it in our hands to achieve these objectives in the near future.

Pursuing its policies towards the socialist objectives, the P.N.C. has moved our country from colonialism to political independence, on to republican status, to ownership and control of our natural resources, and in the process has motivated the people to become more self-reliant. It has enabled the people to gain a sense of human worth and dignity in keeping with the very heart of socialist principles. It has strengthened national unity and improved the well-being of the

masses.

All of this is in keeping with the objectives of the Party which are formally adumbrated in the declaration of Sophia, another historic document in Guyana's historical development. If I may, with your permission, Cde. Speaker cite some of these objectives, I think we will be in a better position to see the relation between the Government's policy and the principles and objectives set out in the President's Address flowing from the basic objectives that motivate the Party. I quote from page 12 of the declaration of Sophia:

- (1) "To ensure and maintain, through the practice of co-operative socialism, the interests, well-being and prosperity of ALL the people of Guyana.
- (2) To ensure our commitment to the Socialist ideal and more particularly to ensure that the people of Guyana own and control for their benefit the natural resources of the country
- (3) To provide every Guyanese the opportunity to work for and share in the economic well-being of the country and to ensure that there is equality of opportunity in the political, economic and social life of the country.
- (4) To motivate the people of Guyana to improve by their own efforts and through the Party, the communities in which they live.
- (5) To pursue constantly the goal of national self-reliance."  
and finally,
- (6) "To work for the closest possible association of Guyana with her Caribbean neighbours and to maintain a link with International Organization and Agencies whose aims and objectives are consistent with those of the People's National Congress."

2.20 p.m.

As I indicated, these objectives of the party inform the Government in the pursuit of practical and concrete ways and means for the welfare and development of the Guyanese people. As I have said, our people have come a long way with the People's National Congress in Government and now we are in the period of transition to socialism. May I in this respect advert to article 1 of our People's New Constitution which states:

“Guyana is an indivisible, secular, democratic sovereign state in the course of transition from capitalism to socialism and shall be known as the co-operative Republic of Guyana.”

Cde. Speaker, the fact that in the very first article of our Constitution this fact of transition from capitalism to socialism is highlighted, attests to the seriousness of our Party, of our Government and of the people of this country to move in the direction of socialism. What does this mean in fact? Briefly put, I think we can say that at this point in our history all relations of exploitation associated with capitalism have not yet been eliminated but are in the process of being eliminated. Further, that socialism has not yet been built but it is in the process of being built. And as we know, Cde. Speaker, the creation, the development of a socialist society, is not a simple or easy task. If one were to examine only the areas of attitudinal changes one will appreciate the task that lies ahead to fulfill our objectives.

One can also, if one wishes, refer to the preamble of our People's New Constitution which again sets out quite clearly the fact that the State of Guyana is guided by the principles of socialism and is opposed to all social, economic and political systems which permit the exploitation of man by man. All of this attests to our socialist credentials. But if I may say so, our socialist credentials are established by deeds, not by empty rhetoric. It is by the deeds of the People's National Congress and the Government of the People's National Congress that the Guyanese people overwhelming gave and continue to give support to the People's National Congress. There may be some who tend to harp on our difficulties, who seem to suggest that Guyana is unique in experiencing problems at this time. But I believe that the Guyanese people in the main understand what is taking place. They are not gullible people, they cannot be readily fooled. And, furthermore, this understanding on the part of the Guyanese masses is enhanced through the education provided by the People's National Congress, both as Party and as Government.

We do not “claim” to be socialists. We are socialists and our deeds prove this. But if some others do not think so, we do not seek to break a lance with them on this score or to indulge in futile arguments over definitions. We have no time to waste on such exercises. We are busy people and furthermore we are in a hurry to secure, with the co-operation of the masses of Guyanese, the development of our people and our country in spite of the difficulties. Concomitant with our commitment to the socialist ideal is our Party's and Government's emphasis on people, in the development of our people, who must be the active builders of the new and better socialist Guyanese society. In his address, our Cde. President underlined the need not only to involve the people in decision making at all levels but he stated on page 13, and I quote:



“The main object of development for my government is people and ..... the fullest possible satisfaction of their growing material, cultural and intellectual requirements.”

We as a Party have also adumbrated that through the practice of co-operativism

We see the realization of our socialist objectives. Cde. President in his Address had this to say.

On page 13, paragraph 3 he states:

“My Government’s commitment to the socialist ideal is a matter of common knowledge ..... as also is its conviction that co-operativism must be seen as the major instrument of economic and social transformation.”

What do we mean by this? It has been stated quite often before by our Cde. Leader and others that our ideology is socialism. We are not attempting to find some new type or brand of socialism in Guyana. For us, the objectives of socialism are universal, and these include such objectives as the ending of exploitation of man by man, the creation of real conditions for equality of opportunity, the creation of conditions in which people can live a humane existence and relies their full potential for development, to see themselves not as rugged individualists pursuing selfish aims but rather to see themselves and interests personally as being consistent with the interest of the community and the interest of the society as a whole. But, Cde. Speaker, the co-operative in traditional and now forms and co-operativism in its broader sense represent the instrument, the vehicle, or the principle by which we believe we can best achieve the objectives of socialism in Guyana.

2.30 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, if I may be allowed to dilate a bit on this point, we believe that one of the basic problems facing man is the problem of human alienation. And if I may attempt to give a simple example of this, at least in one of its aspects, particularly in the sphere of the workplace, we know that ownership of our natural resources is in the interest of all Guyanese. We also are aware of the fact that about 80 per cent of our economy is nationally owned- that is, owned by all the people of Guyana. But we have to go further than this if we are to realize the objective of enabling the working people and others to have an active part in or to be involved in decision-making at all levels. Thus, it is in this respect that our concept of co-operativism is applicable.

Co-operativism runs deeply in our people’s history and cultural traditions. But it is not merely because of this that we have chosen co-operativism as the means by which we should best be able to realize our socialist objectives. I think we can see co-operativism applying broadly in two spheres if I may so categorise them: the socio-economic and socio-political spheres. In the first instance, there is the workplace, the enterprise, and the aim of co-operativism is to eventually, over a period of time, involving education and training, set up the mechanism which will enable...

The Speaker: Five minutes more, Cde.Chandisingh.

Cde.Chandisingh: .....the involvement of the working people, that is the workers, the community, and the State on behalf of all the people, the decision-making process.

Secondly, there is the socio-political sphere. That is what we are witnessing today by way of the local government re-organization, the setting up of the Regional Councils and the subsequent measures which have to be taken to put in place the other agencies or Councils from the smallest which will be known as the People's Co-operative. All of this represents an aspect of co-operativism because it is intended that the whole people should be involved in decision making at all levels.

In the socio-economic sphere we have the workers, the community. In the socio-political sphere we involve the people in decision-making in the State apparatus. In this respect one can allude to article 13 in the Constitution which sets out the objective of the political system. Article 13 states:

“The principal objective of the political system of the state is to extend socialist democracy by providing increasing opportunities for the participation of citizens in the management and decision-making processes of the State.”

These two spheres, socio-economic and socio-political, will have to be integrally related to realize in full the principle and objective of the fullest participation of the people in decision-making not only at their workplaces but also in the society. But, Cde. Speaker, we do not believe that all of this will be achieved overnight.

2:40 p.m.

We believe that the stage has now been reached where we can begin the process of co-operativising our society. We will have to find the ways and means for doing so, involving experimentation, trial and error. We shall have to adopt the attitudes of learning from our experiences and of being flexible in our approach. All of this is aimed at reducing alienation in our society, to bring about an end to exploitation of man by man, to evoke the potential of the Guyanese people, their creativity, their innovativeness, in order to achieve the objectives that we all want to see.

Structures alone, however, cannot achieve these things. Structures depend on people, people who are capable and committed to function. Therefore, education and training, including ideological education, assumes vital importance. A new Ministry has been created, the Ministry of Higher Education, and in this respect the Ministry of Higher Education will be concerned not only with University education and training, it will be very actively involved in ideological and co-operative education. The Ministry, I expect, will aim to improve and expand ideological and co-operative education because we are not only interested in equipping people with the necessary knowledge and skills.

The Speaker: Two minutes more, Cde.Chandisingh.

Cde.Chandisingh: we are interested in developing people who will have understanding and commitment to serve the people.

In reference to the President's remark on page 11 of his Address, may I in citing this reference, indicate also the lines to be followed by the Ministry. May I, with your permission, quote from page 11, paragraph 5:

“The responsibility for this has been put within a new Ministry, and my Government has determined that all education institutions run or financed by the state, shall be national institutions responding to the needs of the society and contributing to the task of nation building. We cannot afford to pay for the esoteric, the ivory towered, the insulated and isolated. Public financing commands obligations to the people.”

I would like to indicate that the Ministry of Higher Education will seek to fulfill the pronouncement on this question by Cde. President.

I seek now to wind up my contribution with reference to the ideological direction of the party that informs the Government, independence is a cardinal principle for us. I think that in this sense independence has three facets at least. First, there is state or political independence, second, party independence and third ideological independence.

This principle of independence we seek to guard at all costs. We have no desire to seek to impose our specific path on others. We neither seek to export our path, our revolution, nor do we wish to import the revolutions of others. Furthermore, in this respect may I say that friendship, real friendship, cannot be synonymous with relations of domination and subservience. With this attitude and approach our Party and our Government view our position and this is the stand that we take.

Cde. Speaker, we are indeed going through a very exciting period of our history, and what we in Guyana – with the leadership of the Party and Government headed by our Cde. President- are attempting to do and, indeed, have done, I doubt whether any other nation of our small size has been able to achieve. *[Applause]* This is something which should fill us all as Guyanese with pride in our country and with a desire to see our development continuing to take place. Indeed, our destiny is truly in our hands. Let us in unity use these hands to realize that destiny. *[Applause]*

The Speaker: Cde.Corrica.

The Minister of Culture, in the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture (Cde.Corrica): Cde. Speaker, on Monday the ninth of February, 1981, the ceremonial opening of this first session of this Parliament took place. Unfortunately, some members' were not here.

They did not come because I heard through the grape-vine that they are afraid of pomp and ceremony. But those of us who were fortunate to be here had the privilege of listening to a most inspiring and challenging Address delivered by our first Executive President, Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham. [Applause]

Listening to that Address one could readily recognize that it was not just another address for the opening of Parliament. It was an address which I would describe as not only food for thought but food for action. They say great things sometime come in small parcels. That is exactly what happened with this Address

2.50 p.m.

Cde. Speaker, Cde. President took pains in identifying some of the weakness and he set out tasks to Corporations, Ministries, etc., to annihilate these weaknesses and problems. Though no detailed statement was made in the area of culture- and one does not expect long drawn-out detailed statements in an opening address, because very soon most likely we would have that in a Budget Debate. But in brief, the speech outlines certain important policies and decision which will have to be made. But for us in the Ministry of Education, Social Development and Culture, a little hint is good enough to inspire and motivate us to action and I think this is an appropriate time to give a brief account of our stewardship.

I will not quote it again because I think it was quoted twice of twice before. The particular page of this document entitled "in our hands" is page 13, paragraph 3. Cde.Chandisingh has just quoted that paragraph and it is very important to note that emphasis was laid there on satisfying people's material, cultural and other needs.

We know that the cultural situation in Guyana is very complicated. It is not as easy a hurdle to get over as even the political situation because, from whence we came? Africa. From whence we came? India. From whence we came? China. From whence we came? Europe. We have a living example in this National Assembly of from whence we came. So it is an area which we have to deal with very carefully and we in this new established Ministry of Culture within the Ministry of Education and Social Development, have decided to take steps to close the ranks of our people culturally. One must admit that we have won our political development, have decided to take steps to close the ranks of our people culturally. One must admit that we have our own political independence. We are moving towards our economic independence. But I feel a very important struggle for independence is going on right now and that is to win our cultural independence. It is my belief that if we cannot overcome our cultural independence it will be held and scissors to get over our economic independence. As I see it, people are using this subtly to prevent us from overcoming our economic independence through the different cultures that are being forced upon us through the radio, the screen, magazines, etc., and we know how influential those media and outlets could be. So we have decided to work out a new national cultural policy in which all will be involved meaningfully, to work out programmes whereby all Guyanese can participate and get involved. We have to encourage our people to be more culturally aware to understand and respect our own culture. We know what has been done in the past to discriminate or cause discrimination against our indigenous cultures. But I think so far, quietly, we are succeeding.

Now we have established a Folk Research Unit where we are recording all the important activities, the important happenings of the Guyanese people in the past and we hope to use this record in the future for educational purposes. It is very important to know the past so you would know from how far you came.

(Cde. Corrica continues)

3.00 p.m.

Now for some achievements. As I said this is not a time to go into very full and long drawn-out detail because some opportunity will be given for that later on. We have established a National School of Dance and flowing from this, already, we can be proud of the National Dance Company. This company has been thrilling audiences throughout the Caribbean. The company has performed for our Suriname neighbours with whom we have close cultural tie. This company has performed at GUYFESTA and at CARIFESTA in Cuba and we hope and look forward to the opportunity of performing at CARIFESTA in Barbados this year.

We have established the Burrowes School of Art and I can assure you that graduates from this school are of a very high standard and they produce a very high standard of work. The Diplomas earned there are recognized Diplomas. Those of us who witnessed Mass Games last year and who marvelled at some of the background scenes were actually marveling at works by Guyanese artists, most of whom were from the Burrowes School of Art and who worked under the instructions of our Korean friends. I think they should be applauded.

And speaking about Mass Games, Cde. Speaker. I think all of those people who were planning to sabotage the Mass Games and who were hoping to see it flop are now proud Guyanese. I am sure once they have a conscience, once they have a heart, they would be very, very proud to see what our Guyanese children can do. I can assure them that this year what they will be seeing will be much better than what they saw last year. This year, when they look at Mass Games, enjoying the background paintings, which they call the books etc., they will be looking at the artistry of Guyanese under the tutorship and instructions of Guyanese.

Cde. Speaker, we have created and established, in our society, many festivals and one of these is GUYFESTA- Guyana Festival of Creative Arts.

The Speaker: Five minutes more.

Cde. Corrica: this has been a very successful exercise, something which has brought the indigenous culture of all ethnic groups throughout the length and breadth of this country to the limelight and it could be at no higher place or brighter and bigger stage than the National Cultural Centre.

We have introduced- and it is here to stay- Mashramani which, no doubt, is the biggest ever cultural activity to take place in Guyana. And right now, Guyanese throughout the length and breadth of this country are being entertained by our cultural activists. We call them calypsonians. There again, you see, we try to take the thing to the people which is not a regular and common practice in other neighboring countries when there are such activities.

We have established, in order that the small man may enjoy the facilities at the Cultural Centre, and for artistes of all walks of life and various abilities to be able to perform and exercise their talents, C.C. Varieties- Cultural Centre varieties. That has been catching on and it is very popular.

One other thing, Cde. Speaker, we are working towards the establishment now of a National School of Music. This is not the type of music school that one would have envisaged in

the past, the sophisticated type of music teaching with Violin and piano and so on. That is good, Bach and Beethoven, but we are conducting a survey to find out what will be best for the Guyanese people, the Guyanese children. We want to teach them the kind of music that they can use to earn a living and contribute towards making our people happy. It is no use learning to play a piano to play only for your friends at home.

Cde. Speaker, Article 23 of the Constitution of Guyana speaks about the right to leisure and I feel that all work and no play would make Jack a dull boy. So we are working towards, after getting those people qualified and up-to-date with their musical ability, arranging what are called “worker s’ concerts.” That again will give them an extra opportunity to display their talent for the benefit of the masses.

When all is said and done, Cde. Speaker, we, the Guyanese people would have to make or break the chains that are around us culturally, if we are to become independent culturally. We will have to learn to respect, admire and support our own artists and musicians, buy our artists’ paintings and, at no time, try to divide the people of Guyana buy using the old method of the Colonialists. The comrades would understand what I mean.

In closing I would like to say in support of the Motion moved that we all should accept the policies of this little booklet In Our Hands and by doing that make Guyana a better place to live in.

The Speaker: Cde. Janet Jagan.

Cde.J.Jagan: Mr. Speaker, as one of my colleagues said when he addressed this Chamber yesterday, the most notable feature of Mr. Burnham’s speech is not what he said but what he did not say. I want to carry that opinion a little further. Nowhere in this document In Our Hands do we find mention of one of the overwhelming problems that exist in this country. I speak of unemployment. It is certainly a problem that bears the closest and deepest attention because it is like a dangerous disease. It destroys people; it is worse than a cancer because ultimately it causes, one might say, some of the same symptoms.

Unemployment is exceptionally high in Guyana. The Government will not provide us with statistics. We can only guess and the guess by non-governmental analysis is that it is somewhere in the vicinity of 25-30 per cent. Whatever may be the exact figure, there is not one single person in this Assembly who could dispute my claim that it is one of the most serious problems. Is there any light at the end of the tunnel? At one time-not so long ago- the then Prime Minister said that there was light at the end of the tunnel, but unfortunately no one has ever seen that light.

Why is there no perspective in this document? Why is there no projection on how the regime intends to solve the problem of unemployment? Does the People's National Congress take into consideration what unemployment does to human beings? The Government provides not one cent in unemployment relief. What does that mean? It means that the thousands and thousands of unemployed and their families have no means of livelihood. Then you will ask: How do they survive? We know how they survive. They survive on their families. Their families keep the unemployed and their wives and their children alive and that, as you know and as we all know, creates an additional burden on the working families, the working-class families, the small farmers' families who have the impossible problem of making two ends meet in a situation where the income is low and where the cost of living is high.

There are serious problems and the Government is turning its head away from this basic problem. One would imagine that the minimum that could come forth would be for some form of relief. The last speaker made some reference to the various countries and continents from which the people of Guyana came. He spoke of the past. I speak of the present.

Where are they going? They are going to North America; they are going to England and they are going to Suriname in search of work.

One of the chief reasons why people depart from Guyana, leave their homeland which they love and which they do not want to leave, is that they have to live and to live one needs an income and the exodus rate is going up. Again, what are the real figures? I don't know. Certainly the list of overseas voters is no gauge. The number of Guyanese living overseas is a scandal and we all know it and I predict in this Assembly that this year will be perhaps the year of the highest retrenchment by the Government of Guyana. In other words, I believe- I hope I am wrong and I would be only too happy if you prove me wrong- that this year unemployment will go up. I fear it will. If you gentlemen and ladies can prevent it, all good for you. You speak over and over, ad nauseam, of the right to work. It is nonsense to talk about the right to work. Guyanese are willing to work but give them the jobs. That is what you cannot do. Do not talk of the right to work being written in the Constitution. It does not have any meaning to anyone. No one cares what is written. Everyone cares what is done; that is what counts and in the past Constitution and the present Constitution we will see that what is done, how the constitution is dealt with, is what counts, not what is written there. So let us get away from that.

I heard the speaker before the last saying that the emphasis is on people. Well, if the emphasis was on people certainly we would say the first emphasis on people is to have them to live and they cannot live without employment and the Government has no solution because it is bankrupt of ideas. I hear all the talk about people, people must be involved, why is it that this document does not deal with the problems that people are concerned with? What about the cost of living? What is said here about the cost of living affecting every single person in Guyana? I would agree that it affects those with the highest incomes the least and it affects those with the lowest incomes or no income the most. Do I hear someone murmuring about Americas if so; let me remind you that I am a Guyanese citizen. I have given up what not one single person here would give up but practically everyone here would desire to go there.

I notice that with barely a pause after the election campaigning the cost of living started



to mount and mount at an astronomical level. The basic things that all Guyanese use, rice and milk, have already gone up. Has anyone here an apology for it?

There is no apology for raising the price of rice and raising the price of milk. Already our women in the lowest income group cannot buy the milk that they need for their children.

Expectant mothers do not have the funds or income sufficient to buy the milk they need and yet the price is going up. Why is not milk subsidized? Why hasn't the Government put forward even a minimum poverty programme, a small programme? Let us subsidize milk to expectant mothers; let us subsidize milk to infants and children. Let the Minister consider such a programme because it is necessary; it is needed, unless the Government can do as they do in some socialist countries- provide free milk to all children. Milk has gone up 27 per cent and that is no joke for a poor man. Everything has gone up.

3.20 p.m.

My colleague spoke of the melting of the rent freeze. Rents are going up. Small householders have to pay more for water rates and taxes. Electricity went up 100 per cent last year and now 55 per cent. Water rates and transportation have gone up. It is only the tip of the iceberg we are seeing with the rise in the prices of milk and rice. I again predict to this Assembly- if I am wrong I would be glad- that prices are going up more and more during 1981. You cannot stop it. Clothing has gone up, children's clothing and spare parts.

We heard a long dissertation about the transition to socialism. I wonder if the gentleman who spoke about the transition to socialism knows that in the socialist countries children's clothing is heavily subsidized. In this country children's clothing is horribly expensive. Have any one of you examined the price of children's clothing? A pair of socks, for a small child can range from \$ 5 -\$7. Ask yourself how much for a pair of shoes, household goods, pots and pans, and glasses and dishes. What happens when a young man and young woman get married? How can they buy the pots and pans? Go to the Government-owned stores and see what they charge for pots and pans. The inflation rate in 1980 was 100 per cent and yet we have had a wage freeze.

Cde. Speaker, in 1977, the T.U.C. and the Government worked out an agreement whereby the minimum wage for state employees would go up each year. But the Government has not honoured its agreement. Why can't we have indexation? As the cost of living goes up the wages must automatically go up. Many countries are doing that. How can people survive on a wage of \$ 11 a day when every single thing is creeping up day after day? It is going up at a very fast rate, not creeping. Under I.M.F pressures they are going up more and more, and under I.M.F pressures there is more retrenchment. When is this wage freeze going to be called off? Maybe I am wrong in assuming, but one of the first documents put here in this Assembly yesterday, to my knowledge, unless I am incorrect, it was the first real business session- and Mr. Chandisingh says that we are a people in hurry- was an order to increase the salaries and allowances of the four Vice-Presidents and yourself. I hope I do not embarrass you. I think I would agree with the speaker who said "we in the P.N.C. are a people in a hurry."

Yes, you are a people in a hurry to increase the salaries of certain people. But why can't you be in the same hurry to pay the \$ 14 minimum? Why can't you be in the same hurry to keep down the rising cost of living? Why can't you be in the same hurry to prevent electricity charges going up 55 per cent? Perhaps this is an indication that the wage freeze is now melted. Can I assume that this first important document, if my calculation is correct, means that the speaker would be getting an increase in his salary of 153.3 per cent and the salary and duty allowances and entertainment allowances have gone up considerably from \$18,000 a year to \$38,400 a year, or from \$1,500 a month for the salary and two allowances to \$3,200 a month?

I notice that from this document the four Vice-Presidents will also be receiving increases that would carry them from their salary, their duty allowance and entertainment allowance to the same \$3,200 a month and, of course, with the extra benefits of house allowance, car allowance, travel allowance and chauffeur allowance. So let us hope that this is a break-through for the working class. I am waiting for the Prime Minister to tell me that this is the break-through, this is a new policy, that the wage freeze is broken and now the minimum wage is automatically going up. I would be the first to cheer and shake your hand, Mr. Prime Minister, if you do that.

This document does not mention something else that the man in the street is interested in. there is no mention of tax relief. Will it be more taxes or do we have to wait until the Budget to know if it is less taxation or more taxation? Shall we judge for ourselves from years of experience that it will probably be more taxation? Perhaps the taxation will be of the hidden variety. I would like the Prime Minister to tell us a little more. I keep getting whispers and little references, inside and outside documents about a sales tax. Is there a sales tax? The I.M.F. referred to a sales tax that will have to be introduced. Perhaps I read in some official document a reference to a sales tax. Let us hear all of the taxes and if they are going up or down.

This document makes no mention of another problem that concerns all Guyanese and even the members of this House. I am speaking of crime. The crime rate is going up. We have more delinquents, we have more murders, and we have more corruption. There is a new immorality that is cutting into the national fabric. What has the Government to say about crime? Go into the street. You talk about people, involving the people. Go and walk on any street, go in any shop and you will find that the high incidence and growing area of crime is a problem that concerns all people and all of us right here in this Assembly too. I heard one of the speakers refer to Abraham Lincoln and his concept of democracy: government of the people, by the people, for the people. What a distortion to relate those high sounding words to the sort of "democracy" that we have here. It is a shame, a disgrace. Lincoln's concept was a noble concept. I do not believe in the old adage about someone turning in their grave. But perhaps the bones would turn when they hear the concept of Government of the people, by the people and for the people as being exemplified by this National Assembly and the recent elections. That is going a little too far.

3.30 p.m.

I listened to one of the speakers tell us about the transition in which the P.N.C. is leading the country, the transition to socialism. I want to ask if the lifting of the rent freeze is part of the transition to socialism. I want to ask if the de-nationalization of the bauxite and sugar companies is part of the transition to socialism. I want to ask if the New Investment Code is part of the transition to socialism. I want to ask if the removal of controls and subsidies is part of the transition to socialism. These are questions that bear examination.

I wanted to refer to this other problem because of many of the things I have raised come basically to the question of financing, financing projects that will be of benefit to the people. There is a song that was sung after the last war; it's a song that some of us know. "Where have all the flowers gone." I want to turn that word "flowers" into "money". Where has all the money gone? Where has it gone? Where has it all the money that this country has gone? It's gone away.

In 1979 the Government collected \$396 million. Where has it gone? Does the Minister of Health see it there in the hospital, in the dispensary, in the miserable beds and hopeless linen and the fact that women are sleeping two in a bed? Has anything gone to the hospital? I don't think so.

We know that 57 per cent went towards debt and compensation payments. Every loan this Government raises and squanders we pay back in all forms and we the people are taxed. I know too, that \$8 million goes blindly to the Ministry of National Development every year. From 1970, when we spent only \$15 million on the Army and Police to last year when we spent over \$100 million. That's where the money has gone and that is why today you have to remove the subsidies on most of the important foods. That is why the electricity rates are going up and the foods prices are going up and the transportation and all the things have gone up. That is why today, Guyana is in shambles.

I look at this booklet "... in our hands lies the destiny of the Co-operative Republic. Let these be safe hands" [Applause (Government)]. Our Republic, I say without any reservations, is not in safe hands. [Applause (Opposition)]

The Speaker: Cde. Sharma.

Cde.Sharma: Cde. Speaker, I, like the many other Members who spoke yesterday, feel very much honoured to be given this privilege to speak for the first time, in this the highest forum of the country. Our country, a place we all love whatever our political philosophy may be or our political affiliation, has gone through great travail over the last century.

We, of this generation, are trying to right the wrongs of the past and are trying to lift the terrible burdens which still weigh on this country. In this task, Cde. Speaker, we need the help and goodwill of all, because if Guyana fails, all will fail and if Guyana succeeds, all will succeed. But, I am confident that we shall overcome all our problems and difficulties and would be able to create a brighter, happier and a healthier Guyana.

Cde. Speaker, I would like fully to associate myself with the generality of the speech made by the Minister of Home Affairs when, in very convincing style, he demonstrated that the Government has not only sponsored the promulgation of our great People's New Constitution

but also pursues policies that implement that Constitution.

Permit me, Cde. Speaker, to quote from the President's speech, page 6, paragraph 2:

“When the People's New Constitution was being promulgated it was emphasized that certain new rights were to be entrenched. These include the right of the tiller to the land that he tills.....”

The whole of Guyana knows that the words of Article 18 of the Constitution have been an article of faith of the People's National Congress even before the People's New Constitution came into operation. Those words are:

“Land is for social use and must go to the tiller.”

On the 14<sup>th</sup> December, 1974, the Cde. Leader of the People's National Congress, now the President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, in his famous declaration of Sophia said these words:

“We believe that land should go to the tiller.”

What Cde. Leader of the People's National Congress had to say then about the social use of land and the misuse that land was put to in this country is acknowledged by honest persons of all political persuasions.

Cde. Speaker, in Colonial days large tracks of crown lands were rented by big people like Bookers and wealthy rice farmers at a nominal rental and then sublet to small men at much higher rents resulting in the amassing of wealth by exploitation of man by man. There was the system of the rich and powerful leaving land in a state of abandonment, or underutilized, while the land was held by them during Her Majesty's Pleasure or, after the Republic during the President's Pleasure. There was profiteering on a large scale and wanton exploitation of the small and poor by the big and wealthy. Promoted by the Government, article 18 was written into the Constitution to remove for all time from Guyana this intolerable system of exploitation. Even before the new Constitution came into operation Government, by administrative action, began to make changes in the system so that small men were given long leases of state land with the right of renewal once the land was cultivated, rules of good husbandry preserved and a small rental paid. There was even a Land Selection Committee set up in various regions of the country to vet the bona fides of applicants for lease of State and government land.

3.40 p.m.

The Government must be applauded for moving to abolish the undesirable practice of absentee landlordism where land was hoarded for purposes of speculation when inflation pushes up prices. However, it is to be noted that my Government's policy does not deber bona fide sellers who have their own substantial holdings of land productively employed in agriculture from employing others to till the soil and to reap the produce. In other words, the policy of “land to the tiller” under the Constitution does not interfere at all with the business of any large-scale farmer engaged in actual production to satisfy social needs and to advance the economic

development of both himself and Guyana.

To support this, Cde. Speaker, if you look again at page 6 of the President's presentation we will see that a Committee was established and very soon that Committee will start to function and advise Government on land matters.

When the Constituent Assembly was deliberating on the new Constitution there were loud noises in certain quarters about the absence of any reference to the Deity in the Constitution but those who argued for mention of the Deity overlooked an important fact and that is that Guyana was going to be a secular state in which there was to be no Establishment Church, but the same Constitution which created a secular state went on to provide in article 145 for the protection of freedom of religion, freedom to change one's religion and freedom, either alone or in community with others, and both in public and private, to manifest and propagate one's religion or belief in worship, teaching, practice and observance. Then in the clearest possible words Article 145 goes on to say-

“No religious community shall be prevented from providing religious instruction for persons of that community.”

There is not the slightest hindrance or obstacle in the People's New Constitution or in the nation at large to complete an absolute freedom of religion.

Indeed, when the President was taking his oath of office on the 6<sup>th</sup> October, 1980, as the first Executive President of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana he felt free and the highest Court of the land upheld him, to manifest in public his own personal belief in the Deity when he added to the constitutional oath of office the words “and I do swear, so help me God.” Cde. Speaker, you will remember that those words caused objections to be taken in certain quarters but the Court of Appeal upheld the right of the Cde. President even on the formal occasion when he was taking oath of office to proclaim his religious belief.

What my party argued before the Constituent Assembly was to the effect that every Guyanese was equal to any other Guyanese in so far as all rights and freedoms are concerned. Those who have religious beliefs still continue to be Guyanese citizens and as human beings could not be subjected to a Constitution which, must be for all the people, foisted on them a declaration of belief in the Deity against their will. [Applause] On recognition of religion and equal opportunity for religion in this country we must not lose sight that it was the P.N.C. Government that gave recognition to the Hindu and Muslim holidays. [Applause] It was the P.N.C. Government that increased religious radio time over our radio.

I have left for last a short comment on the humanity and the decency which are reflected in article 30 of the Constitution. This article has removed centuries of ungodly discrimination against children who, through no fault of their own were born to parents who did not marry each other. [Applause] Article 30 of the Constitution in language that every child can understand tells the child born out of wedlock that his legal rights and his legal status are exactly the same as those enjoyed by children whose parents are married [Applause]. For how much longer could a progressive, even poor, nation like Guyana have continued the hypocrisy and injustice of such discrimination? I am a layman but the Constitution can only mean one thing when it says that “All forms of discrimination against children on the basis of their being born out of wedlock are

illegal.”

I have read in article 39 that it is duty of all public agencies, including the Courts, to be guided in the discharge of their functions by the principles set out in the Chapter of the Constitution which contains article 30. Therefore, this Government can properly boast that it has brought about the enshrinement in the Constitution of a new rule of law which has perhaps too late, but better late than never, righted the great historic wrong to innocent children born out of wedlock. [Applause]

The Government is walking on the road laid down in the People’s New Constitution. There is nothing in the President’s Address to this Assembly that shows any deviation or departure. Therefore, I have great pleasure in commending that the Address to the National Assembly, which was given by our Cde. President, be given wholehearted support and approval and final endorsement.

The Chairman: Cde. I.Chowritmootoo

Cde.I.Chowritmootoo: Cde. Speaker, I like the other new entrants to this National Assembly would like to state that it is an honour and a signal privilege to have been elected to this honourable Assembly, the highest forum of representation in the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. This has been made possible through an indigenous device to ensure the further extension of practical democracy. Of course, this ingenuity, reflective of all the arrangements of the People's new Constitution, has become a reality through the true working class party, the national political institution, the People's National Congress. How else could this honourable Assembly have been dominated by interests' representative of the small man, the working class masses? How else could the son of a sugar worker of indentured ancestry have risen to this height? All to the credit of that dynamic political institution, the People's National Congress. My presence here is a living testimony of the earnestness with which the party of the working class, the People's National Congress, tackles the problem of true and total representation of all sub-cultural groups in this country. Also, my presence gives support to the fundamental principle of equality of opportunity for all, for so long as one has the ability and one applies one's mind and body to the task of development, one can reach the greatest height in society.

It is a fact that his Excellency the President, Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, is also the son of a humble school teacher, while our dear Cde, Prime Minister is the offspring of poor subsistence farmers.

I speak this afternoon after the all-embracing address made by his Excellency the President, Cde. L.F.S. Burnham, to this honourable Assembly, in his own inimitable style, setting out the broad policy of reconstruction and the parameters within which the agricultural sector will continue to play in our forward thrust in the establishment of a socialist society. To highlight fully how very important agriculture is to this nation of ours, I refer to Cde. President's Address to this Assembly on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1981, the last page and the last paragraph.

I quote:

“..... in our hands lies the destiny of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. Let these be safe hands.”

Indeed, we must as Guyanese apply our hands to the task of ensuring that the soil yields an abundance to feed ourselves and others and it is for this reason that the Government of the People's National Congress, the people's Government, has on stream three massive agricultural projects, namely the Tapakuma, the M.M.A. and the Black Bush Polder Extension Drainage and Irrigation Projects which, when completed, will bring well over 250,000 acres of new land under cultivation at a cost of \$643 million while at the same time it will enhance the productivity of hundreds of thousands of acres presently under cultivation. This bears testimony to the fact that development is concerned with people and, therefore, the fact of the hundreds of thousands of acres of land being prepared gives further proof to the People's New Constitution. Here again I am forced to refer to Article 18 which states that land is for social use and must go to the tiller.

Agriculture is the main factor in our economy and the greatest number of persons are employed directly and indirectly.

With the continued emphasis and importance attached to this sector, Article 22 of the People's New Constitution, that is, the right to work is indeed guaranteed. Our people, our first and foremost resource, must maximize the use of our second greatest resource and that is, land. This will take place with the guidance and leadership of the People's National Congress.

In order to further strengthen our agricultural drive, the process of education and learning is intensified by (a) the inauguration of a degree course in agriculture at the University of Guyana (b) the expansion of the Guyana School of Agriculture for double intake of students; (c) the establishment of six rural training centre to train youths and adults in agricultural skills and to give a fillip to practicing farmers; (d) the expansion of the Burnham Agricultural Institute in the North West District where more and more youths are being trained; (e) intensifying agricultural education in primary and secondary schools and the establishment of viable school farms especially those attached to the community high schools; (f) supporting and increasing the number of youth clubs with an agricultural orientation;(g) practical on- farm training of youths at the Guyana National Service Centres; and (h) increasing the number of agricultural field staff. More agronomists, more agricultural field assistants will be added to the staff to ensure that there is continuous training of agricultural staff, both at home and abroad, so that the programme of agricultural development can go on.



[Cde. I. Chowritmootoo continues]

It will also provide the necessary information services at all levels to satisfy the farmers and I wish to refer to one particular radio programme “the farming world” which is indeed benefiting farmers especially in the rural areas.

4.00 p.m.

All of this reflects the seriousness and importance which our Government, the People’s Government, places on agriculture. One should realize that development has to be done by the people for the benefit of the people, for it is people who will have to be involved at all levels in the process of production. Also, it is people who will continue to benefit from higher and higher levels of production and so long as the People’s National Congress is in Government, the people will continue to benefit.

Cde. Speaker, farmers have benefited through a number of incentive schemes and I wish to refer to some of these schemes: duty-free imputation of stockfeed ingredients so as to boost our poultry industry; duty free concession on agricultural machinery, appliances, spare parts, tools, fertilizers and pesticides. Not so long ago, a number of tractors were brought into the country from our neighbour Brazil to ensure that the power drive of agricultural production takes place. Therefore motor vehicles for transporting produce from the farms to the markets. Farmers are not left alone to produce but the necessary transportation arrangements are being made whereby they themselves can acquire, through duty-free concessions, vehicles to transport their produce to the markets. There are also free and subsidized planting materials and seeds of all recommended crops that are being distributed to the farmers.

Loans and grants through the accelerated production drive are also made available. And it is interesting to note that while there are a number of farmers clamoring for loans and grants, there are some who are very wicked in thought who would use those facilities provided by the People’s National Congress Government for other purposes. We must be careful to ensure that those, who are to benefit from these facilities provided by the Government, use them for the purpose for which they were granted.

The Guyana Agricultural and Industrial Co-operative Development Bank is also available to facilitate easy access to credit. In fact, since the assumption to office of the People’s National Congress, the sum of \$ 427.3 million was spent on agricultural development. Yearly, the Government of the People’s National Congress has national agricultural exhibitions where the produce of the nation is displayed and where new innovations, new technology and new methods of agriculture are also displayed.

Cde. Speaker, the establishment of the Guyana National Service also indicates the emphasis that the People’s National Government is placing on agriculture. At Kimbia, a Guyana National Service agriculture-oriented centre, a large acreage, running into thousands of acres, is under black-eye cultivation.

In relation to the feed, cloths and house the nation programme, I wish to state here that some people feel that they can put a time span on feeding, clothing and housing a nation. The

programme of feeding, clothing and housing the nation is a continuous exercise because more people are born and more people are in the country and therefore the feed, clothe and house the nation programme must be seen as a continuous one, where more and more people will have to be fed and clothe and housed.

Thousands of acres of land are also under cotton cultivation at Kimbia. There is a cotton gin at Kimbia which does the first stage of processing before it is sent to the Santa Textile Mill to be refined into cloth. It is interesting to note that children who were involved in the first mass games exercise received free uniforms produced from cloth manufactured by our own Sanata Textile Mill. Thanks to the People's National Congress Government.

The nationalized company of Bookers, now GUYSUCO, is now not only concerned with the production of sugar as it was traditionally involved in. It has embarked on a diversification of crops programme where legumes are planted under a large acreage. Palm oil production is also pursued and fish rearing is doing well while the fields be follow.

Cde. Speaker, it can be clearly seen that the agricultural programme of the People's National Congress, the Government of the People's natural choice is intended to

- (a) Attract and secure the full and intelligent participation of the people in production, distribution and consumption.
- (b) To develop the resources of our great country including off-shore fishing resources, and that is why a Ministry of Fisheries was established, to feed the nation adequately in terms of quantity, quality, variety and price.
- (c) To increase exports of traditionally exported products as well as new products in order to increase the National Export earnings.
- (d) To ensure our contribution to world peace and the alleviation of world hunger and malnutrition.

Such is the agricultural programme of the People's National Congress Government.

It was indeed pleasure and with a sense of pride that I made this maiden address.

[Applause.]

The Speaker: Cde. Fredericks.

Cde. P. Fredericks: Cde. Speaker, Article 34 of the People's New Constitution declares that-

“It is the duty of the State to enhance the cohesiveness of the society by eliminating discriminatory distinctions between classes, between town and country, and between mental and physical labour.”

It is the mission of the People's National Congress Government to pursue resolutely this objective in order to ensure that the masses enjoy the better quality of life which is consistent with our socialist ideals. There is no doubt that the efforts of this Government in this area, of removing the differences between town and country, between costal and hinterland regions, are palpable.

Cde. Speaker, I would attempt very quickly to point out some areas of development that have taken place in our rural and hinterland areas and which show what this Government has been doing in fulfilling its objective. Let us first look at the area of communication. There was

increased demand for, first of all, telecommunications facilities to meet developmental needs of Guyana. The Guyana Telecommunication Corporation launched a \$24 million expansion programme in 1971. Direct Distance Dialing was introduced. Twenty-six exchanges will be involved in this Direct Distance Dialing programme. Interior residents have benefited from this system. A tropospheric scatter system was installed at Port Kaituma and a micro-wave system at Matthews Ridge. As a result there is now Direct Distance Dialing between Maburuma and Georgetown and between Matthews Ridge, Port Kaituma and Georgetown. This service is extremely important for interior residents and city dwellers. In the very near future this service will also be extended to other interior regions. Radio sets were also installed in many interior communities, for example, Bartica, Mahdia, Kurupung and other stations, thus making quick and effective communication possible between one station and another and between these stations and the centre.

4.10 p.m.

This Government of the People's National Congress has also done a tremendous lot to improve the transportation facilities for the residents of the rural and hinterland areas. Some of the notable achievements in this field were: the 51-mile Corentyne Highway, the 120-mile Upper Mazuruni Road, the 1732-ft. Canje Bridge and the well renowned Demerara Harbour Bridge. [Applause]

Yesterday the Hon. Member, Mr. Abraham spent much time telling us about punctured tyres on aircraft but we on this side do not see the puncturing of rubber tyres as being a strange and unusual phenomenon. The Hon. Member has always given credit to the P.N.C. for our progressive policies as he did yesterday also but he forgot to mention that in recent years the Guyana Airways Corporation has improved its service to the hinterland with the purchase of two Hawker Sidley 748 craft. [Applause]

Airstrips were established at many locations and to name a few-Bemichi, Kato, Aishalton, Karasabai, Lethem, Annai, Port Kaituma, Kamarang, Kurupung, Konawaruk and others. Several new ships, pontoons and barges were also commissioned by the Transport and Harbours Department, among them the ship Kumaka which serves the people of the North West region adequately and is convenient for both passengers and cargo.

These are just some of the facilities in the field of communication afforded the people of the rural and hinterland areas by the Peoples' National Congress Government.

A country's development is partly determined by the degree of efficiency of its electricity system. Our electricity system spreads from Georgetown to the hinterland. As part of the overall programme of expansion of rural electrification the Guyana Electrical Corporation is in the process of constructing a 69 KV transmission line from Linden to No.53 Village on the Corentyne, and installation of sub-stations at GUYMINE, Linden, Garden of Eden, Versallies, Kingston, Onverwagt, Everton and Canefield. New generating stations have already been built at Garden of Eden and Canefield. Smaller generating stations have also been installed at places like Barica, Anna Regina, Wakeneam, Lethem, Mabaruma and other areas, all with a view to enhancing development and improving the quality of life of the Guyanese people.

Another area where there have been vast improvements is in the water supply to rural and hinterland areas. On its establishment 1972 the Guyana Water Authority (GUYWA) was charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all Guyanese have adequate water supplies for their various needs and they have successfully worked on a number of projects such as the drilling of wells and installation of pipelines at Moblissa, Kimbia, and Tumatumari, and well and water treatment plants at the Mahaica and Anna Regina Multilateral Schools.

Though beset the world economic difficulties during the seventies, GUYWA has been able to improve and expand water supplies in several areas. Among those areas which benefited were Linden, the east Demerara District and Bartica. Presently emphasis is being focused on the Rupununi area where 46 wells are being installed. Approximately one-third of these 46 wells are already completed.

The President in his Address to the National Assembly said that the task of the Ministry of Environment and water Supply is to ensure that long before the international Drinking Water Supply and sanitation Decade is ended every Guyanese should have access to pure water for all relevant purposes and this is what our Government will do. [Applause]

In the area of health much has been done to improve the services for our brothers and sisters of the hinterland areas. A number of health centers were built in interior areas and some of these were built at Saxacalli, Essequibo, Riverview, Mahdia, Kwebana, Parika, Orealla and Ebini. Cottage hospitals were built at Mibicuri, Black Bush Polder, and Waramuri in the North West region. A modern hospital is presently being constructed at Aishalton in the Rupununi. A number of health posts have also been established in the very remote areas of the country.

Two interior regions, Region No.8, Potaro/Siparuni, and Region No.9. upper Takutu-Upper Essequibo are presently benefiting from the Community Health Worker programme and in the very near future all of our communities will benefit from this service whereby comrades from their own communities assist in the day- to -day health programme. A number of people from the interior are also being trained in all aspects of the medical field so that they can return to serve their communities.

Education, like health, is a very vital aspect of our everyday life and this Government, because of its interest in people and because the development of people is its goal, has thought it fit to first of all make education free from nursery to university-/[Applause] and then to take secondary education into rural and hinterland areas.[Applause] In the past, children from these areas had to travel long distances to Georgetown, or live in Georgetown, in order to obtain a secondary education but today there are secondary and multilateral schools in our rural and hinterland areas. Children in these areas are also benefiting tremendously from the Community High School programme.

4.20 p.m.

I have spoken briefly on some of the facilities that have been extended through the present Government to the people of our rural and hinterland areas of Guyana, facilities which in the past were only through of as belonging to the urban people. When we have such facilities in the country areas we would not want to leave these areas to live in the town. We would be encouraged to stay and develop our hinterland, and one has to only leave Georgetown to travel in any direction to realize the vast development that has taken place in our rural and hinterland areas.

If one understands the organisation and functions of the new Local Democratic system, one would understand that from these system residents of our rural and hinterland areas will benefit. Never before have our people of the hinterland been afforded such an opportunity, an opportunity to make their own decisions and, to put it into simple words, an opportunity to run their own affairs. All this demonstrates that this Government is doing everything in its power to eliminate discriminatory distinctions between town and country. It is against this background that I wish to give unequivocal support to the Motion standing in the name of my colleague Cde. Hinds. [Applause]

The Speaker: The sitting of the Assembly is suspended for 30 minutes

Sitting suspended at 4.25 p.m.

4.57 p.m.

On resumption---

Cde. Ram Karran: (The Deputy Speaker): Your Honour, I am happy to be the recipient of congratulations and I wish to thank His Excellency the President for expressing his congratulations to me. However, sir, it is a pity that I cannot reciprocate those congratulations having gone through with very great care this empty document which has been distributed, in that our verbose President has run out of words. There are so many high sounding words, but alas how cheerless and, indeed, how naked. This whole exercise reminds me of the tale of the king and his two tailors. Just as in the fable the courtiers of that day did not see the nakedness of the monarch. I am assured that the sycophants of today cannot envisage, cannot recognize the nakedness of this document. No doubt they will have in due course drawn to their attention the Guyanese people, the pressed and depressed Guyanese people like the two children in the fable who drew the attention of the naked monarch.

Throughout this document and in fact in nearly all the speeches we heard in this chamber was reference to the new Constitution. Everything was the new Constitution. But not one of the Hon. Members, the new ones or the old ones, referred to that fateful day, the 15<sup>th</sup> December, when again, in fact, one should say the most distressing episode in our country's history took place. No one referred to the elections of that day. Why? They could not. Perhaps it is only a very foolish fool who would traverse the senesce of his crime with the loot not yet intact for fear of recognition. We feel, sir that the emptiness of this document speaks louder than the few empty words that appear. But I feel sure that before this treacherous parliamentary journey is over, that is, before the five years, the Guyanese people will be united, not on the basis of the penultimate line of the first paragraph of page 6, but really united, totally united, ready to rid themselves and Guyana for all time of the gang that tenaciously ride their backs and who at the same time seek to masquerade as friends and socialists.

It is from a magic election, so aptly described by a former friend of the P.N.C circus, the New York Times, that this Assembly has been expanded. It is from these elections that this expanded Assembly has emerged. What to do? To expand democracy? I do not see it here. To initiate socialism? I see it here neither. Why? Perhaps the exercise could have been more cheaply done by continuing with the House of Israel attendance we used to have in the past. But who can tell, perhaps it is the House of Israel distinguished in a new garb, maybe I can question: "All those House of Israel adherents and supporters, bow your heads" Perhaps we can do that. This expanded audience, Your Honour; this duplicate of the House of Israel is not the only sin in so far as the bruised backs of the Guyanese taxpayers are concerned. My colleague and friend has referred to the new Order. The first Order that has appeared on the Order Paper is the expansion of the stipends, allowances etc., etc., for certain people who sit opposite. But that is not the only bit of-

5.05 p.m.

The Speaker: Cde. Ram Karran, you are kind, you have forgotten me.

Cde. Ram Karran: I do not believe that the Speaker should be called in the debate at certain times. I am wary about that, Your Honour, because I do not think that his Honour should interrupt speakers when they are on their feet, so I very judiciously left you out at this part.

Sir, as I said, the extravagance does not stop at expanding the chamber nor does it stop only at the increased stipends which the country can ill afford at this time. But they must look at it. We must observe in passing that while my friends have been very vocal in their criticism of the colonialists –and I too, and my colleagues on this side have been very critical of colonialism– when we look at the exercise where a number of people. Listed on the P.N.C electoral list faced the electorate and yet came through the back door to sit as technocrats, we think it's the greatest abuse to the Guyanese people. How could they do that, have two doors to come in?

You remember, sir, when Mr. F.J. Seaford was nominated to the House after he had been a candidate in the elections and he had lost, the whole of Guyana turned against that principal which brought him into the House. How could the P.N.C criticize the colonialists and adopt the measure of pretending that colonial style. In fact, the colonialists did it with more dignity, with more decency and finesse. But such crudeness can never pass for a Party that calls itself a socialist Party. Cannot. “Vanguard Party” on top of that.

All that is happening at a time when this Government has failed in the year 1981 to match up the agreement on the minimum wage- shall I say maximum for 1979. How could you justify a situation like this, of throwing away tons of money to its supporters and friends when the agreement for the minimum wage of \$ 14 a day was signed by the Government with its eyes wide open and it cannot maintain it? What sort of Government is this?

My friend referred to the unemployment situation. I venture to say here that the P.N.C. would not dare to publish the unemployment figure. The unemployment figure is as serious a disclosure for them to make, just as damaging, as the list of proxies and the list of postal votes in December 1980. These invasions on the public purse are undoubtedly, as my friend said, the cause of the distressing situation reflected in the dishonesty of so many civil servants. I do not see my friend, the Minister of Finance here... well, it occurred a little before his advent, perhaps he will tell us where the Accountant –General.

Not only that, but what about the masked bandits who roam our streets, where people have to set up all night to protect their lives and their properties although the next day they have to work. You know that is true Ptolemy. You can't stop these things; you can't stop them unless you stop fiddling with the funds at this level. That is what the P.N.C. has done and is doing. These massive frauds hardly reach the muzzled press or even this Assembly, through the Public Accounts Committee and the other statutory bodies authorized to bring them here.

My friends know that the public accounts of this country have not been audited. I have not seen an audited report since the year 1970. We are in 1981. How can you husband the people's money? How can you know what are your expenses. No wonder the whole country's financial situation is in chaos. And yet with all of that my friends refer to this Assembly as the

august chamber. I am more inclined to think that this can better be described as the stables of King Augeas whose stables- before I say the advent of Hercules. That brings me to the situation with my friend the Hon. Minister of Energy who, like Hercules, seems not to have appreciated that both the commodities he as was faced with, Hercules, that is, two streams, two rivers, had to be flowed over this heap of cow manure little recognizing that he had power from both items, the water as well as the cow dung for thirty years 'collection.

My friend could not have been in that same position at this time of the world's history where both items can produce heat but he is just as confused as Hercules when he told us about P.C. and R. who was here in the year 1954. he told us yesterday that P.C. and R. is now advising in the year 1981, that the "Tiger Hill project would cost more per unit of electricity than the Upper Mazaruni site. That is not the argument. The argument has been and I informed the Hon. Vice-President that in 1966 the Members on this side of the Assembly asked the than Government to see what P.C. and R said and to carry out its advice.

What was its advice? Its advice was that the two 10-megawatt sets that had been installed at the Kingston "B" station had to be increased by another 10 -megawatt set by 1971 if the country had not gone to hydro. The year 1966 was the time of preparation; in 1967 and 1968, even in 1971, the Government's attention was drawn to the situation.

But what do we have? What did we have? Now 1981, ten years after we should have gone to hydro, whether we had gone to "Tiger Hill or whether we had gone to Upper Mazaruni or whether we had gone to -I understand that he is going now to the North West, I think it is a 10-megawatt site, Tumatumari. What has happened, sir, is the meantime is this, that even the normal maintenance of the limited supply had not been maintained and Sir Lionel Luckhoo, the newly again appointed Ambassador had said a great deal although I am of the view that he did not say all.

5.15 p.m.

But what happened at that time? "A boiler tube bore" and they filled it with cement."A second one bore" and they filled it with cement resulting in a situation where when both sets were working together we were unable to get the capacity that these sets supposed to produce. You could not get 20 megawatts of electricity. That, Your Honour, to my mind is a criminal act on the part of those people who were responsible because everyone knows that unless you had a green card you could not go there and sometimes a hiring and supporter of the P.N.C. Went with his green card and said "I was sent to watch this machine." Watching the machine cannot produce electricity nor can it maintain the plant to have had the best results.

This National Assembly some time ago passed a law making that concern a public utility, governed by certain regulations, but this Government did not observe- I wonder if the Hon. Minister for Energy and Mines is aware that such legislation does exist and there are certain formulae by which the price of electricity will go up, fuel cost. Everything has gone to rack and ruin and that is why we are told on the air every other day by people who are not competent to deal with the matter that the cost of electricity has to go up. Who is going to pay for



the inefficiency and the ignorance that have caused such a situation in the electricity corporation?

I have not seen in any document or heard from any Hon. Minister or civil servant or functionary that for the neglect which Luckhoo talks about and which we know about that their friends in the united States or their friends from London or their friends from anywhere else subsidizing that part of the neglect. The Guyanese people have to pay for everything and it is a shame that they sit here and did not refer to it or treat it in the President's Address.

Sir, my friends cannot hope to get away with that. They can get away with nothing so far. The Guyanese people are well aware. As I said just now, they will be thoroughly united to deal with them in due course.

I went outside, sir, and I saw some posters. One is, "The Year of the Diasibled". Last year it was "The year of the child" and this callous administration allowed a child, who possibly could have been saved had she been sent overseas, to die, and the anguished cry of her resounded throughout this country.

We talked of "the year of the disabled" and last Saturday I watched the stray catchers from Georgetown armed to the hilt going into Sophia pasture- there are no roads there and no houses because one recognizes the hazards of straying cattle on streets and in built-up areas. This was the Sophia pasture, where the municipality has been for some time dumping refuse. These cows, in the hot midday sun, drowsy, resting, when the stray-catchers startled them and drove them down to the pound. The owners had to pay \$ 10 for each cow. But who were the owners of the cows, those affected? One was a widow, an aged widow. One used to be employed here on the lawn. He is now a retired employee without a pension, and three of them are paralytic-John Seegobin, Joseph Seenarain, Jack Akulu. Incidentally some of those names I called did not appear on the voters list. They were scored out and some were not allowed to vote. And this Government is commemorating or celebrating or giving publicity to the call for the observation of the year of the disabled. Isn't that a shame?

My friend the hounourbale sub-Minister of Agriculture- sir, you will forgive me because I do not know the titles; one Ministry has four Ministers or three Ministers. Last year he regaled us with all this talk about all the difficulties he had with the aggressive waters. He was telling us about production of rice, production of this, production of that, production of the other, production of milk. I need not remind him of the fact that in this country, which boasted a surplus of milk in the "40's and 50's, gallons upon gallons of milk thrown in the drains in Georgetown. What has happened today that we cannot get fresh cow's milk and he few cows that are tended by these paralytics are being hounded down to the pound.

But my friend 's contribution about production – these figures he had given us with respect to production, let me remind him that such figures and others by his predecessor had been put in the newspaper, sent to this Assembly and they all failed. I remember last year they said they were going to produce 335,000 tons of sugar and I have a feeling that my friend particularly did not quote last year's production in his dissertation before this Assembly. Let me tell him now that I am not directly connected with any of the industries but I can take a bet with him, Your Honour- you can be the witness- that the production figures he gave will be as false as those of his predecessor. They will continue planting rice in the Chronicle and they will continue

planting sugar and all the other things in the Chronicle, but the figures he is calling are unrealistic, the main reason being that you cannot cheat the people at the top, ride them with their backs sore and expect them to produce. They will not produce. You have to find a means of treating the people as human beings not as jackasses. They are not going to be able to produce under those conditions.

And this is a word of warning. My friends talk about increased production and productivity. These are high-sounding words but there is the corollary to that. How do you get those things? You got them not by sitting in ivory towers as you do here and talk over the heads of the people and at the same time lambaste them with whip lashes.

That is not going to bring about production productivity. All this blabbering talk contained in the Presidential address is empty. The Hon, Members must tell us.

5.25 p.m.

I remember my friend, the Hon. Vice –President, was telling us of all the fairy tale; hydro here, hydro there, hydro, hydro, everywhere. We have not solved the problem in the area where there is the largest concentration of people. Hydro is alright, it is cheap; it is going to save us the oil bill. But the Canadians had operated electricity in this country for a long number of years with wood. We do not have to import the wood. We do not need foreign exchange for that. How much will it cost to set up as stand by two small 5-megawatt plants in Georgetown to assist? And then we can think of going for the hydro hero, there and everywhere. But what my friend tells us is that we must limit the use of electricity. We must count down on electricity. We are forced to cut down whether we want it or not. But one would have taught that a country like this, faced with areas and even in the urban areas, a supply of electricity, so that young people particularly can spend their spare time making something out of cheap electricity so as to be able to bolster themselves.

Our friends told us of all the glorious things. I nearly said “lie” but that is banned. We will accept what they say as completely false unless this Government is able to show that all this blabbering that went on before becomes a reality. Where is the bicycle factory? Where is the glass factory? Where is the cotton that you are planting? You do not even have the cotton seed. Where is it? You are telling us about hydro-electricity this, that and the other. Sir, you must show us these things and satisfy us that these things are a reality and then perhaps we will accept that the fairy tales they are wavering before us are themselves going to be things that will come about. Electricity should not be curtailed. The Government must find some means of supplying electricity at a cheap price so that the unemployed, particularly, can gain by it. Those are the things that should have been in this empty document.

In closing, I want to congratulate my friend on the delivery of his speech not the content, and to say that I was enamored more or less by his speech last year about the aggressive waters and hope that in his new Ministry of Agriculture that he will show a little bit of his own aggressiveness among the sheep and the goats in the Ministry.

The Chairman: Cde. Reid

The Prime Minister (Dr. Reid): Cde. Speaker, we have now come to the end of this debate. It is my privilege, a very unique one at this time, to wind up this debate. I want to before doing so to congratulate you on the orderliness of this Assembly throughout this debate. [Applause] Probably it is a sign of new things to come. I wish, too, to record congratulations to the Executive President for this very historic presentation. [Applause] I really believed that as we have come to the end by dear and good friend, Cde. Ram Karran, the Hon. Member, would have been digging his teeth into something. But he came out to the end of it so that all of us have realized, and I think people outside, that he was merely talking for the sake of talking. He spoke about the growing of cotton and about not searching for alternative means of energy. That is

written in the booklet. This is written in that Address. But reading is one thing, interpretation and understanding must be something completely different. And so he misses all that because I do not believe he took any time to examine the presentation that was made by our Cde. President.

Again, Cde. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the New Members who have spoken for the first time in this Assembly. They made their maiden speeches. I am certain that many of them, however, were not speaking for the first time as public speakers and I want to congratulate all of them. [Applause].

In this new Parliament as I look around, especially on this side of the Assembly, I feel a sense of joy, for here we see so much new blood. If you enter any place Cde. Speaker and you see no young people, you see no new blood; so to speak, it is a sign that that is a dying place. [Applause] I have no intention of drawing any attention to the opposite side of the chamber, the Minority Party. But, Cde. Speaker, change during this period has challenged this Parliament and this National Assembly and it is for us to spend some time to understand change. I, with my farming background, always think that in that discipline there is never an end to change, for you can see it constantly. Unless changes are adopted then the farmer will find it difficult to make a living.

New things are happening all the time but for some people there is never any change. Indeed, however, this must be an historical event in this National Assembly, and I hope that all of us will approach our task with good will and co-operation for the common good of all. The economic world in which we live and in which we are struggling for change is not a Sunday School, it is not a little Cocktail party, it is a ruthless world, and sometimes even immoral, and it is heartening to see that even though the economic crisis have been described as even worse than World War II, the main industries in Guyana have not done any retrenchment at all. As a matter of fact, there has been greater employment in those industries. GUYSUICO has expanded itself from a mere sugar-producing agricultural industry to one producing other crops. And we in Guyana recognized that it is no point shouting about human rights when sometime all around us there is more human violence.

#### 5.35 p.m.

We have been able in this country of ours to maintain a certain standard and level of living that there is no doubt, no doubt whatsoever as far as our ability to feed ourselves is concerned. And no one can say our Guyanese people are dying because of lack of food. As a matter of fact, Guyanese people make a choice of even the protein that they should consume whether it is fish or fowl. A glance at our foreign policy at this time is useful, for our being non-aligned is real and so the fight is carried for the new International Economic Order, for notwithstanding how much we strive at home, we need also to fight in that International arena so that in time fundamental change will come about in the economic order of this world. We will not give up as some people indicated yesterday; very interesting, even though amusing, how that comrade speaking for that side of the Assembly had indicated that they have given up any battle, any kind of confrontation with any big power at all. It was not strange, Cde. Speaker, when that

comrade said that, because the Leader of that Minority group himself has already told us that for him it is a good thing to be a puppet of one of the developed super powers in this world of ours.

We therefore, need to maintain our security forces and it is no point lifting the amount of money spent to keep our security forces. We need to have the security forces for what will we develop if we have no country at all? The task will have come to an end with no benefit to all of us. Moreover, our security forces are not traditional for they do productive work especially in agriculture and there is evidence all around this country to this fact.

But we must be able to interpret change so that we can evaluate it against what was, not what might be, not what should have been, not what will be, but what was. And in Guyana there is evidence of change for the better all around us. Even though Georgetown is in this present stage as you get outside of old Georgetown you see evidence of the tremendous change. As you get into the rural area you see evidence of that change, not only the roads but the cottages. Even though there is shortage of paint, and there is a shortage of paint because more and more people have found it useful these days to want to use paint. Standards are lifting all the time and there is need for more and more. Hence, the President's Address gives us the direction in which this ship must proceed.

It was not expected in his presentation that he would have gone into great detail. It is for us, Cde. Speaker, to work out those details some of which have already been worked out, as you heard from so many speakers, so that the development can go on. He has set the task for us, what the state Planning Commission must do, how much monitoring we need to do, the restructuring of the entire thing what has to be done in the field of energy and so forth, water supply, and all of that. But those who spoke on the minority side were not even here to listen. I thought if they were here they would have remembered well, even if I was tempted to forget, how the President was looking at certain people as he indicated their task and we could not miss that in this Assembly, those of us who were present.

We know and we believe that this change in this Assembly is a change for the better, for today, all over this county, there is the sound, there is the evidence of people's power. One is tempted to ask: What is people's power? What is the power of the working peoples? Many of us are old enough to remember that some years ago my friends in the minority group had a taste of power, just a little taste of power and due to immaturity, lack of wisdom, they used it to help destroy people. That little history can help in interpreting these questions: "what is people's power"? State power in the hands of the few rich is not people's power.

I said not so long ago in this Assembly that in 1891 there was a new Constitution but when the elections were held in 1892 the same financial representatives of that old council were returned to power and there was no change at all; there was no new blood. I mentioned then that than even the darling, the idol, of the proletariat, Patrick Dragan, did not win a seat. Today when we look around in this Assembly we see people from the grass-roots. If there is any real grass-root you look around here and you see it. Look at them. They have not come to this Assembly for fun. Their mere demeanor is a sign of seriousness in this Chamber, a serious

commitment to the work we have to do, because if the means of production and distribution are left in the hands of the few rich there can be no meaningful change of colonial power, imposed by metropolitan rule on us. Some people would like to see a return of that because they were overjoyed when our former British masters sent their own lackeys here during the 1980 elections. And it was a little distressing during this debate to hear the leader of the Minority Group extolling that happening in this independent country of ours.

5.45 p.m.

But the people's power has developed over the years. It has taken some time. From the time we came into Government in December 1964, the seed was sown and today we are seeing the maturing of that young plant. All these working people in this National Assembly, this great law-making place, where many of us in our young days did not even dare to enter the compound, far more to climb the stairs to come into this place. It was beyond our dreams. [Applause] This is development that is being implemented for the first time. There are more elections to come to complement it but there is no magic wand; there is no crystal ball. The only thing that has to be done is useful and sensible work to pave the way through co-operativism to the new socialist society.

Again you find some lack of being able to interpret when Mrs. Jagan said there is nothing said about work and the right to work, when throughout the entire presentation it seems to me our commitment to labour and to release our energies has been moving through page by page, paragraph by paragraph like what has been described by people who are better learned in those terms, a golden thread in this document presented by our Executive President.

Here among us we have those who in the past were unheard, unheeded, unseen and unknown. All today, through the people's National Congress, have an opportunity, have a chance to be meaningfully involved in the whole Government of this country, in the whole administration of the economy of this country, in the whole management of production. Some of them have got the experiences already in the whole cultural uplift of all the people of this country. We are the ones who will have to do all of that, we who have come from among the people, and it is good to see this very relevant theme on the cover of this book In our Hands, in our hands the people indeed have taken all these tasks and activities into their our hands. That is people's power. It is to advance our progress on the new road and provide us with a catalyst-like action to a mechanism of co-operativism towards socialist goals and what these goals can be but the material upliftment of all the people of this country so that they can be fed, clothed and housed, be given opportunities for learning and opportunities for performing.

This would be a task to overcome the inherited evils of the old society, the old society that was so full of irregularities, some of which still torment us: a task to prevent alienation, waste, carelessness, indignity, misinformation, disinformation and misdirection.

I am certain, Cde. Speaker, that with this group of people getting out into the communities much

can be done and so it is our task in this Assembly, especially those of us who have been here for many years- and I do not see any new comers on the other side- we must help to consolidate this discipline. That is why I am so overjoyed that the orderliness was unique during these two days because we need creation of socialist discipline for the enhancement of life. [Applause] we need that discipline, not to control life but for the promotion of people's power with a sense of maturity and wisdom so that there will never be a repetition of that history I spoke of just a while ago, when in 1953 there was so much lack of wisdom and in 1957 there was very little improvement at all.

People in Guyana are now on the road to experiencing genuine freedom, not only human rights but also civil rights, and this freedom fortunately is being given to all the people of Guyana, those who love Guyana and even those who hate Guyana, those who defy our constitution and laws and those who run away to other countries and invite nations to cause aggression on our territory and our people. There is still freedom for all. Those who confirm to the Constitution and the law, as well as those who do not; those who look outside for foreign masters, especially at election time, to solve problems for us.

5.55 p.m.

We have come to the stage in our development where we have to accept the reality that the problems and issues of this country have to be settled by the people of this country. And that is why it is so good to emphasize the theme "In our hands", so that there would not be this wild march all over the world, seeking people who can give direction to this Government in office. For often has it been repeated that we will be neither pawns to East nor West. The world is real. The realities of this world are no dreams and I would wish that we stamp out from our attitude and our behavior any illusions about this world.

In this essay on representative Government way back in 1860, John Stewart Mills expresses the thought in these words, and I quote:

"A people may prefer a free Government, but if from intolerance or carelessness or cowardice or want of public spirit they are unequal to the exertions necessary for preserving it, if they will not fight for it when it is directly at hand, in all these cases they are more or less unfit for it. And though it may be for their good to have had it, sometimes even for a short time, they are unlikely long to enjoy it."

We have had that kind of experience in this country already. And so the Parliament itself is today being challenged by the People's New Constitution and the local Democratic Organs act, section 5 (f). It is written that there will be sanctions for any misdemeanor of any kind. This is to indicate the seriousness of the task before us.

In this National Assembly we have space. In this National Assembly we have time. I am sorry Mr. Feilden Singh did not speak. With space and time man must not only appreciate challenges but must accept the challenges. This time, therefore, must be occupied by sincere and

conscientious efforts by all of us here, not to tell people that we cannot even have the cotton seed when we know that the cotton that we grow is making the cotton cloth and the school children are wearing the cotton cloth. How can any sane or sober Member of this Assembly dare to do that at this stage of our development? Space and time must be utilizing most effectively for the benefit and use of our people. We are challenged to use our abilities and creative talents and if we do not now possess them, we have to develop those latent creative talents. We must even do some preparing now and get the creative talents, and do not tell us that we do not have any cotton at all when the school children are wearing clothes made from cotton grown in Guyana. What kind of thing is that? I always thought that if I am to tell a lie it must be to old people because they are already old. But is it dangerous, almost destructive, to tell lies to little children, for they are growing up and as you grow older and weaker they are growing stronger and stronger. I hope that they will not take you to task for that kind of misdemeanor.

We are challenged in this Assembly to use our abilities and creative talents in helping to develop one people to create one nation and to mould one destiny in this country of ours. Here, the new constitution, especially in relation to the local Democratic Organs Act, is giving us an opportunity to extend our horizons for the common good. I urge my friends to do just that and not to heed those who move around the world calling on other nations to cause aggression on our people and our country.

All I have to say at this moment is the often repeated sentence. "Father forgive them for they know not what they do". Yes, our country is in our hands. The public sector itself has come under a new kind of management. But the public sector management would be part of this group in this Assembly and the local Democratic Councils will have an opportunity to monitor, to check, to evaluate, to see how we are moving towards the goals and targets set, to know what is happening in those far-off communities. From every part of this country we have representatives and they will have to set the goals and targets. They will have to identify the individuals and groups with tasked set. They will have to be checking on what is happening. People's power will control people's property and that is part of the constitution now. The planning and the programming will have to be done in consultation with the people, with the workers, so that the work can go on.

As a matter of fact, the workers themselves will now be used as defenders of the workers' properties so that people's property would not fall prey to parasites and predators, to arsonists and so on, in this country. Workers themselves, I am sure, are learning that state property has to be taken care of and there has to be a continuous reproduction, adding more and more, so that there could be more and more for all. That is why instead of talking of minimum wages, Government has long decided that there must be incentives for greater production and productivity and that is a reality already in this country.



I believe that all of us have to be re-educated more and more in the spirit of the new society. All of us have learned to work in this new way and, by example, I believe this group can be extremely useful in the development process of our country.

Cde. Speaker, I want to say a word to the Minority Party, for there is a special challenge to all of them, a very direct challenge, both the small Minority and the smaller Minority Party.

[ Mr. Singh: “ I did not get to speak.”] I thought Cde. Abraham had done so well yesterday that you are a little ashamed to appear. [Laughter.] For the people’s power gained by the people has to be consolidated and preserved. That is one of the tasks for us.

6.05 p.m.

People’s power has come to the workers because of the P.N.C’s socialist ideal and correct socialist strategies and tactics. Some people take guidance from their lords and masters; some people are just copy-cats and when they go wrong their lord and masters desert them. I am not saying that some of them are in the process of getting that kind of experiences. I heard a conversation not so long ago, only this morning, and I was surprised at the kind of information that came from their friends. I will urge that their thoughts and actions, their will, the energy of any group with a socialist objective must now concentrate on safeguarding and increasing people’s power.

If you do otherwise then it is no point giving yourselves names of that kind. For how long would you dare to resist and attempt to destroy people's power that is now evidenced in this country. The task is clear before all those who claim to be socialist. I can understand my good friend, the Hon. Member Mr. Feilden Singh, who might want to undermine it all because he has a different idea, a different philosophy. I do not quarrel with him. Some day he will walk across. The P.N.C. works in a mysterious way [Interruption].

The Speaker: Comrades, please let us have some order.

The Prime Minister: But the task is clear now, to draw the broad masses of people into sensible and active involvement in greater socialist construction. I do not mind what kind of socialism you have in mind, whether it is Marxist, Leninist, scientific or what not, the business is to give support to people's power because the worker's involvement is most important. As a matter of fact, it is the most important happening in any country that has its ideal as socialist.

And so we must give the people an opportunity to let their living, creative energy now blossom forth and this Assembly must be a constant reminder of what must happen to the masses of people outside of this Assembly. When you tend to forget, come early enough so that you can gaze around, for we are committed to come on time so that you can look around to see this most significant and far-reaching change. Because in time there will be a blossoming forth, not a hundred fold, not a thousand fold but a million fold and we have got the examples already, for today I see the Guyanese people have been able to feed themselves. [Applause.]

We suffer sometimes because our old masters did such a perfect job in orienting us. Today we apply their customs, their culture, the food and drink that they are used to- their objective of doing trade with us. They have got us into that. We have not learnt enough about food but with the explosion in learning that is in progress, I am sure that before long people will accept protein regardless of what type; people will accept carbohydrates regardless of what type and get on with the business of maintaining their health and growing stronger and stronger.

We have seen the housing improvement that has happened in this country. Never before in the history of any Government have so many houses been built for so many people who never dreamt that they would have been owners of houses. [Applause.] We must evaluate from whence we came and not what it should be or what it will be. From whence we came. I remember when I came into this Assembly in 1964 I was reviewing the work of the former Government. I sometimes wonder. Yesterday they talked about bald face. I wonder. They built in a whole year, twelve houses and they did not stimulate the community to build their own. They were like dead people in this place and I am surprised to see them awakened to life again shouting emptiness all the time.

Cde. Speaker, no Marxist/ Leninist group, no believer in scientific socialism, can join enemies in organizing conspiracies and confrontations, engineering acts of sabotage and provocation and spreading lies and slander. No such group will be engaged in that kind of behavior. Whatever happens one thing is certain; people's power shall break the resistance of the enemies wherever they are [Applause]/As you heard yesterday, some have already capitulated to old system of exploitation of man by man, of dominationism and imperialism. They have thrown

up their hands; they have given up.

In like manner they had given up when we were to lay the foundation for socialist development, ownership and control of the means of production and the means of distribution of goods and services. What did they tell their master sitting in his rocking chair in the Presidential office of the United States of America? "My lord, I will never nationalize sugar and bauxite." How can you be a socialist and make that kind of commitment, give that kind of undertaking? How will you develop socialism if you do not own the means of production and the means of distribution of the goods and services once you have taken State Control? The basic principles of the thing are those. And to hear it repeated in this Assembly that we must cease striving for hydro-power that would be meaningful for the development of this country because as he said, the United States of America would not want us to have it. Think of it. What a revelation in this honorable Assembly. It is good for the new comers to hear with their own ears and to see the speaker of those words so that they will never forget.

6.15 p.m.

We do know that these new representatives have come from the sovereign people. Some of them have been discovered by the great discover, the People's National Congress. [Applause] They have been given an opportunity, a chance, to unfold, in common parlance, to find their feet, hold their footing, and I am satisfied that we are on the right road. As a matter of fact, hold their, why I urge my friends to walk with us, to travel on with us, is because the future is not only challenging but extremely exciting. Creation of a new and better society which is the mission of the People's National Congress is a most difficult task, for the most deep-seated and deep-footed happening is the touching of the economic foundations of the life of people, people who at one time dominated this society, who made their living by trading, who stayed in this country as parasites and others who grew fat and wealth in this country without productive work. They are hurt to the core because the foundations of their economics life have been touched.

We on this side have moved for economic emancipation because there is no point in having only political independence for that will soon be meaningless unless we have economic independence as well. This new Assembly that is here is evidence of the determination of this party in this Government that economic independence must become more and more meaningful and so this difficult task would become very gratifying for there can be no greater joy in a community than to see people causing tear-drops to become fewer and fewer, causing the new sluice to be built, the new koker to be constructed, the new dam to be built. There can be no greater life than this and thus I say the times are exciting because we live in a country where you can see development happening under your very eyes.

There are many who have gone. Some have given all sorts of explanations. Some see it as brain drain and what not. Some people believe that it is because there is no work here. Some who have a lot of work here have still gone. There are other attractions in those countries but for us who remain, who are involved totally, there can be great gratification and it is for that reason I urge my friends, as I did during the swearing- in ceremony, to see themselves as partners in this

undertaking on their own behalf, in their own self-interest so that as they grow older and older and they reflect there will be something, some action of theirs, that will cause them to have joy and happiness. My friend, Cde. Ram Karran, like myself, is growing older and older, greyer and greyer with fewer and fewer hairs.

It is in the fulfillment of this task that Guyana will be transformed to a socialist society, with hatred to none and goodwill to all.

Finally. Cde. Speaker, as I said a while ago, people's material welfare is the life-blood of our every action on this side of the Assembly. People's involvement in work and work organisation for performance is our business, hence we seek to have full and continuous employment. Look at the schemes that are being constructed now, notwithstanding the economic crisis. Many enterprises have come to a standstill in some countries. Some developed countries like the United Kingdom are retrenching people, day by day, week by week, month by month. The mighty and powerful United States is taking off those last employment for those are always first to be retrenched. In Guyana in our main industries more and more people are being employed; more lands are being brought under control so that people can find self-employment. The Abari that destroyed people for generations is now being tamed through the vision and plan of the People's National Congress. [Applause.] - so that those waters that used to be destructive will now serve for the use and benefit of the development of people.

Self-reliance can only mean releasing of man's energies through useful work for the production of goods and services for goods and services for people's use and benefit and for all people inside this country and outside, our programme and our policy is self-reliance.

So many people are interested in what we are doing here that enquires are coming from all parts of the world to tell the story of what is going on in Guyana as we have it in our hands.

I therefore, Cde. Speaker, commend this motion so ably moved by Cde. Denzil Hinds, a member of the Cloth, a reverend gentleman who had the courage, the strength, the hope, the faith to move this Motion in this Assembly. I now comment this Motion to both sides of this Assembly. [Applause]

Questions put, and agreed to.

Motion carried.

MEETING OF GUYANA BRANCH OF COMMONWEALTH  
PARLIAMENTARY ASSOCIATION

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Member, a meeting of the Guyana branch of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association will be held here after this Sitting. All members are therefore reminded to remain for the meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Resolved, “That this Assembly do now adjourn to a date to be fixed.”  
/The Vice-President, Parliamentary Affairs and Party /State Relation./

Adjourned accordingly at 6.30 p.m.