

THE
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES
OFFICIAL REPORTS

/Volume 09/

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE SECOND SESSION (1982) OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FOURTH PARLIAMENT OF GUYANA UNDER THE CONSTITUTION OF THE CO-OPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA.

5 th Sitting	14:00 hrs	Thursday, 1982-04-01
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MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY (77)

Speaker (1)

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

Members of the Government – People's National Congress (64)

Prime Minister (1)

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

Other Vice-President (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

Cde. H. Green, M.P.,
Vice-President, Public Welfare

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. Clark, 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

*Cde. H.O. Jack, M.P.,
Minister of Energy and Mines

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

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

*Cde. J.A. Tyndall, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of Agriculture

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

*Cde. J.R. Thomas, M.P.,
Minister of Home Affairs

*Non-elected Members

Ministers (8)

- 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 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. Y. V. Harewood-Benn, M.P.,
Minister, in the Office of the Prime Minister
- *Cde. H. Rashid, M.P.,
Minister, Office of the President
- *Cde. R.A. Van West-Charles, M.P.,
Minister, Health, in the Ministry of
Public Welfare

Ministers of State (3)

- Cde. M. Corrica, M.P.,
Minister of State for Culture, in the Ministry of
Education, Social Development
- Cde. R.C. Fredericks, A.A., M.P.,
Minister of State for Youth and Sports,
in the Ministry of National Development
- *Cde. C.E. Wright, M.P.,
Minister of State for Construction, in the
Ministry of Works and Transport

Parliamentary Secretaries (3)

- Cde. A.W. Bend-Kirton-Holder, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Women's Affairs and Housing.
- Cde. D.AN. Ainsworth, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Education, Social
Development and Culture
- Cde. B. Bhaggan, M.P.,
Parliamentary Secretary, Foreign Affairs.

*Non-elected Member

Other Members (23)

Cde. M. Ally, M.P.
Cde. M. Armogan, J.P., M.P.
Cde. B. Beniprashad, M.P.
Cde. J.B. Caldeira, M.P.
Cde. A.A. Chin, M.P.
Cde. J.P. Chowritmootoo, J.P., M.P.
Cde. E. B. Davidson, M.P.
Cde. H. Doobay, M.P.
Cde. A.B. Felix, M.P.
Cde. E.H.A. Fowler, M.P.
Cde. P. Fredericks, M.P.
Cde. E.F. Gilbert, M.P.
Cde. J. Gill-Mingo, M.P.
Cde. A. McRae, M.P.
Cde. J.M. Munroe, J.P., M.P.
Cde. R.N. Primo, M.P.
Cde. P.A. Rayman, M.P.
Cde. C.G. Sharma, J.P., M.P.
Cde. 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-Nascimento, J.P., M.P. Government Chief Whip

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

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

Members from the Regional Democratic Councils (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.I. London, M.S., M.P. (Region No 5 – Mahaica/Berbice)
Cde. I. Chowritmootoo, M.P. (Region No 6 – East Berbice/Corentyne)
Cde. N.R. Charles, M.P. (Region No.7 – Cuyuni/Mazaruni)
Cde. D. Abraham, M.P. (Region No. 8 – Potaro/Siparuni)
Cde. A. Dorrick, M.P. (Region No. 9 – Upper Takutu/Upper Essequibo) (Absent)
Cde. D. Hinds, M.P. (Region No. 10 – Upper Demerara/Berbice)

Members of the Minority (12)

(i) People's Progressive Party (10)

Minority Leader (1)

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

Deputy Speaker (1)

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

Other Members (8)

Cde. J. Jagan M.P.
Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud, J.P., M.P. Minority Chief Whip
Cde. N. Persaud, M.P.
Cde. C.C. Collymore, M.P.
Cde. S.F. Mohamed, M.P.
Cde. I. Basir, M.P.
Cde. C.C. Belgrave, M.P.
Cde. Dalchand, J.P., M.P.

(ii) United Force (2)

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

Officers

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

PRAYERS

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE SPEAKER

Hours of Sitting

The Speaker: Comrades and hon. Member, I am informed that the leader of the Assembly and the Whip of the Minority party have agreed that the general debate will last for two days. The Sitting will be from 14:00 – 16:00 or at such time as the Member then speaking finishes his speech within the time allotted to him, 16:30 – 18:30 hrs and the same proviso applies, and from 20:00 hrs until all the members listed for the day is completed.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS AND REPORTS

The following paper was laid:

Minutes of first meeting of the Committee of Selection held on Monday 1982-03-29.

[The Speaker (Chairman of the Committee of Selection)]

PUBLIC BUSINESS

MOTION

APPROVAL OF ESTIMATES OF EXPENDITURE FOR 1982

Assembly resumed the debate on the Motion moved by the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, for the approval of the Estimates of Expenditure for the financial year 1982.

The Speaker: Cde. Narbada Persaud.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Cde. Speaker, once again we meet in this Assembly to debate the budget Speech, a document which has given the analysis of the performance of the economy for the preceding year. Today, however, unlike many other years, we meet to discuss a Budget Speech in which, for the first time, the Government has openly admitted its failure to manage the economy of this country. The Government officials accepted that the nations' economy is perilously close to bankruptcy and that the alarm bell can ring at any time. Guyanese are indeed not only in serious trouble but, also, Guyana is in very grave danger.

Long before increase oil prices, international recession and imported inflation became excuses, there were clear signs of squandermania, mis-management and corruption in almost every aspect of the Government's activities. Today, corruption has stretched beyond the Government level and has gone right into the level of the P.N.C., meaning the K.S.I.S, which are now owned by the P.N.C. Today, such is being recognized and acknowledged by the Government itself.

In an editorial of the New Nation dated 14th February, 1982, it is stated, and I quote:

“Corruption is eating like cancer into the sinews of our society. Blackmarketing, smuggling and open peddling of contraband goods are afflicting us. The disease calls for drastic cure.”

The question here is, however, can the P.N.C. really effect any cure at all.

The Chronicle of March 16, 1982, talking of non-profitable projects states:

“These programmes, most of them drawn up by government have helped to plunge the economy into its deepest post World War recession. Collectively, however, the national economy is in shambles and this is no exaggeration.”

Here, something that the Government was being told about year after year by the P.P.P., something that the Government was hiding all along from the public, at long last they have come to recognise that the people are catching up with them and are being forced to admit that heavy corruption, mis-management, etc., are eating the society.

The New Nation of February 14, 1982 continues:

“It is now common knowledge that Guyana’s economy is tottering on the brink of collapse ...”

Further down in the same article of the New Nation, it is stated:

“The government, of course, cannot escape blame for the sorry state in which we find ourselves ...”

Here, Cde. Speaker, the official organ of the ruling Party is saying that the rulers cannot escape blame, yet the Vice President of Economic Planning and Finance has found everything and everybody else to blame save and except the Government itself. The impression created in the Budget speech delivered by the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance is that Guyana is not unique as far as the economic crisis is concerned. We are told that the world is in crisis, both the capitalist and socialist world. Figures were quoted to show that even the Soviet Union was having problems with its economy. All this was done to excuse the P.N.C. Government of the wrong planning also, which of course, is reflected very clearly in the failure of their third Development Plan, the mis-management, the corruption and the squandermania which exist in this society.

It must be noted that the socialist countries do not exist in a vacuum. Since they have trade and other relations with the capitalist countries, any crisis in the capitalist world is sure to have some effect on the economy of the socialist countries. Notwithstanding that, however, I wish to quote that Nikolai Tikholov said in an interview with a delegation of journalists from Japan.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: Comrades will know that Nikolai Tikhlov in the Chairman of the USSR Council of Ministers, and in a comprehensive interview with the Japanese journalists he said among other things.

Dwelling on the state of the Soviet economy and prospects of its development Nikolai Tikhlov pointed out and I quote “The Soviet Union entered the 80’s having a powerful economic, scientific and technological potential. The USSR now has vast national wealth estimated at over 2.9 trillion roubles. The increase of the national income for 1971 – 1980 amounted to 55 per cent. The industrial output went up over the same period by 78 per cent. The living standards of the Soviet people are steadily rising on the basis of the growth of the country in economic potentials”.

The Head of the Soviet Union Government stressed that the Soviet Union’s economic and social development confirms convincingly again that it is only socialism, its social and political system, its planning of the economy that ensures the successful solution of the present-day economy and social tasks. He continues and I quote “We have recently summed up the results of the implementation of the plan of the first year of the five-year period 1981 – 1985” and here he is talking directly about the 1981.

He said I quote again “I must say that despite a severe drought that adversely affected the development of the country’s agriculture and related industries, despite the gravitation of the international situation for which the reactionary imperialist forces are to be blamed, the Soviet economy was developing dynamically and made progress.” The past year, in the opinion of the head of the Soviet Government confirmed that the social and economic course worked out by the party for the eighties is scientifically substantiated and correct. Again, and I quote, “It is a fact Tikhlov said that even in the complex conditions of 1981 the Soviet Union achieved on the whole high economic results. The industrial output rose 3.4%. It can be mentioned for comparison that the volume of industrial output of developed capitalist countries in the past year rose on the whole only by 0.8 per cent, while Britain’s industrial output dropped by 6 per cent, that of France by 5 per cent, of Italy by 2 per cent. In the first year of its eleventh five year plan period, the Soviet Union made a new important step in the solution of social task. Real per capita income rose that year by 3.3 per cent”.

May I quote very briefly Cde. Speaker what one of the Secretary of the Trade Union of the USSR also said in an interview with journalist. He said that “income of factor and office workers will rise by 14½ per cent under the new five year plan, while retail prices for basic goods and services will remain stable”.

Here it is the Minister – excuse me – the Vice President of Economic Planning and Finance is making the point that if the Soviet Union’s economy is also in problem then what is wrong with Guyana’s economy also being in problems. As I said, socialist countries do not exist isolated from the other capitalist countries, but nevertheless, despite the effects of the crisis in the capitalist countries – figures I have quoted here where prices are going to remain stable under the present plan and wages are going to increase by 14½ per cent under the same period show the difference.

Can we compare the situation here in Guyana with the one in the Soviet Union. Are prices going to remain stable? Are wages going to increase? The answer of course Cde. Speaker, is clearly no.

With your permission Sir, I wish to quote from the Mirror which represented an article from GRANMA dated January 10th 1981. As far as the economy of that socialist country is concerned growth obtained ran to 12 per cent, a most significant figure given, the situation of international crisis. Productivity in general showed an extraordinary growth of 10 per cent which led to an 80 per cent increase in production. This meant a relative saving of the work of some two hundred thousand people. Average wages went up from 148 pesos in 1980 to 168 pesos in 1981 that is almost 14 per cent. One Cuban peso is slightly more than one U.S. dollar. The per capita income rose by about 9 pesos as a result of other complimentary measures such as the new social security order.

In public health the number of hospital beds increased by almost five per cent and those for social welfare by almost twenty one per cent. The Housing Construction Plan which called for the completion of 20,000 dwellings was over-fulfilled with some 24,000 dwellings finished. Cde. Speaker, here we are talking about socialist countries also in crisis. These are realities of socialist Cuba who today still is under the threat of US imperialism.

To cry crocodile tears now is really hypocritical since the situation did not reach this stage overnight. It has been progressively deteriorating over the past six years as we have been pointing out year after year in this very National Assembly, but on every occasion we were told that the silver lining is soon going to appear. Today, the dark clouds are there to stay and no indication as to when the silver lining will ever appear.

To ask for increase production and productivity again is wasting time. Workers cannot produce on hungry bellies. Today almost all companies have been abolished – as a result prices and charges have escalated beyond the reach of the great majority of workers. There is a great shortage of essential food. Lines are getting longer and longer with the limited available food items. Looting has taken place in some areas. One woman lost her life, many others were trampled while in lines desperately in search of food.

How can production and productivity increase when great deal of intolerance is being demonstrated by key personalities at the central political and administrative levels, when questions are raised about national economic issues as complained about the General Secretary of the Trade Union Congress. The Vice President at a meeting with the TUC said that he was unaware of massive retrenchment when he was asked the direct question. The President of the Public Service Union Mr. Daniels wrote the Permanent Secretary of the Public Service Ministry for information on advice by Cde. Desmond Hoyte. The reply states and I quote “I am afraid that the scheduling of the Ministry’s work is too tight for me to pursue rumours”. This was the reply by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Service to a letter sent to that Ministry by Mr. Daniels, the President of the Public Service Union and I want to repeat what he said “I am afraid that the scheduling of the Ministry’s work is too tight for me to pursue rumours”.

National Assembly

14:25 hrs

(Cde. Persaud continues)

Three weeks later, the Executive President himself disclosed that there would be retrenchment. What tomfoolery! In a document by the World Bank on Guyana's economy, dated 2nd June, 1981, the World Bank stated as follows:

“Government revenues as a per cent of GDP are quite relative to other non-oil exporting developing countries. Major new tax measures at this juncture might act as a disincentive to producers. A preferred alternative is a reduction in current expenditures as a percent of GDP both in Central Government and the rest of the Public Sector through redeployment of personnel and through tighter expenditure control methods.”

Here in this document, dated 2nd June, 1981, the World Bank was advising the Guyana Government that Government revenues as a per cent of GDP was quite high and that it had to balance its budget, it had to reduce expenditures and to do that it had to redeploy. In that document it is so stated. The Government is so tied up to imperialism and its agencies that it had no alternative but to take the advice of that imperialist outfit and to retrench over 6,000 workers. It is a shame! This has resulted in 6,000 workers being retrenched.

Cde. Speaker, with your permission I want to quote what the General Secretary of the Trade Union Congress, Mr. Pollydore, stated in a document that he presented last Sunday to the T.U.C. The topic is Assurance of No Retrenchment. He says:

“The Executive President at the meeting in his office” –

which Mr. Pollydore had mention earlier in this document-

“Stated that there would be retrenchments in the Public Service/Sector.”

This was after assurances were given that there was going to be no retrenchment. It was the Executive President himself who told Mr. Pollydore that there was going to be retrenchment.

“This disclosure was contrary to assurances given the TUC on a number of occasions by Government representatives.

The first assurance to the TUC was given during the wages negotiations between the Government and the TUC in July 1981.

The dominant consideration which influenced the TUC's decision to move away from its demand for a 25 per cent interim increase in wages during its negotiations and to settle for 7 and 10 and 12½ per cent increases was the need to avoid retrenchment.”

Here he is saying that in the negotiations with Government officials he was told that to avoid retrenchment the T.U.C. had to drop the demand for 25 per cent increase for the workers and had to settle for 7 and 10 and 12½ per cent increases. The T.U.C. was lulled into a false hope. What happened? It agreed to accept the 7 and 10 and 12½ per cent increases and yet today it faces this massive retrenchment of 6,000 workers.

The process of retrenchment has already started. The Budget Speech is today being debated. The proposal is made in the Budget Speech that 6,000 workers should be retrenched. The Budget Speech has not yet been approved but since yesterday hundreds of workers, if not thousands, have already received their letters. At the time they received the letters they were sacked from their jobs. It is reported that in a particular Ministry a number of people were in tears. This is the way the members of the Government want production! This is the way they treat workers! Give them a letter today and say, “You are fired!” in this country where unemployment varies between 30 and 35 per cent of the work force another six to ten thousand workers will join the fleet of unemployed.

The many problems affecting the workers today, such as high unemployment, massive retrenchment, shortages of essential food and other items, blackouts, water-cuts, high prices, exorbitant transportation and electricity charges etc. are all reflections of the grave economic crisis that we have today.

We must understand, however, that this economic crisis is a result of production crisis and that the production crisis is a result of the political crisis and that the political crisis is the result of the unrepresentative minority government which does not have the confidence of the workers in this country. How can we then expect better than what we are having in the country today where a government rules from the top and does not have the confidence of the workers at the bottom? Is not this the reason why production has been grinding downhill since 1975? It is a shame!

Despite all the failures that have been enunciated in the Budget Speech, despite all the failures that the Government Ministers and other officials have been going around the country and speaking of, they still have the face and the guts to be sitting on that side of the House up to today. It is a shame! In other parts of the world surely people would have tried to save their face and resign, not in the interest of themselves, but in the interest of a nation, in the interest of a suffering people, a suffering people like those we have in this country today. It depends on whose interest our friends over there are really looking after, whether it is the interest of the workers who are catching tail in the streets lining up for a loaf of bread or whether it is the interest of themselves. Today you cannot get, so they got rid of the lines by not giving any flour to bake bread.

National Assembly

To have production in this country, to remove all the ills that we have here today, all the shortages, all the lines, all the blackouts and everything else, obviously we must have a truly representative democratic government, a government that is involve with the masses, a government that can motivate the people, a government that can really get increase production and productivity in the country. The P.N.C. cannot. This is a matter of fact. If you had such a government, then obviously you would have solved the political crisis that has gripped this country for a number of years. Having solved the political crisis, you would have solved the production crisis, and having solved the production crisis you would have solved the economic crisis because we would have had an increase in production, large increases for export, which would have earned this country vast sums of foreign exchange. With the foreign exchange we would have been able to purchase and import all the items that are hard to get in this country today.

We know what is happening. I don't think that we have to take a light to search in the night for what we are seeking in the day. With your permission, sir, I quote again from the T.U.C. General Secretary report:

“The government must be careful not to over-emphasis or become so preoccupied with the adverse effects of the international situation on our economy, that it appears to be blind or oblivious to the cumulative deleterious effects on the economy of the state of malaise and nonchalant attitude which have permeated most of our society today.

It must demonstrate a greater awareness of the negative effects of production and productivity which could result from fear and insecurity engendered by the increasing number of dismissals of personnel without any regard for the disciplinary procedure which constitutes a part of the terms and conditions of the person's employment; fear of discrimination or victimization and harassment because of political views; discriminatory employment practices; uncertainty about assurances given by responsible Government representatives and widespread concern by workers and trade unions over the use of political authority to circumvent or disregard recognize industrial relations principles and negotiated provisions of collective agreements thereby undermining the confidence of the workers in their trade unions.”

National Assembly14:35 hrs

(Cde. Narbada Persaud continues)

Joseph Pollydore, Joseph Pollydore is now speaking about the things that we have been talking about for a very long time. Time is longer than the P.N.C. Time has now caught up with them. Time has not caught up with them and unless they move and move very swiftly, they will go down in history in this country as the ones who have behaved in a worse way than our colonial masters have behaved. Having messed up the economy, and plunged the country on the brink of collapse, they are now calling on all to help bail them out of the mess. The collapse was inevitable because no sound economic base was laid during the last 17 years despite the heavy sums of money they have borrowed.

The Vice-President for Economic Planning and Financing has really not told us anything new apart from admitting that the performance of the economy in 1981 was disastrous. Physical output was unacceptably low and financial out-turn was disappointing. Retrenching six thousand workers, self reliance, task force, war on waste etc., are obviously not the solutions to the economic crisis which has direct bearing on ideological and political orientation. To admit that we have reached the stage where we are unable to pay overseas suppliers for some of the goods imported; where we are unable to meet debt installments to commercial banks, bilateral and other creditors; where many suppliers have stopped exporting goods to us other than on a cash basis; where some export insurance agencies have withdrawn insurance cover from us, and where we are deemed to be uncreditworthy I to admit that the P.N.C. Government has hopelessly failed to manage the affairs of this country, they should resign as a new Government.

Cde. Speaker, on page 18 of the 1978 Budget Speech, it stated:

“As such this year’s Budget represents the first year of a financial plan that is consistent with the third development plan of the Government for the period 1978 – 1981.”

last year 1981, happened to be the last year of their third plan – development plan.

The Speaker: Cde. Persaud, by agreement I am giving you the additional fifteen minutes. I also want you to observe – this I am addressing to the Minority Whip – the behaviour, no heckling, no disturbance. I hope this is what is going to continue.

Cde. Persaud: The economy, according to the 1978 Budget Speech which said that that was their third five-years plan was targeted to grow by 17 per cent during 1978 – 1981. Instead, growth was as follows: 1978 no growth at all: 1979, minus 2 per cent growth; 1980, plus 2 per cent growth; 1981, minus 0.5 per cent growth. Instead of having the 17 per cent positive growth in the four year period. They had minus 0.5 per cent growth in that period. It is clear indication that the plan was in shambles itself and all they had talked about when they put up this plan was just a dream because year after year, the budget clearly indicated that the four year target set in that plan never materialized.

Credit Account deficit according to that plan was to be reduced in the last year, 1981, to \$11.7 million. Instead, the deficit raised to the height of \$27.4 million. Balance of payment, current gap was to be reduced to \$59 million in 1981. Instead, the gap widened to \$558 million. Bauxite sales was targeted to reach \$607 million in 1981, instead, it earned only \$428 million. The Tapacuram irrigation project was targeted to be completed early 1981. One year later, work is still going on and nobody knows when it will be completed. The Textile Mill Complex cost the fantastic sum of \$28 million more than was originally budgeted. Cde. Speaker, there are all failures of this third development plan. What the government will offer now, one waits to see. That is if they still remain in their seat and they do not resign. The 1981 budget Speech, that is last year, set certain targets. Among them was that the consultancy firm of A.E.S.O. systems was to study the problem of spare parts and advise on appropriate of procedures. It so happens that spare parts is still a problem in Guyana today although they have acquired the services of that firm. To step up returns to acceptable levels of production, the 1981 Budget implemented the following at Guymine: Green Construction Company was contracted to eliminate the land between stripping and mining; Maschinen Expert/I.B.K. Consulting Enterprise was brought in for technique and systems for effective forward planning and mines development; Kaiser was contracted to help overcoming current problems experienced with the quality of Alumina products; U.S. Steel came in to increase the efficiency of the calcining operations of the Berbice plant. Austro-plan was to upgrade the efficiency of ore handling procedures and Touche Ross was to revamp the practices and procedures of the Accounting system. All these we have contracted, and despite of all that additional burden on the Guyanese people, the Bauxite Industry went further downhill last year.

Year in, year out, the Stated Budget is drawn up with pre-planned deficit and the money necessary for economic development is borrowed primarily from abroad from debentures and bonds and by increasing the money circulation. All this inevitable worsens inflation and raises the national debt, both internal and external, which now stands over \$3 billion Guyana Dollar. Cde. Speaker, debt payments increased from \$58.6 million in 1974, to \$119 million in 1977, to \$227 million in 1979, to \$337.8 million in 1981 and to \$462.7 million dollars which it is going to be this year. It must be noted that out of the \$337.8 million spent on debts last year, only \$111 million went on capital, and \$226 million went on interest. This year, from the \$462 million to go to debts, \$135.8 million is going as capital and \$326.9 on interest. That is why the country cannot really come out of this tangle web in which the P.N.C. has brought us because of the money they are borrowing and they are squandering, and they are not really putting it into effective use.

In 1981, the debt charges of \$337 million was equaled to 60.4 per cent of current revenue, 40.5 per cent of current expenditure, 35 per cent of export earnings, 25 per cent of G.D.P. Debt charges of \$337 million was 40.5 per cent of current expenditure. Employment cost \$238 million, was 28.6 per cent of current expenditure. Social services ended up with \$267 million or 30.9 per cent of current expenditure. This year 1982, debt charges are expected to be \$462 million, this is equal to 73.6 per cent Cde. Speaker, and I want to emphasis that 73.6 per cent of the current revenue is going to be spent on debt charges this year. What are we working on? If 73 per cent of current expenditure is going to be that, sir?

National Assembly14:45 hrs

(Cde. Narbada Persaud continues)

41 Percent of debt charges of our export earnings and it is 30 percent of our G.D.P. My God! How any other country in any part of the world can exist on this scandalous affairs where 73.6 percent of our current revenue is going to go towards the repayment of debt and compensation payments. Cde. Speaker, it is a shame and I think that the time has come when government will definitely have to change its policies. The servicing of public external debt obligation has become an increasing burden in Guyana in recent years. The combination of declining export receipts and increasing interest and amortization payment have led to an increase in service and public debts. From 4 percent in 1975 to 28 percent in 1979 to 35 percent in 1981 and it is expected to be 41 percent of the foreign exchange earnings towards the repayment of debts.

Government has now seen wisdom of seeking a rescheduling of its debts, something the P.P.P has been urging it to do for some time now. The steady decline in production is a clear reflection that workers have no confidence in Government, despite calls from every Government Minister and other officials for increased production and productivity. The results year after year have been disastrous. The workers are really not to be blame but the Government.

Sugar production fell short of target by 10,000 tons in 1981. In 1971 the industry produced 368,000 tons. This declined to 340,000 tons in 1974 and 324,000 tons in 1978. In 1981 the production was only 300,000 tons, a declined of 68,000 tons below the 1971 level. Rice production fell short of its target by 52,000 tons in 1981. In 1971 the industry produced 211,000 tons. This declined to 182,000 tons in 1978 and to 168,000 tons in 1980. In 1981 the production the production was only 165,000 tons, a decline of 46,000 tons comparing it with the 1977 figure. The production of Bauxite Alumina fell short of its target by 654,000 tons in 1981. In 1979 the production was 1,808,000 tons. This declined to 1,790,000 tons in 1980 and in the last year the production was just 1,680,000 tons, a decline of 128,000 since 1979. Rum fell short of its target by 1.1 million proof gallons in 1981. Refrigerators fell short of its target by 14,200 units and by 4,200 of its actual production in 1980. Gas stoves fell short of its target of 28,190 units when production was 11,810 units last year. Garment production fell short of target by 233,390 dozens and fell below the 1980 production by 125,390 dozens. Timber fell short of target by .3 million cubic feet. Shrimp fell short by 2.2 million pounds. Pork fell short by .7 million pounds. Eggs by 10,000,000 units. Poultry by 4 million pounds.

These are all shortages that government experienced during last year. The Vice-President of Economic Planning and Finance, announced that seven corporations have made a loss of a total of \$220.8 million. Added to this now we must put four other corporations which made losses during 1981. They are L.I.D.C.O, Guyana Transport Services, G.M.C and G.B.C.. One wonders why a corporation like G.B.C. which has the total monopoly of radio media with all advertisements, etc. should make a loss.

The Vice-President also did not mention that the surplus of eight other corporations were reduced, some drastically during 1981 when compared with the performances in 1980. Such negative performances in the fields of manufacturing, agriculture and commerce indicates that Government has lost all confidence in workers and no amount of threat, coercion and cajoling can retrieve the situation from where the P.N.C. has brought it. The balance of payment deficit, growing from 46 million in 1970 to 123 million in 1973 to 209 million in 1979 to 258 million in 1980 and to the height of 558 million in 1981. The budget deficit, growing from 61 million in 1977, 124 million in 1978, 190 million in 1979, 274 million in 1981.

With Consolidated Fund Current Account being overdrawn at 31.12.81 by \$1,025 million and capital account overdrawn at 31.12.81 by \$596 million, any school boy would come to the correct conclusion that the country is no longer on the brink of bankruptcy but in fact is bankrupt and the economy will collapse at any time.

Cde. Speaker, permit me to refer to little Grenada which got their revolution only three years ago. Last year exports increased by 14 percent over the previous year. Wages increased by 17.3 percent in public and private sector. Agricultural products increased by 7.8 percent over 1980 despite two hurricanes and serious flooding during the period 1980 – 1981. Fisheries, Forestry and agriculture together grew by 5 percent over the previous year. Seven new primary and one nursery schools were built during the last year. There was great improvement in the fields of agriculture and health. Overall the economy grew last year by 2 percent, the year before by 2½ percent, the year before by 3 percent. Here we are told that all the world is in crisis, yet little Grenada with its revolution over three years ago has been able to make all these strides. Surely this indicates what a very young country can achieve so long as it has the correct approach and its planning strategies are correct and most important the people are involved at all levels. Unfortunately, however, this is not the case in Guyana and is therefore responsible for our present plight. Cde. Speaker, on page 70 of the Budget Speech, the Vice-President stated that “the Government does not intend to impose or increase taxation”. Taxation as we all know takes up the cost of living and puts additional burden on the working class. May I, however, ask whether the increase in the price of margarine, rice, kerosene, aerated drinks, beers, milk, stockfeed, fertiliser, etc. imposed by government since the year began have not earned the Government extra taxes and whether this has not brought further hardships to the working class. To say there is no intention in impose or increase taxation is a sham and today fools no one, since everyone knows that taxes are imposed before and after the budget as well.

Once again we are told that we have become ineligible to draw upon the resources which were made available to us under the extended fund facility of the IMF. We warned the government on several occasions...

The Speaker: One minute more, Cde. Persaud.

Cde. Narbada Persaud: that the I.M.F cannot cure the disease but will make it worse. This has actually happened here in Guyana. Government accepts the harsh terms laid down by the I.M.F years after year, fails to meet the targets set and as a result the drawing of the fund is suspended. In the meantime, however, the harsh terms are passed on to the workers. It is clear, Cde. Speaker, from the performance of the economy in the last six years that the experiments being carried out by the P.N.C. in collaboration with the World Bank, I.D.B. and I.M.F. at all cannot solve the problem of our country.

As patriots and loyal Guyanese we would very much like to see Guyana advance and advance really in the direction of socialism. Such advancement cannot be guaranteed by collaborating with imperialism. I therefore call on the P.N.C. Government to break forthwith from the imperialist axis within which it has been operating thus far. For our part we are prepared to work fervently for a genuine political solution which we sincerely feel will rapidly change the financial situation of this country.

[Applause]

National Assembly14:55 hrs

The Speaker: Cde. Chandsingh.

The Minister of Higher Education (Cde. Chandisingh): Cde. Speaker, those who have just a moment ago called upon the P.N.C. to resign as a Government would find themselves in the greatest quandary if ever such a misfortune ever to befall the Guyanese people and they did not have the P.N.C. guiding this country. [Applause.] I would suggest that they would not even know where to turn and what to do. One of the first things they would do is to book passages for all corners of the globe to go and seek advice abroad as to what to do in Guyana's interest.

In rising to support the Motion moved by Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance, Cde. Desmond Hoyte, in the presentation to the Budget for 1982, I would like to observe that this Budget Speech was not simply a Budget in the traditional sense, in the old Westminster model. Rather, I consider it to be a social, political, economic analysis and a programme of action for action by the people of this country. It is a guide to action indeed for all of us, intended to secure the defence of our country, economic recovery and further social progress. In a world of very harsh realities, Cde. Hoyte presented his Budget comprehensively and brilliantly. In the context of our ideological principles and perceptions of our national interests, the proposals contained therein were bereft of rhetoric and platitude. They go straight to the heart of the problem. There has been no attempt to prevaricate or to gloss over the difficulties. There has been no attempt to make excuses. But it was a bold attempt to put forward a programme that can and will, when acted upon by the people of this country, pull our nation out of the current difficulties and show the way forward for our entire nation.

This approach is typical of the People's National Congress. As a matter of fact, our Party Congress and all other Party bodies including the General Council, the Central Executive Committee, Party groups, members' meetings, have been giving serious thought to economic matters facing our country and our Party has been involving increasing numbers of our people, and will continue to do so, to enable them to understand the affairs of state, to study the affairs of state and to learn to run the economy better, more efficiently and effectively. Ours is a constructive, responsible and creative approach. Let it be said that we welcome constructive criticism, quite unlike certain minority elements, of which we have heard something already this afternoon and undoubtedly will continue to hear more of same. Who seem to live constantly in the past and take refuge, as a matter of fact, in the past, as if the past was any **halogen** period. They behave as if the world has stood still, as if Guyana indeed has stood still. But I submit that they seem to live in a world all their own, encrusted and fossilized and cannot rise to the occasion to meet the needs of the present circumstances.

The Budget Speech is characterized by a self-critical assessment and its openness, and this I think reveals an inner strength, confidence and reliance on the good sense and ability of the Guyanese people to appreciate and to respond. Those other elements in contrast have always been strangers to the virtues of self-criticism and frankness in their approach to the people. I am not really surprised.

It would be less than frank to me to say that I am surprised at the hysterical and demagogic attempt to play upon the seriousness of our country's economic and territorial security situation in order to make capital out of this circumstance and to seek thereby to resurrect their political fortunes. But I would have thought that patriotic Guyanese, of whatever political, ideological persuasion, would have seized the opportunity at this critical and troublous time for our nation to demonstrate the real determination to be part of the solution rather than continue to be part of the problem. But perhaps the operative word here and the sentiment in this equation is "patriotic" which seems to be lacking in certain quarters. Isn't it passing strange that among the first references to be made by the first speaker on that side, in that part of the Minority, sought to come to the defence of certain other countries, to the Soviet Union, for example. They said that we were making excuses by pointing to the difficulties throughout the world, the economic crisis in the world. But didn't they seek to make excuses for a big country like the Soviet Union? I am sure that the Soviet Union does not need any small group like this to defend its interests. I am sure, like other big powerful countries, they are quite capable of defending their interests and so it would be of greater interest to the Guyanese people – /Interruption/

The Speaker: Just a minute Cde. Chandisingh. Cde. Persaud, you know I can deal effectively with bad behaviour. When Cde. Narbada Persaud spoke there was not a whisper, no heckling to distract and throw him off what he is saying.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I will ask my members not to heckle.

The Speaker: Cde. Chandisingh, please proceed.

Cde. Chandisingh: Thank you Cde. Speaker. They have said that a big country like the Soviet Union is not isolated from the impact or the effects of the capitalist world and its crisis. If that is the case, how much more so would a small, still poor, developing country like Guyana not be affected by the world crisis.

15:05 hrs

Cde. Chandisingh: Cde. Narbada Persaud gave a lengthy quotation from Nikolai Tikhonov. Well Cde. Speaker, I would merely like to refer him and others who appear to have the same approach to read what Leonid Brezhnev had to say at the last congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in which in almost every page, reference has been made, not only to the successes but to the continuing difficulties which are facing them in all areas of social life, and they too have spoken about mismanagement and about corrupt practices, about short-comings of all types that still exist in that society.

Cde. Speaker, we are closing our eyes if we fail to recognise that all countries are facing problems such as those and it does not do any good for anyone to come here and make excuses for every other country in the world but their own native land. Cde. Speaker, that should be a lesson that should say something, it should send a message to the Guyanese people as to who defend their interest. Cde. Speaker, when we make references to short-comings and problems in other countries, whether socialist or capitalist or what have you, it is not with the intention to criticise or to denigrate or to ridicule, but merely to establish the realities of a harsh world situation; and I can go on. I have before me a whole file of clippings from newspapers publications abroad which indicate some of the difficulties that other countries are experiencing. I do not wish to take more time on this because I know my time is limited here to speak and therefore may just cite some headlines.

For example, “Czechs stunned by steepest food prices rises in thirty years.” “Romania to meet Western Bankers in connection with re-scheduling of debts.” Austria’s jobless treble.” We know for example that even the socialist countries of Eastern Europe have a tremendous quantity of debts owing to Western Bankers. And these are the capitalist banks. We have been accused of being pro-imperialist for dealing with these banks. Well if that is their epithet then what do they have to say about those other countries that they seem to support that have such debts and relations with those same financial institutions and agencies.

So Cde. Speaker, it is important, I think, that we should get our sights clear and not be misled by the very poor excuses being offered by members on the other side. When they speak of corruption and mis-management, I ask them: where, in what part of the world does this not exist? I wonder whether they have been to heaven perhaps and found it does not exist there. But where doesn’t this exist. The thing about this, Cde. Speaker, is that it is the People’s National Congress, which has responsibility to the people of this country, that is taking the initiative in seeking if not to eliminate at least to minimise and reduce the occurrence of this social evil.

Cde. Speaker, as I indicated already, I should have thought that patriotic Guyanese would have risen to the occasion, I would have thought that at this time all Guyanese would want to join in the efforts to help to strengthen our small nation’s viability as an independent nation and to defend our gains. We, Cde. Speaker, as a small, still relatively poor developing young nation, can ill afford the luxury of opposition for the sake of opposition. We are in a sense all in the same boat, and if that boat is leaking in stormy seas through which we have to pass and is in danger of sinking the sensible thing for all Guyanese

is to forego acrimony and all help to toil and plug the leak so that we may all safely arrive at port. Indeed manoeuvring in stormy turbulent waters is not a comfortable routine exercise. It demands courage, dexterity, ingenuity and innovations. Intelligent choices and even certain changes in our everyday existence. Basic, fundamental, revolutionary changes have never anywhere been accomplished without any problems or difficulties and so, Cde. Speaker, in this debate on the 1982 budget we of the People's National Congress offer a positive programme for recovery and growth and I think that we need to concentrate more on those aspects. It is these aspects – what we will do and what needs to be done in various spheres, how the people can be involved. It is this type of discussion that I think the public of this country would like to hear, not bewailing our problems and throwing up our hands in the air and saying we can do nothing about it.

Indeed, Cde. Speaker, other speakers on our side will undoubtedly in the course of the debate be putting forward in various areas of their responsibilities the practical proposals for solution to our problems. And it is not fortuitous that we take such a position for we have the responsibility for giving positive leadership to our people and this is natural. It is only natural to expect, for was it not the People's National Congress upon whose shoulders the responsibility fell to lead our country to independence, to ownership and control our natural resources, to the path of socio-economic transformation, to cultural upsurge and to a sense of human dignity for our people in our own country, to development of higher standards of living. True, in the last period we have been going through some difficult times and we all know the causes, but can deny that the People's National Congress has truly guided our Guyanese people through thick and thin and will continue to do so.

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15:15 hrs

(Cde. Chandisingh continues)

Cde. Speaker, the ideology of anarchism and negativism holds no promise for our people's progress. We have heard the first speaker on the other side. He talked about workers. He said workers cannot produce on hungry bellies. Let me inform him that I visited one of the socialist countries of Eastern Europe a couple of years ago and when I was there I was told a story by those comrades. They said that in the post-war period there was no food, there was nothing and the workers said at that time what was perhaps the equivalent of the expression "While the grass is growing the horse is starving." The said, "We must have the food in order to produce." But there was no one to give them food. There was no one philanthropically existing who wished to bail them out and they had to help themselves by self-reliance. Their party explained to the workers that they had to go hungry in that country until they themselves could produce.

That is just an example of what other people have been through. Talking about food, again I want to make it very clear that we make these points not by way of criticizing anyone, since we have a policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of any other people, whether East or West, North or South. All we seek is to be allowed to live in peace, to develop our own country in our own way. But there again, let me point out for the benefit of the comrades over there – it is a pity they do not read some of these publications. This is the address by Leonid Brezhnev to the recent Congress of Trade Unions in which he had this to say – I quote from that speech with your permission, Cde. Speaker.

The Speaker: Will you give the reference, the name of the booklet and page, or anything like that?

Cde. Chandisingh: It is from "News from the Soviet Union" issued by Novosti Press Agency, 18 March, 1982, page 5. it reads as follows:

"Comrades, vital and urgent questions that affect the interests of all working people, of the entire nation, have always been raised at trade union congress. On of these questions today is the food situation. The party and government are well acquainted with the existing difficulties and are doing everything possible to surmount them. We intend, at a plenary meeting of the Central Committee of the GPSU, to examine a food programme which will outline ways of radically solving this problem. Yet both in agriculture and in the related industries there is great number of urgent matters that brook no delay, that can and must, be tackled immediately in order to improve food supplies."

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So, there are some of the problems and, fortunately for us in Guyana, the policies of the People's National Congress have in the past years enabled us to be able to become more self-sufficient, though not entirely yet. We have not achieved perfection but we are in a much better position now as result of those policies than if those policies had not been carried out.

Referring again to the to the food situation, I wish to make brief reference to what the other side has said. I see, for example, that they have been issuing a leaflet which says among other things:

“The P.P.P. says ‘Don't Starve.’ Get up and fight. Tell the P.N.C. ‘No Food, No Production’ ”

As usual they have the equation upside down. This is a slogan of anarchism, not socialism. “Don't Starve. Get up and fight”, as if fighting among ourselves is going to produce food. Fighting will only produce death and destruction and the worsening of the prospects for recovery and for progress. I wish to let those who advocate such know quite clearly that this approach is not only anti-national but, in the face of a serious threat of an external enemy to 70 per cent of our territory, this may be regarded even as treason to our nation. [Applause]

The Budget Speech, so brilliantly presented by Cde. Hoyte, put forward proposals which are practicable and achievable and which give hope to all of us. Within the ambit of the proposals there is a clear ideological underpinning of these proposals of this programme, and that is why we have sought to make the exercise as painless as possible in our circumstances while retaining our services, such as education and health and other services, at as high a level as is possible. Our ideology, as we know, is based on the principles of socialism and high among these are co-operativism and self-reliance.

It is within this context that I want to point out – I do not have enough time to go into more details at this time – that is view of the needs of our situation we intend, and the Ministry of Higher Education which falls more specifically within my purview intends, to intensify and expand our ideological work in order to prepare people for defence and production and to steel them for the tasks that lies ahead of us.

Also, I want to say that many of the solutions to our problems lie in using our imagination, our ingenuity, in order to produce, from local materials, things that can save us foreign exchange. This is being done on a modest scale, for example, through the National Science Research Council and its main operative arm in Science and Technology, the Institute of Applied Science and Technology.

The Speaker: One minute more.

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Cde. Chandisingh: And so we have to do with less more than we have done before.

To conclude my remarks, I would like to ask: Does anyone really seriously believe that there is any force other than the People's National Congress that has the capacity to guide this country to recovery and progress? Some people naturally will grumble and complain about availability of certain items, of the problems in our society that are as yet unresolved, of the shortcomings and inefficiencies which still exist. Where don't these exist? We make no pretence to have solved everything, to be in a state of perfection that even we know all the answers to every problem, to every conundrum that real poses. But few, if any, would doubt that without the People's National Congress at the helm, working closely as we have always done with the people, there would be very little hope for social programs in our Guyana, that whatever hope there still is now, in the midst of all our problems, would be blanked out completely and certainly for a long time to come.

I recognize that there are some groupings with political aspirations. They have some nuisance value and do their best to obstruct, mislead and seek to thwart.

The Speaker: I think, Cde, Chandisingh, I will have to obstruct you now. Your time is up.
Cde. Green. [Applause]

National Assembly

The Vice-President, Public Welfare (Cde. Green): Cde. Speaker, may I first take the opportunity to congratulate my colleague, Cde. Hoyte for presenting a budget, as he says of resilience, at a very difficult time in the history of this country. I would just like to in congratulating him, say that I hope that those who sit across the way would have, from his speech, recognized that we have to work together to save our country and that we have to be true patriots. I listened to the first speaker of the Opposition and I remember, Cde. Speaker, that it was that Party's leader who told the workers, when things and the worlds was not as it is today, that there was not a cent more. We need to remember those things.

In terms of the concerns for the workers, to talk about resigning, the question which the workers should ask: If not the P.N.C., what or whom? Cde. Speaker, in terms of the workers of this country, I am able to say that internationally there was overall improvement of the industrial life of workers and there was maintained over the period, good industrial relations and a good climate primarily as a result of a better understanding between the Union, employees and respective agencies. During the year under review, a number of minal standards for employment for workers was achieved. We got a number of movement in terms of, particularly, the Private Sector, and even those workers that were not unionized, we were able to assist. This resulted in an increase in legislative protection and a better standard of life for many workers in our country. The sugar, bauxite and rice industries ran into serious production difficulties, but there still exists a close partnership between Government, the Trade Unions and management. This can be evidenced by the fact that throughout the year, over 1,500 visits were made by officers and during those visits we sought an opportunity to create harmonious relationship between employees and employers. In fact, Cde. Speaker, there was evidence of enthusiasm by workers to produce even though many problems still exists. In fact, many were drawn to my attention during the numerous visits I myself paid to work sites.

We in the Ministry of Labour, have a great deal of confidence in the ability of both Management and non-Management workers to continue improved relations with each other and consequently to see that there are improvements. Our efforts, however, need to be pursued further since in terms of the world and our economy, it is important that for this year we put in place some mechanism to ensure that optimum use of our manpower, equipment and our land-mast.

Unlike some countries, we in this country have potential and good leadership and therefore, we look to the future with courage and confidence. The Budget before us provides that challenges for us to make that giant step both physical and psychological so that with confidence we will put in place the mechanism to ensure that every man, every woman in this country cam make full use of his brain and his muscles. It is necessary, as we discuss this budget, Cde. Speaker, to do so against the background of the world as it is. The Opposition may say what they like because even if we wanted to, even if we try as a country with less than one million people and with our political history and geographical location we could not, as my colleague before me observed, escape the repercussions in a world that to my mind has gone crazy.

National Assembly

Someone quipped years ago that when the developed world catch a cold, we in this part got pneumonia. The problem today Cde. Speaker is that the develop world seem to have pneumonia. The system that produced the evils of slavery and indenturship in some measure still exist in our world. The attitude of our former masters and their kit and kin have not really changed. We need to appreciate this. It is true that then and even today we have grouped both within the church and outside who do good and intends generally to help the poor masters of the world. The motive generally of the 19th century colonialism – that motive was to keep us as slaves and indentures. The mid-19th and 20th century saw an end to formal slavery, the pre-independent struggle and then for us in 1966 independence. What did we have when we got Independence? Fires we inherited a typical colonial economy and patterns: 1. Limited infra-structure. 2. A market to import manufactured goods. 3. A source of cheap labour and 4. Because of cultural pattern and imposition of systems, a disoriented labour force, particularly in urban populations. They had prejudices about what was good and what was bad work. Of course, what some referred to as the white collar and shirt jacks cycles.

Externally, some may argue that these conditions have changed, but are those countries still interested in keeping us as colonies. They still have to maintain a high standard of living at the expense of the poor countries and those of that produce the raw materials in this world. We are still, in terms of trading, forced to accept terms of trade dictated by the metropolitan societies and so even though we have a flag and an anthem, we in fact, remain an economic colony. In a sense, the pattern and relationship have not changed. We still remain at a serious disadvantage. Indeed for many of us and for many countries, except those of us who have the courage like the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, the people of the developed states still decide what many in the developed world wear, eat and even learn.

Today inspite of what the opposition and those who do not know better, may say, let us examine terms of trade ---

The Speaker: Cde. Green, you were referring to the people in the Assembly? We have a Minority not an Opposition.

Cde. Green: I was making a general observation. It is not what we earn in actual dollars and I heard my good friend, Narbada Persaud, confusing himself with figures.

Now Cde. Speaker, figures confuse a lot of us and it is something to be used with real skill, and particular understanding. We quote figures and do not make a relationship. It is not what we earn, it is what we could do with what we earn. I wish to make available to this Assembly, some crisis we faced. In 1970 we could sell 27 tons of sugar; out of the proceeds, we could buy a tractor. In 1974, we got the highest prices for our sugar, and when our friends wanted all the money to go to the people who allegedly produced the sugar, when we got as high as the highest ever known of £650 per ton in USSR. Even when we got those very high prices for sugar it took 14 tons of sugar proceeds to buy a single tractor.

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15:35 hrs

(Cde. Green continues)

But these prices did not last long. As that last year to buy a similar tractor we moved from 14 tons in 1974, we had to sell 34 tons of our sugar to buy that same tractor last year. Oil. One ton of sugar in 1970 could give us 48 barrels of oil. Last year that ton of sugar could only bring us 10 barrels of oil. In 1970 we got good prices for calcined bauxite. One ton of calcined bauxite could purchase 16 barrels of oil. In 1974 the price of oil went up and so did the price of calcined bauxite and therefore one ton of calcined bauxite could only buy four barrels of oil. But even though we got better prices for calcined bauxite last year one ton could only buy seven barrels of oil.

Cde. Speaker, these drastic changes are a part of the world in which we live and even though our sugar workers produced, not extra, but moderately well the industry lost \$81 million as explained in the Budget Speech. Workers everywhere, therefore, must face this challenge like men not mice. The Budget provides some of the answers and our leader, anticipating the problems facing this country, issued a prescription in 1974, which might be apposite for me to read this afternoon. He said that those who say that this thing is sudden must recognize that we have watched the situation for years. Careful management of our financial resources and reserves, greater production and productivity, intelligent exploitation of our natural resources, strict discipline, war on waste, resolute pursuit of socialist objectives, intimate involvement of people, and courage never to submit or yield. We need, therefore Cde. Speaker, to face what indeed is a war, a war to succeed in a very hostile environment. The present economic difficulty or struggle, a struggle to survive particularly since many of the leaders of the developed world are no longer particularly concerned with our problems. We have to find solutions. We cannot go around this country admitting that we are puppets of the Soviet Union.

We have as some people do, to, like men, find solutions to our problems that face us.

Recently the European Economic Countries identified a new group of countries know as the Least Lesser Developed Countries. They observed that the stress of this group was so grave and the economy so price-ridden that their very survival, they noted, was at stake. In his opening speech recently at the United Nations Conference dealing with the LDC's President Mitterrand of France said and I quote:

“Anti-poverty war is getting stuck in the treasury. On one side there are the rich managing their crisis with a faintheartedness of convalescence struggling from set back to slight improvement and back to ill health again. On the other side there are the poor with their ration of distress grabbing for enough to sustain them until the next day.”

It is this attitude and this background that we need to see the budget as against the background that we in this country will continue to work with the Trade Unions and other organisation to work out measures outlined in the Budget that will turn our economy around.

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Cde. Speaker, we need men with courage and determination, not people who go globe trotting and look for excuses and are afraid to face reality. We do not need frightened leaders who are afraid to go to the people and tell them the truth and propose solutions which are by the very nature of things difficult. Some so-called leaders are reluctant to go along with strong measures even those that accept, at intellectual level that we and the rest of the world face problems. The great majority of T.U.C. Leadership appreciates the strain and stress we face and are of the view that they will work with us to help. But I am told that one senior official of that organisation claims they have not accepted that there is justification for retrenchment and even dismissal.

On that question may I say that the P.N.C. Government can stand by the record of concern for the interest of the working class for which we have and will always draw our political support and strength. It is this party, Cde. Speaker, and government that put an end to annual retrenchment in industries like the Bauxite Industries, the Ministry of Works and Housing. When we came in office retrenchment was traditional. It is this party that put an end to and found jobs for people. Therefore, when we identify retrenchment it is like a good and concerned doctor forced to administer an unpalatable dose of medicine, all in the interest of his patient and his family. Too many of us seek cheap popularity and are unprepared to take constructive measures. Retrenchment, even though it must be recognised as a painful experience for those workers who are being affected, must be seen not as a deliberate act on part of the Government but as one of a series of top measures which our Government finds itself compelled to make in order to bring about the speedy recovery of the economy. No one can deny that it was ... of this concern for the working class by the Government which caused us to continue the employment of a substantive number of workers where it was recognize that they are in excess. Regrettably, the time has come when the economic circumstances of the country clearly indicate that we can no longer continue to carry such surplus staff particularly within the surface areas of our very large public sector.

Contrary to what has been said in the ...training in the public sector has been an on-going process since last year. It has been applied in every stratum of our society, particularly in administrative and political measures. You are aware, Cde. Speaker, that it was last December that several managers and allied categories were dropped and the removal of several managers and other high administrative types even within recent times, must be seen as positive steps taken by Government to streamline operation in the public sector, to remove set backs and to make various agencies more responsive to the need of the economy and the people. Present programmes is not, I repeat, is not intended to affect any particularly but it will be rational and will be a fair attempt to make the services economic and efficient.

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(Cde. Green continues)

No one group will be expected, whether he be Manager, porter or charwoman.

May I say that we have had occasion in this Assembly and elsewhere to criticism many of our Managers. But we have within our Public Service a number of managers who work beyond the normal call of duty who have helped to hold things together and I am confident they will continue to work as well as they have been in the interest of the nation.

As the President himself has often stated, retrenchment within the public sector should not necessarily result in unemployment because vacancies notified by the Central Recruitment and Manpower Agencies and other employers in the newspapers clearly indicate that while many persons complain of being unable to find jobs, there are several jobs which are going begging if only those persons are prepared to make the psychological and attitudinal adjustment which would allow them to take advantage of such job opportunities.

Government fully recognizes some of the difficulties and the dislocations which will result in dealing with the current problems caused by retrenchment, but is prepared to commit itself to ensuring continuity of employment for those public servants who are prepared to take those jobs which now exist in any of the other public sector agencies. It must be clearly understood, however, that while the full ramifications of the various benefits will have to be worked out and the discussions with Government Trade Unions and agencies, the conditions to be enjoyed by those retrenched workers who find employment in other Public Service agencies will have to be those which apply to the new agencies and not the agencies from which they were retrenched. Steps are already being taken to bring about the harmonization of the pension schemes after the necessary actuarial reviews. In the meantime, however, even though payment cannot now be made, there exist adequate arrangements to ensure that pensionable public servants do not lose any benefits to which they are entitled.

Forgive me again if I go beyond Guyana. But how do you accept that one of the most powerful and militant unions in North America, the United Auto Workers, recently agreed to hold salaries and to cut their workforce from 160,000 to 105,000. They agreed amidst difficulties. Workers must know in this country that we have two major enemies: Enemy Number one – Venezuela, enemy Number two – the world economy to contend with. We need therefore, those of us who profess and indeed love Guyana, to close our ranks and face these two commitments squarely and resolutely.

I am sure that the men – and when I say men I include women – will make a success of our efforts. We all must accept that the world is inter-related, as was put in the Budget Speech on page 15 when Cde. Hoyte referred to the dependency relationships. The rich are spending new sums on armament, fantastic sums, \$3 million to \$4 million on a single aircraft to destroy the world. Super powers are spending that amount of money. Some of our friends would refer to one group. We have faith in the strength and the potential of our workers. I believe that once they have the leadership, and given the assistance, they will respond.

What is important in so far as the workforce is concerned is the willingness of every Guyanese to adjust to the demands of our present economic crisis. Crisis or no crisis, we have been learning painfully to rely on our own resources and this process must be continued and speeded up.

The Speaker: Three minutes more.

Cde. Green: We need, as a people, to respond to the feel of work and to put aside all prejudices and false pride and work where work is available and to seize opportunities new and unusual. The existence of a lazy, disoriented or unprepared workforce will ensure our failure to recover. Many of the solutions to the problems of our ... dependency are, in fact, the very solutions that will show us the light at the end of this tunnel. It is a question of our will, it is a question of those who claim they are patriots, recognising that we need to close ranks. It is a question of the unity among our people which we can bring to bear at the present moment. We need to stop acting and to perform. We need to stop the gallery play which we have been seeing in so many quarters and get down to the task of nation-buildings. I am confident that it is in times like these that make us all convinced that we are Guyanese and the heirs of those who sacrificed so that we can survive and progress. We will keep this heritage safe to pass on to our children and our children's children. We have the strength, we have the leadership and we have a great leader. As Martin Carter said, "As I come from the niggeryard to the world of tomorrow I turn with my strength."

The Speaker: Cde. Singh.

Cde. H.L.B. Singh: Cde. Speaker, as I rise to make my brief contribution to this honourable Assembly on the 1982 Budget Debate, I wish to associate myself with the previous speakers in commending Cde. Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance for presenting a Budget which could be considered tough, but which has not brought any additional taxation on the Guyanese people in spite of the spurious Venezuela claim to approximately 70 per cent of the richest part of our territory which we would have to defend. At the same time we would have to intensify our production and productivity to combat the serious economic crisis which now beset our country.

It is said that there comes a time in the affairs of a people that a test is made to determine whether they can stand up to the success and failures of life or whether they need some more time in order to do so. May I say that probably our time has now come and I wish to assure this August Assembly and all Guyanese that we shall overcome. We shall indeed triumph over the crisis that is now facing us. I am confident that every patriotic Guyanese, regardless of his political persuasion or ethnic origin, will come forward and support this Government in its effort to tide over the stormy economic waters and to row safely to the shores of a safety, buoyant, economic recovery in the not too distant future.

National Assembly15:55 hrs(Cde. H.L.B. Singh continues)

Cde. Speaker, the economic and political problems which are now facing our young and developing nation are not isolated from many other countries of the world and it is not beyond our capacity, will and ability to overcome them, for we are blessed with the right kind of leadership and the human and natural resources to enable us to do so before long.

What is required by us Cde. Speaker, is the courage, the determination, the commitment and the dedication, never to submit or to yield to anyone within or outside of Guyana who may attempt to thwart our objection from becoming fully developed socialist state. In the light of this Cde. Speaker, I humbly exhort all groups and organisations, be they political, social or religious to rally their support behind this government so that we can truly defend our country against the military and economic aggressions which is being perpetuated by our greedy neighbours of the west namely Venezuela.

Cde. Speaker, it must be noted that when a family is attacked all members of that family must stand together to repel the attack irrespective of their diverse views and opinions. They must show a oneness of purpose and a unity of strength. They must not adopt a defeatist attitude merely because the attacker may be of a greater numerical strength or may be possessed of more modern and sophisticated weapons and implements. For no amount of sloganeering or propaganda, or issuing of hand bills against this party and government at this point in time by reactionaries within and outside of Guyana will save us from the predicament which we now face. We must of necessity come to the grips with the situation and seek every possible opportunity to resolve the problems. For any military attack by the Venezuelans or the continued economic recession will not spare anyone section of the Guyanese people and save the other, all of us will perish.

Our ancestors, the Africans, the East Indians, the Portuguese, the Chinese and of course the European who were the masters of the afore-mentioned have all migrated from several lands of diverse cultures, traditions and customs to Guyana in search of a better living standard and in many instances they were brought here against their will and very much to their unhappiness and annoyance. Upon arrival here they were met with the indigenous inhabitants – the Amerindians who were not also very happy as history has told us to have those outsiders coming in. But the former had no choice, for that was the order of the day, as it provided a cheap labour force for the planters and their descendants. In short they were legislation to give effect to the slave trade and the indentureship was given top priority by those who were in control of the government of the three colonies and the court of Policy at that time.

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Cde. Speaker, I must mention that after emancipation in the mid-eighteenth century, many of the freed slaves emigrated from the sugar plantations on lands adjoining the sugar estates and set up their own system of local democracy and village administration. We must therefore pay tribute to those courageous and noble ancestors of many of our Guyanese people who were the initiators of the system of local democracy which we inherited and had attempted to improve over the years but is now being perfected by the Government led by the People's National Congress. Cde. Speaker, the emancipated slaves recognized that in order for them to survive they should have a strong economic base and so they divided the villages which they brought into two sections – one for residential purposes and the other for the cultivation of food crops. They also recognized that as long as they could produce co-operatively and feed themselves they would be able to remain free, not only physically but economically as well. Cde. Speaker, what is being adumbrated by the Government today in requesting the people produce more is nothing new to us. We have been doing so far the past seventeen years and we are trying to reinforce it by all our leaders at all levels of society. If this could be successfully achieved then we can free ourselves from the economic shuffles which now grip this nation.

Cde. Speaker, as a result of the determination of the freed slaves of feeding themselves and freeing themselves the labour force on the sugar plantations became depleted and alternative areas of labour had to be found. In that quest the East Indians were brought here around 1834 to work in the estates up to early in the nineteenth century when Indian immigration ceased. East Indians brought with them their eating habits and wearing apparel, something which many of us have copied in this country today. The Portuguese and Chinese followed next with their respective cultures and we also copied from them. This brought about an amalgamation of cultures between the races of this country and it was the People's National Congress Government who having recognized that fact was able to grant national holidays for the diverse religious groups and cultures of Guyana. Today Cde. Speaker, almost every Guyanese eat methem, eat black cake, ear dhol, eat roti, eat chowmein and lowmein. It must be noted that the East Indians and the Chinese wore cotton garments while some of the others wore different types of synthetic material.

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16:05 hrs

(Cde. H.L.B. Singh continues)

So that is being done today to reintroduce cotton cultivation and production of cotton material by the Sanata Textile Mill will improve our economic position and save us much needed foreign exchange which could be diverted to the acquisition of the many pieces of important machinery and other equipment and other equipment which are so necessary for the substance of our industrial development.

I wish to emphasise that restriction of the importation of split peas, edible oil and a few other commodities must not be viewed as an attempt to affect the life style, the eating habits of our people. We know for a fact that we can produce enough legumes, plantains and other ground provisions as well as coconut oil and other food substitutes for food on which we are spending large sums of money to import. We have seen that by the importation of some of these commodities we are providing employment for farmers overseas rather than for our own people and we wish to reinforce the point of self-reliance and economic independence, and, at the same time, to earn more foreign exchange.

The Speaker: Cde. Singh, I am afraid you cannot earn more time. The Sitting is suspended for 30 minutes and on resumption Cde. Bend-Kirton-Holder will speak.

Sitting suspended at 16:03 hrs.

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On resumption –

Cde. Bend-Kirton-Holder: Cde. Speaker, Members of this honourable House, it is indeed a pleasure for me to stand this afternoon in support of a Budget so ably compiled by the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance. It shows that the People's National Congress is endowed with a wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise and our opponents, though they may try to do things contrary to what we are trying to do in Guyana, that is, to motivate our people, I am sure will not succeed.

It is no wonder that our opponents are resorting to all sorts of things to cause confusion which is, in fact, something that they always do. They have become known to prey on certain weaknesses, but we are sure, because of the experience of our people in Guyana the people who support the People's National Congress, that they will never succeed.

We have made no pretence about the present problems within our society. In fact, the Budget Speech ably put that experience to the knowledge of our people in Guyana but the problems which we inherited, based on our colonial past, can, and will, only be remedied when we have effectively caused the type of development to take place which is contrary to what the colonial masters gave us as development. For example, let us look at Housing in the Budget Speech. Ample proposals are made for the continuation of programmes, despite our economic position, and we are going to improve the Housing in our communities, despite those conditions.

When our Executive President gave us the undertaking in this House that the development of our country lies in our own hands, the People's National Congress representatives took that seriously and, in fact, we have been working assiduously to devise a serious programme for the implementation of what we preach. In other words, we are not prepared only to preach: we are prepared to practice exactly what we preach.

The members of the Minority Party over the past have developed a strategy of spreading confusion and causing, to their minds, some bit of unrest within our society. When we implemented a programme whereby we said we must use our own resources – if I may take as an example one of the things we spoke about – we talked about using our own fruits and vegetables. I can remember clearly that those forces went around telling the people that they will be starving when we ban certain items of food, for example, fish. When we banned sardines, when we banned corned beef, they went around saying that the people of Guyana, the people in the hinterland, would starve. But, indeed, what happened? In fact, it brought about a people with a resolute decision to feed themselves and today we see that we can produce our own fruit and fish and meat, well preserved and preserved only by the Guyanese people.

This Budget, given to our people, is a Budget that is meant for promoting development in our country and we, from the People's National Congress, will not sit idly by and allow the opponents of our party and Government to continue to fool the people that there is disaster coming to this good land of ours. Let me look at housing and housing development. I quoted from page 62 of the Budget Speech:

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“On the Government’s agenda for development, housing has always been priority. When in difficult times, it continues to be.”

When we look at the other provision made for housing in the Budget we can see clearly that it is true, for the government hopes to construct 135 houses by self-help. Forty-six of these will be constructed during 1982. That was another move made by this Government and Party to motivate the people so that in fact they would not have the full effect of building construction when they own their own homes but, in fact, they will participate so that the general cost of the building will go down by some degree.

I should like to refer to new facilities outlined in the budget. We can continue in the same vein by looking at page 62, to which I referred. It states here:

“It is expected that the private insurance companies, pension funds and credit unions will intervene more actively this year in the housing sector and that their investments will supplement the outlays provided by the Central Government.”

It continues:

“In order to facilitate persons of moderate income and financial resources, the Guyana Co-operative Mortgage Finance Bank and the Dependents’ Pension Fund will assume a special role as lenders to such person. Government will, in the first instance, transfer \$4 million to the Bank to enable it to intervene more actively in the area of housing development.”

It continues again:

“In the first place, its lending ceiling will be increased to G\$50,000;”

That is lending to the working class people, giving them the ability to purchase or to construct their own homes. Never before, in the history of our country, have the working class people been given that privilege to own and construct their own homes.

This Government recognises that because of the limitations with which these institutions are plagued, there was not enough to meet the cost of construction, because about 50 or 60 per cent of the material for house construction or building construction is purchased with foreign exchange and we have no control with respect to the prices of those materials. Therefore, in addition to what we were readily lending to the working class, we have increased the amount so as to permit more people to be involved in our housing programmes. In addition, we have also said that we will increase the money if the sum of \$4 million is not enough. If the people grasp the opportunity and take that money and continue to develop their own houses, we will look at that and make additional resources available.

Those facilities that I have just mentioned also carry a tax rebate. We have made it clear, within the Budget Speech, that persons who have loans for housing development will be given a tax rebate on their interest charges. I want those who are opposed to this Government to tell us where in the world the real working class people can have such benefits accruing to them.

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16:40 hrs

(Cde. Ben-Kirton-Holder continues)

Cde. Speaker, I want us to emphasise that the active participation of our people in self-help is a very important component of this Government's policy. If we believe comrades, that people must be involved, we believe in their involvement and we support their involvement in a practical way so that we can understand what construction is all about. And not only that Cde. Speaker, at the end of the construction, they will be able to maintain those buildings which they have constructed. We are not only thinking of giving them a building, but we are also giving them the skill to maintain that building through self-help.

Cde. Speaker, we have also decided that notwithstanding our scarce resources, we are prepared to have some 135 rental apartments available and that will be made available at a cost to this Government and to the people. We already have in our midst, 16 terraced houses in the Bend-Kirton Court. These buildings cost us \$438,919.72. In the duplex, field 13, we have already constructed four buildings and that is to the cost of \$170,963.58. To date, we have constructed nine rental units in Laing Avenue, at the cost of \$247,500.00. We have also in field 13, and atom house which cost \$30,118.36. This is a new model being introduced with batton windows so as to reduce the cost of inflation in our country and thus making the houses available to our low income working people. Cde. Speaker, we have been able to develop 10 Saki U houses in field 13 at a cost of \$300,000.00. It is a new model and we are seeking to introduce the shingled roof whereby we would not have to provide foreign exchange in terms of galvanized sheets. That will be an asset to the working class people. In field 13 we have also developed terrace units and to that development we have completed 25 per cent of a twenty-six unit house. Work will continue in the effect in 1982. This is at a total cost of \$178,750.00.

That shows clearly, Cde. Speaker, the input by this government for the working class in housing development. If we may stretch a little further, we have developed 65 units at the Samata point. We have developed 56 units for the Postal and Tele-communications Workers. Some painting remains to be done. At the Best Foreshore, we have developed 85 of these units and at Burma we have developed 22. Cde. Speaker, in New Amsterdam, we have developed, through the Mayor and City Council some 50 odd units, and at Errol's Vile another 35. Again in New Amsterdam, work is going on, and some 30 in Annsville and 25 in Bermine will soon be officially handed over.

At Melanie Damishana, we have got 164 of those units. There are 50 houses on the northern side of the Public road which are in the process of completion. At Hope – and I must take some time to speak about Hope, because the Hope Estate has always been the concern not only of our Leader, but our Party and Government as well – we have been able to establish four units within that centre in a very short time and work is continuing where the workers of Hope Estate will indeed come out of those shanty houses that they are living in and will be occupying houses built by them and for them on behalf of our Government and Party. [Applause.]

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That is an achievement and, therefore Cde. Speaker, no whether they oppose the government or they are with the Government can fully and truly say that this Government is not working in the interest of our people.

If I may look a little at women's affairs, Cde. Speaker, our women in Guyana have been able in the past years to get themselves totally involved in our development process. This is not perchance. This was a deliberate effort of our Government and party. Our women's affairs desk is established and coming out of that we have been able to train in Guyana, some 400 women in various skills of development. Let me look, Cde. Speaker, at our last quota. We give 146 scholarships and out of that 146 scholars who left to study abroad, 50 were women and indeed, they were in the non-traditional areas. Fields like engineering, the vet and other sources of qualifications based on the non traditional areas. Again, Cde. Speaker, we have exposed our women; seven of them attended seminars and workshops designed at enhancing their capacity for working with other women so that we will be able to use those women to motivate and educate other women within our society for their total involvement in this development that must take place. I want this Assembly to know that that was not at the expense of our Government, but indeed was the expense of the international lending agencies who this Government negotiated with on behalf of our women and we were able to succeed in having those programmes developed in their interest. Cde. Speaker, I want to state again that our women were involved in the Truancy Campaign and we were able to work programmes with our women in those areas that we identified there were problems. We were able to give them the type of education and assistance to help them to come out and be earners of income of their own so that they would not bedote the idea that women alone cannot be motivated in maintaining themselves. We were able to use that truancy campaign, Cde. Speaker, effectively, and motivated our women to become not earners of salaries, but whereby they provided the means by which they could exist. They themselves have become income generating persons within our society.

Cde. Speaker, at the work sites – we visited a number of work sites – we were able to motivate those employers to change some of the conditions under which our women existed. I can remember quite clearly visiting one bag factory where we had to call on management to desist from certain practices whereby today our women have been unable to continue under that yolk of terror.

Cde. Speaker, we must also acknowledge the woman in the house hold, and we have mounted a number of programmes whereby we brought out our women who were in the house hold and we got them motivated into cottage industries whereby today, they are self-supporting in their homes. Because of this particular retrenchment that must take place, we will have to curb on our expenditure and our excess labour. The women need not feel that they will be left out. They can be gainfully employed in our society. The women bureau has already taken steps to provide those areas in which they can be totally involved. I want to name some of those areas. We have already started programmes, Cde. Speaker, in training, and book-binding. We have already started a programme in training women in upholstery. We have already started a programme in training women for the National Guard Service and other services of that kind.

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16:50 hrs

(Cde. Bend Kirton-Holder continues)

We already started to train women in the National Guard Service and other services of that kind, in the Police Force and particularly we are emphasizing on our training for project planning and development so that our women themselves can start they project and understand how to administrate the project in their own interest. Cde. Speaker, these are ways and means in which this government will tackle our present problems and these are ways and means that we must understand as a nation. It is compulsory for us to do so at this point in time.

We are also helping our women to get involved in agricultural development so that our women can continue in their traditional role as farmers in our society because we know that our women can be farmers and successful farmers, but we were led to believe that women can only remain in our homes and we think this is a time when we must motivate our women so that they can become successful farmers and produce the goods and services so necessary for our situation and this is what we are doing in terms of training. We have also approached the Ministry of Agriculture and a portion of land will be set aside both for housing development and indeed for women to get involved in agricultural development at the M.M.A when it comes on stream. This is one of our areas, Cde. Speaker, in which we would hope to have our women totally and fully involved. Cde. Speaker, everyone knows and I think that it is a pass word that through the Ministry of Health we have been encouraging our women to use more local things and particularly in the Ministry of Health we have been identifying breast – feeding as a means of giving our children, our brains and suckling the nutrients that are necessary for their own survival and not to depend on artificial things that come in and tell them that will make them survive. So indeed we have started a programme identifying breast-feeding among our women and will ensure the attitude and habits in this direction we are gaining success. Cde. Speaker, I want to say that in the ministry there we have already had most of our women who are street vendors or school vendors. We have already involved some 372 persons and two of them being men, founded by UNICEF and designed to help vendors operate under minimum standard of environment and sanitation conditions. Comrades, this is a programme which we hope we will continue to have women involved in and by continuing to have their involvement our health standard will improve both at the vendors level at school and on the street.

We are also establishing the facilities with the objective that not only the standard of the vendors will improve but the standard and health our children will improve. Cde. Speaker, it is known and I think the Minister of Health will deal with it, that a number of health centres have been established.

The Speaker: Five Minutes more.

Cde. Bend Kirton-Holder: Community and child care, and those clinics were meant to take the services closer to the people, closer to women who must use these services and that is why we will continue despite our economic position, so that more of our women will have the types of services

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necessary for their own health care and that of their community. Cde. Speaker, I would like to refer to our agriculture programme and in referring to our agricultural programme I would like this honourable House to note that we in this People's national Congress have already seen it fit to give the type of leadership that is necessary to our people and the Budget provides that we develop our agricultural potential. Our leader already said the world is coming short of food and if we have both the material and human resources, therefore, we must develop agriculture so that there will be a means of developing our country. Cde. Speaker, there can be no dispute that under the colonial system that motivated our people to believe that things must come from abroad for their consumption and I disagree with the position taken that we have substitutes. We do not have substitutes. We must use our won indigenous resources. We must tell the people and I would like those of the Minority Party, I nearly said Opposition, to understand that they must walk this journey with us, educating our people that the use of their own indigenous resources in terms of food is good for their consumption and health because indeed it was proved so by the University of the West Indies.

There can be no dispute. Even our herbs, it has been proven are effective herbs for our health and health conditions. Cde. Speaker, in supporting this Budget I would implore all, both in and out of this House that our survival is in agriculture and agricultural development as the Budget so clearly classified that we must get involved so that our economy can once again become vibrant in this wonderful land of Guyana. [Applause]

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: Cde. Speaker, the Budget Speech is a confession of failure. It is a confession that the P.N.C. Government has proven themselves, over the seventeen years of efficiently and effectively governed this country. Are we to sit down and allow the P.N.C. to lecture us now after seventeen years as to what is to be done. The P.N.C. cannot even tell that have to the ordinary man in the street because if you go and listen to them they have rejected all the excuses and slogans emerging from the lips of the P.N.C. spokesmen and women.

We have today a number of over-night scientists and nutritionists. It is no secret, Cde. Speaker, that the People's Progressive Party, from the time immemorial have made it abundantly clear that this country is basically agricultural and unless this sector is nourished and effectively monitored the country will suffer economically. If anyone who have been here for some time was to go through the Hansards you will read there the kind of responses the P.P.P. got from the P.N.C. when it was sitting on this side of the House. It was called by all kinds of names and this a little bit of historical truth will not hurt but will sort to edify those who have displaying such enthusiasm in their contribution in this House. The Vice-President in the Budget Speech in one of the pages described Guyana as a beautiful fertile and richly endowed country. No one disputes this and we would be the last on this side of the House to utter a single word of contradiction to that statement. What is however being questioned is endowed and beautiful – as we all can see the country to be why so many are fleeing it. The obvious air of uncertainty and insecurity and the migration rate has been the concern of all of us.

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17:00 hrs

(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

The migration rate must be the concern of all of us, for those who are brushing the dust of Guyana off their feet are some of the best brains, skilled people, farmers and producers. Many who are going and have gone concede that foreign countries are not beds roses, but they are still going. A dispassionate and objective examination will reveal that the absence of democracy and violation of human rights principally influence those who depart. But those who remain spend greater hours lamenting our disastrous economic plight, worried about the future of themselves and families, concerned about job opportunities, the security of their lives with the dangerous crime trend. These have led to lethargy and clearly a state of frustration and depression.

It is well know that in the Caribbean Guyanese are one of the hardest working people, skilled and full of vision. Our potentials and resources are unquestionable. A country with gold, diamond, rice, sugar, bauxite and timber has been reduced to the state of a naked mendicant. Our economy is in shambles and employees of the public sector are being fired. Clearly the unemployed will have to remain without work and when these naked facts are thrown to the Government some of their speakers burst out in hysteria.

I was ashamed to hear one of the speakers saying that if a worker says unless I get food I cannot work and produce, that statement is described as treasonable. I think that spokesman is an enemy of the worker and if that person is guilty of treason he has been guilty of treason inside of the Assembly for many reasons. Our population is relatively small and our country vast. Everyone proclaims Guyana to be the Caribbean food Basket. Instead, we are unable to feed ourselves. We do not have foreign exchange to find staple food items.

Guyana has the potential and I emphasise that we have the potential to defeat any crisis. I think I recall the Cde. Vice President, Cde. Green, saying something to that effect and I want to support that statement. We have the potential. But what we have to examine is why the potential, the resources and all the other qualities and assets we have cannot be utilise to better this country and, indeed, to provide a better standard of living for all the people. This is not only the view of Members on this side of the Assembly. But, Cde. Speaker, these words came from the lips of the President when he said in his speech in this Assembly on page 7, the following:

“A relatively small economy such as Guyana’s may suffer the disadvantage of being unable to influence world trends decisively...”

In that statement is implicit even the belief that small as we are we can even influence world trends, which is a good position and something I would wish to support. But then he goes on:

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“..... small is not only beautiful but also, potentially effective. If we were to exploit and develop our relevant resources intelligently and efficiently, we can survive and even prosper in the context of the world’s needs, crisis or no crisis.”

How the Government could come and tell us in this Assembly and attempt to convey to the nation as a whole that all our difficulties and miseries and what have you are entirely due to world crisis and world problems. There is a crisis in the Government, a crisis in the P.N.C., and that crisis has to be resolved if this country is to move forward. We will come to that in a few minutes.

It is clear that our economic problems cannot be blamed on the world crisis. The blame must politely and frankly and truthfully be placed on the P.N.C. Government. In difference to farmers, indifference to their many, many representations, contempt for their welfare, inability to motivate and inspire them to produce, these are some of the factors and reasons why we have not been producing.

The President when he delivered his speech said on page 9:

“...as one looks back at 1981 with its troubles and its woes, one readily recognises that physical production was not up to target in most areas. Even sugar which was by far the best performer achieved only ninety-five per cent of its revised target. We may coldly and objectively ascribe these failures to circumstances entirely beyond our control, like bad and/or unseasonal weather, or others only partially within our control, like inadequate of equipment and spare parts, but it cannot be denied that a substantial contributor to failure was weak and unimaginative management, indiscipline and lackadaisical performances at all levels.”

I am saying that the President in his speech identifies at least some of the areas that are responsible for the economic predicament of this country. Who appoints the manager? Who must overlook the Managers and supervisors and monitor the total economy? Could the Government escape that responsibility? It is clear that if our current plight is attributable to some of the factors which the president alluded to that the P.N.C. cannot escape blame and they have, we know only one recourse, to resign and let the people have a Government of their choice and of their will. Let it be know that unless and until democracy is restored and the people and their true representatives are meaningfully involved in the decision-making process, increased production and productivity will remain a dream.

The P.N.C. says tell it as it is. Let us tell it as it is. Is the composition of this Assembly a reflection of the people’s will? If the P.P.P. represents the minority in this country, why is it at the 1980 General Elections that the Army had to be used to seize the ballot boxes and they did not allow the will of the people to prevail, as was clearly in the ballot boxes? You denied the populace the right to and choosing ... of their choice. You need the Army in this villainy. You pushed the nation into the position of seeing the Army and the security forces as their enemies.

National Assembly17:10 hrs(Cde Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

This is the environment the PNC government has created and it is in this environment, it is in this atmosphere – that of 1982 we are living. The P.N.C. has got to take serious and challengeable responsibility of changing this situation and conditions which power and influence I boldly say without fear of contradiction the P.N.C. cannot exhort.

The people have drifted too far away from them, there is a tremendous gap between the ruling team and the masses of this country and I know many of the Comrades sitting on the opposite side concede that fact. They know it only too well. Go in Bourda Market, go in Stabroek market, go on the street and you will hear – we want bread, we want flour, we want rice, we want split peas, we are hungry, bakeries have closed.

People have literally reached starvation point in this country and you do not want them to speak, you do not want to accept criticism, you are intolerant to hearing the truth. Cde. Speaker, one thing is abundantly clear to all today, the elections have proved that the P.P.P. is the majority party in this country and there can be no doubt about that.

Democracy today conspicuous by absence and we need Cde. Speaker, once again at this juncture of our history to battle and to struggle to win back democracy. Indeed, the democratic rights of the people of Guyana. On page 47 of the Budget speech, the vice President said “We have also to plan and organize our activities on regional principles. The Regional Democratic Councils have a constitutional responsibility to manage and develop their social organisations”.

While the Regional Democratic Councils have a constitutional responsibility what is does not have is the people’s confidence and that is vital. The Councils have proven to be more a financial burden and an extension of the bureaucracy. We are all aware of orders issued pertaining to salaries to those who now compose the bureaucracy of the regional council. I do not want to be personal, I never like to, but some of them are clear ‘has been’ to use a well know Guyanese phrase. One man confess that he never felt in his life that he will ever earn such big salaries. So it is against this background, where the workers wages are not increased, where the people are not given essential food items and the bureaucracy of the elite are outstanding everyday at the expense of the people of this country. Do you expect them to have confidence in you? Do you expect them to co-operate with you? Do you expect them to support you?

Cde. Speaker, the Regional Democratic Councils undoubtedly have certain constitutional assignments, certain constitutional duties, but that will not help them to function, to inspire or to cause development of this country. When government speaks of regional democracy, the masses will must prevail in all the regions and in the total constitutional system to one is fooled by all these extensions and bodies within the constitutions framework. Cde. Speaker, the truth is for twelve years district and village councils did not face the electorate – that is a reality since 1970.

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Then comes paramountcy of the party which does not have constitutional sanction but permeates all governmental institutions and the lives of the people of this country. I notice as the economy get worse and as situation deteriorates the government is avoiding talks about paramountcy of the party. But it is utterance of that type, it is placing party flag at the Appeal Court and such behaviour that have pushed the nation into the state of fear and insecurity and have made them lost interest in this country and not helping to produce that develop this country.

Party workers deny this: Party workers are given Ministers' status and facilities, stationary paid from the Ministry of National Development. Where is the constitutional sanction for that kind of action? I hope that the head of that Ministry who is a young man will ensure that all those who have entered into that Ministry along the lines I spoke about, that they will be the first to go on the streets and not the workers who will not be able to support their families with small meager wages.

Cde. Speaker, the independence of the Judiciary and the Courts of Justice are frequently questioned because of ... of justice in so many instances. The treason trial on the West Coast incarcerating P.P.P. supporters without bail, holding them in prison until after elections both in 1973 and 1980.

Appointment to the Judiciary and members on the opposite side know what I am talking about. Amendment of the Summary Jurisdiction Appeals Act to provide that persons convicted in the Magistrate Court are imprisoned and were not automatically placed on bail until the appeal is heard and concluded. Amendment of the Administration of Justice Act the enlarge the number of private offences clearly designed against opponents.

The Criminal Justice Act of 1980, passed with the effect that submissions already made by Defence Council are over-ruled. These are only a few examples Cde. Speaker. The atmosphere, the conditions, the feelings of the people in Guyana is as a result of these factors. The constitution guarantees many things, but constitutional guarantees whether in the old constitution or the new constitution have been observed in the breach. Suspects who are politically opponents are first beaten and tortured. The P.P.P. reported where a young man was placed on an ants nest. Shame on this government. I understand two young men. On page 26 of the budget Speech.

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(Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud continues)

The Vice-President in his Budget Statement had this to say and I quote from page 26 of the Budget Speech:

“The right to strike is a basic right of all workers.”

And when strike action is taken, scabs are employed and workers terrorised and, as I said before, legislation is speedily and hastily enacted against the interests of the workers. In some cases the legislation is of a retroactive nature. Let us tell it as it is, with the hope, Cde. Speaker, that there will be no recurrence.

The time has been reached for a thorough reappraisal of the country's problems and difficulties and for a spade to be called a spade. There is a vital need to divest the nation of its reservations, reluctance, fears and uncertainties if this beautiful country is to be lifted out of the current difficulties.

I wish to call on the Government to recognise the principle reasons for a fall in production and for the state of the economy. Do not search for scapegoats! Blame yourselves! You have been there for 17 years and you have thwarted the people's will, smashed their expectations and hopes and wrecked the country. There must be a new beginning in the interest of this country for the well-being and welfare of all in Guyana. The people know it all. You will not have to tell it and tell it as it is. They know it.

On page 54 of the Budget Speech it is stated:

“Action begun last year to improve efficiency in the Rice Industry will continue. The management of the Guyana Rice Board will be reorganised and the management system strengthened and improved. In particular, there will be regional decentralization of management functions and direct responsibility of Regional Managers to the regional administration.”

What is needed is for the farmers' two representatives to be recognized. In one of the early quotations the Government said the regional bodies must co-operate and work with the people's social organisations. The Guyana Rice Producers Association Act is one of the statutes of this country. It has its beginning in the colonial days at which time the Association was recognised and, with the advent of the People' Progressive Party in the Government, the majority of the farmers were placed to control and manage the Board. This Government, the ignores the people's representatives and proceeds to handpick people here and there , those who have proven that all they are concerned with is their own personal interest and what they can get out of the system. The P.N.C. is not unaware of this. Believe me what I tell you. Many said this, “They are in the system. I am with them to see what I can get.” These are the people you have with you and these are the people who are getting fat within the P.N.C.

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The Speaker: Four minutes more.

Cde. Reepu Daman Persaud: I say that there should be a public enquiry into the Guyana Rice Marketing Board and all its branches. When the farmers managed the Board it made profits. Now it is losing money. Time does not permit me to give the figures. Hand the Board back to the farmers. Let those who produce, manage and run it. The loss you now record will become a surplus. The farmers will be given incentives and will receive a just price for their paddy and rice. Imagine, in 1964 and 1965 Guyana produced 165,000 tons of rice. In 1980, you produced 165,000 tons. In 1981 production fell to 163,000 tons. It means that after 17 years you are producing less rice than the country used to produce before. And still you want to tell the people they can get rice, that there is rice in Linden, in Berbice, that there is rice all over the place. Clearly, the farmers are not producing and how can you have rice? Equate the figures with the amount you export and you will see what is left. Not only a small amount is left, but a poor quality of rice remains for consumption by the people of this country. Instead of providing employment, 600 will be sacked by the Guyana Rice Marketing board.

Why is the government concealing what price it receives from overseas markets for rice? Tell the farmers. Let the farmers know. Show the figures. It is only by such action that you can motivate and inspire them. You cannot by fooling and deceiving them. I say, on behalf of the People's Progressive Party, that 75 per cent of the price received for rice must be paid to the farmers and you will have greater production and more foreign currency with which to import food so that all those items that have been placed on the banned list can be removed from the list and the people can be fed. Rice is only one of our major products, but if all areas of our economy are properly managed and monitored I have no doubt that this country can get out of its difficulties.

I want to conclude with the remark that the greatest problem in this country is the absence of democracy and a Government which is an imposition on the people of Guyana. Until this situation is corrected we cannot move forward and better Guyana and make it happy for all [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Tyndall.

The Minister of Agriculture (Cde. Tyndall): Cde. Speaker, I rise to support the Motion so ably moved by the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, and in doing so I wish to share with this August body some information on the programmes that we are promoting, the programmes that this Government is pursuing in the Ministry of Agriculture in order to help to bring this country out of the present economic difficulties.

In the context of our economic difficulties, the agricultural sector is confronted with what can be truly described as a supreme challenge. The nature of this challenge has been determined, not only by the factors arising from within the economy. This we do not deny. But also, and even more insidiously, by the persistent problems of the world economic system.

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The Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, has made a very detailed presentation on the problems of the economy and on the difficulties of the external economic environment. I do not propose to repeat what he has so clearly and so admirably expressed but with your permission, Cde. Speaker, I would like to make reference to a number of elements that are of particular relevance to the agricultural sector. I do so and I consider this necessary because it is important that we eschew emotion, avoid personal prejudice or sectional interests and base our response on dispassionate analysis. There is no way to refute emotion, but at least we can examine the facts.

We refer to the international situation, not to say how well or how badly other countries have done. That is irrelevant. What is relevant is the effects of these developments on our economy and their implications for economic policy. To recount what other countries have done, what U.S.S.R. has done, what Cuba has done, what Grenada has done and to put forward these as prescriptions for Guyana is a most insidious form of economic imperialism, or, perhaps, it is a manifestation of a vacuum of the mind.

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17:30 hrs

(Cde Tyndall continues)

Cde. Speaker, the first point on which I wish to focus, by way of background, by way of providing a perspective towards our debate on this particular issue, in that for a number of years now world agriculture has been passing through a period of great crisis. World agricultural output has been showing a decline for a number of years and despite slight improvements in 1978, the trend is still downwards. We are part of world agriculture. What confronts our agriculture is not a crisis, it is not a crisis situation but a challenge and an opportunity to re-orientate ourselves and to restructure our economy so that we can take the maximum advantage of a growing demand for the things we can produce.

The second element on which I wish to focus, is the monetary and financial turmoil in a world which has led to a reduction in the flow of financial resources for agricultural development and which has obviously affected Guyana. The traditional recipients of such financial flows will have to depend more and more on their own resources. They will have to mobilise more resources internally and use what they have with greater efficiency and effectiveness.

The third element which I wish to mention is the instability and general depressed prices for the non-oil exports of developing countries. Developing non-oil exporting countries including Guyana have found themselves exporting more and more to maintain the same level of earnings, and in some cases many countries have been exporting more and more only to earn less and less. In other words, the terms of trade has been moving viciously against us.

The fourth point I wish to mention, is the persistence of inflation particularly in the developed countries of the world who still supply most of the imports, in particular, the inputs we need for agriculture and for general development. Development has become a very costly undertaking and developing countries are finding it increasing difficult to meet such cost.

The fifth point on which I wish to focus, is the cost of energy. In 1973 we spend 28 per cent on our fuel imports. In 1974, we spent 13 percent. In 1979, we spent 29 per cent. In 1980, we spent 25 per cent. In 1981, we spent 40 per cent. Where will it end? More for energy means less for other things. The arithmetic is simple enough. What imports shall we maintain? What imports should we reduce? This is an issued not only for Guyana buy virtually all non-oil producing countries with a perspective of development for their people.

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Cde. Speaker, the points to which I have focused will help us to determine what are the basic imperatives of our agricultural policy in this time of difficulty and challenge. The first imperative is that we must seek to promote greater food self-sufficiency. To put it in plain words, we must eat more of what we produce and eat less of what other people produce unless we are prepared to sacrifice our development to satisfy the immediate craving of our exotic appetites. In this connection, I wish to quote from a very prestigious document. A publication by the Food and Agricultural Organisation. I make this quotation because it is very topical and because relevant references have been made in this Assembly and because the report represents and refutable wisdom. I quote from Agriculture 2,000, page 101 published by the F.A.O.:

“There is not nutritional reason why developing countries should exaggerate the Westernisation of their diets which is in any case taking place. Many countries could benefit if they could use for development purposes at least part of their growing expenditure on imports of wheat.”

This is not a publication of the PNC Government. It is not a publication of anyone here. It is a publication of the F.A.O., representative of the vast majority of mankind. It is a wisdom which I recommend to my friends on the Minority benches. Does it not make sense for the hinterland regions to produce more of what they need and to eat more of what we produce and depend less on food brought from outside. Food production is not only a matter for farmers, non-farm families can make a great contribution to food security of their country. I think we have some non-farm families on the Minority benches. They could make contributions by using up available land, every available land space around their house, even plant pots or any suitable containers, to grow more food to help reduce their food dependence. And far from affecting domestic trade and agricultural produce, such produce, such activities, will release resources for the development of other areas of agriculture.

The second imperative of our agricultural policy is the need to make the most efficient use of resources available for agriculture. With the reduction of the, or the possibility of the reduction in the conventional flow of external resources in real terms for agricultural development, there will be an inevitable shift of emphasis on expansive development from new project activities to intensive development. The developmental activities aimed at increasing the benefits from existing developmental projects and from existing resources. There are three main areas in which this policy will be applied: land resources, water resources, and human resources. In the coastland, in coastal agriculture in Guyana, land resources and water resources are two face of the same coin. If we consider water resources in terms of water control system, or simply as the availability of irrigation water. Over the past ten years or so, a considerable amount of money was spent in making land available for agriculture.

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In the MMA region, in the Tapacuma region, to at the end of 1981, total expenditure was roughly \$116 million. When the project comes to an end, that will be later this year in September, we will have spent an estimated \$130 million. Twenty-five thousand acres of rice land will be given effective drainage and irrigation, and also eight thousand of non-rice land. In the MMA region for the first phase, we will be spending \$164,000,000 to bring into production, to provide flood control in drainage and irrigation, 146,00 acres of land. The magnitude of this investment in agriculture, particularly in agricultural land for rice cultivation, can be judged in terms of the cost of developing an acre of land. In the MMA region at the end of the first phase, an acre of rice land in the front land area which will benefit from main drainage and irrigation, will cost \$3,000 an acre. At the end of the second phase it will cost \$6,000. In the Tapacuma region when the project is completed an acre of land will cost \$3,500. A farmer in the Tapacuma region with 30 acres of land will be given the capital benefit of \$105,000. When the second phase is completed, the farmers in the MMA area will receive the benefit of \$180,000 – an individual farmer. This is an enormous amount of money to place in the hands of the farmer and this is an illustration of the confidence that this government has placed in the hands of the farmers of this country. [Applause]

In the final analysis, the cost of these development will have to be borne by the people of this country, by every citizen. It is, therefore, important that we ensure that every square inch of this land is beneficially occupied so that there can be some increment of benefit which will accrue to the economy and to the country as a whole. It is in this sense that we see the significance and wisdom of the 'Land to the tiller' policy which is enshrined in the new Constitution. The exact words of the Article 18 of the New Constitution are:

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

We cannot afford to maintain a state of non-utilisation or under utilisation, with regards to any cultivable land that is accessible and available for productive use. A basic imperative of our agricultural policy is to end non-beneficial occupation to promote more intensive utilisation and to make lands available to those who are willing and able to cultivate it. Access to agricultural land is perhaps the most important mechanism for the promotion of social change and economic justice. It is one of the panels of policy of this Government. The promotion of economic justice and social change through land reform, 'Land to the tiller.'

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17:40 hrs

(Cde. Tyndall continues)

Work towards the preparation and enactment of the legal framework for the implementation of land to the tiller policy is already under way and the regional administrators are charged with the responsibility of identifying land which non-beneficially occupied or unutilized in order to make this land available to people who are willing to cultivate it. Land is for social use. In the M.M.A. region there is already a legal framework for land distribution. The ... have commenced work towards this end. In the process of development Guyana will be assisted by the Development Crop Division of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Kingdom.

Let me now say without question of the more effective utilisation of water resources. Water as an agricultural resource is very costly. It is costly when we have too much of it. It is costly when we have too little of it. It has been estimated, again by the F.A.O., that the drainage and irrigation schemes in many countries of the world over 60 percent of the irrigation water is wasted. We do not have similar statistics in Guyana but I should not be surprised if our wastage, if our performances in not better. We have to correct the situation. We need to prove our knowledge of Caribbean Water control, especially in farms. I am happy to say that work towards this end is being carried out at ... M.M.A. and at Black Bush Polder. The effectiveness of water management system particularly farm water management system depends more on the farmers themselves than other administrative agencies of the water management system. In recognition of this important fact the Ministry of Agriculture will work along with the Ministry of Regional Development and the Regional Democratic Councils to promote and encourage the establishment of water management committees at the district level or any other more convenient geographical level. The Water Management Committee will comprise predominantly of farmers and includes the relevant officials in the areas of agriculturists and engineers.

In September of this year a seminar of farm water management techniques with participants of Guyana and Suriname will be organized by the F.A.O. Participation of this seminar will be fully financed by the F.A.O and the Government, my Ministry will seek to involve the participation of farmers as well as officials and on the return of these farmers they will be constituted into a nucleus group in order to spread the new technology among farmers and among water management committees.

Few developing countries, if any, can boast of all the technical manpower they need for agricultural development even though the training facilities cannot satisfy their full needs. For a small developing country such as Guyana the situation is particularly acute. The most crucial area affected is the Extension services which is a delivery system for inputs of farm production, technology and other services to farmers. To deal with these problem developing countries must make efficient use of their scarce technical manpower source. In order to increase effectiveness extension services the Ministry of Agriculture will promote the farm group approach.

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This is not to say that individual approach will not be pursued but to the extent that the farmers groups are a more effective transmission of delivery of extension services, of technical inputs and to the extent that these groups are natural groups, natural groups in terms of their perceiveness and in terms of their consensus to their group procedure that the group approach is the best way to satisfy the needs than the Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with the Ministry of Regional Development and the Ministry of Co-operatives. All pursue the establishment of these groups to effectively utilise all scarce manpower resources and more effective delivery of the scarce inputs for agricultural development. So far we have ...certain policies which must be seen as basic for agricultural development. I now wish to say something about production programmes in this sector.

Sugar and rice, which amount to 43 percent of our merchandise exports in 1981 will be expected to be the biggest contributor in the drive for agricultural exports in 1982. The Vice-president responsible for Economic Planning and Finance has always given the target for those commodities. Sugar production in 1981 at 300,790 tons was 8.1 percent below target. As a result of rain fall conditions almost ten thousand acres were left in the ground. If this acreage had been reaped and if we had assumed the same yield as the national average yield then the short fall would only have been 2 percent and if we had maintained the sucrose content which in the functional weather, we had bad weather in 1981, had been maintained we would have exceeded the target by some 4,000 tons. The target set as stated in the Report of the Vice-President responsible for Economic Planning and Finance, are within the realm of possibility of achievement, given favourable weather, given good industrial relations and given good dedication all concerned, by all workers from top right down to the workers in the field.

Rice production for 1981 fell 25 percent below target. The first crop fell shortly below target but because of a persistent programme of prolonged rainfall into the land preparation season the land preparation of the second crop was considerably hampered and production of the second crop was only 59 percent of the target. One heartening feature is the steady rise in yields. Paddy yield per acre in 1969 was around 10 bags per acre. It rose steadily and in 1982 19 bags per acre. It almost doubled in 12 years. This is tremendous achievement. It is testimony to the success and the wisdom of the agricultural development programme of this Government.

Another heartening indication is that even though the rice production in 1981 was still below the record target of 211,534, the highest rice production in the history of this country, the highest in 1977 and I do not need to tell you which Government was at the helm. Even though target was below there are indications of a firm upward trend. Indeed, in 1982 we have a record crop in the ground, 113 acres, the third highest in the history of this country and on all these occasions it was during the regime of this Government. Yield rice target for this year has been set at 213,000 acres. A special production drive is being launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Regional Development and in this production drive the Regional Democratic Council, the grassroots level organisation will play a vital part in identifying unused lands and in putting up proposals. Proposals from the grassroots representatives, from farmers themselves as to what can be done with the limited resources to build acreage under

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production.

I throw out a challenge to my friends of the Minority benches to respond to, to participate in this drive, to show they with the people, to help to promote at maximum utilisation of our rice lands. Special measures with the assistance of a loan from USAID, a project for modernization of rice facilities is under way. The project will involve the improvement of the rice facilities at Somerest Parks, at Wakenaam, at Anna Regina, at Black Bush polder, at Mards and it will involve the building of new rice milling facilities and silos at Trafalgar, and the rebuilding of the wharf and storage facilities in Georgetown.

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17:50 hrs

(Cde. Tyndall continues)

Cde. Chairman, I wish now to turn, rather in a haste, to a special commodity programme which is being launched by the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Regional Development and the Ministry of Co-operatives jointly. The programme is aimed at promoting the production of a selected list of commodities. The programme is unique in many respects, not in its individual features but as a package. It is unique in that the commodity is specific. It will work with farmers who have identified themselves for participation in this programme. It will involve about fourteen commodities and the programme will be launched on the basis of measurable acreage and measurable targets. It will be carefully programmed and monitored and it will be given the support of the Ministries concerned.

That is not to say that this programme covers the whole of our agriculture effort. It is an additional effort and it is a special effort. This programme will be supported by loans provided under the Food Crop Production and Marketing Programme. A sum of \$8 million is available for distribution to farmers this year and a campaign has been launched in order to sensitise farmers to the availability of these facilities and to involve them in schemes. Again, I wish to invite farmers on the other side to participate in the scheme if they so wish. Individual farmers can enjoy a credit of up to \$30,000 and if you form a co-operative you can earn a loan to the equivalent of \$120,000.

The Speaker: Five minutes more.

Cde. Tyndall: Now I wish to make special reference to certain commodities in the production of edible oil. We have the capacity to satisfy our needs of edible oil. We have the coconut cultivation, we have the rice bran, we have the palm oil seeds, we have cotton seed and we have tens of thousand of acres of wild nuts. They are not as wild as so many people may think.

We have embarked on a programme to utilise all these facilities. The first thing to be done is that those who own coconut cultivation must reap all the coconut that are on the ground. Our experience at Hope Estate, our experience in the coconut rehabilitation exercise suggests that if we can collect all the coconuts on the ground we can improve production immediately by 30 per cent ...will go into cultivation later this year, by September, has a capacity of 1,000 tons per annum and when all these facilities are mobilised we will be in a position to satisfy our need.

I wish to refer rather speedily to certain other projects, to a dairy developing projects – for instance to a sheep development project – in respect of which the F.A.O. is offering to assist us. I wish to refer also to the establishment of the Veterinary diagnostic laboratory which will be opened this year at a cost of \$3million and which will be a considerable in livestock production in the work they do in preventing disease.

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I wish to refer to a project for the utilisation of natural pasture and pasture legumes for meat and milk production. We must develop a system that is alternative to the factory production system that has been developed in the rich countries in the north, a system which utilises our natural resource, and the pasture legume project is being executed with the assistance of E.C.C.A. with financing from C.I.D.A.

The Speaker: Two minutes more.

Cde. Tyndall: Cde. Speaker, I begun by saying that the agricultural sector faces a great challenge. It will be more accurate to say that it faces a formidable challenge, formidable but not beyond the capacity of the Guyanese people. A successful response calls for a united and resolute action on the part of all Guyanese. It is a formidable task but a task that must be done. I know that we depend on the vast majority of Guyanese people because they know that this is the only way. I think that on the other side the Members of the Minority Party know that this is the only way, determined and resolute action as a nation. I call upon them to declare where they stand, whether they are for the people, whether they are for the development of this country. What are they for. Are they are production, are they for creating employment for the poor people of this country by buying the things they can produce. I call upon them to declare on whose side they are. [Applause]

The Seaker: Cde. Gilbert.

Cde. Gilbert: Cde. Speaker, I rise this evening to support the Motion moved by the hon. Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance in this Assembly. Earlier in this Assembly we have heard a Member of the Minority saying that the Budget Speech is a confession of failure. I want to refute that statement and I want to say that the Budget is not a confession of failure. The Budget as presented by the hon. Vice President is a frank analysis of the state of the economy and a fair programme for economic recovery. Of course those in the Minority are wont to spread gloom, despair and disaster to the people of this country. Over the years the people have rejected such negativities and have shown their confidence in the Government of the People's National Congress by always rising to the occasion. Despite the present difficulties which faces the economy of Guyana today, it must be seen against a certain background. That background is one which demonstrates over the years that under the People's National Congress we have experienced in Guyana positive and profound changes in the political process and great advances in our development activity.

I say this to illustrate the point that what we face in Guyana today is indeed the harsh realities of deep international economic crisis. It might be good for me to refer to some of the events to the past which the Minority sometimes just simply forget. I want to remind them that despite the ills which we face today in the word and the crisis we face in Guyana, they must remember that it was the People's National Government that led this country from independence to Republic status, that brought into force the People's New Constitution, that has introduced a deepened system of democracy by an introduction of the new regional system. The Minority must be reminded that it was the People's National Congress which undertook a programme of nationalization, of reforms in the public administration, of reforms in agriculture and education.

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18:00 hrs

(Cde. Gilbert continues)

Also Cde. Speaker, it would be good for me to remind the Minority Party of the many things spoken about by my other colleagues who spoke earlier, particularly of Government's programme in the development of better housing facilities for the people of Guyana. Massive drainage and irrigation projects in the agriculture sector, the construction of roadways, advances in forestry and rural electrification.

Cde. Speaker, the advances made under the People's National Congress Government are multi-folded, they are many, cannot be easily counted. But why have I referred to these developments? I have referred to these developments to make the point that it is tomfoolery to come here to say that the People's National Congress has failed. The People's National Congress has always succeed under difficult circumstances and we continued to succeed.

Apart from fundamental economic changes in the interest of all the Guyanese people, Cde. Speaker, it must be established that based on our past achievements what we must recognise is that what we faced with is a genuine crisis, a crisis which we must not politic about. A genuine crisis which not only faces Guyana but faces the entire international community. Therefore in the circumstances we have to be imaginative and we have to use our initiative. We have to soberly and systematically use all available resources to tackle the problems of the economy and effect a recovery programme.

Obviously, if such a programme is to be effected and if all the resources of this country are to be mobilised to effect recovery, then we need to address our minds to the question of harnessing the resources of our youths and channeling such resources productively in the interest of the overall development of the nation. Therefore, I would invite this Assembly and indeed the broad populace to debate two questions in this respect. That is the question of youth in production and defence and (2) organising of young people through institutions that will help them to be mobilised in the development process.

On many occasions and it is now a custom for the very important youth question in Guyana today to be glossed over or be forgotten by these in the Minority. But I wish to point out that it is under the People's National Congress Government over the years that have given the young people a chance in this country, that have been organising and mobilising them productively.

Let me in referring to the involvement of youth refer to two major institutions which the People's National Congress has been instrumental in organising and sustaining over the years. One of those institutions that are crucial is the institution of the Guyana National Service. You recall in this Assembly and out of this Assembly the question of the Guyana national Service was actively debated and you will recall in the initial stages that the institution of the Guyana National Service was rejected by the then Opposition in the Assembly. I am not too sure if the position is now changed but it would be good for me at this time to refer to some of the achievements of youths in the Guyana National Service.

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One of it has been the proper development, orientation of those young people that have been passed through the Guyana National Service. For many of them, if not most of them have been given the opportunity to realise their full potentials and have utilised such potentials in development activity in different parts of the country. Many of those who have come out of the National Service are servicing in many of the major national institutions of the state. Many of them are serving in many of the agricultural communities performing different tasks in development activities.

Also Cde. Speaker, it would be good to note that the Guyana National Service is presently organising them to be productively engaged in all the National Service Centres in our country affording them opportunities in training in relevant skills, particularly in the areas of carpentry, masonry, mechanic, agriculture and farming and other areas that are fundamental and crucial to the entire development and dynamism of the economy.

At the same time basically, physiologically and physically preparing them to defend the revolution and the mother land. Perhaps Cde. Speaker, it might be good for me to remind the Minority of some of the achievements in the productive areas of the Guyana National Service. For instances, apart from turning out thousands of trained young people who might have been otherwise counter-productively engaged in the society and putting them into the establishment in the society. The Guyana National Service is involved actively in the production of black eye, in the production of corn, in the production of cotton for the textile mill, in the production of green vegetables. In fact, right now, the Guyana National Service is not only self-sufficient in the production of green vegetables, but the Guyana National Service is now exporting from its centres green vegetables to the nearby communities and even the towns, including Georgetown.

The Guyana National Service is also actively engaged in organizing young people in the production of stone, in the production of gold, in the production of poultry and eggs, beef and pork. Also the National Service has been getting involved in a number of small industries including the production of toothpick.

This record is but only a part of the wide achievements to which the Guyana National Service has achieved since its inception and I am sure by now that the Opposition – those of the Minority are not only convinced, but that they will join in the national drive of organising young people to be entered into the Guyana National Service so that they can be given the proper orientation and to be productively organized in the society.

Not only have we concentrated on organising youths in the Guyana National Service. Another important institution which the government and party has concentrated its effort in organising the youths at the community level is the Guyana people's militia. We are all aware of the broad objectives of the People's Militia, but in the main the People's militia is servicing the task of popularly mobilising young people at the level of the community and getting them involved in military and para-military training, so crucial and vital to organizing the broad masses for the defence of the country.

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18:10 hrs

(Cde Gilbert continues)

Not only have they been involved in military and paramilitary training, the Guyana Peoples Militia is now actively engaged in organising agricultural production at community levels, also in organizing training programmes for unattached and unorganized young people wherever they are.

These two institutions, to which I have referred, are profoundly crucial for organizing young people in development activities.

The Speaker: Two minutes more.

Cde. Gilbert: But more, we need to expand and develop these institutions and agencies of the National Development and Defence and begin an active programme of organising youth on a broad and popular base on agricultural production at every level. We need to organise youth in communities and mobilisation. We need to organize them in youth and training activities. We need to continue a programme at the community level of training young people in every possible are in which we have the facilities for training. More than that, we need to continue to engage our young people actively in sport. As you will have noticed, last year the Government of the People's National Congress announced the establishment of a stadium to cope with the advancing youth participation in sporting activities in our country. We need to analyse and understand the role of all of us and the contributions to the society of youth generally so that in the final analysis we can understand that the young people of this country, who form a substantial part of the population, can be positively engaged in the whole drive of organising for production and defence. That, I am sure, will be a positive contributory factor to the whole question of ensuring a turn around of our economy and will make a substantial contribution to the economic recovery programme.

The Speaker: Cde. Mohamed.

Cde. Mohamed: Cde. Speaker, to the question that was posed by Cde. Tyndall may I respond. The P.P.P stands where we have always stood – on the side of the Guyanese working people, on the side of progress, on the side of socialism, on the side of peace, on the side of democracy. That, I think, is well understood by all, not only in Guyana but throughout the world.

Last Monday we listened to a Budget which was very frank but nonetheless gloomy. Admittedly the Cde. Vice-President who presented the Budget Speech spoke very vigorously and with enthusiasm, but I am baffled about the enthusiasm when he mentioned such dismal failures, and I really cannot understand how the Government can be so pleased when it is presenting to us and to this nation such tremendous failures.

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Perhaps to the other rhetorical question which was posed by the Minister for Higher Education, the Budget itself presents the answer: If not the P.N.C., then who can bring recovery to this country? The question misses the entire point. It was the P.N.C. that brought the failure. It was the P.N.C. with 17 years of mismanagement. The P.N.C. was in the saddle alone and that led to the kind of crisis we have and to the problems we are witnessing here. Neither can we say that the prospects for recovery offered in the speech engender much hope, stimulate such confidence or offer much encouragement. The crisis we are facing is all-pervasive. It is affecting every sphere of life in this country. Already we are beginning to witness this in the field of education.

What we would like to ask is this: How is the crisis going to affect the professed socialist ideology of the Government? Given the dependency of ideology on economics and their interdependence, the crisis will naturally be reflected in the ideological superstructure. In fact, in my estimation, the entire tenor of the Budget speech is not at all consistent with its purported commitment to socialism.

But, apart from the general thrust ideologically of the Budget Speech, which may not be coinciding with the belief and the commitment to socialism, I know for a fact also that were we look around we would see that there has been much reduction in terms of advancing and promoting the socialist ideology by the Government. Look at the mass media. Within the past four or five months we have been able to see that institutions financed and influenced by government are reducing the number of programmes in terms of ideological education. I refer to the Workers Education unit. I refer to the C.L.C. programmes, apart from the Government mass media. I refer to the University of Guyana. When the Ministry of Higher Education was established and a Minister was put for the promotion of ideological education, it was from that very time that there has been a decline in some of these programmes.

We have been listening to a lot of challenges from the other side this afternoon I make this challenge: since the Government is saying that it would like to promote socialism ideologically, we fully agree. We say, “Do it and take one hundred per cent support from the People’s Progressive Party. Just go ahead and you will have our unconditional support in this direction.”

The Budget Speech to some extent has also joined the fray for first it speaks about the continuous espousal of the regime and government to socialism. Nevertheless, in the same breath it speaks denigratingly of that very principle, of that concept, of that ideology. I quote from page 44 of the Budget Speech where the vice-President says:

“The objective of building a socialist society remains an absolute national priority; and, necessity, this consideration must influence our policies and guide our actions as we carry out our various assignments and duties in the implementation of the programme.”

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But the last paragraph on page 14 and the first paragraph on page 15 speak not in good terms of socialism and its achievements. Cde. Narbada made the point but I disagree with the rebuttal. We are not opportunists and we do not pay lip-service to socialism. We recognise the class struggle internationally waged between the two systems and if the Government is going to choose conveniently what it is going to say about socialism, then we consider it our duty to also show the other side of socialism.

Obviously the government has conveniently chosen certain aspects of the reality of socialist life, the Soviet Union and other socialist countries, to try to exonerate itself from the blame that it must shoulder for the crisis facing Guyana. To justify this it even, in some way, subverts the very ideology. The members of the government are saying in the Budget Speech that they subscribe to socialism and in doing that I think they are not giving a correct understanding, a reasonable or fair understanding, to the very people they would like to support them in their path to this socialist objective.

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(Cde, Feroze Mohamed continues)

They are not given then, a proper understanding of the political economy of socialism or the state of the economy of the Soviet Union of the socialist countries. Our position is clear. In the international class struggle we have taken our side. Have you? In the barricades we stand on our side and that is why when one side of the picture is given then it is our duty to also give another side because we think the other side has relevance. It is germane and appropriate to our condition, our reality and our own desire to move ahead towards that objective.

Cde. Narbada said that in the next five years there will be a 14½ per cent increase in wages. Doesn't that have relevance to our reality? Of course he spoke about the stability of prices. Of course, we have got to show why we want socialism and show how there in a socialist land you can have stability of prices of basic food. What the Minister did not say which also has relevance to us are these: There will be no more pension and scholarships for people in the socialist land. Sixty thousand enterprises will be modernised with a mind on the interest and welfare of the working class. Ten million people will be moving to improved housing – we are talking about 46 – but, of course, we are living in two different situations. One hundred and ten million people will be going on holiday free or at cut rate. There is no unemployment. There are not dismissals going on. There is no inflation. That too is socialism, and that too has meaning to our country, to our people.

We are not asking the government to conceal anything. If they have chosen to say these, fine. All we are asking is, say the truth because after all page 44 of your budget speech is also saying that you are committed to socialism. But doesn't it seem natural that in influencing the people, you have to tell them why? Do you not also have to show them the benefits of socialism? You not only have to bring out the negative, and it is only from that angle that I think that we ought in speaking about it, and if in fact, you are very sure that you believe in it, you have to give a reasonable, clear and balanced picture and not one-sidedly as appears in the budget speech. I think if you do not do that those within the government who maybe still committed to propagating the socialist ideology will be hard pressed to explain what appears to be a contradiction, where you say you are committed to a socialist ideology but in fact you are only giving the negative.

As to capitalism imperialism, we fully agree it is in permanent crisis. It is caught up in a recession. There is no end in sight. There is no dispute over that and it is precisely because of the crisis under capitalism crisis under capitalism that I think, partially, to some extent we are also faced with this crisis, but not totally. When you present the question in this form, it strikes me as if you are evoking those two super-power theory line. The equidistant line which over the past year seem to have been promoted or seem to have become fashionable again. We warn that if you continue like this then you are only allowing yourselves to be pulled into the ideological trap set by imperialism, and unconsciously you will be helping imperialism today when the ideological struggle has become very sharp and imperialism is on an ideological offensive. In doing so further more, you can perhaps – I want to believe unconsciously – also be giving socialism a bad name, and an undeserving name. The P.P.P's position is clear. We have said before that we do not subscribe that what is going on in Guyana today is socialism. That position which we have taken before, we still hold so today. There is no socialism in Guyana. At

the same time whilst we firmly believe that, we nevertheless, feel that at a certain juncture of our development, the PNC has taken an anti-imperialist direction, had veered towards that direction. We are hoping that in that direction we would have been a more pronounced content – anti-imperialist content – in their policy. It is in the framework I think the debate must be conducted because I think anyone can justifiably say that we can take the debate at the stage of socialism. Even our Constitution does not subscribe to that. Its first chapter says that we are in the transition to socialism. We are saying we have to take the debate in seriousness at another stage, the anti-imperialist process to see how far it has gone, how far it has depends on what would be necessary at this stage. Accordingly then, I wish to quote Brutents, an important ideologist. I think many who are acquainted with theory would know the particular part I wish to quote says this:

“Establishment of a mass education system, development of national culture and its democratisation struggle against pro-imperialist and pro-colonialist ideologies. In the spirit of nationalist, anti-imperialist revolution, democratic ideology and adherence to socialism. Adherence to socialism in its official interpretation. An anti-imperialist foreign policy, solidarity with national liberation and anti-imperialist movements and with progressive orientation and all round co-operation and close friendly relations with socialist States which are the principal of international support of socialist orientation, or in other words, countries taking a progressive look direction”

which we think, as I said the debate should centre around. But apart from that look at the whole question of the public sector in Guyana. At this stage we say that the public sector or nationalisation is good. We are not opposed to it, but when one looks at page 30 of the Budget Speech, what is alarming is the failures that have been itemised in terms of the state Corporations. Ideologically, I do not think if we want socialism or to move in that direction, this is good, because what in fact we are now going to do, is that this is going to be a weapon in the hands of anti-communists imperialist puppets and their propaganda is now going to be seen. In Guyana where socialism has failed, nationalisation can't work.

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18:30 hrs

(Cde. Feroze Mohamed continues)

But we have to go further apart from seeing that propaganda being utilised and to see that contribution the Government may have made towards a kind of propaganda that will not be helpful or will not promote socialism.

One of the reasons for the failure is the refusal of Government to accept our call that with nationalisation move to the next stage. Let the workers feel that they are the owners, let them know that the property belongs to them and that would have been one of the most important steps and it would have helped no doubt to avoid these very losses that page 30 of the Budget Speech is talking about. Well the Minister of Higher Education spoke of ...and ... negativism but I am sure that he will remember that that for a long time has been the P.P.P's call. We did not take negative positions. We are positive all the way and we said that if you want the nationalised industries to work then you have to change production relations which were not changed and furthermore we said you have to put the workers in control. That was a necessary step. You did not do it because you are over-confident and frightened. Now we have this result and now the very socialist objectives you are talking about can be undermined by those refusals and failures to accept positive suggestions from the P.P.P. Yes, you have now come around to recognise in the Budget Speech that the workers will have to be given an opportunity to assert themselves. This is what you said "The Socialist ethics must proved to be not an abstraction but a practical working tool for promoting better human social conditions through enhanced production and productivity. There tends to be a direct relationship between the workers productivity and the quality of the environment in which they work. Workers become resentful and irritated and their productivity falls. It goes on to say that we should bear in mind that the work environment is very often wider than the work place and may conclude communities in which the workers live.

Well, sentiments like those we expressed before. Now we have come around at least to recognising it and now repeat it. We go one step further and repeat. Do not only recognise and repeat move to implement, not the half-hearted manner that was done so far in what was called workers participation, but move in a more profound way. Let the workers really take control not only of the industries but let them also have a bigger say in the regions, in the communities, that the budget Speech is talking about. That is not negative that is positive because now the whole question of production and productivity is in focus.

The failure of the corporations is in the centre. Well we say move to the step that you should have long ago moved to. Put the workers in charge, let them run the industries, let us make nationalized enterprises viable and let us start by moving and resorting to that factor w2hich so long you have been afraid to implement. What are we seeing now? Thousands of workers are going to be dismissed. You cannot ask them to bear the strain and the pains and the stresses at this stage of the crisis. You cannot harass them, pressure them, prosecute them, you cannot dismiss them and still you are saying that their hands is the decisive factor if we are to come out of this crisis. Speaker of P.N.C. all over are saying that

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workers decide where we go. They will have to produce, they will have to take us out of the crisis, they will have to remove us from out of this mess. That is a fact and dismissals will not help in order to get us out.

I think we must move to make these nationalized enterprises viable and one of the steps we advocate firstly is to put these industries in the hands of the working class. Nowadays we are hearing some talk about encouraging private capitals in the country. Well we will deal with that a little but to develop the first point. If we do not put the workers then we have got to be careful that refusal to put them where they should be put and give them a decisive say will push our creating condition where we can move right back to under I.M.F., Regan and imperialists demands. Therefore, we will have instead of progressive pains of developed and socialist ideology to which we are committed, capitalist development which will be attended by all vices, evils and exploitation. Now the private sector, if it is unavoidable that at this stage it is necessary to bring back the private sector in view of the crisis at the particular stage of development then we only wish here to warn that in doing that you must not lose sight of the dangers that they can pose, firstly, repetition of the Jamaican situation right now where opening the doors under private enterprise, foreign as well as local, brings about the contradiction of local and foreign bourgeois. Secondly, in inviting them you do not take the necessary precautions to restrict control and to regulate their appearance in the economy, notwithstanding the possibility that private sector can develop to such an extent that it can outgrow present government state section, overwhelm it, divert it to this socialist objective that is the direction that he imperialists would possibly want. Those two elements therefore, must be looked at because there is a lot of danger in view of the crisis to the whole socialist ideology in this country.

Let us look at the question of co-ops. Again the speech speaks quite a lot of co-operativism. The importance of co-operativism is the principle of co-operativism and have been long spoken about by the P.N.C. But when we examine that I am not too sure about what successes have been achieved or attained in the co-operative sector of our economy. I think our position in the concept of co-operative socialism is clear. If it is still believed that true co-operative socialism will be attained we disagree. At the same time we think that co-operativism is an important pillar of socialist development and whilst we do not think and do not ascribe to the fact that co-operativism is the vehicle to socialism, nevertheless, we are sure it has a role to play and ... the state sector. We think co-operative sector should be the ... in this country that we would like and we are not too sure that co-operative sector of the economy has been put on the ... that it brings. In spite of our task we still think it is not being promoted as it should.

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18:40 hrs

The Speaker: Two minutes more, Cde. Feroze.

Cde. Mohamed: In this regard, one should refer, as the Minister of Higher Education earlier advised, to Brezhnev himself in his address to the 26th congress of the ... I think the Government will do well to go back and see what the advice is and how he puts the situation in terms of countries like ours.

It states:

“Development along the progressive road is not, of course, the same from country to country and proceeds in different conditions, but the main lines are similar. These include gradual elimination of the positions of imperialist monopoly, of the local big bourgeoisie and the feudal elements and the restriction of current capital. They include the securing of the people’s state of the commanding heights of the economy and transition to planned development of the productive forces and encouragement of the co-operative movement in the countryside. They include increasing the role of the working masses in social life and gradual reinforcing the state apparatus with national personnel faithful to the people. They include anti-imperialist foreign policy revolutionary apparatus expressing the interest of the particular masses of the working people and growing stronger there.”

There is not a stage of socialism, this is countries like ours taking a progressive direction. These are the general features. If you agree we have no disagreement.

The Speaker: Cde. Feroze, time. Comrades, the sitting of the Assembly is suspended until 20:00 hrs

Suspended accordingly at 18:43 hrs.

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On resumption –

The Speaker: Cde. Williams

The Minister, Fisheries, in the Ministry of Agriculture (Cde. Williams): Cde. Speaker, the 1982 Budget was ably presented by the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance on behalf of the Government of the vanguard political movement of this country, the People's National Congress, represents an earnest attempt by the administration of this country, the people's Government, to fashion a programme of recovery occasioned by the serious economic crisis facing not only Guyana but so many other developing and even developed countries of the world. There can be no doubt that the Vice President's presentation resulted from serious examination of the crisis and prolonged consultation with the Guyanese people who, on this occasion once again, have exercised the greatest degree of understanding of the problem.

The latest economic trends in the world, the need for food, self-sufficiency, the continuously increasing gap of foreign gap of foreign exchange, the climate of growing hospitality make it imperative that a new dimension, ... and utilisation be undertaken by many, but more importantly, small poor countries which have been victims.

Guyana, because of its firm ideological objective has become the target of attacks on its industrial and agricultural development. So wicked and determined have been those enemies that they have left no stone unturned to detract investment from the development of those areas. However, the people of this country will not yield but instead draw upon their ... reserves and their stores of initiative to turn the economy of this country around.

This nation has been mobilised ever since the 1970s to feed itself and we are determined to do so irrespective of the attempts by some super powers to overtly and covertly divert our course of progress. The fisheries sector forms part of the agricultural sector of this country. It is an industry which has suffered a tremendous setback as a result of the economic crisis referred to earlier. We have had to review our projections and to make some difficult decisions in the re-organisation of our operations to cope with the effect of the crisis. To refer to the inflation in the price of fuel would be ... but I rather be so if it is only to emphasis the point that several activities in the fishing industry are heavily dependent on the utilisation of fuel.

Of course, like the situation with sugar, Guyana cannot determine the price for this product in keeping with the expenses incurred. Each trawler which operates in our exclusive economic zone requires no less than nine thousand gallons of fuel to proceed on a shrimping trip of thirty-five days. The prices of fuel have increased from what we are accustomed to in the past but the prices of our product shrimp have decreased considerable because at this point in time – I repeat like the situation with sugar – get the prices we should get for the prawns we sell in the international market. Prices of prawns, too, fall within the ambit of the unfair economic world in which we live.

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When will some countries in this world begin to understand the unfair treatment experienced by those who produce the basic ingredients for the survival of mankind? Have we forgotten the call made by our President, when Prime Minister, on the 1st May 1975 at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Conference? Perhaps the Guyanese people have not forgotten but on the international forums which are involved in the world's economy, have they forgotten that plea by Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, Leader of the people of this country and father of this nation? If they have forgotten, with your permission, Cde. Speaker, may I indicate to this House one paragraph of that address by Cde. Forbes Burnham. In paragraphs one and two on page 13, Chapter 5, of that small booklet, which has become a historical document in the cause of humanity, Forbes Burnham said:

“It will not do to deceive ourselves upon the nature of the task which must be attempted. We must embark on building a new order. It is not a task involving the repair, renovation or piecemeal reconstruction of the old order. The sharp rise in petroleum prices did not precipitate the crisis of change, its deliberate dimension and its interrelated aspects.”

Yes, Forbes Burnham has been pleading with superpowers of the world to understand the need for a new international economic order so that the products which we in Guyana strive with all our minds and hearts to produce will receive the prices we seek for those products. Yes, the international world is yet to understand the difficulties faced by developing countries in the production of the very needs of society, the very food that mankind has to live on.

I repeat: petroleum has a direct relationship with, and affects the viability of, some areas of the fishing industry. However, the People's National Congress Government has a responsibility to the people of this country and, as such, will not allow itself to become victims of some serious economic crisis and serious unfair decisions taken against us.

As such, the Government, through the foresight and wisdom of Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, has the need to establish the Ministry of Fisheries here in Guyana. Why was the Ministry of Fisheries established? It is just one year and three months old. In keeping with the retrenchment so ably referred to by the Minority, the Ministry of Fisheries also has a reduction of staff, despite its youthful age, but I rather suspect that there is a direct relationship between protein and truth and the Ministry will overcome and seek to carry out its responsibility despite the reduction in staff.

The Ministry of Fisheries has been established to ensure the dissemination of policy decisions of the Government, ensuring active surveillance of the implementation of such decisions, co-ordinating the activities of all agencies and persons involved in the fishing industry by conducting research, obtaining data and information. The Ministry has a responsibility to create an awareness among the Guyanese people, whether they support the Minority of the progressive ruling People's national Congress, of the importance of the available fishery resources in order to motivate them to become involved in the fishing industry.

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It has a responsibility to organise for an improved export trade, while ensuring more utilisation of fish by the Guyana consuming public and at reasonable prices, which reasonable prices are enjoyed by each and every Guyanese, including the members of the Minority Party in this country.

The budgeted programme for 1981 and immediately onward gives to the Ministry of Fisheries the responsibility for ensuring increase in the production of fish for food. There are a number of projects which will be undertaken by the Ministry to achieve these objectives. The Government of Guyana, with the Ministry as executing agency, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture organisation has embarked on a programme since September of last year – it continues until August of this year – to operate a vessel capable of exploiting tinned fished resources primarily in the distant near-shore and that is the area in this country that has not been exploited by fishermen, the area between near to shore and farther from shore.

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(Cde. Williams continues) The vessel known as the M.V. Arawala should not be beyond the operational and functional capacity of the artisanal fishermen. The vessel would be ... around which a fin fishing fleet can subsequently be developed.

It is intended by utilisation of this vessel to demonstrate and introduce patrolling to the artisanal fishery and train fishermen in this new fishing method. In other words, the vessel will be introduced in order to ensure stern trawling in Guyana, to teach the art of stern trawling to fishermen and to demonstrate the benefits of this type of fishing activity. At the same time, it will ensure that in the process of carrying out this experiment – this project – all available fish that is caught would be sold to the Guyanese population.

Cde. Speaker, there is another project which is being undertaken by the Government of Guyana with assistance from the Canadian International Development Agency. By means of an interest free loan provided by Cedar a line of credit facility amounting to \$6 million is established for the procurement of engines and other fishing requisites for the artisanal fishing. The stage has been set that by the fifteenth of April of this year over one hundred and fifty engines will be distributed to fishermen in this country using the very important vehicle referred to by Cde. Feroze Mohamed “The Co-operative” and perhaps it is useful to note that if in Cde. Mohamed’s view the Co-operative is not as vibrant or as vital as it ought to be well then he has not yet examined the Fisherman’s Co-operatives Society in this country and if he has not yet examined the Fisherman’s Co-operatives Society in this country that is tantamount to the non support that the P.P.P. can ever claim from the fishermen of this country that they so talk about and publicise in their mouthpiece ‘the Mirror.’

Cde. Speaker, the provision also have a grant of \$3 million to undertake a by-catch study. This project is intended to begin this year but is dependent on certain inputs, which inputs can only come about if production and productivity takes place in Guyana. I do not wish it to be misinterpreted that this project will be a reality. It being a reality is dependent upon our ability to increase our production, generate such counterpart funds that will permit this project to become a reality. If the project becomes a reality it is proposed to have a by-catch study carried out with two trawlers operating for a period of 240 days involved in carrying out studies to determine the volume, composition, location and seasonal variation of the by-catch.

For the benefit of this House, when I refer to by-catch and particularly for the benefit of the Minority I mean the fish you catch when you go shrimping. The members of the government and the population are full knowledgeable of that. Excuse me Cde. Speaker, I am not certain. It is also intended to examine the processing and marketing potentials and ensuring that their comparisons between refrigerating storage and storage by ice. Cde. Speaker, it is also intended for the artisanal fishery and the artisanal fishery is the section where the ordinary fishermen are involved, so sometimes it is difficult to understand peoples’ criticism about this government not providing for the ordinary people of this country. The artisanal fishermen are ordinary people of this country and we are providing \$1 million for infrastructure. This project is in fact tied into the line of credit referred to in that \$6 million to be used as

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counterpart fund will be completely funded from the proceeds of the engines and other fishing requisites which are sold to the fishermen.

Under this agreement the Ministry of Fisheries acts in an advisory and supervisory capacity to allocate materials and equipment requested by Fishermen Co-operative Society which are identified in collaboration with the Ministry of Co-operatives.

The Guyana Agricultural and Industrial Development Bank is the executing agency responsible for the administration of the loans, they will provide sub loans to the Co-op societies or to the individual members of the society to assist in acquiring the equipment. The services – Guyana Stores Limited have been retained as procurement agents. Cde. Speaker, with the Ministries of Fisheries, it is intended that we have established a data based and implement a system to provide a continuous flow of information of resources, management planning, development and organisation of the industry. To have this implemented the Ministry has benefited from a special grant given by the European Development Fund and such fund only come to countries that have stable administration and such governments which contribute to that fund are fully ceased to the fact that the only capable administration of Guyana is the People's National Congress administration.

As a result of that we have benefited from a Fishery Biologist, Inland Fishery Expert, Fisheries Statistician and a Biometrician. They have been allocated throughout this country and will be performing their duties with Guyanese counterparts provided by the Ministry of Fisheries. They will be working – as a matter of fact they have already begun working along with local fishermen trying to derive a programme to assess the resources of the fisheries sector and to recommend strategies for the best use of those resources.

It is hoped that this system when implemented will enable the fisheries sector to properly monitor the quantum of fish caught. To record and evaluate data on the catch rate and species composition. To determine maximum sustainable yield of the fisheries sector. To derive system to evaluate landing, data by species, weight and size for the artisanal and industrial fisheries and to determine the relationship between fin fishing and shrimping and the effects of both activity on each other.

While all of this will be done by the Ministry of Fisheries, we still have the basic responsibility to ensure or to continue the regulatory activity in the sub sector. Issuing of the fishing license, organising training programmes for the artisanal fishermen, giving them opportunity to acquire harbour license and to be better equipped to tackle the difficulties of the sea in the process of their shrimping and fishing activities.

The Ministry continues to perform its functions investigating and settling disputes and complaints on fishing grounds. We also have responsibility despite the reduction in staff of continuing extension activities such as demonstration workshops that are beneficial to fishermen and the fisheries sector in general.

But Cde. Speaker, I have alluded to some of the basic responsibilities of the Ministry of Fisheries

along with its involvement in some of the developmental programmes some of which began last year, continuing this year, some of which will begin this year and continue on to next year.

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(Cde. William continues)

Cde. Williams: However it is important --- ---

The Speaker: Cde. Williams, 5 minutes more.

Cde. Williams: that I refer to the complex which has been referred to in the Budget Speech, and that is on page 60 where the Vice-President in his presentation indicated that a Fish Port Complex will begin. This, Cde. Speaker, indicates Government growing interest in the fishing industry's development. We are providing facilities for the Greater Georgetown Fishermen Co-operative Society.

Cde. Speaker, my presentation cannot be complete unless I refer to the fact that I do admit that the Guyana Fisheries Limited – a state agency – did in fact incur a deficit of \$5.96 million as referred to. While the Government understands the reasons for this loss, such as fuel prices, age of the vessel, low prices offered for our products, the necessity for stable management, better moral and excessive staff, it cannot condone such a situation in 1982. As a result the Government of Guyana under an arrangement with the T.D.B. for a credit of \$1.4 million U.S., has acquired the services of a consulting firm known as C.O.F.A., which firm will provide assistance for Guyana Fisheries Limited, which firm has in fact begun providing assistance in person such as a financial expert, processing expert, a fleet manager and a marketing manager. The role of the consultancy firm is to strengthen its organisational and financial administration and train its personnel in an approved administration and financial system procedure, to improve its fleet and processing operation, and to prepare for another arrangement with the I.D.B. loan of \$14.5 million U.S. for the provision of twenty trawlers for the state agency. To put it in summary, Cde. Speaker, the facilities at Guyana Fisheries Limited have been the most modern in the entire Caribbean and that could have only been occasioned by the fore-sight of a vanguard political movement, the People's National Congress.

The Speaker: I don't think you had better continue. Stop at that.

Cde. D. Abraham: Cde. Speaker, I also would like to join my colleagues in commending the 1982 Budget so ably presented to us by the Cde. Vice-President Cde. Desmond Hoyte on Monday 29th March, 1982. In doing this, Cde. Speaker, Amerindians have developed tremendously since the People's National Congress took office. Socially, they have gained the respect of their fellow Guyanese because they are no longer looked upon as the children of the forest but as Guyanese children sharing in all the facilities afforded to them as Guyanese citizens. Because of our Government's policy of free education, Amerindians were able to gear themselves educationally and this has enable Amerindian Leaders to represent their country at the international forums where they were able to convince other participants in the respective forums of the unlimited avenues of employment that are open to them, in this our beloved country – a fact which cannot be mentioned for many other countries of which Amerindians make up a part of their population.

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Hinterland communities have been known, traditionally, to suffer through inadequate transportation and communication systems. However, since our Government took office there was a constant battle to overcome these problems along with a new committee set up for monitoring hinterland supplies and services. There has been a remarkable improvement in these areas. Amerindian communities are now linked with the centre of the regions making it easier for problems to be settled within the regions. Airstrips have been built and are still being built to facilitate these remote communities. The Lethem airstrip which is now being constructed will be able to facilitate the Guyana Airways 737 jet aircraft. Since the inception of the new community, the residents in the hinterland regions have benefited from six new supply outlets run by three co-operatives. The G.P.C., the G.N.T.C. and Guyana Stores Limited, thus providing them with needed foodstuff and are also purchasing local produce from local farmers.

In the field of health, hinterland patients are provided with free conveyance to Georgetown. When they get to Mazaruni they are also provided with boarding and lodging facilities at the Amerindian Residence after being discharged from the institution until their return passage are arranged. A number of new health centers and hospitals are now established, and are being established throughout the hinterland regions. The Aishalton Hospital has been completed and has all the modern facilities of a modern hospital. A similar one is also being constructed at Kumaka/Moruca, Region 1. Amerindian youths were also trained as community health workers and are now being provided with the skills necessary to make their communities healthier and better places to live in. Hinterland communities were also provided with good portable water through wells established by the Guyana Authority. Cde. Speaker, we the Amerindians in the hinterland regions are grateful to our Government and Party for its commitment and dedication in seeking to bring development to our communities. We are all willing to work together for our development. As a result of the confidence of this Government has in our Amerindian people, Cde. Speaker, I am a testimony of that faith and so are other brothers and sisters of the Hinterland. We have been afforded more and more participation in our own development from neighbourhood to the regions to the state. I am sure that every Guyanese will link their arms in unity to save our dear land of Guyana in the year of defence. [Applause]

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20:35 hrs

(Cde. Bispat)

Cde. Speaker, let me forthwith pay tribute to our astute, erudite, resourceful and resilient Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance, Cde. Hugh Desmond Hoyte, S.C. for having presented on Monday, 29th March, 1982 to this House and Nation in his own inimitable and persuasive style a budget of resilience.

Years ago on umpteen occasions the leader and father of this nation has been urging us to produce more. He summed it thus “Produce or perish”, but we have not headed this call. However, Cde. Speaker, this land of ours is fortunate to have a leader of his stature and vision and for that reason we will survive with the active support and involvement of the people with our hard work, sweat and even be it blood. Cde. Speaker, since the People’s National Congress came into power in 1964 it has been working to fulfill its objectives. Perhaps, however, one of the most important landmarks in the general process of liberation was the introduction of the People’s New Constitution which was passed in this honourable House in 1980, thanks to the People’s National Congress. And Cde. Speaker, that constitution has given birth to our New System of local democracy, again thanks to the People’s National Congress. This system of democratisation is for people’s involvement and participation. Their closeness with the people and awareness of their problems will tremendously assist to alleviate frustrations and give a booster for development.

Today, the Regional Democratic Councils are fashioned and geared to play their most challenging and crucial role yet in pioneering our country’s total development and forward thrust. In jeopardy and at stake is the survival of our nation’s economy, at present in a state of crisis a country that has 800,000 people and 216,000 square kilometers and that also possesses an abundance of enviable human and natural wealth, including plenty of sunshine and rain. Cde. Speaker, the Councils represent a symbolic phase of Government’s regional policy, adumbrated by the state as far back as 1970, in which it conceived the de-centralisation, de-concentration and devolution of authority to accelerate exploitation of the nation’s rural based minerals and agri-resources. Increased production in all sectors of our economy can only be attempted through the efforts of the people, harnessing their interests, their energies and their willingness to co-operate.

Among the strategies employed by our Party and Government to generate drive and dynamism in our country’s economic advance pride of place must be given to the regional institutions, that is the Regional Democratic Councils which has come about because of the People’s National Congress, the vanguard party of this land. Cde. Speaker, the organ of local democracy is a relatively new institution, born in 1981 with the active involvement of GALA, out of a restructuring of the local government system to give greater effect to Government’s regional policy. The leadership of the R.D.C is stocked with the local Government and community development veterans such as Cde. Hubert McGowan, who heads the National Congress of Local Democratic Organ, a matured and outspoken personality, fully conscious of the tasks of mobilising the masses and giving them the type of encouragement, guidance and support necessary to boost and promote resource and human development.

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In order to contribute tangibly towards development efforts will be directed to the stabilisation of the economy. Some areas of emphasis are:

- (a) effective planning, monitoring of work and management of staff
- (b) higher levels of staff consciousness and commitment. Towards this end the N.C.L.D.O is co-ordinating training generally for the regions and determining the training needs and planning, organising, implementing and evaluating relevant training programmes for councillors, staff and the people of the regions.
- (c) effective conservation programmes such as reduction of wastage of time and material, efficient use, deployment of resources, reducing absenteeism and unpunctuality. Moreover, Cde. Speaker,
- (d) a greater measure of innovative and imaginative work approaches.

Contrary to fears voiced at the introduction of regionalism, 1973-74, the system grew without any signs of what some critics called 'decentralised dictatorship' or a smothering of local initiative. Out of it also emerged a former regional Minister in the Ministry of Regional Development, our affable Cde. Oscar E. Clarke. Rather the autonomous involvement of the masses in determining their developmental goals within the framework of central government. Guidelines gave rise last to the improvement of the system to accelerate the forward process envisaged by the rural man. The Regions are establishing and monitoring systems for promoting production including allocation and beneficial utilisation of lands. Inventorised lands that are not beneficially occupied; identify lands which support exploitative practices; establish register of farmers who need land; establish land selection committee for allocation of lands, this has already been set in motion; identify areas designated for development; establish register of state lands available for agriculture; plan production targets and allocate production task to local authorities, committees, agencies, etc. For the targets to be attained the regional work programme will have as its main ingredients the motivation and mobilisation of our people and the removal of bottlenecks on farmers. Essential also will be the need for new work attitudes among workers and for all to accept the new climate of regionalism and to perform our tasks faithfully. Cde. Speaker, we must all demonstrate the attitude to work harder in 1982 and to give support to the regions in which we work and in which we live and not merely to give lip service. Orderly development of the regions will take place which will have the participation of the people in the political economic, social and cultural sectors of the nation and their self-development with a frame-work of socialist democracy.

There will be new relationships with the existing Local Authorities for production. For instance, programmes of the Local Authority and the Regional Democratic Councils will be integrated. In total we have administrative relationships between the Local Authorities. The Local Authorities will indicate their work programmes to the Regional Democratic Councils. Further, the Regional Democratic Councils will co-ordinate all the work for the Local Authority for development programme. Estimates will be channelled through the Regional Democratic Councils. However, Cde. Speaker, the collection of rates and taxes is in a depressing state. This has been so, Cde. Speaker, because of active participation of some who do want to see development take place. For instance, in the country to date the arrears rate amount to \$23,090,869. For example, village councils alone is \$2,587,101. The district council's account is

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\$3,778,687, and Municipalities is \$16,725,081. Cde. Speaker, in Region 4 alone arrears amount to \$13,616,664; East Mahaicony Local Authority alone amount to \$752,004.; L.B.I/Better Hope reate is \$149,242. compared with the current rate of \$85,057. The Georgetown arrears account is \$8,472,756. Thus we see why development is not taking place as we had hoped.

But, Cde. Speaker, we propose that certain action would be necessary to ...that can be made ... in order to make rates and taxes collected.

1. Appeals over radio broadcast
2. Quarterly meetings with rate payers
3. House to House collections
4. Payment by labour rate
5. Zoning – whereby a Councillor is responsible for a demarcated area and will assist with problem
6. Filing of summation against defaulting Ratepayers
7. Civil proceedings

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(Cde. Bispat continues)

The Regional Development Ministry, in collaboration with the Attorney General's Chamber, is working on an amendment of existing legislation that will allow members of the City Council to serve summations for rates and taxes collection. We in the Local Authority at present to appreciate the need in terms of alleviating the problems of the people but these can only be done with revenue.

The new measures along with other would serve to enhance the collection of rates and taxes. The problem could be overcome if tackled with imagination and aggressive approaches.

The figures for the collection of rates and taxes, however, rose from a paltry \$4,728 when the People's National Congress came to power. The regions have established programmes for people's involvement and participation in decision making and planning. The Committee's systems for such involvement and execution of the work programmes have been established. The R.D.C.s are working very closely with citizens to involve them in the Council's work through a system of sub-committees. For example, there are a number of sub-committees appointed in the various regions. For instance, we have the Co-operatives and Popular Organisation Sub-Committee; the Sub-Committee for health, sanitation and environment; the Sub-Committee of production, marketing and employment; the Sub-Committee for agriculture, drainage and irrigation; the Sub-committee for education and training; the Sub-Committee for recreation, sports and culture; the Sub-Committee for construction and maintenance; the Sub-Committee for public welfare. I need not go into all of them, but I wish to illustrate some of the benefits that the people as a whole have received.

In Region 4 with the establishment of the public welfare Sub-Committee, that Committee is in the vanguard, having been the first region to have established local board of guardian. As a consequence of that, our senior citizens in the country are enjoying benefits that were hitherto unknown to them, or delayed. It just goes to show that despite what is being said about the non-involvement of people this party and Government is consistent, consistent in the fact that it is having people involved in all its activities. It was said that we are scared and we have rigged the elections. There are certain things that we need to remind ourselves and I would like to recall an incident that occurred some years ago within the P.P.P

The Speaker: I want to remind you that you only have two minutes more.

Cde. Bispat: The Regional System in this budget has chalked up several millions of the Estimates. This high investment attests to the pivotal and crucial role the regions will have to play, moreso the seriousness with which the Government holds its functions in turning a way.

To quote my pedagogue, I conclude:

That which we are we are
One Equal Temper of Heroic Hearts
Made Weak by Time and Fats
But strong in will
To strive, to seek, to Die
But to yield.

The Speaker: Cde. Collymore.

Cde. Collymore: Cde. Speaker, I rise to take occasion to speak in this honourable Assembly in relation to the Budget Statement as introduced by the hon. Vice president, Economic Planning and Finance. I wish to say, as a preface to my remarks, that we categorically reject the Budget. The Budget could be summed-up as follows:

(1) It is a desperate plea for help by this Government to the imperialists. They are in serious financial problems so they are actually pleading to the imperialists to come and bail them out of their financial hole. It is a bottomless pit, as some other people have already said.

(2) The Budget is an actual surrender to the I.M.F. overlords. Only in about one sentence in the Budget statement that the Vice President referred to the I.M.F. but indeed and in fact the whole Budget has been dictated by the pressures the I.M.F. has been putting on this Government.

(3) The budget is a sledge hammer blow to the toiling masses of Guyana. This is seen throughout the Budget where there is this anti-working class spectre haunting it. The Vice President has actually said that they are going to begin by dismissing 6,000 workers. Eventually about 20,000 workers will be axed.

(4) The Budget is a barefaced confession of total failure after seventeen years in office. This does not need to be elaborated. Our friends on the opposite side have been fanning out throughout the country telling the people that they have failed. Elsewhere in the world where democracy prevails the Government would have honourable resigned. But not these people on the opposite side, not them.

(5) The Budget is a master stroke in cunning the Guyanese nation. For instance, they are saying that it is a tax-free budget. If it is analysed we are going to see where taxes are going to come later on.

I would like to speak about two aspects of importance pertaining to the Budget and to the policies of the Government. These two aspects pertain to extravagance and corruption. The Government is saying in the Budget statement that they would like to cut costs, to close the gap in their current account. We have noted that very little effort has been made to close the gap in seriousness. To quote from the Budget statement, the Vice President stated that the following on page 28. it states;

“With a deficit of such magnitude we are clearly not running a viable system.”

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Page 29 states:

“The increase in commercial arrears can be described as forced loans from our suppliers; it represents the value of goods which we have imported into this country but for which we have not paid.”

If an ordinary person in Guyana goes to a shop and buy goods without paying, he is charged for obtaining goods by fraud. This Government is getting away with it. What does he say on page 79. It states:

“We have to reduce to manageable proportions the huge gap of “G\$276mn. in the Central Government current account which we had in 1981. This reduction cannot be done at one fell swoop; but we have to begin the process of reducing it systematically so that over a period of four years we can eliminate it altogether and, ideally, show a surplus in the current account.”

He goes on:

“We have therefore curtailed Government expenditure and trimmed staff by some 6,000 employees. There are four reasons for this reduction of staff.”

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(Cde. Collymore continues)

We are saying that the trimming is superficial. The workers have been victimised and there are other areas where trimming could be done without hurting. We have itemised these areas.

1. Dismantle the Ministry of National Development. You will be saving \$4.3 million. In seven years, from 1975 to 1981, the Ministry of National Development received \$73 million and it has only accounted for \$2 million. For \$71 million that Ministry has given not given any account to this honourable House. I am not imputing anything to the integrity of the Minister who presides over that institution of corruption. I am not saying anything at all about that. He is honest, but the institution itself is corrupt and this is what we are saying here. In 1982 the Ministry is going to get \$4.3 million but again there is a block vote. The Ministry has explained some items but there is a block vote for over \$3.1 million, which comes up to 72 per cent of the fund being unaccounted for. The members of the Government are not conning the People's Progressive Party on this side of the House as they are trying to con the nation.

2. Cut the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by 50 per cent. During this year it is going to get \$17.4 million. In 1970 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs received \$3.2 million. We feel that this Ministry is the most unproductive in the whole plethora of Ministries. It has been unable to help the Government to obtain loans. The Ministry has been unable to avert a confrontation on our western frontier and I don't see what it is doing except spreading P.N.C. propaganda overseas. This Ministry should be axed in half. You would save \$8.7 million.

3. Freeze troop recruitment into the G.D.F. We note that the Government is trying to send in 300 more troops. We are saying: Extend the People's Militia. You don't have to pay militiamen and there will be ample reserves for the potential army people in the Guyana Defence Force.

These are ways to save money and close the money gap. We are making constructive proposals.

4. Freeze police recruitment. They are planning to employ 20 more constables. [Cde. Green: "150."] Thank you very much. One hundred and fifty more constables. If the Government relies on the people, the masses, to help in police preparation, it will not have to pay vigilantes or people in the community police

5. Reduce the number of Ministers by 50 per cent. There are too many Ministers in this Guyana Parliament.

6. Cut the Ministers' salaries by 50 per cent. In fact, cut the salaries of the Ministers by 33 per cent. I want to be reasonable to them. [Laughter.]

The Speaker: Like you all get latitude now.

Cde. Collymore: 7.Reduce the number of vice-Presidents to one. Taking into consideration the clout and instinct of my honourable Friend, Hamilton Green, I know that he will survive. [Laughter.]

8. Reduce the Ministry of Information by 50 per cent. You are going to save \$2.9 million there.

9. Reduce all Ministries by 50 per cent. This included the Ministry of Fisheries which has done very badly and has lost \$60 million

10. Slash all super salaries by 33 per cent. All the big boys. They are eating the same food as the ordinary people who earn \$12 a day. Why do they want those big, fat salaries? They want to accumulate capital to become capitalists. Cut down their salaries and you will get to reduce the budget gap.

11. Cut down on the payment of overseas debt charges. We cannot afford the amount of money that is going overseas to pay debts. I challenge any one of the Vice-Presidents or Ministers to say that we can afford it. Let them get up after I sit down and say that we can afford to pay. We are paying \$462.7 million. We cannot afford it. We note that the Government has begun to reschedule the debts. This is very good. We have been calling for this for many years. The Government is now doing it, but we are saying that these people who, as I said, are putting the pressure, will not agree to go beyond a certain degree. Therefore, you have unilaterally to do certain things. For a start, cut the debt charges to half. [Interruption by Cde. Green.]

The Speaker: Cde. Green, when you were speaking nobody was interrupting you.

Cde. Collymore: You will be able to say \$231.3 million, mostly in foreign exchange. This will enable you to finance the import of essential goods, including foodstuff. I don't agree with certain people who say we must ban food. If you save \$231.3 million you can finance foodstuff and you can also pay off the arrears on much of the overseas debts. It is not good to obtain credit by fraud, even though you are a Government.

12. Scale down the National Service or scrap it. A moment ago the hon. Member Cde. Gilbert was speaking of certain things with which he is not au fait. He has no statistics to back up his boast. He was boasting about the National Service. People should come into this Parliament competent and should do their homework before they get up to spout hot air. The National Service is too costly and too ambitious. We have said this over and over. Now that we are in this financial plight it is time for us to get rid of this Cadillac style institution, because the economy is at a bicycle stage.

...Cannot afford the scale of that institution. It was begun during good years when we had high sugar prices, as the Vice President for Public Welfare said, £600 per ton. Now we get £250 per ton on the world market. It means that we have to scale down all these extravagant expenditures. Nothing is being done.

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We note that National Service will get \$24.5 million this year and income from that institution is only going to be \$1 million. Let Cde. Gilbert know this. I spoke about this some years ago and I said that the National Service is a military institution. I gave statistics to show that it is 90 percent military rather than commercial or agricultural. Therefore, scale it down or scrap it because we cannot afford it at this particular juncture. Last year it spent \$27.2 million and, according to the figures, it is expected to get \$10 to \$11 million. This means that it was expecting a lot of cotton, a lot of cotton seed oil and a lot of black eye peas. It only got \$2 million. What happened to the cotton, the black eye peas and so on?

I should like to quote from the President's Address "Charting Our Destiny". He said when he was declaring open this Session of the National Assembly – I quote from page 8 of this document:

"Cotton production under the aegis of the Guyana National Service will be expanded not only to ensure the local manufacture of the greater part of our needs in textiles, but also to provide a significant input to our programme of achieving self-sufficiency in, and a surplus production of, edible oil for export."

He has laudable aims. What happened? When the Government said it was planning to get \$11 million from National Service it only got \$2 million. It means that the whole textile mill and black eye peas production has become a fiasco. We know that this is so, because the Government is now importing cotton from the United States of America. This is a kind of screwdriver industry, an industry which does not improve the balance of payments position and which is a drain on the resources of the nation.

What about corruption and crime? We note that at various levels members of the Government have been saying that the Government is going to crack down on corruption and crime. We would like to have some discussion on this particular subject. Corruption and crime also directly affect Government revenues. For instance, corruption generates unbudgeted expenses. Money which is supposed to go into Government coffers finds itself in people's pockets and the deficit is widened.

Secondly, corruption causes reduced revenues. By that same token, the amount of money which you are expecting to collect is not realised because some people have made off with it. That is why we say that a stop must be put to corruption or it must be scaled down. It is too rampant.

Some time ago the Office of the President issued a release saying that a Committee was set up to probe corruption. I wish to quote from the Guyana Chronicle of 17th March, 1982, which carried a Press Release from the President's Secretariat. The release states;

"The Office of the President announced today the establishment of the Accountability Committee in keeping with the relevant resolution adopted at the Fourth Biennial Congress of the People's National Congress in August, 1981 and the undertaking made by the Cde. President in his address to the nation on 22nd February.

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The Committee, which is charged with identifying and investigating aspects of Corruption and Irregular Practices in the Society, will have an investigative arm.

The initial membership of the Accountability Committee will comprise the following persons: Cde. Lloyd Luckoo, Chairman, W.G. Stoll, Lynette Dolphin, Leslie Mootoo, Rev. Wilton Ogle.”

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(Cde. Collymore continues)

Cde. Speaker, I wish to state categorically here on behalf of my party that we have absolutely no confidence in those persons who comprise the accountability committee. Not that we impute anything on the integrity, we have no confidence in them because it is purely P.N.C. Committee. For some years we have been asking for an all party committee in this House, people to probe corruption. We want an all party committee, not a purely P.N.C. Committee.

Now corruption is an industry untaxed in Guyana and I would like to quote some remarks made by a person who could not have been deemed to be a politician. This is the late Archbishop of the West Indies who reported in the Diocesan magazine of December 1969 and this is what he said: “Bribery and corruption in all forms are prevalent. Money in the hand of the unscrupulous can outwit social justice at every level. It is amazing to see what \$5000 can do and much more modest sums can do. Secure appointment for the less qualified, make files and records conveniently disappear, miraculously reduce amounts due in tax, secure contracts, evade penalties and secure privileges”. This is what we are faced with in Guyana today. This is the reason why we are saying that there should be an all party committee to look into the question of corruption, to deal with corrupt individuals.

Sometime ago we had made a suggestion for this to be done and there was a select committee of the National Assembly set up to consider extension of the Ombudsman powers. This committee has been allowed to lapse and nothing has been done.

We have an itemisation here as to how the budget gap could be closed – by dealing with aspects of corruption and these pertain to the following:- (1) The theft of state funds – when people steal money belonging to the government you extend the budget gap. (2) theft of state crops and herds. The state branches are being hit repeatedly by rustlers.

All these things help to deny revenue to the government and something has to be done, nothing is being done. Theft of state goods from state bonds. The bonds of the state particularly Water Front are sitting ducks. Large sums in consign cargo disappear, whole containers – the contents vanish and so on. People see these things and nothing is being done. Corruption distribution practices – here you find the K.S.I. is at the apex of it, there you find these corrupt distribution practices going on, these also help to reduce state revenue.

National bribery – nowadays everyone has to pass money to get certain things done. At the Records Office of the G.P.O. if you want a birth certificate fast you must pay \$50 – this is the kind of things that is going on. Why must a person pay \$50 to get a birth certificate. That is his due, but he has to go there, spend money to travel and pay \$50 to bribe the people there.

Waste in other firms as (1) infestation of state commodities and other aspects, infestations in the docks, in the bonds. Split peas, rice and paddy in fields spoiling, cheese dumped, salt dissolved because the river water flood the bonds, garlic getting windy, milk powder getting rat down. The Minister of Consumer Protection is looking at me, do something about these losses, millions of dollars are going down the drain. We are making constructive suggestions, they say we don't make suggestion, you have them tonight. Bad storage practices, careless handling of state cargo. Cargo come in at Port Georgetown, but the Georgetown don't have money to pay for it and it goes away and come back at a higher price. This is not commercial practice, this is not wise, this is bad business practice.

Arson of state property. We have said over and over again that a lot of embezzlement is going on and the big boys at the top cover up the tracks by burning state property. Again million of dollars go down the line and something has to be done, nothing is being done. The chaps cover their frauds very carefully and so far they have not been caught. Either that or the law enforcement agencies just don't want to catch them.

Hand back distribution to the state outlets. Formerly state outlets used to handle distribution of commodities and the profits as revenues goes to the National Treasury. Today what is happening, the K.S.I. is doing the distribution and the K.S.I. profits go to the P.N.C. coffers. The K.S.I. is a P.N.C. creature, all the revenue go to that institution and the state is starved of funds and yet you friends on the opposite side are saying that they want to close the budget gap. They are not really serious. Why must the K.S.I. take away state trading. If we are so-called socialist the state must do it not the K.S.I. Cde. Speaker, we have information to the effect that several millions are missing from the K.S.I. and some top men are under scrutiny. If the committee really works we will see who will get charged.

Close down GuyAmerica Airline. Why is the government which is socialist government, it claims to be socialist. Why is it actually encouraging a rival private capitalist firm to pose as state entity. It is unfair competition that is going on against the G.A.C. for this so called GuyAmerica thing "One stop non hop". We are saying all the help to the G.A.C. We have information also to the effect that the maersk plans from Denmark, the Boeing 737 has been repossessed by the firm which hired it to the Guyana Government and they have taken it back to Denmark. It is not there. Why? Not because the G.A.C. could not pay, G.A.C. is making the necessary money but the Government was not releasing the foreign exchange because they want GuyAmerica to try, therefore the plane gone now and you have only one plane left there. This is how we are going to build socialism. This is the practicals of socialism. You have failed the exams, dunce caps for all of you.

Cde. Speaker, cut out luxury imports and perks to the elite. Tighten your belts, change your eating habits. You want split peas, you want dhol, urid, eat black eye. Black eye is \$6 a pint and so on. But you know what has been happening on the docks. Some days ago an English ship arrived with 240 cartons of haig and Johnny Walker whisky consigned to Guyana Stores. Let them investigate. Is this how we are going to close the budget gap? And save foreign exchange? Why we cannot drink local liquor. Guyana has the best liquor in the world.

Cde. Speaker, I think we now have violation of Tender Board procedures reports by the Auditor General on corruption. We have organised crimes which is taking place. This includes armed hold ups, armed burglaries. Guystac and Guyana Stockfeeds were robbed recently. There again revenue went into the pockets of gangsters. These are some of the things which we like to point out to our friends on the opposite side and we are saying that unless these things are attained to, the budget gap will remain wider and wider. Thank you very much.

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The Minister of Regional Development (Cde. Clarke): Cde. Speaker, I am glad to take my contribution to this 1982 budget debate, and to note at the very beginning, the attitude of the People's Progressive Party towards the People's Militia. I hope that they will now invite those of their followers who are still left with them to join with us in this organisation for the defence of our territory. [Applause.] Cde. Speaker, the Cde. Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, in his budget speech adverted to the fact that the Regional Democratic Councils have a constitutional responsibility to manage and develop their regions, and for this purpose to mobilise their people, and to co-operate with their social organisation.

During 1981, Cde. Speaker, those councils in their initial year of operation laid the foundations for the execution of these tasks. They were simultaneously exposed to important work and learning experiences. They started the year with familiarisation exercises immediately after the 1981 Estimates of Expenditure were passed; completed phased, recurrent and capital work programmes in a manner consistent with their own priorities. Priority was given to their building programmes. For example, to facilitate the expeditious establishment of Regional headquarters which includes accommodation for the sub-treasuries, Regional Central Accounting Unit, and sub-offices of the Audit General. This was achieved in all the regions with the exception of Region 8, Potaro/Siparuni, where an acute shortage of buildings pose special problems.

Because of accommodation and staffing problems, the Ministry of Regional Development continues to undertake accounting functions for Regions 8 and 10, where sub-treasuries are not yet operational, but are programmed to be operational this year, as the Cde. Vice-President himself explained. Generally, Cde. Speaker, accommodation for both offices and housing are basically inadequate in all of the regions and will continue to be a high priority on the phase current programmes of the regions. The regions assumed full responsibility for accounting functions with effect from August 1, 1982. Regional Executive Officers were designated Accounting Officers with effect from that day. Preparatory to this, Regional Executive Officers, their assistants and senior accounting staff were exposed to an intensive four-day induction training in the new financial and accounting systems and procedures which were designed for Central Government transactions in the regions. Financial manuals and the new Central Government financial systems and procedures has been prepared and a similar manual and Financial systems and procedures for Local Democratic Organs is in the process of completion.

Work has been on going on the completion of the legal framework for the effective operation of the new Regional Democratic System. The definition of the boundaries of the Local Democratic Organs on the ground proved to be very tedious and time consuming. Both the draft legislation for the operations of Local Democratic Organs and the definition of boundary for these organs are expected to be completed shortly. Draft Legislation will contain the Constitution Orders for Local Democratic Organs, the assignation of functions and relationships, election procedures and administrative and financial guidelines for Local Democratic Organs. During 1981, Cde. Speaker, seven training courses for Councillors of Regional Democratic Councils were held at Kuru Kuru Co-operative College in active collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs. Two train-the-

trainers courses for Councillors and opinion leaders were conducted at the same venue, preparatory to the implementation of training programmes in the Regions this year. Training will continue to be emphasised during 1982 in conjunction with a number of agencies including the Public Service Ministry, The State Planning Secretariat, and other agencies. The programme includes a seminar for regional chairmen and regional executive officers, later this month. In addition, there will be held training courses for Vice-Chairmen, and assistant regional executive officers at a later stage. In addition, at least two train the trainers courses will be held during this year and the Regional Democratic Council will co-ordinate and implement under the aegis of the National Congress of Local Democratic Organs, training programmes in the region.

Perhaps, Cde. Speaker, I should indicate that the Ministry of Regional Development has been restructured to enable it to effectively carry out the functions and responsibilities which are crucially required at this point in time. Notwithstanding the reduction of its staff complement from 162 to 92, the Ministry will benefit from both structural re-organisation as well as a better quality of staff. The mission of the Ministry is to provide for the orderly development of the regions and ultimately, for participation of people in the political, economic, social and cultural sectors of national life and their self development within a framework of socialist democracy. Its purpose is to conceptualise and formulate policies for the Regional Democratic system and to provide assistance and guidance in the form of legal framework and appropriate financial and management systems to facilitate its effective and efficient operation; for the effective dispensation of its function. The Ministry has and will comprise, the following five divisions: The division of Local Democratic Affairs is responsible for monitoring development and regulatory activities relating to the implementation and the functioning of Local Democratic Organs. This work involves conceptualising the implementation of on going developmental activities of a local and administrative nature in the areas of its regulatory work. The division is responsible for ensuring that organs comply with legal and administrative procedures and limits, and that institutional arrangements and structures function as conceived. It is also responsible for co-ordinating procurement of supplies and distribution of goods and services to the hinterland regions, carrying out Amerindian welfare services required by the Ministry by law, and supervising and administering the Amerindian residents. The division of personal administration, is responsible for ensuring the orderly management of personal administration within the regions including appointments, terminations, transfers, re-numeration, and ensuring continuity of benefits for officers who function in the regions. The Division of Development, Planning and Management is responsible for assisting Regional Democratic Councils in developing regions, and implementing appropriate management systems. This work would include providing technical assistance in generalised and financial management services, preparation of regional plans, assisting in monitoring financial regulations and practices, assisting in budgetary and cash flow projections, developing, monitoring and evaluating projects and analysing demographic social and economic characteristics of the regions.

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(Cde. O. Clarke continues)

The division of general administration is responsible for carrying out routine support functions of the Ministry including personnel, registry, typing and accounts. The division of valuation is responsible for surveying and valuation of land and property for the purpose of assisting the Local Democratic Organ in the collection of rates and taxes. It will provide for uniform valuation systems, both for Local Government purposes and to enable other Central Government agencies to purchase, sell, lease, rent, acquire compulsory or to assess real property at fair market prices.

The Ministry's main tasks for this year will include the finalisation of legal, administrative and financial arrangements for the establishment of other five sectors of the Local Democratic Systems; the monitoring operation of the Regional Democratic Council and the Local Democratic Councils generally when they are instituted; monitoring and coordinating and evaluating the daily flow of goods and services into and out of the hinterland regions and providing Amerindian hinterland welfare services; assisting the Regional Democratic Councils in developing and implementing management systems; determining training needs and planning, implementing and evaluating relevant training programmes; developing guidelines and installing systems to facilitate the effective operation of functional relationships in the regions, provide liaison services between the State Planning Commission, Sector Planning unit and the regions; evaluate the impact of planning and projects as they affect people, institutions and national development; conduct periodical reviews to ensure compliance with system, financial regulations and establish accounting practice; assist the regions to establish and monitor mechanisms to maximise collection of revenue in the regions; assist the regions in establishing and monitoring systems for the promotion of production including the allocation and beneficial utilisation of lands and exploitation of indigenous resources; encouraging regions to establish a programme for people's involvement to participate in decision making and planning; establish viable committee system for such involvement and for executing their work programmes.

Cde. Speaker, the Vice-President for Economic Planning and Finance has clearly indicated in his Budget Speech the vital role that these regions have to play in the recovery programme to turn around the economy and to sensitise the people and organise them for this task. In the war for economic survival which we have to wage unrelentingly we will have to rely on our resources as well as our resourcefulness. The regions have already been alerted to the goal of regional self-sufficiency and plans for this programme are far advanced, more particularly in the hinterland regions – Numbers 1, 7, 8, and 9 which are subjected to acute disrupted logistical problems. Self-sufficiency programmes for these regions are being finalised by the Regional Democratic System in collaboration with the people of the regions and the Ministry of Agriculture which is providing technical guidance. Self-sufficiency as a principle and goal is however, not restricted to these only but only but affect all the regions. Indeed as integral components of socio-economic system the extent to which the regions attain self sufficiency and surplus will significantly contribute to the attainment of national goal of self sufficiency, import replacement and export earnings.

The first step in this direction is the encouragement of people in every community, no matter how small and the mobilisation and rational utilisation of local resources to meet local needs and market demands. Indigenous resources and development and application of indigenous technology will test the creativity and innovating spirit of our people. The task of motivating, supporting and sustaining them constitute the primary responsibility of Regional Administrations in the immediate weeks, months and years ahead. Already, the National Science Research Council, Cde. Speaker, has initiated discussions with the regions and will be working in close collaboration with them for promoting and developing local technology to meet local production needs. Apart from organising people for production the Regional Democratic Council will continue to rely on technical and professional services from Ministries and agencies in the Centre for the undertaking of research, surveys and economic feasibility studies pertaining to indigenous resources with economic potential for investment which has been identified by the in their respective regions. Funds for this purpose have been provided in the regions estimates, Cde. Speaker, and already some regions have begun work in this direction. Regions have been provided with guidelines for stimulating production and are already in the process of compiling data on which they can effectively plan and monitor production programmes in the various communities of other regions. In the execution of this exercise tasks and targets are being assigned to individual communities in consultation with people and their existing institutions and organisations.

The physical work programme of regions have been identified and approved from the standpoint that they are supportive of production. Within a frame work of financial stringency each programme is highly selective and the choice of social programmes has been influenced by the need for meetings such needs, which unless satisfied can prove as disincentives to production. The recovery programme can only be successful, Cde. Speaker, if integration and co-ordination are effectively carried out in the regions and the responsibility for such approaches falls squarely on the Regional Democratic Council. A good example of this is the level of accountability which the regionalised operation of the Guyana Rice Board will now have to the Regional Administration. The processes of integration and co-ordination certainly requires common sense and good will from central agencies. In order for regions to carry out from their work programmes effectively vital support and technical services must flow to them from central agencies in a manner which is not disruptive or discourteous. There should be a clearly recognised demonstration of mutual respect for functional authority as well as the need for consultation and purposeful dialogue on both sides. The communication of detail and sectoral policies, programmes and strategies of minimal standards and also of technical and professional advice to guide the sections of the Regional Democratic Councils will be periodical approaches which must be followed by central agencies for the effective implementation and harmonisation of programmes in the regions.

In this regard the Regional Democratic Councils are expected to demonstrate an active interest in and exercise an overview over, the operation of the public sector in the regions and to co-ordinate the work of other local government bodies within the regions. As has been indicated in the Budget Speech, each Regional Democratic Council is charged with the constitutional responsibility for the management and development in the region. Generally, it is expected to manage and develop the area in a way which would lead to the goal of the economic system of the state which is “the fullest possible involvement and satisfaction of the people’s growing material, cultural and intellectual requirements as well as the

development of their personality and socialist relations”. As the regions grow in viability they will increasingly develop their capability for executing their functions and responsibilities and correspondingly reduce their dependency on the centre which is no marked now. In the interim, however, the importance ascribed to the Regional Democratic Council should be recognised and their functional position respected.

During 1981 most of the regions were constrained by transport and communication problems, lack of mobility and therefore contact with communities several hampered administration and extension services; inter-regional and extra-regional; transport and communication systems are to be improved this year. Funds are provided in the Estimates this year for the provision of additional communication, both as between the region’s head quarters and outlying areas, as well as those headquarters and the centre. Land and water transport will also be improved as well as housing for officers and stocks of equipment to facilitate the implementation of infrastructural programmes. The Regional Democratic Council are charged with the responsibility of incorporating the work programmes of existing Local Authorities in order to ensure internal consistency of regional programmes.

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21:35 hrs

(Cde. Clarke continues)

For this purpose deployment of available resources is being rationalised to meet the needs of an integrated regional work programme supportive of production.

Rate collection is already being monitored by Regional Democratic Councils and drainage and irrigation rates collected by Local Authorities on behalf of the Drainage and Irrigation Board will not be retrained by Local Authorities, but paid over promptly to the Regional Administration. The collection of drainage and irrigation rates will shortly be de-centralised and utilised within the regions to facilitate the execution of work programmes within declared drainage and irrigation areas in the respective regions.

Action is being taken at the moment to strengthen the legal machinery for the recovery of rates. Cde. Bipat has already referred to this matter. There is a vital connection between production and infrastructure as well as the rates which finance the latter. Other supportive approaches will be required if works are to be undertaken in a timely manner and constraints to production removed. Regional Democratic Councils are required to ensure that programmes for rate collection include self-help and piece work on a rebate basis which are planned and implemented by Local Authorities, and that people are actively organised for this purpose. The Councils are in the process of identifying lands which are available for cultivation, identifying farmers who own these lands and through the already established Regional Land Selection Committees are expediting the process of applications for lands and the placement of farmers on such land on an individual as well as a collective basis as the circumstances dictate.

Extension services both in terms of co-operatives and agriculture, including fisheries, are being co-oriented and actively monitored by the various Regional Administrations. Emphasis is placed on the efficient planning, co-ordinating and execution of extension services to ensure the prompt identification and solution of problems which inhibit production and to ensure that people are organised for production and for extension education. In particular, the regions play important roles in organising inputs such as seeds and other planting materials as far as possible. In conjunction with the Ministry of Agriculture and the Guyana National Trading Corporation, arrangements have been made for the functions of local procurement and distribution of agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, insecticides and weedicides now undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture through the Central Research Station at Mon Repos to be transferred to the Regional Democratic Councils. In increasing measures, functions which are centralised but which are crucial to the work of the regions will be de-centralised. Consideration is being given at the moment to the decentralization and regionalisation of legal and administrative entities such as the Drainage and Irrigation Board. The East Demerara and Boerasirie Water Conservancies. Development Authorities, Plant maintenances and Hire Division, to name a few. As already indicated, certain administrative arrangements have been set in train for the de-centralisation of the operations of the Drainage and Irrigation Board.

It is crucial that production, both traditional and non-traditional, should be intensified. People must be organised for production and Regional Democratic Councils must provide the leadership. The central agencies will be expected to take the Regional Democratic Councils into their confidence and to provide them with the vital, technical and professional support services and to assist them in practical terms with the job ahead of accelerating production to which, as was emphasised by the Cde. Vice-President, “we must all turn with all our strength”.

The regions are our rallying point for production. A lot will depend on them. But for maximum achievement, a lot will also be needed from us at the centre in terms of the support they receive. The administrative capabilities of the regions have been and will be further strengthened during the course of this year. Training at all levels will continue to be improve competence in planning and management. The principle of accountability will be emphasised at all levels and the regions will proceed with the vital tasks which are expected of them in increasing production, improving revenue collection, programme implementation and the rational deployment and utilisation of resources, creating opportunities for the purposeful involvement of the people in decision-making processes and organise them for increased community self-reliance and, finally, ensuring that intelligent and resourceful management takes place and a high premium is placed on cost effectiveness and financial rectitude.

Regional Democratic Councils and Local Democratic Organs generally throughout this country during 1982 will indeed be making a significant contribution to the recovery effort of this nation and I, as the Minister responsible for these undertakings, together with my colleagues in the Cabinet and in the Government and the People’s National Congress, stand ready at all times to ensure that the people of our country in all areas of production get the support they need so that the crucial production effort which is required at this time could be achieved.

The Speaker: Cde. Dalchand.

Cde. Dalchand: Cde. Speaker, on Monday last, the Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance presented the nation with what he described as a tax-free budget. If one followed the trend and manner in which this Government does things, it is clear – and Cde. Narbada earlier mentioned some of the items that Government has increased since the beginning of this year. They have already put tax on several items and they will continue despite the assurance given by the Vice-President.

The Government has increased the price of over one dozen items since the beginning of the year. I will mention only two of these items because they are of great importance to the productive sector of this country. Fertiliser, for example, was increased by over 100 per cent. This is needed for the agricultural development of this country and this Government thought it wise to impose a 100 per cent increase for fertiliser. This is going to interfere with agricultural development, I can assure the Government and the Minister. Some people are not fertilising the field. They are not giving adequate supplies to the plants and this is going to definitely interfere with production.

Rice, which is a basic food item for the Guyanese people, has been increased by 100 per cent. This is a basic item for the working man. How can this Government claim that the Budget they presented is tax-free. The Vice President, Economic Planning and Finance has actually declared that Guyana is on the brink of bankruptcy. He is only attempting to fool the nation. The P.N.C. Government has ruined the economy of this country, they have brought it to a near international disgrace and the Vice President has admitted in the Budget Speech on page 33 that Guyana has lost its credit worthiness.

21:45 hrs

(Cde. Dalchand continues)

If we accept what is being said over there, that all things are rosy – everyone on this side so far has said how much the Government has increased production, how much it has done, but even if you have done all those things, you have brought Guyana into international disgrace by putting it on the list of non-creditworthy countries. This was admitted by the Minister. In his speech the Minister also said that public corporations will be given up to the end of June to show cause why they should not be profitable. In the same voice he expressed the view that he will not allow them to improve their accountability by increasing charges to the public.

The people of this country have no faith in this P.N.C. Government. They are frustrated. I want to refer to one single thing to show the reason why this should be so. This government entered into a wage pact with the T.U.C. in 1977 to give the workers \$14 a day minimum wage in 1979. Up to this date the workers of this country cannot get that wage. Which worker will have faith in the P.N.C. Government? The members of the Government are joking.

Today workers have become careless. They are frustrated. They are not responding to the call. Why? Not only because they did not get \$14 a day. That is one part of it. Workers are asked to live under conditions which they can ill afford. Last year the T.U.C. appointed a technical committee to go into the exercise of seeing why working wages are not enough. I would like to read what that committee has to say. I quote from page 10 of the Report:

“Further, if we are to look at the budgetary patterns of low income workers we would find that their take-home pay is grossly inadequate. For example, the take-home pay of a worker whose gross salary is \$270.90 per month would be approximately \$250.00 if such a person is married and has four children to support. Assuming the following expenses:”

And then it gave these figures – Rent \$65.00. This is low standard. Electricity \$25.00. This has gone up by 200 per cent. Transportation \$80.00. This is for the worker, his children and wife. And then it states:

“The amount thus remaining available to meet normal food requirements is \$80.”

A list of food items is given to show what the working man will have to get.

“A list of food items regarded as essential will indicate the inadequacy of \$80. The following portrayal of a reasonable budget of an average family (six) would indicate the size of earnings which should accrue to the worker if he is to provide for his family at normal and not subsistence level.”

He gave the items: Rice \$2.7 per gallon. Rice today is nearly \$4 a gallon. Sugar 2 lbs for 25 cents: cheese \$3.60 per lb. Cheese is now 4.27 per pound. This is what you call debt.

Based on that, you can see that there is hardly any improvement in this particular situation and this is what a technical sub-committee of the T.U.C., which is supposed to represent the workers of this country, has said.

This Government is very heartless where the working people are concerned. Today we find that debt payments are actually responsible for the greatest part of our present economic dilemma. Export earnings in 1982 are estimated to yield this country approximately \$1126 million and it is estimated also that we will pay debt charges amounting to \$462 million, or 41 per cent of our total foreign earnings. You can see clearly that nearly half of our foreign earnings are going towards paying debts. What is left to import basic food, machinery for industry and agriculture? Nothing. We are suggesting to the members of the Government as Cde. Pollydore said, that they not only talk about it but that they seriously act now to reschedule, without any delay, the entire public debt. This will save the country, as Cde. Pollydore put it, half of the present amount that is being paid. This will be approximately \$231 million. This will allow the Government to buy at least basic food items. It will enable the Government to import much needed spare parts, to buy machinery for industry and agriculture, to subsidise the very high cost of living.

These are things that will generate production. Instead of that, the Government is planning to pay an increased sum over last year's public debts. What benefit are we getting from these huge payments? Thirty per cent of that sum is going to pay for debt compensation.

The P.N.C. Government has brought this particular part of the dilemma on to the Guyanese people. We showed where, if the members of the Government, when they were to nationalise DEMBA, had heeded the P.P.P's suggestion to them, namely, to pay \$100 million for nationalisation of DEMBA and ask for a 40-year period in which to pay with no interest charges. We were telling them. "You pay if you make a profit. If you do not make a profit, you don't pay." The P.N.C. by itself, unilaterally went and changed the entire thing. They paid over \$107 million for the bauxite industry. The Government agreed to pay the people 6 per cent interest on the sum and it reduced the time of payment by half, that is, to 20 years. This today has become an anchor on their necks. They cannot afford to meet these people.

The Government has done the same thing with the sugar industry. The P.P.P. was always in support of nationalisation. The P.P.P. supported nationalisation even of the sugar industry. The Government would have paid \$1 for the sugar industry but, under pressure, it ended up by paying \$102 million and at the same time it agreed to pay six per cent interest charges. That is why this country has these large debt charges to meet today.

People are now spending a long time in lines hoping to get something to eat. The members of the Government saw we must revert to substitutes. Where are the substitutes? There has been no flour in the supermarkets for the past two weeks and people cannot get plantains, which are locally produced. They are sold at \$2 per pound; cassava at \$1.50 per pound and yams at \$2 per pound. Thus the cost of living for the working man has been increased. People join lines and spend hours in lines and cannot get food. We are asking the Government to import the basic food items in adequate supplies. After rescheduling the debt, use some of that money to see that you import an adequate supply of food so that the working man does not have to stand for hours in a long line hoping to get something to eat.

This situation also has a psychological effect on those who are working. Workers in offices are wondering when they can go and get something to buy. They are not working with all their heart. This is hampering production.

We have transportation problems. Again, because of our heavy debt payments, we cannot afford to have adequate transportation. Mark well that the transportation problems were brought on this nation by the members of the P.N.C. Government. They were pig-headed; they were deaf; they were 'hard ears'; they did not listen to the P.P.P's call not to abandon the railways. They went and scrapped the railways. Today they are saying that it was a mistake. We told them when they were doing it that it was a mistake. They did not heed the advice. They scrapped the railway and today they have an immense transportation problem in this country. Many workers cannot get to their work places on time. Sometimes they are two to three hours late. How are we going to get increased production? I understand they are now planning to beg in the international world, maybe India, for to have a railway again.

Look at the plight of the P.N.C.! We had a railway; the Government scrapped it. Now it is begging alms to have a railway again. We are saying: "Pay proper wages to the workers and give them good working conditions. You will then encourage them to greater production." We are asking Government to do everything within its power to eliminate the suffering of the working people. Do everything possible. Do not come here and tell us that things are rosy when in fact things are really bad.

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21:55hrs

(Cde. Dalchand continues)

Today as I said transportation seem to be a big problem. Workers cannot produce, they cannot get to their workplaces on time. The Government in its early days was bent on borrowing plenty of money. They went hay riding, borrowing money, millions of dollars. Now I understand their national debt is \$3 million. What have they done with the money they borrowed. If those money were usefully spent today we would have been generating money to pay back without any problem. They have squandered the money, they mis-used the money, they have placed the money in wrong development. That is why today this country finds itself in such dilemma.

The Minister of Finance in his Budget Speech in 1977 spoke of how credit worthy the Guyana Government was and he made some reference in his budget speech Cde. Hope, page 29 with regard to public debt. The payments on the account amounted to \$119 million in 1976. It is four times that now, so far and only because of our nationalisation settlements have been favourable in terms of the period ever which payments of compensation had to be made. Nationalisation payments account to about 30% of the total public debt. Our external debt ratio is estimated to be no more than 10% of export earnings in 1976. Today it is 41%. When account is taken to the fact that export earnings were usually low this year, it is clear that the ratio in a more normal year will be significantly less than 10%. In fact they said it was 8% in 1975.

At this figure Guyana is well below the level of the 15 – 20% ratio of a number of middle income developing countries that still have undiminished access to the capital markets of the world. Further, it has become conventional and conservative to regard a debt ratio of 20% as an upper limit for a developing country. It therefore appears quite clearly that Guyana with an excellence record of payment of its debts and its debts service ratio of less than 10% has not assumed the obligation beyond its capacity. In 1976 they said they were made in well good position and maybe what fooled them that they went from there and they started borrowing madly. Again they did not spend it wisely and so the economy today, the public, the working people of this country is suffering. Cde. Speaker

The Speaker: We will suspend for ten minutes and resume afterwards

Suspended accordingly at 22.00 hrs

1982-04-01

22:15 – 22:20 hrs

22:15 hrs

On Resumption

Cde. Cora Singh: Cde. Speaker, I am indeed grateful to be given this opportunity to make contribution in this honourable House and to support the 1982 budget which was presented by Vice-President Cde. Hoyte on Monday 29th March, 1982.

Production. Cde. Speaker, it is intended to set up production groups in every people's co-operative with a view of having total involvement which will work closely with the production and marketing committee of the Regions' Democratic Council and the co-operatives. Popular mobilisation committee would be set up with a view of having increased production in every field. Every hectare of land available for planting will be cultivated. Already there is a fever among the farmers both old and new to acquire more lands as it is clearly understood and accepted that the agricultural drive will make the small man a real man.

We ought to increase the production of cassava of new varieties which are high yielding. Experiments are on the way on various plots on the West Coast of Demerara. Experiments are being carried out at Look Out which is in a good location to run a factory to make cassava flour which will afford comrades within the area new job opportunities and help in the economic stream.

Work is presently going on in the factory of oil plant at San Jan and this will be completed shortly. Only 185 acres are under cultivation. It is expected to increase to 2000 acres as early as possible.

Negotiations are presently going on with the Agricultural Bank to get loans to rehabilitate the cocount industry in the region. This will make an input to our edible oil on the land. There is plan for developing Hogg Island with the assistance of the I.D.B. World Bank, discussions with the residents for the taking over of unused lands are in progress and the response is indeed encouraging. Cde. Speaker, land for bonafide farmers will be distributed more easily by the Regional Land Selection Committee presently functioning. The Land and Survey Department will seek to have their presence in the region in order to expedite applications. Lands which have been leased and not beneficially occupied will be re-possessed and re-distributed. We are setting up a register of such lands and of farmers who are prepared to work them immediately.

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(Cde. Cora Singh continues)

Cde. Speaker, in Leguan and Wakenaam, reconstruction work in order to improve drainage and other infra-structure work is being carried on. On clay bricks, Cde. Speaker, it is proposed to increase the capacity of this factory. Management has already been able to rehabilitate the old Chinese kiln and is immediately looking into ways and means in conjunction with the international export, to enlarge the factory and to increase the inputs. There is a great demand for these clay products.

Cde. Speaker, there is also an increase of the rice production in the region because the farmers are satisfied with the new rice price and have pledged their full support to promote this crop. Cde. Speaker, it is also intended to increase the production of pineapple for a ready market in Barbados. This year, and also to increase other crops. Plans are being formulated by the Food Crop and Marketing programme to assist in this aspect. This plan includes the setting up of a buying centre at Parika where more than 50 per cent is completed. Farmers will be able to obtain all the technical help and will be storing inputs such as fertiliser, insecticide, weedicide etc. There will also be a purchasing centre for crops grown by the farmers in the nearby areas, in an effort to help farmers in the region. Cde. Speaker, it is planned to reactivate the sale of ground provision and coconuts, and the distribution of fish. The West Bank supply centre is to expand its business to sell stationery and other items. It is planned to set up a gasoline station at Parika. This Cde. Speaker, will help the farmers greatly. They will not have to travel long distances for gasoline and waste man-hours.

Cde. Speaker, 90 per cent of the work on the Leguan Secondary School building has been done including the conversion of the class rooms. This school will be open for the September term. Cde. Speaker, balata is being developed in the Essequibo river. Another sawmill will be established in the Parika area where loggers will be encouraged to developed their potential. Cde. Speaker, the regional general hospital at Best Village on the West Coast will be re-operable this year. More health stations will be established in the region. Portable water supply will be further improved throughout the region.

The resuscitation of the Pig Industry will be done through the setting up of a pig rearers Co-operative Society in the region. It is also intended to seek reserve lands for pasturage to encourage the cattle industry within the region.

Cde. Speaker, the time has come when all patriotic Guyanese should and must close ranks and work towards harnessing our economy. Before some of them go on street corners and bla bla and criticise us, the Government, let them be as loyal citizens to encourage the people as the People's National Congress does, to be calm, cool and collective and co-operate to build and defend this dear land of ours. Remember, Cde. Speaker, if we build together, we would co-operate and we will enjoy the fruits and gains of our labour. If on the other hand we do not co-operate we will all suffer together, Cde. Speaker.

[Applause]

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Minister of Energy and Mines (Cde. H. Jack): Cde. Speaker, in his Budget Speech of 29th March Cde. Hoyte addressed his mind to the serious situation which faces the economy of this country. Among the very many merits the Budget presented has been the very candid and frank analysis of our economy condition and recognition of the various short comings which have plague our economy . With particular reference to the bauxite industry it is true to say that 1981 was not only a difficult year but one would also say a disastrous year. But if we are to keep our prospective in balance I think that it is right that we should look not only at what took place in 1981 but since we are debating the Budget Speech in April 1982 we should have a look at what has transpired during the first quarter of 1982.

First of all let me say this. The loss which was made by the bauxite industry last year was the first instance of the bauxite industry in Guyanese hand having made a loss. That is after 10 years of existence. I think it is not unusual for an industry as large and complex as our industry to make a loss at some time. This is not to excuse the loss or to be complacent about the loss it is to put into perspective what has taken place so we do not give up in despair. As Minister charged with the responsibility for the lot of natural resources of this country I should endeavour to show this House that while we are in a difficult situation with proper management of the resources at our disposal we still have a very bright future before us. The figures which I have at hand at present with regard to the bauxite industry for the first quarter of 1982 are figures up to the 28th of March, 1982. If one were to look at the documents which contain the Budget Speech at page 20 and again at 51 one will notice that in 1981 production of the various products in the bauxite industry fell significantly below expectations. But what is significant is that the targets set for 1982 while below the target set for 1981, are above the actual production for 1981. So it becomes important to see how performance in 1982 meshes with the target set for 1982. As I said these figures that I have at my disposal are still incomplete since they refer to the period up to 28th March, 1982. Look at calcined bauxite which is the most important target. We are 99.2 percent of target. With regard to metal grade bauxite we are 102.6 percent of target. With regard to chemical grade bauxite we are 97.2 percent of target. In the case of alumina we have dropped to 70.1 percent. If one were to calculate the overall value which was expected to be produced in the first quarter and again recognising still that we have three days to go we are at 91.7 percent of the target. This certainly is nothing to shout about having regard to the fact of the capacity of the industry to produce more and having regard to the level of the target which was set. Nevertheless, it does reflect a situation which could be described in some measure as something of a turn-around.

The bauxite industry is plagued as we all know, with a number of difficulties at management level, the level of spare parts, the level of foreign exchange and the level of equipment. But the arrangements are in train now to upgrade various associations which we have made with certain companies who have special expertise in the various fields of mining and could be of assistance. A concerted effort will be made during the course of this year to increase production and productivity, to improve maintenance, to accelerate the Research and Development effort of the industry and its improved marketing. I would say that there is need at this time for us to express our faith in the bauxite industry. I think that the work force moral is improving, that there is a sense of commitment among members of management and I was there

quite recently and was heartened to find that despite all the difficulties workers both at the management level and at non-management level, are determined to make a success of this industry. If one good thing comes out of the present difficulty which beset the industry it could be an increased awareness of the value of the bauxite industry to Guyana and the need for all other sectors of the economy of this country which go in some way to buttress or feed the bauxite industry, for them to play their part in the realisation of the goals set for the industry and the goals of production which have been established. So I would like to say Cde. Speaker, that it is time that we give some appreciation to those workers at all levels in the industry who are as it were hand to foot. We should, while not at any time minimising the difficulties and shortcomings of the bauxite industry in Guyana, take some time to have a comparison with other industries, some of them less complex than other our own bauxite industry.

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(Cde. Jack continues)

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Which are plagued with difficulties both at the production level and at the marketing level. It is as said, Cde. Speaker, there are many other aspects of the development of our natural resources which give cause for some optimism. With respect to our hydro electrical factor which is necessary to be developed if we are to overcome the difficulties which attend the poor performance of the thermal generating plant at G.E.C., the following is the state of play at present: We are proceeding with a optimisation study which is a study of alternatives sites where hydro electricity can be produced. Those sites including Tiboko, Amaila, Kaieteur, Tiger Hill – which is the site much beloved by certain members of this Assembly – as well as Upper Mazaruni. We expect to have the report of that investigation later this year. I shall be prepared to let any member of this Assembly have a look at the report and to discuss it with any member of the Assembly who feel an interest in having a discussion on this question. At the same time we are in the process of mobilisation for the further work of investigatory nature which has to be done for the Upper Mazaruni hydro project, and we expect that by October this year, we will have the finished study in our hands.

Quite recently, that is within the last two weeks, we have received from Montreal Engineeing, the consulting firm which we had retained to do studies for some of the isolated hydro electrical stations, the study on Wamukarru Hydro Electrical Station. We have also received the study on Tuma Tumari. This is a study which is the result of an investigation to develop Tuma Tumari to have an installed capacity of 50 mega watts in the first instance. It is believed that if they go ahead is given this year the construction could be conducted later in 1986 or sometime in 1987. At present, the estimated cost for this project is in the region of \$125 million U.S. The decision whether to go ahead with this project or not will be taken by Cabinet later on. Let me say, however, that while pursuing both Tuma Tumari and Wamukarru, we are not abounding Upper Mazaruni.

Turning to the investment to the mining sector, one will recall that in his Budget Speech, Vice-President Hoyte, mentioned the investment code. This Assembly is aware of the fact. I am sure, that a few years ago we published an investment code which we have acknowledged is not a complete document. What the investment code really did was to give the Government a certain flexibility with regard to negotiations where joint ventures were contemplated, and where previously, we had a somewhat rigid position that in all instances, the Government or the Government and the Co-operative sector must have majority holdings. While we have sought to give ourselves a flexibility, I can assure this Assembly that we have not in fact changed our principles and that with respect to all the negotiations which we have entered into since the promulgation of the investment code, we have insisted on and in those cases where we have concluded agreement, we have succeeded in having majority ownership in the hands of the Government.

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(Cde. Jack continues)

22:40 hrs

This includes arrangements such as the one we made with ...for uranium and Norman Mines for gold. We are in the process at this moment of discussion with the Yugoslavs a joint venture for the development of gold in the Konawaruk region and the same principles will apply. The Yugoslavs, themselves being socialists, naturally see no difficulty in agreeing with us in the promulgation of principles which they themselves execute in their own country.

Apart from this, we expect during the course of this year to complete a revision of the Mining Laws. It has been found that in many instances development in Mining legislation in other parts of the world has proceeded at a pace far quicker than we have been able to make changes here in Guyana. We find it necessary to update our Mining legislation to bring it more in line with present-day thinking. In this endeavour, we will be having assistance from C.F.T.C. which is the Commonwealth Fund for technical assistance. Some years ago we had instituted assistance to Miners' Fund. That Fund has been in the doldrums for the last two years but I am happy to say that this year, under the aegis of the Geological Surveys and Mines Commission, we will be resuscitating this Fund and giving some further assistance to our small miners.

At present we have an officer whose sole duty it is to travel into the various mining districts in the hinterland to examine the conditions under which the miners are operating and to see what assistance can be given to them in terms of expediting the supply of foodstuffs, petroleum equipment etc. This officer has been working in close harmony with the regional system and the instructions I have to date is that there has been a significant improvement and much appreciation on the part of miners themselves.

Apart from this, in collaboration with the UN revolving fund for mineral development, we are exploring for gold and copper in what is called the green stone belt. That is an area from Supenaam going west just past Peter's mine.

Turning now to the petroleum sector, the situation is that Home Oil which has a concession in the Takatu Basin of the Rupununi is drilling its second well. Seagull Dennison, which is a consortium of an American and Canadian Company, and a company with which we have signed an agreement for off-shore exploration, has already concluded the necessary ... survey and will be starting drilling off-shore during May or June this year. We are in various stages with negotiations with other companies. I shall not mention the names since one never knows, until one has signed a contract, whether these negotiations would result in agreement.

We have negotiated a loan of \$2 million from the I.D.A. for petroleum development in Guyana. That loan will be used for the purpose of revising our petroleum legislation to bring it up-to-date to develop a Petroleum Corporation for which we already have draft legislation to establish a petroleum unit which will be the nucleus of that Petroleum Corporation and to train Guyanese staff in the various aspects of petroleum development. Apart from this, some of the money will be allocated for the purpose of

carrying out on-shore drilling. We hope that that drilling will be started in the later part of this year and that drilling is expected to explore our potential for oil in the north eastern region of Guyana. It is felt that we do have structures which would contain oil and that this oil would not be at a very great depth. It is expected, for instance, that we may have to drill not more than about one thousand feet so that the cost of drilling would be nothing like the cost of drilling in places like the Rupununi where Home Oil is at this moment. Those are the things which the petroleum sector is doing at this moment.

Coming now to one of the more difficult ones, there is the question of G.E.C. I am happy to see that the whole of this meeting has been uninterrupted by the visitation of an outage. I can assure this Assembly that the Ministry is making strenuous efforts to improve the situation as soon as possible. I think it is right that I should be frank with this Assembly and let you know what the difficulties are. We have signed a contract with B.E.I., an English-based firm, for management assistance, and personnel from that company are at present in Guyana working at G.E.C. But concomitant with the agreement which we signed was the necessity for an inflow of a certain quantity of cash which would have gone to buying necessary spare parts and equipment. Because of the general difficulties which the whole economy faces, we have not been able to get the equipment in time. We have not also been able to get some of the spare parts in time. For this reason, the plant which we have both at Kingston and at Garden of Eden are working under extreme strain. We have to work them longer hours than normally would have been the case. We cannot take them out of service sufficiently to give the amount of maintenance attention which is necessary. We are hoping that very shortly we will be able to remedy this situation by bringing back one of the gas turbines which we have sent abroad for repair and which has been repaired and is awaiting a shipment to Guyana.

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(Cde. Jack continues)

At this time I would like to point out that we are carrying out scheduled load-shedding. Notices are appearing in the newspapers but I get the impression that persons are not reading those notices. I would be glad if all of us could pay some serious attention to the notices as they appear.

It is true, I know some will say, that despite the fact that the notices appear, sometimes load-shedding takes place which is outside of the ambit of those notices. The fact is that with the state of equipment such as we have, we cannot absolutely guarantee that there will be no load-shedding at all outside the scheduled load-shedding. But, on the other hand, there are very few countries in the world today that do not have load-shedding of one form or another. We may have more load-shedding than some other countries but if you go just across your borders you will find that in many of the cities. You can go further north if you wish, as far as England, and you will find that today load-shedding is something that all people are now accustomed to. What I am asking is that we pay attention to the schedules as they appear and try to assist by the conservation of the use of electricity.

The Speaker: Three minutes more, Cde. Jack.

Cde. Jack: The Geological and Mines Commission has been monitoring the gold production in this country and has also itself been engaged in gold production. As you know, last year we had the highest reported gold production for a number of years and we expect this year to have another high report of gold production. We are in the process of reconstructing and restructuring the Commission to make it more efficient and to allow it to take on the added burden which the Commission has to take on because of the increased activity in the mining sector both locally and with regard to foreign enterprises which have joint ventures with us.

All in all, therefore, it seems to me that despite the fact that we speak at this time of difficulties there are sufficient rays of light on the horizon to give all of us a hope, nay, an expectation that within a short period of time we will turn the corner in the economic development in this country and be once again on the road to increased production and to accelerate economic advance. [Applause]

The Speaker: Cde. Vandenburg

Cde. Vandenburg: Cde. Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise to join my colleagues in this House in support of the Vice-President, Economic Planning and Finance, in his presentation of the 1982 Budget which was presented in this House on Monday, 29th March. It is a Budget ably described as a 'budget of resilience'.

The institutional arrangements within the various regions supervised by the Regional Democratic Councils will play an integral part in implementing the recovery programme for the national economy. I quote from page 85 of the Budget Speech 1982:

“The Regional Development Councils are crucial to the success of the production effort inasmuch as the regions will be responsible for ensuring that there are the necessary infrastructure and supportive measures and mechanisms to enable their production quota to be met.”

If one understands the structure and functions of the Local Democratic system, one would easily understand the pivotal role the Regional Democratic or Development Councils have to play in the active sector. The Regional Development councils, which comprise chiefly the Chairman and Councillors, cater for and involve everyone within the region regardless of their creed or ethnic origin.

This is the policy of the People's National Congress Government – people's involvement. [Applause.] With involvement of the regional system in the country's development progress, most of the industries will be able to make a tangible contribution towards increasing foreign exchange. The rice industry, for example – rice as a crop has the greatest potential for increasing foreign exchange and farmers' incomes in a short period. This view is reinforced by the fact that a technological package and basic infrastructure for rice production are already established.

Cde. Speaker, at present only about 50 per cent of the available 250,000 acres of rice land is being cultivated. The highest acreage recorded was in 1977 when 123,126 acres were harvested in the first crop and 214,196 in the second. Since then there was a marked decline, particularly in the second crop in 1979 and total acreage for the crop fell to 222,833 but began to show a gradual upward trend since then. Clearly the main thrust of any programme to increase rice production should be aimed at putting into productive use some or all of those 125,000 acres of rice land that are not being used.

In some areas it appears that small expenditures on the removal of constraints in certain areas would result in considerable increase in acreage planted. For example, the building of stellingen, bridges, roads, agro-chemicals, storage facilities. I could illustrate at Port Mourant Follow Up No. 43 koker areas where over 8,800 acres of uncultivated rice land can be brought under cultivation for an estimated expenditure of less than \$4 million (Guyana). At a yield of 48 bags per acre and a cropping intensity of 1.6, the potential annually from this area could be over 250,000 bags of rice or a gross foreign exchange earning of over \$20 million.

In order to implement the programme, the Regional Councils are assigned specific duties:

- (1) Identifying unused lands;
- (2) Noting the constraints that have prevented the utilisation of those lands; and
- (3) Initiating action to remove those constraints within the shortest possible time.

The Regional Councils will work in close collaboration with relevant agencies. For example, Drainage and Irrigation works, as the example of Port Mourant, will be done with the assistance of the Hydraulics Division of the Ministry of Agriculture.

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(Cde. Vandenburg continues)

For the proper execution of these works, the Regional Councils will as far as possible mobilise people to do self help work. Cde. Speaker, in view of the fact that this is a short term programme, priority must be given to areas where minimum expenditure of short duration could bring significant increases in production.

It must be noted that the production programme is geared to make use of all available resources and to achieve higher yields with minimum use of import inputs to better husbandry and water control. Corporations like the Guyana National Trading Corporation will have to work in close collaboration with the Regional Councils so as to make available the required inputs to farmers for the production programme, example like seeds, tools and agro chemicals.

There are other schemes that will boost the agricultural projects with the regions. Like the Tapacuma Irrigation Scheme which on completion will release 42,000 of arable land for rice cultivation. Then we have the giant MMA Water Control and Land Development Scheme which is scheduled to be completed in 1983 and will make available 185,000 acres of land for food production. Cde. Speaker, this project will provide drainage and irrigation to 46,000 acres of rice land, 15,525 acres of sugar land, 1,500 acres of land for coconut production and 6,000 acres for other crops and some 21 acres for improved pasture and an additional 14,000 acres of rice land will in that region be benefitted from the modernised system of fold control.

Cde. Speaker, if some attention may be focused on the individual farmer within the regions it will be observed that they would derive considerable benefits through the regional system. Farmers could be advised by the Agricultural Officer or Field Assistants that are assigned to the region. The Officers could be able to make constant checks on the individual farmers and supply the necessary technical advice which obviously will result in increase production of a higher quality.

Cde. Speaker, even though the Guyana National Service does not come under the full supervision of the Regional Council it is one of the greatest procedures of region ten. It supplies large quantities of black eye and eggs to other regions. It is clear and beyond any doubt that intensified agricultural programmes that are implemented by the Government of the day that the Guyanese people again more nutritious food value from fresh greens and vegetables now sold on market stalls. Full use is being made of the technical advice and guidance of various agricultural staff in the regions of this country. More and more people are devoting their time to the soil, even in their back yards, parpets and drains.

It should be noted that in Guyana today as never before the farmer has a place in our society, because it is spelt out in our people's new constitution 'land to the tiller'. I challenge anyone who will dare say that this government does not practice what it preaches, for there is a place for the public servant, the Doctor, the Lawyer, the Magistrate, the Judges and there is also a place for the farmer too. For we on this side of the House have believed and understand that there is dignity in labour. Thank you.

Cde. D.A.N. Ainsworth, Parliamentary Secretary , Education, social Development and Culture:

Cde. Speaker, before I get into the actual meat of my presentation I wish to refer to some of the comments made by my good friend across the way Cde. Feroze Mohamed when he attempted to give us a sort of lecture on anti-imperialist programmes. I am wondering if in these times when imperialist have been controlling most if not all of the sources of food production in the world and with his part constantly saying that we must continue to hang on to this traditional source of food supply, if in fact they are not asking us to dependent and at the same time promoting continued imperialist relationships. Also at this point in time when since 1974 the U.S Secretary of Agriculture pointed out that by 1985 the would/will have a deficit of \$47 million tons of grain if we in Guyana should wait until that time to begin to get our people and our farmers involved in agricultural production. We should ensure that our words are consistent with our deeds.

Cde. Speaker, education by its very nature is of universal interest and concerns everybody. The individual, the community, regardless of sex and age. It is universal also because it concerns everything, professional and social activities, leisure time, every aspect of life and through life. Nobody can therefore adapt a mutual attitude to education. Subsequently an analysis of the education systems and its future should reckon with differences and similarities regarding not only education in its narrowest sense but also the economic development of socio-political level of the country concerned. For education is not one sided or uni-dimensional. It has in fact a dialect relationship with society. The point I wish to emphasise is that education contributes more effectively to social changes and justice when it is tuned up with the economic political or other structures within society.

If the purpose of education therefore is to provide a better education for future, better for the individual, for society and for human needs as a whole, one should look to the school which is a singular institution – in that it may be said to be truly an investment for the future. As a consequence the question of the content of education is extremely important. Determining the content of education such that it will be practicable in the future, means that the country must plan its present and future needs to make them consistent with the national ethos.

It is therefore not surprising that this government has given high priority to education as the indispensable tool for revolution in human, social organisation. It has shown its commitment to education in its decision to provide free education at all levels. It is within this context in September 1976 that educational goals have been defined, not only in terms of future needs, but also in terms of the political, social and economic factors of the Guyanese society. Inherent in this was the fact that education is not a sector of development, but is inter-related with all forms of development. This meant intensifying the educational process and constantly improving upon methods and alternative approaches to learning compatible with Guyanese ideology.

As a consequence since 1976 there has been rapid horizontal and vertical expansion in the education system in order to solve the complex and difficult pattern of transforming education into a potent instrument of national development, of providing real equality of educational opportunities and of improving and extending courage to encompass the masses.

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(Cde. Ainsworth continues)

It is not surprising then that given our present financial condition between 1976 and 1981 the expenditure on education had increased by 65.6 per cent. This immense investment of financial and human resources demands that we continually re-assess our national aims and decide on the exact purpose we wish education to serve. Thus at this point I will highlight some of our achievements at each level of the education system during the period under review, and indicate more steps we will be taking this year to improve the quality of education service for the nation.

At the time of Government's take over of nursery education in September, 1976, there were 328 nursery schools, with an enrolment of 19,000 pupils. By the end of the first year, enrolment increased by some 35.7 per cent. This was attributed to the fact that free education encouraged more parents, especially those who could not have afforded the school fees before, to send their children to nursery schools. To date, the growth of nursery enrolment is so rapid that in many areas of the country, the Ministry is experiencing difficulties in placing all children requiring admission to nursery schools. But note the community spirit of some of our parents in their endeavours to redress this difficulty. In the period under review, 1,075 new places in rural areas were provided mainly by the Netherlands Aid project and school building by self-help. By 1982, again through self-help and community project, at least ten more schools will be completed.

The grave phenomena of the majority of nursery teachers being unqualified and untrained did not deter us. A unique strategy was adopted to redress the problem by tutors, nursery education leaders and the teachers in schools. They were trained simultaneously, using the Each one Teach one principle. Six tutors were trained by a UNICEF consultant. These tutors in turn trained 29 nursery education leaders via seminars and other follow-up activities. Each of the education leaders in turn conducted two two-hour workshops per week with practicing teachers in their respective schools and districts. These workshop sessions which were practically oriented exposed practicing teachers to selected knowledge and skills in nursery education and provided them with the opportunity to gain nursery education orientation and insight.

Although a formal three-year in-service training programme was implemented in September, 1980, the Each One Teach One approach continues. Teachers not included in the formal training course continued to attend workshop conducted by the education leaders according to their years of teaching experience. For example, during 1980 – 1981, the workshop pattern changed to deal with two levels of teachers. Those with less than two years service attended junior workshop two hours per week for orientation in nursery education. Those with more than three years experience attended the professional workshop three hours per week as well as the G.T.A. upgrading course.

Our school feeding programme is also expanding. About 18,000 children, that is about 66 per cent of the school population received milk on school days during the year. In Greater Georgetown, milk was supplied by Lidco directly to the schools. In other areas full cream powdered milk was supplied to each district for use in schools. The community spirit was also reflected, in that parents in some areas assisted by providing implements for boiling water to supplement the materials and equipment given by

the Ministry's fund. Discussions have been held with the World Food Programme in relation to increasing the amount of milk to facilitate the feeding of all nursery school children and providing them with packets of biscuits.

Cde. Speaker, it is of interest to note that even in some nursery schools we have been involving the children in agriculture at a very early age. It is a joy to pass through some areas and see those nursery school children tending to their agricultural plots.

Cde. Speaker, coverage at the primary level compares favourable with the developed countries and has surpassed those of most of the developing countries which are still striving for universal primary education. Our net enrolment ratio now stands within the nineties and our gross level at about 102. The latter is also a tremendous improvement when compared with those of developing countries and our Caribbean neighbours. The inference is that the percentage of over aged pupils enrolled is declining steadily, because of the low percentage of repeaters throughout the years.

This improving is not surprising since supervision of schools has been stopped up and Education Officers are now working in closer collaboration with the Curriculum Development Unit in order to improve the quality of teaching in our schools. For this year, an additional 600 heads and deputy heads of school will be oriented and trained via workshops and seminars, to organise, manage, supervise and evaluate schools and personnel. These working sessions should be able to contribute towards improving the internal efficiency of the schools. Cde. Speaker, I should inform this house that during 1981, a sum of \$225,000 was expended in house training and workshops for on the job teachers. Cde. Speaker, we have recognised that in the primary school system or in the school system in general, order and discipline need to be restored if any work is to be carried on. Problems affecting pupils' performance have been carefully studied and careful needs-assessment considered. Plans are now afoot for a return to the community involvement and participation as invaluable aids to the child learning process. Accountability is foremost in the intent of the programmes which we are not about to implement in the primary section of the schools. We have mounted a programme countrywide by which we hope to ensure that meaningful work is found on the chalk boards in most schools, so that from the time the child enters the school he will be in a position to start working.

The plan here is to get students into the desirable habit of commencing a day's study with interesting work which they can get right. The careful grading is designed to ensure that a feeling of self-worth is developed in each child who could see himself improving from day to day. To make the programme operative, the idea was sold to supervisors, those being the education officers and education supervisors, then to the headmasters and headmistresses, the entire staff, the P.T.A. and to the school through a system of consultation at the various levels. But the matter of accountability does not end there. We are in a process of assisting Education Officers, teachers, to achieve economics of time and energy by organising their work in terms of clearly defined objectives or tasks which can be measured. There is now only the need for order in the task of supervision, to ensure that the system operates smoothly.

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(Cde. D. Ainsworth continues)

There is need too for broadmindedness on the parts of all concerned and for patriotism that would lead us all to keep in mind the good of Guyana above every-thing else. One of the plans in the air is a Draft Supervisor Education Officer's Report Form. This is planned as a co-operative venture in which persons in groups interested in education throughout the country are being asked to contribute ideas. Further, the contents of the form are to be discussed among various groups in the communities. In this way everyone will know what is to be expected in terms of performances. Parents can be assured that their children's education is being taken care of properly.

Cde. Speaker, as was mentioned earlier education has a dialectic relationship with society. It should reflect the economic development and the social, political level of the country concerned. The Ministry is therefore making a concerted effort by providing pupils not only with basic general education and/or specific practical skills but by developing skills and attitudes necessary for them to make a personal contribution. In other words, it is making education more relevant to the circumstances of Guyana. While making changes, there have been deliberate attempts to ensure that those receiving formal education, whether at the primary, secondary or university level do not become isolated from the country's economic and social problems but that they should become imbued with the desire to use their skills for the development of the country as a whole.

We also feel that if education should successfully promote egalitarianism we should be able to combat reverse tendencies such as the disassociation of brain from manual work or the gulf between formal education and working life. Hence, provision has been made for an assessment of practical work to be in-corporate in this year's Secondary School Education Examination. Primary Schools are being encouraged to provide a wide range of practical activities. Among those suggested are agricultural, self-help project, national-service co-operatives and participation in national events and exhibitions from which students could select at least two in which to participate and become actively involved during the SSEE examination year. The marks for this new subject which is called the sixth component will carry the same weight as many of the other five academic subjects in which the subjects are normally tested.

The rational for introducing a practical non-academic subject at the Secondary School Entrance Examination is an attempt to give meaning to non-academic manual work in such a way that practical work is seen not just as unnecessary drudgery but as an important element in development. As an additional benefit, practicals can be closely related to economic concepts in such as to make classroom studies more real and meaningful to students. What better way to teach about resources and in-vestment than by actually producing something

Cde. Speaker, in the school situation the percentage of trained teachers at primary level had increased from 45 percent in 1976-77 to just about 58 percent in 1979-81. It would seem therefore that one of the factors affecting an overall improvement in the pupil trained teacher ratio is the high attrition rate each year. Just about 23 percent of the teachers leave the system each year a great portion of which is trained and qualified. For example, in 1980 there was an absolute loss of trained teachers of just about 10

percent. It seems as though teachers are leaving the system for more lucrative jobs. An analysis of teachers salaries show that for equivalent qualifications others who are not in the teaching service have been able to obtain remunerations which are much higher than the teachers have been able to obtain at the moment. It is in this context that the vice-President in his address to this house on Monday referred to the fact that while the Government is in sympathy and have agreed in the principle to increase the salaries of teachers the economic circumstances at the moment prevent us from being able to do so because in the final analysis our ability to provide social services is dependant on the level of production that we achieve.

When we look at the secondary level we see that the trend of expansion was similar to that of the nursery level, for at the end of the first year of Government's take-over pupil enrolment increased by 7.8 percent. The greatest expansion was the increase in the number of pupils who attended general secondary schools. It is important to note too the shift in the allocation of students to secondary departments of primary schools, community schools and general secondary schools. Enrolment declined from 42.89 percent of the total secondary enrolment in 1976-77 to approximately 35 percent in 1981-81. On the other hand enrolment in Community High Schools had increased by 70 percent because of the additional school places provided.

We also feel that education should endeavour to provide the initiation of all pupils in various productive tests and stimulate a spirit of initiative and enterprise directed towards self employment. Productive work renders enormous service by preparing the individual for production for his own consumption and such production will have an important place in the economy of tomorrow. In the light of this philosophy we have the Community High School and the work exercises attached to these schools and some of the multilateral school. Cde. Speaker, I wish to refer to the objectives of the community high schools programme. Among them are: provision of work experience for students during their final year at school, development of self motivation and development of the ability to work alongside others efficiently, the provision of an easier transition from school to work, the creation of a group of young Guyanese with correct work attitudes, respect for manual labour and producers of consumers goods and services who are ready for self employment or for general employment. Cde. Speaker, the work study programme which began simultaneously with the introduction of the Community High School, has expanded from the attachment of students from all Community High School and secondary department of Primary school.

In 1980 3000 students were attached to various public agencies, private as well as military and para-military institution for work study attachments. I should at this point inform this House that the work study attachments which students have had at the Belbagg Agricultural Society over the years has been upgraded to a two year programme where the students work and study in an environment where they are able to acquire skills which will make them ready to take on settlement on their own and to be able to contribute to the development of this nation. I would also like to inform this House that the Belbagg Residential school programme is being upgraded to a vocational study school centre and will be so gazette shortly.

Cde. Speaker, while we have been looking at the contribution of these schools it is interesting to note that the agricultural production of the school contributed \$800,000 in revenue by the production of \$300,000 pounds of poultry, 50,000 pounds of pork and 35,000 eggs. Already incomes generated by some farms are being used to provide much needed school equipment. For examples at Vergenoegen three typewriters were purchased and at the Bladen Hall Secondary School the school is expected to become self sufficient by the end of 1983. At the moment it has an expenditure of just over \$661,000. In the production of rice they have just over 105 acres of rice under cultivation and this is to be increased to 150 for the coming crop. The industrial arts programme has contributed significantly to the provision of furniture and other bits and pieces in the school. They have also undertaken minor repairs to the school building and are thinking of taking on contracts for the building of school furniture in certain areas. This has contributed to over \$3000 to the Ministry last year, and in the area of craft production \$16,000 was realised as surplus after the products were sold.

Cde, Speaker, as we review the educational system in this country it is opposite for me to refer to the examination.

The Speaker: Perhaps it may be opposite for me to refer that you have five minutes more.

Cde. Ainsworth: In keeping in tune with the national need and aspiration of the country of Guyana and Caribbean territories are becoming less dependent on British examination. The C.X.C subject area offered have increased from five subjects in 1979 to eleven subjects in 1982. One of the significant values of this examination is that it is not only finely tuned to our needs but it also contributes to the essential development of the students. For rather than being just a pass/fail examination it reports on the student's performance by way of grade and also gives profile points. Some students strength and weaknesses within a given subject are identified. In this way the feedback helps both the teacher and the students concerned to re-organise and restructure the curricula as necessary so that alternative instruction methods and teaching strategies could be planned to facilitate the learning process.

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(Cde. Ainsworths continues)

Last year we went another step further when we abolished the city and Guilds Examination and introduced our own Guyana technical Education Examination. This is in keeping with our philosophy to make education more relevant to meet our changing needs and provide skills that are pertinent to our country. We have been studying students' performance at these examinations and have realised that their performance fall below our expectations even though some schools have done excellently.

A further analysis of these schools reveals that lack of trained teacher personnel was not the major problem, even though at the moment we are experiencing shortages especially in Science and Mathematics. When we looked at schools at random that did well at CXC proficiency in English and Mathematics in 1981 and some that did not do so well, we found that in those schools there were no significant difference in the status of teachers or the pupil-teacher ratios. We therefore feel that there are other forces at work that affect the students' performances at national examination.

International studies have found that school variables which are important predictors of achievement were mostly those that reflected the climate or activities of the school rather than just mere status characteristics, For example, physical amenities, teacher qualification, and that some school, by virtue of a superior organisation ethos, assist pupils more than others school do.

We in Guyana, though the Planning and Research Unit, are conducting an appraisal of our secondary schools to arrive at conclusions concerning their relative performance and effectiveness as measured by the students' attainment at national examination and their attitudes to schooling and self. An analysis of this nature will help us to set up criteria for organising the education service in such a way that there is more active exploitation and rationalization of the available resources. In the wake of worldwide economic recession, accompanied by inflation and spiraling energy cost, the significant of this proposed stock-taking project cannot be over estimated.

At the moment here in Guyana, assisting the Ministry of Education in its all-round attempt to improve education, is a team of experts from UNESCO. They are helping us to put in place effective management system which will enable us to offer a better quality of education for our people so that they can join the workforce and help in the national effort to not only reconstruct a society but to ensure that our economy is viable and prosperous.

ADJOURNMENT

RESOLVED, "That this Assembly do now adjourn to tomorrow, Friday, 1982-04-02, at 14:00 hrs.
[Vice President. Parliamentary Affairs and Party/State Relations]

Adjournment accordingly at 23:32hrs